

December 15, 2017

WACOPS members,

Last week, Initiative 940, which changes protections for officers in a use-of-force incident, was in the news. Media outlets reported that De-Escalate Washington had gathered the required number of signatures to deliver the initiative to the Secretary of State's office. In response to the media's characterization of the initiative, law enforcement organizations came together and issued a press release expressing our united opposition on I-940.

Like many of our members, we feel strongly that changing the Use of Force Law (RCW 9A.16.040) will not reduce violent interactions between law enforcement and the public.

In an email to members, I asked you to read law enforcement's joint press release and the initiative. If you haven't yet, please use the links below and read more about the initiative. The law enforcement community has to get informed. I-940 is attacking our profession and our safety.

I-940 is promoted by De-Escalate Washington, stating: "This measure would require law enforcement to receive de-escalation, mental health, first aid training, provide first aid, change standards for use of deadly force, adding a 'good faith' standard and independent investigation."

Current state law already requires officers to receive the de-escalation, mental health and first aid training. The initiative has no mechanism to fund the additional training and ties the officer's commission to the new training mandate. If you happen to be on leave when the department provides training, your state certification could come into question and departments could be required to pay for the new training. This added unfunded mandate could potentially mean no money for new hires.

The initiative has a component that requires an officer to render medical assistance possibly while criminal activity may still be occurring. If passed, the initiative forces an officer to act outside of not only their safety, but the safety of the community.

According to the De-Escalate Washington website, the initiative would amend the standard for justifiable use of deadly force, including adding a "good faith" standard where officers "should be held criminally liable when their use of deadly force is not in good faith." The initiative changes the Washington state use-of-force standard to one that has the least protections for law enforcement officers.


I-940 does nothing to make our communities safer. In fact, it could cause more violence as it ties the hands of police officers, troopers and deputies, and could cost lives. Get involved!

De-Escalate Washington and its paid signature gatherers falsely claim that this initiative is supported, funded and promoted by law enforcement. As noted in last week's press release, the advocacy groups for the majority of Washington's law enforcement profession oppose I-940.

WACOPS is fighting to strengthen the rights and quality of life for those who have dedicated their careers to protecting and serving our communities. But as stated in last week's email, we need your assistance to tackle this issue. Please continue to spread the truth about this initiative, and register today to attend our January membership meeting in Olympia. At the January meeting you will learn more about I-940 and have the opportunity to talk to your legislators about this and other key member issues.

Register to attend on our website at [wacops.org](http://wacops.org) or call the office at 360-352-8224.

Be safe out there,



Craig Bulkley  
President, WACOPS

**State law enforcement press release:**

[https://wacops.memberclicks.net/assets/I-940\\_press\\_release.pdf](https://wacops.memberclicks.net/assets/I-940_press_release.pdf)

**Text of initiative:**

[https://wacops.memberclicks.net/assets/I-940\\_Final - De-escalate Washington.pdf](https://wacops.memberclicks.net/assets/I-940_Final_-_De-escalate_Washington.pdf)