

The Star-Ledger

N.J. cops won't face being fired for making too few arrests under bill approved by lawmakers

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NJ Advance Media for NJ.com and The Star-Ledger

Published Dec. 13, 2020

New Jersey lawmakers advanced a bill Friday to prevent cops from facing demotion, discipline or pay cuts just because they didn't arrest more people.

A department would be barred from considering the number of arrests made or citations issued when evaluating an officer's overall performance, under a proposal (S1322) approved 6-0 by the state Senate Law and Public Safety Committee.

Current law allows those statistics to be one of the factors considered when officials weigh promotions, demotions, dismissals, discipline and salaries.

Police "are all too often pressured to write more tickets to increase revenue and help municipalities balance their budgets," state Sen. Shirley Turner, D-Mercer and one of the bill's sponsors, said in a statement. Other departments have been accused of having secret arrest "quotas," she said.

"These policies, whether written or unwritten, have fallen hardest upon low-income individuals and people of color," Turner added.

The bill would still allow arrest and citation statistics to be tracked. The proposal must pass the full Senate and Assembly before it can head to the governor's desk.

Several policing reforms have advanced since George Floyd protests swept the state. The governor recently signed a bill into law largely requiring departments to use body cameras, but other reforms have stalled.