



# KITSAP COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

*Efficient, accessible and effective county services*

February 1, 2022

Dear local legislator:

**Robert Gelder**  
DISTRICT 1

**Charlotte Garrido**  
DISTRICT 2

**Edward E. Wolfe**  
DISTRICT 3

We are collectively writing to you today to ask for your support on Senate Bill (SB) 5919 – “concerning the standard for law enforcement authority to detain or pursue persons”. We strongly support this bill which was introduced with bi-partisan support including Senator Emily Randall who represents Kitsap County.

Recently enacted police reforms laws required modification. This is something that local law enforcement, local government leaders and citizens agree. The recent Attorney General’s Opinion (AGO 2022 No.1) highlighted ambiguity contained in E2SHB 1310 and reinforced the need for changes. SB 5919 provides:

- a usable and clear definition of use of force that matches what is already being trained by the Criminal Justice Training Commission;
- makes clear the ability to stop a person who chooses to flee from a lawful detention, aligning with the standard that the U.S. Supreme Court has used for the last five decades;
- provides a strong requirement to balance any vehicle pursuit with the risks it creates for the public, while not requiring a wholesale prohibition that has led to daily occurrences suspects not stopping because of the impression that police can do nothing; and,
- provides clarity and support so officers know what is expected of them while maintaining standards for accountability which is consistent with the goals of the 2021 reform measures.

This bill keeps the foundational elements of recent reforms, such as the reasonable duty of care and de-escalation training and gives officers the tools to get people the help they need and provide justice for victims. We collectively agree that police should be held to the highest professional standards, but also need to insist that they be given appropriate tools to do their jobs and that rules and standards for accountability must be clear and achievable.

Our number one goal is to protect our communities and serve our citizens in a manner that is appropriate, fair and just. We believe that SB 5919 provides critical support to our law enforcement agencies in carrying out their vital missions.

We urge you to support this legislation and support your local communities.

Sincerely,

Edward E. Wolfe  
Chair, District 3

Charlotte Garrido  
Commissioner, District 2

Robert Gelder  
Commissioner, District 1

John Gese  
Sheriff