



2021 Police Reform Legislative Measures *Concerns for crime victims and public safety*

Washington Chiefs and Sheriffs are dedicated to ensuring public safety in our communities. We understand and have acknowledged the imperative for reform and accountability driving these proposals. However, we believe the cumulative effect of these bills, as currently written, may have negative outcomes for victims of crime and overall public safety, including,

- Reduced engagement between members of the public and officers,
- Fewer innovative and diverse officers serving in our departments, and
- A compounded mistrust and divide between law enforcement and the communities we serve.

Bill	Concerns
HB 1054 – Tactics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not allow use of chokeholds and neck restraints even in a fight for your life situation, placing officers and the public at an increased risk of harm. • Restricts vehicular pursuits of clear public safety threats, including impaired and wrong way drivers and domestic violence assault suspects.
SB 5051– Decertification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision makers would have no direct knowledge of, or experience in, the professions of law enforcement or corrections. • Bureaucracy will eat up budget that leads to fewer peace officers working to help victims
HB 1202 – Civil Cause of Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unfairly tilts liability towards law enforcement officers. • Frivolous lawsuits will create further division between law enforcement and the communities they serve.
HB 1203 - Community Oversight Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diverts public tax dollars to a small group of unelected individuals who have no direct accountability to their community and voters; and with little to no experience in law enforcement; removes local control. • Grants power to issue subpoenas, compel testimony, and access crime scenes and evidence, all of which will jeopardize active criminal investigations, delaying justice for victims.
SB 5259 / HB 1092 – Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires paperwork that takes away from and preventing and investigating crime, with no additional resources. • Put cops in offices instead of on the street.
HB 1267 – Office of Independent Investigations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relies on civilian investigators to conduct complex criminal investigations which could delay justice for victims. • Compromises crime scenes with investigators who don’t have professional training.
HB 1310 – Use of Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effectively requires an arrest any time any level of force is used. • Creates an inappropriate oversight role for the Office of the Attorney General over Washington’s law enforcement agencies.
SB 5263 – Felony Bar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits the felony bar defense for law enforcement that will lead to less action to prevent crimes.
SB 5066 – Duty to Intervene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of excessive force could result in unintended physical altercations between law enforcement officers. • Officers from multiple agencies responding to the same incident would all use force according to their own policies, and the agency with the more restrictive policy would be mandated to intervene, creating confusion.

We do not oppose the basic concepts contained in many of these proposals. In June, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs proposed [13 reform recommendations](#) to improve the public service of law enforcement. As we move forward in the legislative process, we respectfully ask to consider our input and background on these topics to achieve constructive goals that promote better policing and safer communities.