



**WASHINGTON
COUNCIL
OF
POLICE &
SHERIFFS**



March 9, 2018

RE: Legislative action on use of deadly force

Dear Fellow Law Enforcement Officers:

On the final day of the 2018 Legislative Session, combination legislation encompassing two separate bills were passed: Initiative 940 and HB 3003. The combination of these bills allows the Washington State Legislature to honor the State Constitution as it relates to initiatives to the Legislature, while recognizing the cooperation among interest groups to find a way to come to agreement on the issues at the heart of the initiative.

The Washington Council of Police & Sheriffs and the Washington Fraternal Order of Police support the outcome of this process. Our organizations came together because of the duty to fight for our members and protect them from a Washington State use of force standard lower than the national standard.

We began with all the law enforcement labor organizations including the Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs and later to include the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys. By coming together and staying at the table, we were able to work with the community groups and the Legislature to cooperatively find a better outcome than I-940. HB 3003 protects our members from the reckless public safety policy changes mandated by I-940.

“Passage of HB 3003 will provide our members the safeguards they deserve when doing their job and bearing the burden of split-second decisions,” said Marco Montebianco, WAFOP president.

The process to create and pass HB 3003 was a platform bringing law enforcement and the community together. The series of meetings and the long hours of working toward a common goal has enriched our understanding of each other. We are relieved by the passage of HB 3003 because it creates an understandable use of force standard superior to the language in Initiative 940. This outcome is not only better for law enforcement, but also for the public whom the police protect and serve.

“Every Washington law enforcement organization worked hard on this process,” WACOPS President Craig Bulkley said. “We spent hours and days working on the legislation. We sought legal opinions to ensure all law enforcement would be protected. We refused to give up on this issue because the possibility of I-940 passing and endangering law enforcement in November was just too great.

“We found a solution with Legislators, lobbyist, legal counsel, executive directors, cops and the leadership team of De-Escalate WA working together,” Bulkley said.

While some have raised concerns about the unique process followed in passing both I-940 and HB 3003, we are confident and believe in the outcome. De-Escalate WA brought an initiative to the Legislature; they did not certify an initiative to the people. When approached about discussing alternative options, they agreed and participated every step of the way.

As the proponents of I-940, they knew better than anyone how much time, effort, and money had gone into getting 940 certified by the Secretary of State. As the authors of the initiative, they also understood that the language was imperfect and, in places, not reflective of their objectives. The coordinated effort of law enforcement and the community groups was extensive.

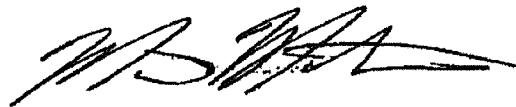
“The magnitude of this problem required WAFOP to reach out and work with not only the community groups but with all of our brothers and sisters in Washington law enforcement,” Montebianco said. “We respect WACOPS’ ongoing communication and commitment to finding a better outcome than I-940. This has been positive for both our organizations.”

“The Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs, along with the Fraternal Order of Police, never gave up on the process to fix I-940,” Bulkley added. “We worked very hard to get HB 3003 passed in both the House and the Senate. We believe this fix is better than trying to fight I-940 at the ballot box, and provides officers with protections deserved for the risks they take.”

This has been an arduous process over a short period of time. We are ready to move forward. We thank our members for their trust and support.



Craig Bulkley
President, WACOPS



Marco Montebianco
President, Washington FOP