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ATTORNEY GENERAL OF WASHINGTON
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July 31, 2018

The Honorable Kim Wyman
ATTN: Jackie Wheeler
PO Box 40229
Olympia, WA 98504-0229

Re: Ballot Title and Explanatory Statement for Initiative 940

Dear Secretary Wyman:

In accordance with RCW 29A.32.040 and RCW 29A.32.070, we supply herewith the Ballot Title and Explanatory Statement for Initiative 940. The ballot title for Initiative 940 was previously established by court order, and is repeated here solely for convenience of reference.

BALLOT TITLE

Statement of Subject: Initiative Measure No. 940 concerns law enforcement.

Concise Description: This measure would require law enforcement to receive violence de-escalation, mental-health, and first-aid training, and provide first-aid; and change standards for use of deadly force, adding a “good faith” standard and independent investigation.

Should this measure be enacted into law? Yes [] No []

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Law as It Presently Exists

State law sets forth when peace officers may use deadly force in carrying out their duties. Peace officers include active police officers, Washington State Patrol officers, and Department of Fish and Wildlife officers with enforcement powers. Under existing law, a peace officer is not criminally liable for using deadly force if the officer acts without malice and with a good faith belief that deadly force is justifiable. The law recognizes certain circumstances where deadly force could be justifiable. For example, it might be justifiable if the force is necessary to overcome resistance. In addition, it might be justifiable if the peace officer believes deadly force is necessary to arrest a suspect who the officer reasonably believes has committed a felony; to prevent escape

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or recapture an escapee from prison or jail; or to suppress a riot involving a deadly weapon. In the situation where a peace officer uses deadly force to arrest a suspect who may have committed a felony, the officer must have probable cause to believe the suspect poses a threat of serious physical harm if not arrested. Evidence that the suspect poses such a threat could include that the suspect has threatened an officer with a weapon, or that there is probable cause to believe the suspect has committed a crime involving threatened or actual serious physical harm. In such cases, deadly force may also be used if necessary to prevent the suspect's escape after a warning has been issued, if possible.

State law also provides for establishment of a Criminal Justice Training Commission (the Commission) to provide programs and set standards for training law enforcement personnel. Every new full-time law enforcement officer must take eight hours of crisis intervention training during their six months at the basic training academy, but there is no requirement that the Commission provide or that officers take any training specifically dealing with violence de-escalation. And while the Commission must develop and make mental health trainings available to law enforcement officers, state law does not require that officers take these trainings.

Existing state law does not contain any provision regarding a law enforcement officer's duty to render or facilitate first aid.

The Effect of the Proposed Measure if Approved

This measure addresses three aspects of law enforcement. First, it addresses when law enforcement officers may use deadly force. Second, it requires de-escalation and mental health training for officers. Third, it requires officers to provide first aid in certain circumstances.

In general, the new measure applies to "law enforcement officers," which includes "law enforcement personnel" and "peace officers." So, like existing law, it applies to active police officers, Washington State Patrol officers, and Department of Fish and Wildlife officers with enforcement powers. But it also applies to reserve officers and volunteers, or any other public employees whose primary function is enforcement of criminal laws.

The measure would change the standard for when a law enforcement officer may justifiably use deadly force. It would adopt a "good faith" standard that permits a law enforcement officer to use deadly force only if: (1) a reasonable law enforcement officer, in light of all the facts and circumstances known to the officer at the time, would have believed that deadly force was necessary to prevent death or serious physical harm to the officer or another person; and (2) the particular officer intended to use deadly force for a lawful purpose and sincerely and in good faith believed that the use of deadly force was warranted under the circumstances. In other words, to determine if the officer acted in "good faith," the new law would examine not only what a particular officer's intentions were, but also what a reasonable officer would have done under the circumstances. The "good faith" test would apply in the specific situations listed under existing law as justifiable uses of deadly force (such as to prevent escape from a prison), but also would

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determine whether an officer's use of deadly force is justifiable in any other potential situation that might arise. An officer who uses deadly force would not be criminally liable only if he or she meets the good faith test.

To help determine whether the good faith test is met, the measure would require an independent investigation any time an officer's use of deadly force results in death or substantial or great bodily harm. The investigation would be done by someone other than the agency whose officer was involved in the use of deadly force. If deadly force is used on a tribal member, the investigation must include consultation with the member's tribe and any appropriate information sharing.

The second change is that beginning in 2019, the measure would require all law enforcement officers in the state to take violence de-escalation and mental health trainings developed by the Criminal Justice Training Commission. All existing law enforcement officers would be required to take both trainings by a date to be set by the Commission, and all new officers would need to take both trainings within fifteen months of starting employment. The initial violence de-escalation training must educate officers on the good faith standard for use of deadly force. In addition to the initial trainings, all law enforcement officers would be required to periodically take continuing violence de-escalation and mental health trainings to practice their skills, update their knowledge and training, and learn about new legal requirements.

The Commission would be required to consult with law enforcement agencies and community stakeholders to come up with a curriculum for the violence de-escalation and mental health trainings, and to set specific training requirements—for example, how many hours the trainings will be and how officers will receive the trainings. In addition, the Commission would set a requirement that officers take the trainings to maintain their certification. The Commission would be required to consider a number of specific subjects to include in the curriculum, including: patrol tactics to avoid escalating situations that lead to violence; alternatives to jail booking, arrests, or citations; implicit and explicit bias, cultural competency, and the historical intersection of race and policing; de-escalation techniques for dealing with people with disabilities and/or behavioral health issues; “shoot/don't shoot” scenario training; alternatives to the use of physical or deadly force so that such force is only used as a last resort; mental health and policing; and using public service, including rendering first aid, to provide more opportunities for positive interactions with the community. For the mental health trainings, the Commission would be allowed to use the existing curriculum it currently offers on mental health and crisis intervention.

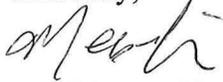
The third change is that the measure would require law enforcement personnel to provide first-aid to save lives, and require the Commission to consult with law enforcement agencies to adopt guidelines for implementing this duty. The guidelines must establish first aid training requirements; assist agencies and law enforcement officers in balancing competing public health and safety duties; and establish that law enforcement officers have a paramount duty to preserve the life of persons they come into contact with, including providing or facilitating first aid as early as possible.

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The Commission may adopt any rules required to carry out the objectives of the measure, and if it does adopt rules it must seek input from the Attorney General, law enforcement agencies, tribes, and community stakeholders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Megan D. Lin".

MEGAN D. LIN
Assistant Attorney General
(360) 664-2510