



Washington Association of  
**SHERIFFS &  
POLICE CHIEFS**

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WASPC Statement on Initiative 2113

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) is a nonprofit organization and, generally, does not engage in ballot initiatives. However, given the Legislature's decision to hear the initiative and our consistent engagement in the underlying substantive policy, WASPC seeks to offer its strong support for the issues addressed in I-2113.

The proposed changes in the Initiative are consistent with policy changes for which WASPC has advocated. Law enforcement recognizes the potential dangers of pursuits and shares in the belief that no one wants more pursuits. However, overly restrictive laws that allow fleeing from law enforcement to be a "get out of jail free" card are not the solution.

Data from local law enforcement agencies and from the Washington State Patrol demonstrate that significantly more people are fleeing from law enforcement officers than before the law changed. During the same timeframe, the Crime in Washington reports illustrate increasing crime rates, and the Traffic Safety Commission continues to report increasing collisions and fatalities on our roadways.

Washington cannot afford to continue fostering an environment which empowers criminals, jeopardizes public safety, and diminishes the rule of law.

WASPC remains committed to granting our law enforcement officers the discretion they need to analyze the situation, balance the risks of the pursuit against the risks of letting an offender drive away, and ultimately act in the best interest of public safety.

To be clear, while WASPC supports this initiative and the greater authority it grants law enforcement to respond to fleeing offenders, we do not want that to be the only option law enforcement officers in Washington have to apprehend those who commit crimes.

As was offered in other legislative proposals this year, we also support efforts which give officers additional technology and resources which empower their decision not to chase, but ensure they have what they need to apprehend a suspect later. Granting authority to impound fleeing vehicles, monitor fleeing suspects, use photo enforcement cameras with a warrant, access Rapid DNA analysis, and deploy other technologies will all contribute to an officer's decision on whether there is a need to chase now or whether there is safe opportunity to follow up later.

We support the initiative and also ask the Legislature to give us the tools to reduce the need for a vehicular pursuit in the first place. By enacting the initiative alongside stronger penalties to deter illegal conduct and technological investments to aid criminal investigations, we think the Legislature can make a significant difference in making our roads and our communities safer.

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