

Special Conservators of the Peace

Policy Questions

Registration

1. Do the current permissible exemptions from registration improve public safety?
2. Is the public interest best served by requiring a state agency to register all SCOPS?
3. What are the benefits of requiring all SCOPS to register with the state? What are the drawbacks?

Scope of Power/Jurisdiction

1. To what extent do SCOPS, working for a private corporation, need arrest authority beyond the physical boundaries of that private corporation's property?
2. Is the public any safer by authorizing SCOPS to have arrest authority beyond such boundaries?
3. What checks and balances should exist to monitor corporate motivations in employing SCOPS?
4. Would governmental regulation of corporations employing SCOPS improve public safety?
 - a. How?
 - b. How do you balance the need for public safety and economic interests of businesses?
5. Do citizens have the right to know when they are engaging with an SCOP?
 - a. Does the use of the seal of the Commonwealth and the word "police" confuse the public and other law-enforcement officials?
 - b. What are the benefits and drawbacks of omitting the use of the seal and "police" by SCOPS?
6. Is it good policy to allow SCOPS to use the same amount of force when effecting arrests as law-enforcement officers?

Training

1. Do 24 hours and 40 hours of training adequately protect SCOPS and the public from the inherent dangers of enforcing laws and making arrests?
2. What are the substantive differences between training requirements for SCOPS and law-enforcement officers?
3. If 24 or 40 hours of training do not adequately protect the SCOP or the public, what is an appropriate amount and type of training for an SCOP with the same arrest authority as a law-enforcement officer?

4. Should SCOPS be subject to the same mandatory training requirements for law-enforcement officers, including: bias & cultural diversity, domestic & sexual assaults, mental health, etc.?

Court Orders

1. Can SCOP appointment orders be improved to clearly define the authority, role, and powers of an SCOP?
2. How can SCOP appointment orders generally be improved?
3. In order to best protect the public, should other entities, besides the applicant and judge, have a voice in the application process?
 - a. Is a circuit court judge the best arbiter of determining the necessity for peace and security in a judicial circuit?
 - b. What type and source of information is helpful to a judge's determination?
 - c. Is public safety enhanced by requiring a public hearing for judicial consideration of SCOP appointments?
4. What mechanisms are currently available for judges to revoke or terminate appointment orders? What mechanisms should be available?
5. What is an appropriate standard of review for judges to apply in approving, denying, revoking, or terminating appointments?

Overall Considerations

1. Is the SCOP program necessary in the Commonwealth of Virginia? What other private security programs are available to address security and safety concerns of the public and private sectors?
2. If the SCOP program has value, how should it be regulated to adequately protect the public and SCOP participants?
3. What, if any, liabilities are created by the program? To whom? How can the risk of liabilities be reduced?