

From: [Newman, Douglas](#)
To: [Leavitt, Rep. Mari](#); Dan.Bronoske@leg.wa.gov
Cc: [Ronald Frederick](#); [Andy Takata](#)
Subject: DuPont Police: Support for HB 2037 and SB 5919
Date: Thursday, March 3, 2022 7:33:53 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
Importance: High

Good Evening Representatives Bronoske and Leavitt:

I hope this email finds you and your respective staff members well. I know you are both very busy during this legislative session. I am also aware that many of our colleagues have contacted you regarding bills which have a direct nexus to police operations, public safety and the ability (or lack thereof) to protect communities and crime victims. It is probably no surprise that I agree with the concerns of my fellow law enforcement leaders, and support the views expressed by the Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs (WASPC).

As you consider your respective positions on HB 2037 (Reasonable Suspicion detentions) and SB 5919 (Reasonable Suspicion-based pursuits), I respectfully request that you take the following under advisement – especially when examining SB 5919.

In short, the current law on vehicular pursuits is too restrictive, and a balanced version of SB 5919 needs to be passed. We (law enforcement) have the same concern that well intended law makers possess: *vehicle pursuits are one of the most dangerous actions police officers can engage in.* There needs to be a clear decision-making process for initiating vehicle pursuits. The care of the community mandates that we balance the pursuit of a criminal suspect with the unintended consequences of hurting the uninvolved and innocent. While pursuit policies vary from agency to agency, existing police industry standards and best practices already provide very restrictive pursuit policies.

The problem with a blanket “one size fits all” law is that there is now absolutely no ambiguity in the mind of the criminal. The result is an emboldened criminal, and a community that is less safe because they (the criminals) knows there will be no consequences to their victimization. They are now aware, without a doubt, that they can elude and escape justice. If we trust our police officers to carry a firearm, and use their training and judgment to use that lethal weapon only under certain circumstances, why can we not trust them to use their training and judgement when engaging in a pursuit?

In DuPont alone – a city with a small police department and a population just over 10,000 - since July 2021, we have experienced an average of more than one vehicle “failure to yield” per week when my officers attempt a traffic stop in an effort to protect this community. Close to half of all of these incidents involved stolen vehicles. Many of them have been involved in other crimes, such as burglary and robbery. I cannot compare the “failure to yield” incidents where vehicles run from my officers before July 2021 because they occurred so infrequently, we were never tracked that data. Furthermore, within a 111 day period (01 October 2021 to 19 January 2022), DuPont experienced an 87% rise in motor vehicle thefts when compared to the same 111 day period the year before (10/01/2020 to 01/19/2021). Our overall calls for service have also increased by 48% from 2019 to 2021 (4721 to 9026 calls our officers have completed).

I do not take this topic lightly. I **deeply appreciate** the legitimate concern for the public in which the more restrictive vehicle pursuit laws were created. I do so as a Police Chief who bears the ultimate responsibility for every action within my department. But, I can tell you from my own personal, very painful experience – I also appreciate this sensitive matter as a police officer who has been involved in a tragic, on-duty, fatal vehicle collision.

Absolutely no police officer wants the anguish, trauma and grief of being involved in such a horrific situation, which unintentionally causes pain and loss. I know firsthand, and truly

understand the concern. However, I also have a responsibility to ensure my officers are provided the necessary environment to protect the City of DuPont from further victimization.

You both have graciously taken time to meet with and talk to police leadership within the 28th District – including me. You are both very well respected amongst your colleagues. I strongly urge you to use your influence to express your support for improved vehicular pursuit and reasonable-suspicion based detention laws. Such improved laws should be balanced, but also allow for the individual jurisdictions to set restrictions that protect the innocent. I ask that you encourage your fellow lawmakers to support laws that will allow good, ethical, well-trained, appropriately supervised police officers to apprehend criminals - utilizing training based in sound legal precedents, rooted in existing constitutional fundamentals, sound judgment, and legally defensible procedures authorized by our respective communities.

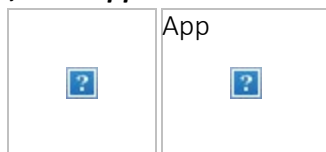
Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns. Thank you in advance for your care and attention regarding this matter.

Very respectfully,

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