



May 7th, 2024

House Judiciary Committee

We strongly oppose H7263. Allowing law enforcement to police themselves has been the norm for decades and it doesn't work. LEOBoR has undermined the public's trust, because there is no way to hold law enforcement officers accountable for their behavior. Language like "minor violations of departmental rules and regulations" are vague terms. Would this sexual misconduct with civilians or officers who engage in sexual conduct during prostitution investigations? These are valid questions as [COYOTERI's 2022 charging document report reveals](#) police officers engaging in sexual conduct with women during prostitution investigations. This report has been emailed to every member of the general assembly 3 times since Jan 2023.

There are so many issues with H7263 that there isn't enough time in the day to cover them all. H7263 is insulting because it includes the following outrageous language.

"Summary punishment of up to fourteen (14) working days without pay may be imposed subsequent to a formal complaint filed with the department for the following violations of departmental rules and regulations that do not result in pending criminal charges requiring discipline pursuant to the remaining provisions of this section:

- (1) The use of deadly force in violation of departmental rules and regulations;**
 - (2) Excessive force or use of force that leads to serious physical injury or death in violation of departmental rules and regulations;**
 - (3) Felonious conduct in violation of departmental rules and regulations;**
 - (4) Professional dishonesty relating to the reporting, investigation, or prosecution of a crime or to the reporting or investigation of misconduct by another law enforcement officer in violation of departmental rules and regulations.**
- (d) The sole and exclusive remedy for appeals of summary punishments under subsections (b) and (c) of this section shall be subject to the grievance and**

arbitration provisions of the accused law enforcement officer's collective bargaining agreement. 1 (c)(e) Suspension may be imposed by the chief or the high"

The summary says that an officer can break departmental rules and regulations and as long as they are not criminally charged, they can use excessive force, injure or kill someone and they will only be suspended for 14 days. There is also a loophole to appeal the suspension by way of a law enforcement officer's collective bargaining agreement.

In the REAL world if people lie, cheat, and commit violent acts they are fired from their jobs immediately. Rarely are police officers indicted and charged with a crime, and H7263 wants to allow them to collect a paycheck until their criminal case is finished.

H7263 is not what our community wants. There is no good reason that law enforcement should not be held to the same standards as civilians. In fact they should be held to a higher standard. We do not have faith in the chief or a committee to hold police officers accountable. The only way the law is going to hold them accountable is if you vote yes on [H7198](#) to repeal LEOBoR entirely.

We hope you will show strong leadership by voting NO on H7263

Sincerely,

Tara Burns
Bella Robinson
Ramona Flour
Lindsey Jennings
Kayla Katt

Call Off Your Old Tired Ethics, Rhode Island (COYOTE RI) is a group of current and former sex workers, sex trafficking survivors, and allies working towards safety and protection for everyone in Rhode Island's sex industries.