



WASHINGTON COUNCIL
OF POLICE & SHERIFFS
'Leadership and Strength Through Unity'



February 25, 2021

Dear Senators,

We are writing to clearly express our concerns about 2SSB5051. As the organizations that represent an overwhelming majority of rank and file law enforcement and corrections officers in Washington State, we all support a robust process to decertify officers for misconduct, or conduct unbecoming of an officer that breaks trust with communities we serve. In fact, Teamsters, Troopers, WACOPS, and WFSE support a number of reform bills moving through the legislature, and continue to work with legislators to get the policy correct on the handful of bills that we do not yet support.

We all support or have reached neutrality on HB 1088, 1089, 5055, 5066, 5259, 5353, 5436. Collectively these bills provide for data collection, auditing, arbitration reform, language around impeachable offenses, and an officer's duty to intervene. We have also worked closely with bill sponsors to amend bills related to tactics (HB1054) and use of force (HB1310) and believe our input has made for better policy that will allow officers to be accountable to their communities and carry out the intended mission of I-940.

Many of our concerns about 2SSB5051 are related to the various interconnections all the police accountability bills have with the decertification bill. If we don't get the policy right in 2SSB5051 the impact to officers could be dramatic and unjust. Each of the separate policy bills will route officers to the Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) which will have new and expansive powers to review officer's performance and conduct. Additionally, the CJTC would be granted authority to reprimand, suspend, retrain, and in some cases, place officers on probation **for up to two years**. In current form, 2SSB5051, will eliminate officer's due process, could lead to termination from employment before a determination is made about misconduct, could impact an officer's eligibility in LEOFF due to a loss of service credit, cause a break in seniority, and impact his or her ability to access health insurance. These impacts could occur before an investigation is completed, and clearly undermine an officer's ability to defend themselves which could result in inappropriate decisions concerning their employment. In the case of HB1203, (Community Oversight Boards) and 2SSB5051, a citizen could simply email a complaint –valid or not- and an officer could be suspended before his or her agency has an opportunity to investigate.

We wish to emphasize our support for the process 2SSB5051 creates to establish state standards for revocation of an officer's certification starting in Section 9 (2). If an officer commits these offenses, we agree it is appropriate for the Commission to initiate appropriate action.

However, we believe local agencies ought to have oversight when it comes to the discretionary offenses outlined in the bill. We wish that Senator Conway's amendment could have more effectively addressed issues related to the review of an officer's conduct, and provided the Commission with clear direction to implement corrective training without, initiating a suspension or extending an officer's probation. We believe suspension and probation are issues best handled at the local level. Senator Conway's amendment makes some incremental changes that we support, but with more time the policy could have been much better.

Thank you for your continued work on this important issue. We remain committed to doing the hard and important work with you so we can effectively represent our workers in public safety that serve our communities.

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Matt Zuvich – Washington Federation of State Employees

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