



Okanogan County
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Okanogan County Prosecuting Attorney Statement on SB 5974

As the elected Okanogan County Prosecuting Attorney, I am in full support of the Washington State Sheriff's Association, the Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens, and Ferry County Sheriffs who have filed complaints against the State of Washington, the State Legislature, and the Governor, and other State agencies because SB 5974 will have the following impacts:

- **Constitutional Concerns:** the bill shifts power from local voters to an unelected state commission (the Criminal Justice Training Commission or CJTC). This state-level, governor-appointed body could override the will of the local voters who elected the sheriff, which is a key issue in the lawsuit challenging the legislation.
- **Suppresses the will of the people:** the bill, which sets new, stricter eligibility standards for sheriff candidates, effectively "cancels and excludes" the voice of voters by restricting who can run for office and allowing state-appointed officials to decide if a sheriff can remain in office.
- **Another Unfunded Mandate:** Counties would have to foot the bill for background checks to determine whether the candidate meets eligibility requirements at a time when local governments are struggling with limited resources to meet its basic obligations of public safety.

The people under the Washington State Constitution have the power to remove an elected official by democratic means: either by recall or by election. SB 5974 empowers an unelected state commission appointed by a highly partisan Governor the means to remove a duly elected Sheriff and subvert the will of the people.

For these reasons, I support the efforts of Washington State Sheriff's legal efforts to challenge and overturn SB 5974 because it is inherently unconstitutional.

Albert Lin

Okanogan County Prosecuting Attorney