

April 22, 2020

Representative J.T. Wilcox
House Minority Leader
Legislative Building, 335C
PO BOX 40600
Olympia, Washington 98504

DELIVERED via EMAIL

RE: Comments Attributed to Representative Sutherland in Seattle Times Article

Dear Leader Wilcox:

We appreciate your continued work with the Governor and majority party to develop a plan to lessen the current restrictions and to clarify the intent of the existing stay home order. These are challenging times that generate fear in many residents. We rely on our local and state elected representatives to work with us in keeping our communities safe.

On Sunday, April 19, 2020, a rally was held on the State Capital grounds regarding the Governor's stay at home order. In a Seattle Times article (April 20, 2020) titled "[Demonstrators rally in Olympia against Washington's coronavirus stay-at-home order](#)" Representative Sutherland is quoted with several troubling statements. If accurate, these statements are very serious, and nothing short of a call to arms against law enforcement.

Now, more than ever, law enforcement needs the outspoken support of elected officials. Residents need to know that peace officers are carrying out the wishes of our leaders and should not be considered the enemy. To help maintain the safety of citizens and those who help protect them, elected officials should emphasize a united message of confidence, calm, and the necessity of good citizenry. Peace officers work to ensure everyone has the free access to advocate for their rights, including free speech, assembly, and to bear arms. That said, it would be a tragedy of epic proportion if a peace officer were to have to fend off an act of aggression incited by the words of an elected official.

We respect and care about our relationship with you, and your caucus. Peace Officers are the protectors in our communities and deserve your support. We have asked the Governor's office to ensure access to more COVID-19 testing and expedited test processing but have seen little improvement. We look to you and your caucus to champion the essential needs of our State's first responders.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration. I look forward to discussing this with you soon.

Sincerely,



Teresa Taylor
Executive Director