



Senate Bill 5974: The Law Enforcement Leaders Bill and Its Impact on local Sheriffs

Presentation to the Spokane City Council Public Safety
and Community Health Committee

Presented by WCPA

**"Sheriffs
Bill"**

**"Law
Enforcement
Leaders Bill"**

**"Senate Bill
5974"**

**These are all names referring
to the same legislation.**

What SB 5974 Does



Creates statewide eligibility requirements for sheriffs, chiefs, and marshals



Requires at least five years of law enforcement experience



Requires certification or certification within nine months



Requires no felony convictions or disqualifying misconduct



Allows removal if certification is lost or requirements are no longer met

Eligibility Requirements



Must be at least 25 years old



Must be a U.S. citizen



Must have a high school diploma or equivalent



Must have five years of full-time law enforcement experience



Must not have conduct that would revoke certification



Changes to Volunteer and Posse Programs

- ✔ **Limits what volunteers can do**
- ✔ **Volunteers cannot enforce criminal law**
- ✔ **Volunteers cannot detain, arrest, or use deadly force**
- ✔ **Impacts rural sheriff posses and reserve programs**

Changes to Volunteer and Posse Programs



**Creates
accountability**



**Holds
sheriffs to the
same
standards as
rank-and-file
officers**



**Prevents
misconduct
by law
enforcement
leaders**



**Improves
public trust**

Why the CJTC Complaint System Matters

- ✓ The Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission first began handling officer certification complaints in 2004
- ✓ At that time, only one staff member was assigned to investigate complaints statewide
- ✓ Critics argued the system was too small to properly investigate misconduct by officers across Washington
- ✓ Senate Bill 5051, passed in 2021, greatly expanded the CJTC's authority and complaint system
- ✓ SB 5051 broadened the grounds for officer decertification and required more reporting of misconduct by agencies
- ✓ Today, the CJTC has a staff of about 21 people dedicated to certification and misconduct cases. Nine of those staff members are investigators.
- ✓ Supporters argue this expansion created a more credible and professional accountability system

Current Status



**Passed
Legislature**



**Signed by
Governor
Bob
Ferguson on
April 1, 2026**



**Effective April
30, 2026**



**Legal
challenges
are already
being filed**

Thank You



*Washington Coalition
for
Police Accountability*