



**WASHINGTON
COUNCIL
OF
POLICE &
SHERIFFS**

Dear Members:

You asked the WACOPS leadership to oppose I-940 and to exhaust every legislative option in finding an alternative. We have followed your direction and worked diligently to find another path. In the past 6 weeks we have worked with a law enforcement coalition and the legislature and found a way forward.

In late January, WACOPS, FOP, WASPC, WSPTA, and COMPAS met in order to create a better policy than what I-940 provides. All of these organizations, and later to include WAPA, came to a unified position in support of the language crafted at that meeting. That unified effort was the key legislative leaders needed in order to help us open a dialogue with the backers of Initiative 940, DeEscalate Washington. At no time were any law enforcement organizations willing to accept any policy that was less than the national standard of Graham vs. Connor. Over the past 6 weeks our leadership was prepared to walk away from these discussions if DeEscalate Washington refused to accept language necessary to protect our members from malicious or political prosecution.

Since those discussions began in early February, we have held ongoing discussions with DeEscalate Washington. The use of force language was one of several parts of the negotiation. Through the strategic work of your leadership team, at 4pm on Monday, March 5 we came to an agreement on better public policy, reasonable protections for Washington State's peace officers, and a legislative path to avoid a November vote. We are working to get final passage of Substitute House Bill 3003 tomorrow. We believe the resulting statute will provide protection to officers like Graham vs. Connor. We have also included enhancements that would give officers protection for malicious prosecution.

WACOPS does not support Initiative 940. We are working on legislation so we don't have to fight the initiative at the ballot box. The Troopers Association and COMPAS have taken a position that we should fight this in court or in November. When you consider that Seattle/King County is the epicenter of the Initiative's most vocal supporters, and you consider the possible outcomes of 940, choosing to fight over finding a legislative solution would be a long-shot. Developing better public safety policy with a statewide law enforcement coalition has resulted in an understandable use of force statute.

Recently you may have heard media reports or misinformation from other officers about our efforts. We are confident our effort will be successful and result in a better public policy providing protection for officers. All four of the law enforcement organizations that represent rank and file officers have been involved in developing this legislative solution. Law

enforcement didn't ask for a change to the use of force statute. Because of the relationships we have in the Legislature and our ability to work with diverse interests, we are attempting with this legislative solution to secure a voice for our members now and in the future while ensuring you are protected from the risks you take every day.

Thank you for your membership. Please call the WACOPS office if you have any questions.