

Legislative Leadership,

We are writing to urge the Legislature to take action and revise the restrictions of police vehicle pursuits and provide funding to help ensure the public safety needs of our residents.

The Association of Washington Cities (AWC) hears from cities around the state that they have public safety concerns due to an increase in people fleeing from the police. Because of this, AWC selected revising the restrictions on police vehicle pursuits as a 2023 city legislative priority. In AWC's 2022 City Conditions Survey, which includes responses from a diverse and representative group of cities, **62% of cities** said that their community had experienced an increase in the number of people fleeing from the police.

In 2021, AWC was an engaged supporter on many of the police reforms that the Legislature adopted, but we understand that law enforcement is complex and that sometimes legislation needs revising when the impacts become clearer. In the case of the limits adopted on police pursuits, we think revisions are necessary to improve public safety outcomes in our communities.

Right now, too many suspects are simply driving off—sometimes in a dangerous manner—because they believe that they cannot be pursued. This makes our residents feel unsafe. In a recent poll of 500 likely voters from across the state, **79% of residents** indicated their support for revising the restrictions on pursuits to use a reasonable suspicion standard. In that same poll, **86% of residents** said that their highest priority for their city government was public safety and crime reduction.

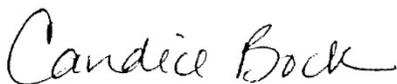
Cities support:

- **HB 1363:** We believe that the bill includes an appropriate balance between providing law enforcement with the tools needed to pursue dangerous suspects, while focusing on appropriate and necessary safety standards.
- **SB 5533:** The bill contains proposals to create a model policy around police pursuits and new grant funding to help police departments implement new technologies for tracking vehicles.
- Continued state funding to help recruit, retain, and train officers.

This is a challenging time for public safety in our communities. We are seeing an unfortunate increase in crime, while our police departments are stretched thin. We need the Legislature's support to adopt appropriate policies—including revisions to pursuit restrictions and funding to help address the public safety needs of our residents. Creating safe communities takes a partnership between state and local leaders.

We are asking for the Legislature's partnership to improve public safety throughout the state.

Sincerely,



Candice Bock
Director of Government Relations