

SPECIAL

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REPORT

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TIME TO REPLACE THE QUINN BILL

The benefits of the Quinn Bill police educational incentive program are extraordinarily generous and are not aligned with the services received by the public and the taxpayers. In a time of heightened security but tightened finances, the Quinn Bill's limited benefits and growing costs make it a prime target for a fundamental overhaul. The total state and local cost of Quinn Bill salary supplements in fiscal 2002 was approximately \$101 million and is expected to reach \$110 million in fiscal 2003. The City of Boston will pay an estimated \$15.6 million in Quinn Bill expenses in fiscal 2003 with half reimbursed by the state. Because of the financial incentives, police officers have been enrolling in those educational institutions where they can earn eligible degrees with the least amount of effort. Once the Quinn Bill became effective in Boston, a noticeable shift occurred in which institutions Boston officers attended to receive their degrees.

The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education approved quality standards for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement degree programs eligible for Quinn Bill benefits in February 2003 – but that is not enough. A whole new police educational incentive program should be approved that progressively ties educational attainment to higher job responsibilities and compensation. Absent that, at least the annual incentive payments in the Quinn Bill should be changed to a smaller percentage of salary with a maximum cap or a fixed dollar amount so that the costs are aligned more appropriately with the public benefits. The Board should be given adequate resources to implement the new standards effectively. Academic degrees covered by the Quinn Bill should be expanded to include other disciplines.

Boston's Acceptance

Since 1970, 250 communities have adopted the Quinn Bill, including Boston, which signed on in 1998. Rebuffed by the White and Flynn Administrations after public debate, the Quinn Bill was approved by the Menino Administration in contract negotiations with the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association on July 14, 1998, and was applicable to all officers. The City Council accepted the Quinn Bill in September with its vote to fund the contract. The contract stipulated that the Quinn Bill provisions would not become effective until July 5, 2000 (FY01). The number of Boston police officers eligible for annual Quinn Bill benefits since the first year of implementation has increased to 1,353, from 56% of the sworn force in 2001 to 64.2% as of March 2003. Officers with Master's degrees increased by 36% and with Bachelor's degrees by 29.8%.

Quinn Bill Costs

Quinn Bill costs have become increasingly expensive for the Commonwealth, Boston and other municipalities. Paying police officers a fixed percentage above the pay scale of their position over an entire career is an exceptionally generous benefit. The total statewide cost of Quinn Bill salary supplements in fiscal 2003 is expected to be \$110 million. Municipalities will spend approximately \$91 million in fiscal 2003, half of which will be reimbursed by the state in fiscal 2004. In addition, the Quinn Bill

What is the Quinn Bill?

The Quinn Bill (Ch.41,s.108L), or the Police Career Incentive Pay Program (PCIPP), is a local-option salary benefit offered exclusively to uniformed police who earn a law enforcement, criminal justice, or law degree. Officers who receive other degrees, such as computer science or sociology, are not eligible. Under this program, police officers employed by a participating municipality are granted increases in base pay of:

- 10% for an Associate's Degree or 60 credits towards a Bachelor's Degree
- 20% for a Bachelor's Degree
- 25% for a Master's or Law Degree

This annual salary benefit is split evenly between state and municipality. However, overtime and pension costs that are increased by the higher salaries must be absorbed by the local community. The Commonwealth pays the full cost of the Quinn Bill benefits for State Police officers.

expenses for State Police officers will cost the Commonwealth about \$22.9 million this year. The City of Boston paid \$14.9 million in Quinn Bill expenses in fiscal 2002 with half reimbursed by the state. Boston's costs represented 18% of the total municipal bill in fiscal 2002. Boston's Quinn Bill tab is expected to reach \$15.6 million this fiscal year, with payments made to 1,353 Boston police officers or 64.2% of the force.

Paying annual Quinn Bill benefits as a percentage of salary means that the education bonus grows with every contractual pay raise and with each additional degree. Officers of higher rank receive larger Quinn Bill payments for the same degree, on the assumption that degrees earned by higher-ranking officials will have a greater impact on police services. A Boston police captain with a base salary of \$88,498 in 2003 could receive an annual Quinn Bill bonus of \$22,125 for a Master's degree with no increase in authority or responsibility. A patrol officer with a base salary of \$52,453 and a Master's degree could take home a Quinn Bill payment of \$13,113.

Fiscal Year	Boston	State Share#	State & Municipalities
2000	\$0.4*	\$44.2	\$72.3
2001	12.9	48.8	86.7
2002	14.9	59.3	100.8
2003	15.6	64.2	109.8

* Police education incentive cost prior to Quinn Bill
Includes State Police

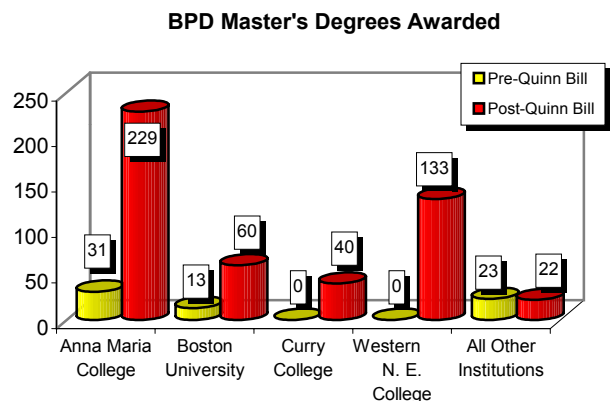
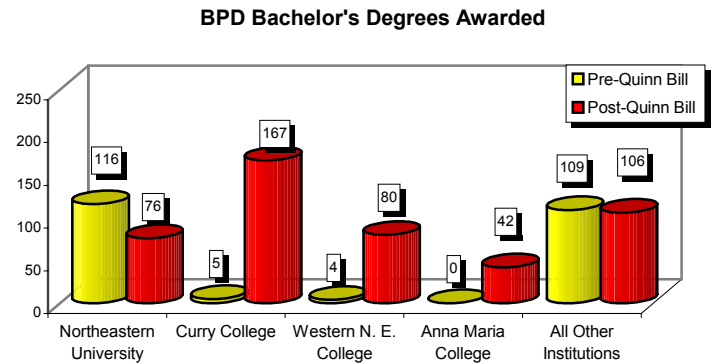
No Quinn Bill Standards

Compensating law-enforcement officers for educational attainment under the Quinn Bill is a big investment but less justifiable when the educational programs most popular with police officers are considered to be mediocre at best. From 1970 to February 2003, the only academic requirement of the Quinn Bill was that a police officer graduate with a relevant degree from a New England-based college accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) or one approved by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education. No standards existed for curriculum, instructor certification, attendance, or course requirements beyond those set by the institution itself. Standards established by some institutions would not be sufficient to ensure academic quality in instruction and in student performance, given their financial incentive to churn out Quinn Bill-eligible graduates.

The Quinn Bill has created a lucrative market for colleges that cater to police officers who are working full-time by offering convenient locations and relaxed course requirements rather than academic rigor in their criminal-justice programs. This problem was first exposed by *The Boston Globe's* Spotlight Team in 1985. The *Globe* found that the Quinn Bill was "much-abused," providing hefty pay increases for what it called "little academic sweat." Today, certain colleges still make it easy for officers to attend classes by establishing satellite programs close to police stations but far from campus libraries and other academic resources. In order to expedite graduation, some institutions award non-traditional credit for standard police academy training or experience on the job. These institutions tend to grant a larger share of non-academic credit for knowledge-based examinations (e.g., CLEP, DANTEs, LEAP). Courses are often taught by adjunct faculty who are sympathetic to officers and willing to cut them a break in class work. This approach can make an instructor not only popular but also successful, since class size is often a key performance measure for these part-time teachers.

Where Boston Police Get Their Degrees

After the Quinn Bill was adopted by Boston, a shift occurred in which many police officers began to enroll in those educational institutions, sometimes called "cop shops," where they could earn criminal-justice degrees with the least amount of effort. Indeed, 83.1% of



Master's degrees received by Boston police officers for Quinn Bill benefits have been awarded by just three institutions whose main campuses are not located in Boston but which have set up satellite programs there. Apparently, not much has changed since 1985. Approximately 47.3% of the Master's degrees currently held by Boston police officers were granted by Anna Maria College located in Paxton, Massachusetts, while 27.5% of the degrees came from Western New England College whose main campus is in Springfield, Massachusetts. Relatively new to the Master's program in criminal justice is Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts, which bestowed only 8.3% of the Master's degrees, but is the leader for eligible Bachelor's degrees at 35.5% for Boston officers. The attraction to these institutions by Boston officers after the Quinn Bill was accepted in Boston is revealed by an analysis of the number of Quinn-eligible degrees held between the time the contract was implemented and March 2003. A noticeable shift occurred in which institutions Boston officers attended to receive their degrees, which is shown by the graphs on page two.

Steps To Reform Quinn Bill Programs

Reacting to increasing criticism of the quality of the Quinn Bill program, the Commonwealth's Board of Higher Education, in November 2000, voted to undertake a review of the criminal justice degree programs. The Board appointed a Criminal Justice Review Committee that looked into 43 programs that confer these credentials. Though based on just a "paper review" of relevant documents, the committee's report, issued in November 2001, found wide variation in the quality of criminal justice education and raised particular concerns about a small number of programs most popular with law enforcement officers. Citing discrepancies between some colleges' day and evening programs in administration, faculty staffing, and student-body composition, the report warned that Quinn Bill-related programs may have become an "academic cash cow" for some institutions.

The Legislature also responded in the summer of 2002 by approving an amendment to the Quinn Bill that authorized the Board of Higher Education to establish "quality guidelines" for criminal justice programs, including standards and review processes. The Board also was given the authority to conduct periodic reviews of criminal justice and law degree programs and to certify pay increases earned only through programs that met the Board's standards.

The First Standards

The Board of Higher Education approved a strong set of guidelines for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement degree programs eligible for Quinn Bill benefits at its February 2003 meeting. These guidelines represent a significant step forward, generally follow the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences principles and are the first standards instituted since the law was enacted in 1970. The guidelines establish clear standards for undergraduate and graduate programs for curriculum, faculty, admissions and articulation agreements with other institutions. Also included are:

- Standards for facility and student resources and program quality and effectiveness.
- Application to all divisions - day, evening and continuing education programs.
- Requirements that two-thirds of the faculty in Bachelor's and Master's degree programs hold an earned doctorate (Ph.D.) in criminal justice or a closely related discipline.
- Requirements that programs rely on full-time faculty to teach core courses and to deliver at least two-thirds of the teaching in each degree program to reduce reliance on adjunct faculty without appropriate degrees.
- Prohibitions that no academic credit be awarded for life experiences or for military, police academy or other training, a practice liberally utilized by some institutions to expedite graduation.

Under the new guidelines, by May 1, 2003, the president of an educational institution with an approved criminal justice or law enforcement degree program must submit a letter to the Chancellor of the Board of Higher Education indicating the institution's intent to seek or not to seek approval as a PCIPP program. The letter must state the institution's intent to implement the new standards for all students enrolling in a criminal justice or law enforcement program after May 1, 2003. Full applications must be submitted by September 30, 2003, for approval by December 31, 2003. The timetable is tight for those institutions that would need to make extensive faculty and facility changes to comply and could result in a few institutions deciding to delay or not continue participation in the PCIPP program.

The Legislature is ready to make additional changes to the Quinn Bill in the fiscal 2004 state budget. The House Ways and Means Committee's budget recommends an amendment to the Quinn Bill that codifies the process for the implementation and management of the new guidelines established by the Board of Higher Education. To control costs, the budget provides that municipalities that accept the Quinn Bill after July 1, 2002, will not receive state reimbursement for 50% of the costs before fiscal 2010. Also, the Commonwealth's half-share for fiscal 2004 is cut by 15%. The Senate is expected to introduce its own amendments to the Quinn Bill shortly.

Recommendations

Today's police services, with their broader range of community needs from social services to terrorism response, require officers to be well-rounded, critical thinkers able to make informed decisions decisively. These skills are better honed through the rigors of a high-standards college education. At the same time, the current Quinn Bill program is extraordinarily expensive for the Commonwealth and participating municipalities and benefits are not aligned with the services provided to the public and the taxpayers. In this situation, a total restructuring of the compensation and educational requirements for a police officer is warranted. The approval by the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education of quality standards for Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement degree programs eligible for Quinn Bill benefits is a significant step in this restructuring, but much more needs to be done.

1. The Governor and Legislature should replace the Quinn Bill with a whole new police educational incentive program that progressively ties educational attainment to higher job responsibilities and compensation. Each new police officer hired in Massachusetts should be required to have earned an Associate's degree in one of the approved disciplines from an accredited educational institution. A minimum standard base pay for a new police officer should be established statewide with this requirement with individual communities able to increase that level through collective bargaining negotiations at their discretion. Each subsequent promotion to a higher rank with greater responsibilities and commensurate salary increase should be tied to higher educational requirements. For example, a Bachelor's degree could be required for promotion to sergeant and a Master's degree for lieutenant or captain, etc. This approach would be more aligned with the practice of educational incentives in the private sector and would move away from the current practice of an officer receiving a large financial benefit for a degree for the remainder of his/her career with no change in responsibilities.
2. If the Quinn Bill is not replaced as recommended above, at least the incentive payments in the Quinn Bill should be changed to a smaller percentage of salary with a maximum cap or a fixed dollar amount so that the costs are aligned more appropriately with the public benefits. Even then, the benefits would be far more generous than most private educational incentive programs that reimburse employees for the cost of tuition for a credential that might qualify an employee for higher-paid positions, but do not boost salaries without a commensurate increase in responsibilities.
3. Officers who are within five years of retirement should not be able to become initially eligible for Quinn Bill benefits. Police officers who receive Quinn Bill pay should be expected to serve the public for a minimum number of years. Boston will soon see a wave of retirements of police officers whose last three years of salary were boosted by Quinn Bill pay and who will retire with higher pension benefits but with limited time served after having received a degree.
4. The Board of Higher Education's fiscal 2004 budget should provide sufficient resources to ensure effective implementation of the new Quinn Bill standards. The new guidelines, authorized by the Legislature in 2002, require the Board to evaluate each institution's application and to perform any external review or inspection deemed necessary as part of the application process or as part of any review for possible non-compliance with the Board's guidelines. Funds also are needed to maintain an accurate database to facilitate the review and establish accountability. Approval of quality standards without the resources to properly implement the plan will render the standards meaningless and negate the changes absolutely needed to establish credibility for this program. The standards should be amended to require each approved institution submit an annual report to the Board of Higher Education verifying compliance with the standards.
5. The Board of Higher Education should be authorized to approve the expansion of academic degrees covered by the Quinn Bill to include other programs of study to broaden the program's benefits. Eligible programs should not be limited to Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement degrees as other degree programs such as Computer Science or Sociology are equally useful in today's delivery of police services.

These changes will not come easily. The Quinn Bill has weathered reform efforts in the past, especially in 1985, when the call for reform was strong. This time must be different. The replacement of the Quinn Bill with a new program to serve today's public safety needs at a reasonable cost, more aligned with the benefits, should be a high priority for the Romney Administration and the Legislature.