



OFFICE OF
GARY SIMPSON

KITSAP COUNTY SHERIFF

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Dear Editor:

With the November 6th election right around the corner, I want to offer insights as to the impacts I-940 and I-1639 will have on local and all Washington state law enforcement. Having listened to several debates and evaluations of both measures' printed text, I am opposed to both initiatives and encourage you to vote "NO" on each initiative.

Voting "NO" on I-940 allows law enforcement, advocates and legislators time to approve a better law which will ensure a new standard for the policy and training on the use of force while building public trust in our community and across Washington State.

After the legislature passed a bill that was accepted by everyone, a court case regarding the process (not the policy) put the original I-940 on the fall ballot - an outcome neither side wanted. The proponents of I-940, understandably, support the initiative. Law enforcement groups, also understandably, oppose the language of I-940 as written. However, both sides that worked on the agreement want our clarified language to become law regardless of the outcome of the election.

As a law enforcement officer, I have seen the critical need to continue talking and coming together to cooperate, respect, and acknowledge all perspectives. I have always believed that 'public safety' is a community responsibility which included the need for public involvement. Law enforcement is saying we should not trade one problematic deadly force standard for another. We have worked together to develop language that works. We should celebrate this renewed relationship which will provide improved practices and better policy. Public safety is too important to let this get caught up in divisive rhetoric.

Washington State can set an example for our divided nation by coming together on polarizing issues. I encourage my fellow Kitsap County neighbors to vote "NO" on I-940 and then make sure our legislators know we want a stronger and better law in the 2019 session.

I also ask that you join me in voting "NO" on I-1639. The expected outcome of this initiative is well intended, however there are numerous aspects of this initiative which are essentially impossible for law enforcement to appropriately respond to. As the executive law enforcement officer for Kitsap County, I question whether our office can meet the expectations of this measure as written. Along with my colleagues of the Washington State Sheriff's Association, we are elected by the voters of each of our counties to enforce these provisions, yet we have not been involved or provided any input into the initiative or the policies created by its text. As your elected law enforcement officials, we believe we should play a critical role in any process involved in proposing changes to firearms legislation. This initiative places a greater burden on law-abiding citizens and law enforcement while creating no additional accountability for criminals. Please join me in voting "NO" on I-1639.

Sincerely,

Gary Simpson,
Kitsap County Sheriff

