



March 5, 2019

**The Honorable Timm Ormsby
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
House of Representatives
315 John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA 98504**

RE: Support funding for Criminal Justice Training Commission basic training programs

Dear Representative Ormsby,

We are writing to urge that you fully fund the Criminal Justice Training Commission's Basic Law Enforcement Academy (BLEA), Corrections' Officer Academy, and Equivalency Academy training-class requests in your 2019-21 operating budget proposal. Our state's nationally recognized training programs are more important than ever for preparing our law enforcement officers to do community-based policing work in our local communities.

We strongly support the agency's request for a "base budget" level of 19 BLEA classes for each fiscal year in the 2019-21 biennium. This would establish a more realistic maintenance-level number for budget planning purposes.

The base level of funding for a total of 10 BLEA classes has been too low to keep up with the demand since 2013. This limit required CJTC to make supplemental funding requests five years in a row, leaving the legislature feeling like we "fixed" the problem only to have the CJTC back the next session asking for additional supplemental funding. The necessary "fix" is to raise the base level of funding to cover the needed 19 classes per year. Currently, BLEA receives 540 applications a year. With the base funding set at 10 classes and classes limited to 30 students, the CJTC cannot meet current demand. There is nothing on the horizon to suggest the level of demand will drop anytime in the foreseeable future and even some signs that it will increase.

We make this urgent request at a time, and in an era, when demand for new officers continues to grow. Population growth, attrition, and increasing officer retirements create an increasing and vital need for certified training programs for newly-hired officers. Demand for training new recruits continues to exceed funded capacity at the academy. The challenges will only get more severe moving forward. According to the Office of the State Actuary, 23.7% of the local law enforcement work force is eligible for retirement. In addition, the definition of policing and first-responder work has grown to include mental health response, homelessness, spikes in opioid use, and more.

The bottleneck at the academy makes it increasingly difficult for our chiefs of police and sheriffs to meet the minimum staffing levels in our growing communities. This leads to fatigue, mandatory overtime, and overworked officers who are not able to make the sound, split-second decisions that are essential to their jobs.

The Basic Law Enforcement Academy is the result of a strong partnership between state and local government. Counties and cities entered into that partnership many years ago by agreeing to provide a portion of local traffic ticket revenue with the state – in exchange for the state’s agreement to assume key law enforcement costs including a training academy that set statewide standards and certification requirements. In 2016 alone, that citation revenue provided over \$22 million to the General Fund. Local governments also pay a 25 percent of the cost of the training course, as well as the cost of ammunition.

This is a good deal for Washington. It is in our state’s interest to continue this partnership and commit to a realistic training budget moving forward.

It is critical that CJTC’s training programs are fully funded in the 2019-21 budget. We urge you to include this funding in your budget to protect public safety, train our law enforcement to the standards we’ve put in place, and honor the partnership between state and local governments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Rep. Shelley Kloba
1st Legislative District



Rep. Tom Dent
13th Legislative District



Rep. Chris Gildon
25th Legislative District



Rep. Drew MacEwen
35th Legislative District



Rep. Roger Goodman
45th Legislative District



Rep. Derek Stanford
1st Legislative District



Rep. Brian Blake
19th Legislative District



Rep. Jake Fey
27th Legislative District



Rep. Eric Pettigrew
37th Legislative District



Rep. Larry Springer
45th Legislative District



Rep. Bob McCaslin
4th Legislative District



Rep. Ed Orcutt
20th Legislative District



Rep. Christine Kilduff
28th Legislative District



Rep. Mike Sells
38th Legislative District



Rep. Vandana Slatter
48th Legislative District



Rep. Mary Dye
9th Legislative District



Rep. Sherry Appleton
23rd Legislative District



Rep. Steve Kirby
29th Legislative District



Rep. My-Linh Thai
41st Legislative District



Rep. Amy Walen
48th Legislative District



Rep. Mike Steele
12th Legislative District



Rep. Mike Chapman
24th Legislative District



Rep. Tina Orwall
33rd Legislative District



Rep. John Lovick
44th Legislative District



Rep. Bill Jenkin
16th Legislative District



Rep. Kelly Chambers
25th Legislative District



Rep. Mia Gregerson
33rd Legislative District



Rep. Jared Mead
44th Legislative District