



From: Denis Law <DLaw@Rentonwa.gov>

Sent: Wednesday, September 5, 2018 8:12 AM

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Subject: King County Executive Dow Constantine's Inquest Process Proposal-response letter from SCA Mayors

Importance: High

Dear SCA Mayors,

Executive Dow Constantine formed a review committee to examine the inquest process and issue recommendations for potential reforms. As elected officials we want to respond to Executive

Constantine's inquest process proposal regarding our concerns about fairness/equity and not getting ahead of I-940/SHB 3003. Attached you will find a draft letter for your review. If you would like to add your name along with ours on the letter, **please send your confirmation, electronic signature and city logo to April Alexander (analexander@rentonwa.gov) no later than Monday, 9/10/18.** Once the letter is formatted, "signed" and sent to the Executive, you will receive a copy.

Thank you for consideration.

Denis Law

Mayor, City of Renton



April Alexander

Mayor, City of Kirkland



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(DATE)

The Honorable Dow Constantine
King County Executive
401 5th Ave. Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

RE: Proposal for revising process of King County inquests in use-of-deadly-force circumstances

Dear Executive Constantine:

We are writing as mayors who share your belief in fostering the most open and transparent process possible for inquests that are conducted in the aftermath of deadly use of force. We also want to ensure that process is fair, balanced, and premised on the best science, data, and information available, which leads us to write this letter and ask for further discussion at an elected officials level.

The inquest process, in cases of lethal use of force by law enforcement, is meant to provide an open public forum (conducted by a neutral decision maker) into the facts and circumstances surrounding a death at the hands of law enforcement. These are very serious matters, and we are fortunate in King County, because while all counties in Washington State have the option to hold an inquest, only our county, by charter, requires that one occur.

We are also fortunate that law enforcement in Washington State recognizes that we need now, more than ever before, to have police and the citizens they serve work together to find compromises and solutions on how use of deadly force is evaluated and dealt with. During the 2018 Session of the Legislature in precedent-setting fashion, representatives of law enforcement, De-Escalate Washington, and other organizations came together to enact both Initiative 940 and Substitute House Bill 3003 (SHB 3003) to amend that initiative. I-940/SHB 3003 changed the legal standard for when officers are considered justified in using lethal force, and it established landmark requirements for investigation and training of all sworn officers.

Against that backdrop, we are aware that King County has been reviewing and re-examining its inquest process, has issued a preliminary report (March 2018), and continues to consider updates to the process. While we understand the concept of ensuring that the inquest policy remain up-to-date and relevant, we want to ensure it takes several factors into account:

- We believe that whatever updates are made to the inquest process should first integrate the statutory underpinning of I-940/SHB 3003 and see what, if any, substantive changes should be made based upon the new state law going into effect.
- We believe the inquest process needs to continue to strike a balance in these emotional and difficult cases, so that both families and law enforcement feel their issues and concerns are being heard, represented, and evaluated appropriately. For example, we are being told that the current inquest proposal guarantees families a voice, but does not provide any assurances that decision makers will hear from subject matter and forensics experts. We see these types of assurances as crucial to ensuring that the inquest process strikes a delicate balance and that it is conducted in the most fair, equitable, and information- and data-based manner possible.

For these reasons and others, we ask that you and your office push the pause button on updates to the inquest process and allow more discussions with us as elected officials who are accountable both to the citizens we serve and the law enforcement officers we employ. We believe we have the time to undertake further discussion and do this right, particularly since I-940 has now been placed on the ballot and SHB 3003 amendments are thus on hold.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our concerns and our desire to have forthright discussions with you and key players in your office who are working on updating the inquest process.