At least 145 law enforcement and corrections officers have lost their New Hampshire certification over the last dozen years, forfeiting their ability to work for reasons ranging from felony crimes such as rape to flunking a physical fitness test.

The decertifications, some that are only temporary, include 12 police chiefs and one sheriff.

The names were disclosed by USA Today last week, part of a nationwide effort that used public record requests in 44 states to identify 85,000 problem police officers. In New Hampshire, the list comes from the New Hampshire Police Standards and Training Council, which issues and revokes police and correction officer certification.

“The police work for the public and have the unique ability to deprive people of their liberty,” Bissonnette said. “This is why the public has a right to know when an officer has engaged in misconduct.”

“Because the list is secret, we don’t know whether the former New Hampshire officers in the USA Today report are on the Laurie List. That said, our recent victory (last) week where a court ruled that the Laurie List is a public document is a step in the right direction for transparency and accountability. We’re pretty scary, he said.

However, Gilles Bissonnette, the ACLU-NH’s legal director, said the public needs to see the list in its entirety so taxpayers can determine which, if any, officers have engaged in “sustained misconduct.”

Despite the ruling, Attorney General Gordon Mac-
Donald has not released the Laurie List, and lawyers representing media and civil liberties groups who sued for access to the list did not rule out that Mac-Donald will eventually appeal the order.

The attorney general does provide updated versions of the Laurie List with names redacted. The latest, dated April 11, has 280 entries (See State House Dome, Page B7).

The two lists are different.

USA Today’s list of 145 decertified officers covered 11 years and includes people who either no longer work as police or corrections officers or who lost their ability to work as officers and corrections officers on a temporary basis. Meanwhile, the Laurie List stretches back a couple of decades; some remain on the job, some have lost their job.

Death doesn’t even get one off the Laurie List. The list was designed so prosecutors could keep track of police officers who would have credibility problems if they were called to testify in a trial.

“You’re talking about two different animals altogether,” said Mark Chase, police chief in Center Harbor and president of the New Hampshire Association of Chiefs of Police. His organization opposes release of the Laurie List.

“We do not stand behind officers who should not be wearing a badge,” Chase said. But an officer can land on the Laurie List for fudging a sick day, he said. To compare such a mistake to a crime is
glad to see this issue gaining national attention.”

The decertification list changes from year to year.

In early years, the reasons are straightforward, giving explanations that include DWI, domestic assault and submitting false documents.

Several involve temporary suspensions after an officer fails a three-year fitness test. But in later years, the justification for decertification is coded by a reference number to various state laws or police standards regulations.

On Friday, MacDonald’s office said it would not release the Laurie List, referred to as the Exculpatory Evidence Schedule, right away. In a three-page letter, Criminal Justice Bureau Chief Geoffrey Ward noted that Superior Court Judge Charles Temple did not say the list should immediately be released. Ward also noted the judge’s order was not a final order in the case.

“The EES was not created for public informational purposes, and, as such, the spreadsheet was not developed in a manner that substantively identifies, or provides context to, the conduct of the individual officer that resulted in his or her placement on the list,” Ward wrote.

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