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March 17, 2026

The Honorable Bob Ferguson  
Governor of Washington  
416 Sid Snyder Ave SW # 220  
Olympia, WA 98501

**Re: Requesting Gubernatorial Vetoes of SSB 5855, ESSB 5925, Sections 4 and 11 of ESSB 6002, Sections 9, 11, and 12 of 2SSB 5974, and E2SHB 2034**

Dear Governor Ferguson,

The Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs (WACOPS) respectfully requests that you veto SSB 5855, ESSB 5925, Sections 4 and 11 of ESSB 6002, Sections 9, 11, and 12 of 2SSB 5974, and E2SHB 2034. These five bills, taken together, represent significant and unwarranted burdens on Washington's law enforcement officers and the agencies that support them — and we urge you to stand with the men and women who serve this state by declining to sign them into law.

Washington's peace officers are navigating one of the most challenging environments in the state's history. The most recent [WASPC data](#) confirms that Washington continues to rank last in police staffing per capita as it has for the last 15 consecutive years. In this context, legislation that imposes additional burdens on officers and agencies without a clear, meaningful public safety benefit makes it harder to recruit and retain the officers our communities depend on. We respectfully ask that you consider the following bills and the impact each would have on both those who serve and our state's residents.

**SSB 5855 – Concerning the Use of Face Coverings by Law Enforcement Officers**

WACOPS respectfully requests a veto of SSB 5855. This bill was introduced in response to public concern regarding recent federal immigration enforcement actions occurring across the country — yet as passed, it does not apply to those federal officers. Instead, this bill will give false hope to the public and its requirements will fall squarely on Washington's local and state officers, who were not the source of the concern this legislation sought to address in the first place.

Every officer in Washington is already required by law to wear clear identification — the only verifiable means of identifying an officer in the field. And, if an officer does not comply with these requirements, we have robust accountability measures in place to address this. Furthermore, in accordance with the [Keep Washington Working Act](#), local law enforcement in our state does not conduct civil immigration enforcement. This bill conflates our local officers with federal officers, and therefore only undermines community trust further.

WACOPS engaged in good faith with the legislature and the bill's sponsors throughout this session, and while a few amendments were made which we

appreciate, the bill as passed will still expose officers to unjustified complaints when wearing protective equipment to maintain their health and safety while performing their duties.

Washington's officers have long borne unwarranted criticism for the actions of others in jurisdictions that are not our own. SSB 5855 will not stop the actions that sparked public concern, but it will create new burdens for officers who are simply doing their jobs. This will have a chilling effect on our profession and only serve to worsen Washington's historic police staffing crisis by driving away officers who will be reticent to perform their duties in fear of being unfairly prosecuted. And beyond that, it will create confusion with your constituents when nothing changes about the way federal agents operate. We urge you to support our officers and veto this bill.

### **ESSB 5925 – Concerning the General Powers and Duties of the Attorney General's Office**

WACOPS respectfully requests a veto of ESSB 5925. Our members are deeply concerned about the expansion of unchecked governmental authority, and this bill embodies that concern. ESSB 5925 authorizes the Attorney General's Office (AGO) to issue civil investigative demands (CIDs) without meeting any burden of proof — no reasonable suspicion, no inquiry justification, no threshold of any kind. This is a significant and troubling departure from our state's well-established standards. Compounding this concern, the bill grants the AGO authority to impose gag-order type restrictions on recipients of these demands — a level of secrecy that no public office should wield unchecked. The AGO already has considerable power to demand discovery and compel production through ordinary civil processes, which provides appropriate checks and balances. ESSB 5925 bypasses those safeguards.

We raised these concerns throughout the legislative process without achieving the protection necessary to prevent abuse. Power left unchecked, without reasonable restriction, poses a serious risk to all institutions and individuals it touches. We urge you to veto this bill in its entirety.

### **ESSB 6002 – Sections 4 and 11: Concerning Automated License Plate Readers**

WACOPS respectfully requests a partial veto of ESSB 6002, specifically Sections 4 and 11. We want to be clear that WACOPS supports the core framework of this bill and the accountability and usage requirements it establishes for automated license plate reader (ALPR) technology. Our concerns are narrow but significant.

Section 4 limits ALPR data retention to 21 days, with limited exceptions. At a time when crime clearance rates are declining across Washington, we cannot afford to strip investigators of the tools they need to solve crimes. Delayed reporting, delayed discovery, and delays in investigative assignment mean officers are often unaware that ALPR data is relevant to a case until well after a 21-day window has closed. Vetoing Section 4 would maintain current retention practices, while preserving the bill's other accountability and usage provisions.

Section 11 creates a one-sided civil remedy which would allow a person claiming injury to recover costs and reasonable attorneys' fees, with no reciprocal protection for agencies that prevail in defending against such claims. This asymmetry invites speculative litigation and places a significant ongoing burden on local governments and law enforcement agencies with little risk to the claimant. The existing right to seek damages for genuine injury is already available through ordinary civil process.

We urge you to veto Sections 4 and 11 while allowing the remainder of ESSB 6002, which we support, to become law.

### **2SSB 5974 – Sections 9, 11, and 12: Concerning the Position of Elected Sheriff**

WACOPS respectfully requests a partial veto of 2SSB 5974, specifically Sections 9, 11, and 12. I want to be clear: our members fully support ensuring that law enforcement leaders are qualified and that we hold these individuals to the highest standards — many provisions of this bill reflect that shared goal. However, Sections 9, 11, and 12 cross an important line by interfering with the constitutionally protected selection process for elected sheriffs.

The position of sheriff is unique in Washington governance: the voters of each county have the right to choose their sheriff based on the qualifications they believe are most important to their community. Our members strongly support this principle of local control and believe any legislative changes to it are contrary to the will of the electorate. These sections would enable a politically appointed commission to usurp the democratic process and expand politically influenced mechanisms for removing an elected official. The current framework of qualification, election, and recall for the position of sheriff — accountability directly to voters — is the appropriate and constitutionally sound process. We urge you to veto Sections 9, 11, and 12 while allowing the remainder of the bill which we support, to become law.

### **E2SHB 2034 – Concerning Termination and Reinstatement of LEOFF Plan 1**

WACOPS respectfully requests a veto of E2SHB 2034. The Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System Plan 1 (LEOFF 1) represents a solemn and constitutionally protected obligation to Washington's officers and firefighters who built careers in public service around the promise of a secure retirement. The Washington Supreme Court recognized this commitment in *Weaver v. Evans* (1972), affirming that active and retired members hold a contractual right to a funded, secure retirement benefit.

This bill terminates LEOFF Plan 1 effective June 30, 2029, and provides for the reversion of surplus trust assets — currently exceeding \$3.3 billion — to the state after actuarially sufficient resources are set aside. While the bill's sponsors assert that benefits will be preserved through a restated plan, our members have serious concerns about the precedent this sets. Terminating the pension plan that formed the foundation of career and retirement decisions for thousands of our state's first responders sends a troubling message about the durability of the state's commitments to its public servants. WACOPS believes Washington must honor both the letter and the spirit of its obligations to those who served under this plan and selflessly put the safety of their communities above their own throughout their career. We urge you to veto this bill and send a message to our state's first responders that Washington is committed to protecting their hard-earned benefits.

In conclusion, WACOPS advocated vigorously throughout this session on behalf of Washington's law enforcement officers, and we are grateful for the opportunity to bring these final concerns to your attention. We are proud of the relationship we have built with your office around our shared commitment to public safety and remain committed to constructive engagement on the important work ahead. We look forward to that continued partnership and collaboration.

Thank you very much for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Teresa Taylor  
Executive Director  
Washington Council of Police and Sheriffs

CC                    Kenneth Martin, Policy Director, The Office of Governor Bob Ferguson  
                         Nathan Olson, Senior Policy Advisor, The Office of Governor Bob Ferguson