

Talking points for adding Conservation Officers to the Virginia Law Enforcement Officer's Retirement System.

This legislative amendment would add conservation officers of the Department of Conservation and Recreation as members of the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System. Conservation officers would accrue retirement benefits under the Virginia Law Officers' Retirement System for creditable service on or after July 1, 2018.

1. This action supports the Governor's priorities for public safety by increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the DCR law enforcement personnel to protect our visitors and employees as well as the unique natural and cultural resource of the Commonwealth.
2. Inclusion of conservation officers the department of Conservation and Recreation in VaLORS will allow DCR to retain our highly trained and skilled officers, reduce the rate of turnover and the associated cost to hire, train and equip new officers.
3. The General Assembly has recognized the enhanced risk of being a Conservation Officer employed by DCR. These enhanced risks and physical demands, come with a high cost to the individual officer. In general law enforcement officers have a life expectancy of 66 years as compared to a life expectancy of 75 years for the general population.
4. The cost to include DCR conservation officers in VaLORS is more than offset by the 19.6 million dollars in tax revenue that is generated by visitors to the state parks each year