

HB 2703 -- USE OF DEADLY FORCE BY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS

SPONSOR: Gray

Currently, a law enforcement officer may use deadly force when he or she reasonably believes that the use of deadly force is immediately necessary to effect the arrest and reasonably believes that the person to be arrested has committed or attempted to commit a felony, is attempting to escape by use of a deadly weapon, or may otherwise endanger life or inflict serious physical injury unless arrested without delay.

This bill changes the provisions to allow a law enforcement officer to use deadly force when all other reasonable means of apprehension have been exhausted or are unavailable, the officer has given notice of his or her identity as an officer and a warning that deadly force may be used unless resistance or flight ceases, and the officer reasonably believes that the person to be arrested has committed or attempted to commit a felony or is attempting to escape and possesses a deadly weapon.

A law enforcement officer must be immediately suspended and removed from duty without pay for the duration of a full investigation when he or she uses deadly force against an unarmed person who is at a distance of 20 feet or more from the officer, thereby posing no imminent danger to the officer.

The bill establishes a "Task Force On The Use Of Force By A Law Enforcement Officer" in the Department of Public Safety. The task force must focus its efforts on clarifying the use of force allowed by law enforcement officers in St. Louis County. The task force must consist of nine members appointed by the department director that may include, but not be limited to a person from the Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Commission, and various members of the law enforcement community. The task force shall not meet more than four times annually.

This bill is similar to HB 1502 (2016).