



Office of the County Council

Office of the County Executive



February 11, 2022

The Honorable [First Name] [Last Name]
[Office Address]
PO Box [Number]
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear [Senator or Representative] [Last Name]:

[I or We] write to strongly urge your support for adjustments to last year's HB 1310 so that police can pursue suspects and use reasonable force in more circumstances.

Like many jurisdictions, Pierce County has experienced significant increases in criminal activity since the Legislature adjourned last year. At the same time, our Sheriff's deputies have been forced to stand by as suspected criminals flee or someone suffers a mental health crisis. [I've or We've] heard from our Sheriff's deputies how dangerous and demoralizing it is to be prevented from doing more to protect our communities. Many of them are, frankly, reconsidering whether they can continue to serve.

Please support revisions to:

1. Clearly and concisely define "physical force." A uniform definition would reduce confusion and provide consistency across agencies.
2. Allow vehicular pursuit whenever it is not more dangerous than the offense for which the vehicle is being pursued. Under current law, criminals have quickly learned it is both easier and more advantageous to flee than wait to be arrested.
3. Expressly authorize investigative detentions (*Terry stops*) under reasonable suspicion. Officers routinely need to have individuals remain at a crime scene to sort out circumstances and develop cause to make an arrest, if appropriate.
4. Permit use of force when a law enforcement officer reasonably suspects an individual possesses a firearm or dangerous weapon. These situations pose significant risk to the responding officers, bystanders, and the suspect themselves should a weapon be displayed or used during an encounter with police.

Thank you for your consideration of these changes. The Pierce County delegation has a long tradition of working together to address the region's most vexing challenges, and [I am or we are] confident with careful refinement we can achieve the aims of HB 1310 while providing law enforcement officers with the appropriate tools to effectively protect and serve.

Please do not hesitate to contact [me or us] should you wish to discuss these matters further.

Sincerely,

Bruce Dammeier
Pierce County Executive

[First Name] [Last Name]
Councilmember, District [#]