

C1	Appoint Sheriff, Qualifications for Appointment	Hunter	Article 3, Section 3.70
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Voters would give up their right to elect the sheriff and would give that power to the County Executive who would also direct the Sheriffs’ duties. Also makes the Sheriff subject to undefined qualifications as decided by the County Council.

Proposed Amendment to Charter Section:

Article III, Section 3.70 – Sheriff

Section 4.90

Sponsor of Proposal:

Jake Hunter

Brief Summary of Proposal:

This proposal amends the Pierce County Charter to change from an elected sheriff to an appointed sheriff and establishes minimum professional qualifications for the Sheriff, including law enforcement certification and supervisory experience, to ensure that the individual serving as Sheriff possesses the credentials, training, and leadership experience necessary to perform the duties of the office.

Proposed Amendment:

Current Charter Language:

Section 3.70 Sheriff

There is hereby created the executive department of Sheriff. The Sheriff shall be a nonpartisan position, elected by the voters of the County and shall serve full time.

Proposed Amended Charter Language:

Section 3.70 Sheriff

(1) There is hereby created the executive department of Sheriff. ~~The Sheriff shall be a nonpartisan position, elected by the voters of the County~~

and shall serve full time. The Sheriff shall be appointed by the Executive and confirmed by a majority of the Council and shall serve as the chief law enforcement officer of the County. The Council may by Ordinance provide minimum qualifications above and beyond that in law.

Section 4.90 Limitation on Terms of Office

No person shall be allowed to serve in County elective office for more than two consecutive 4-year terms in the same position as a Councilmember or Executive. No person shall be allowed to serve in County elective office for more than three consecutive 4-year terms in the same position **as Sheriff,** Assessor-Treasurer or Auditor. Service as the Assessor-Treasurer or Auditor prior to January 1, 2009, shall be counted as part of such consecutive terms. Establishment of residency in an alternate district will not circumvent this restriction.

Rationale for Amendment:

The Sheriff exercises significant authority over law enforcement, corrections, and public safety operations within Pierce County. Establishing minimum professional qualifications for this office promotes professionalism, accountability, and public trust, and ensures alignment with standards applied to appointed law enforcement leadership positions elsewhere in Washington.

Replaces and supersedes version of C-1 previously submitted 1/29/2026

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*** This amendment originally contained language for qualifications for Sheriff modeling SB [5974](#). It appears the assumption is SB 5974 will survive legal challenges so those have been removed and replaced by giving the County Council unrestricted power to set qualifications was inserted.*

Summary Points

- Voters would relinquish all power over law enforcement to one person. The Executive.
- The Executive is not subject to qualifications. This defeats the stated purpose and merely transfers power from the Sheriff to the Executive centralizing power into one office instead of two.
- The County Charter is not a vehicle for targeting a single elected office.

- If qualifications are necessary, they must be applied uniformly to all elected positions, not selectively.
- Singling out the Sheriff undermines equal treatment under the law.
- The Charter should remain structurally neutral, not politically reactive.
- Voters determine fitness for office - not partisan amendments.
- It is foolish and dangerous to use the Charter to rectify an election that some did not like the results.

Submit written testimony

By Email: katey.hobbs@piercecounitywa.gov

By Web Form: <https://www.piercecounitywa.gov/FormCenter/Charter-Review-41/Provide-Written-Public-Comment-893>

Submitted public testimony

Names in **RED** = CON

Names in **GREEN** = PRO

As of 4-6-26 = **78 CON** ~ **9 PRO**

2-9-26 Packet

From: john@thetruthpage.org <john@thetruthpage.org>

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 4:21 PM

Subject: FW: Amendment C-1

I object to Amendment C-1 as presented by Commissioner Jake Hunter.

The county charter is no place for partisan political maneuvering. This amendment is clearly that. By singling out the Sheriff's office as the only elected position subject to qualifications, the author reveals his motives and raises serious questions about his impartiality. Why no qualifications for Council Members or Executive. No concerns for the Assessor-Treasurer, Auditor or Prosecuting Attorney? Commissioners and their actions should be applied to charter processes that are politically neutral and benefit everyone, not a select group of partisans as this amendment clearly does.

From: Bryan Ashmore <bryan.ashmore@live.com>

Sent: Tuesday, February 3, 2026 6:44 PM

Subject: Elected Sheriff

Dear Members of the Charter Review Commission,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal regarding the removal of Pierce County citizens from the electoral process of selecting a Sheriff.

I find it deeply concerning that the commission would even consider a measure that deprives citizens of their fundamental right to participate in elections. The ability to elect our law enforcement leadership is a vital part of our democratic process, and removing this right is unacceptable.

Regardless of your personal feelings toward the current sitting Sheriff, he was elected by majority vote of the people of this county. There are measures in place to remove him through the Democratic process if you believe he is unfit.

This proposal is nothing more than an embarrassing attempt to force a liberal ideology onto the people of Pierce County and strip them of the protections of an elected Sheriff.

Sincerely,

Bryan Ashmore

Pierce County Resident

From: Carlsson Gordon <carl.gordon@hotmail.com>

Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 9:34 PM

Subject: Sherrifs

This is an elected position and should stay one. The county executive has too much power already. The standards and qualifications should be in job description, the council and

executive can have a say in this department but the charter states that the sherrif is elected and is a representative of the people and a lackey of the executive.

From: George Young <gey1646@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 11:45 AM
Subject: sheriff

Hi

Long-time Gig Harbor resident

Please consider a charter change to appoint our sheriff rather than electing. They are accountable to no one except voters every four years. The past two elected sheriffs have been problematic, to say the least, and have cost the County significant money. We were fortunate to have Paul Pastor serve as elected sheriff for several terms, and he did a great job.

Police chiefs are appointed and can be removed if they perform poorly; why not sheriffs?

Thanks for volunteering for this commission

George Young

2-18-26 Packet

From: Bea <beaone@me.com>
Sent: Friday, February 6, 2026 10:59 AM
Subject: Request for changes to the charter

Dear Representative Lantz:

Thank you for your time and efforts volunteering for the Pierce County Charter Review Commissioner Board.

I write today to ask you to consider changing the Pierce County Charter to appoint our sheriffs rather than electing them. Police chiefs are appointed and can be removed if they perform poorly, I believe that the same should apply to sheriffs – presently they are accountable to no one except voters every four years.

Please consider placing the above on the November 2026 ballot.

Respectfully,

Beatrice Mezei-Rhodes

Gig Harbor, WA 98335

***** Note Mr. Anderson commented on multiple proposed Amendments. The commentary for each will be associated to their specific Amendment *****

From: jonwayne@comcast.net <jonwayne@comcast.net>

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 11:20 AM

Subject: Charter Review Proposed Amendments

Mr. Fletcher,

I am writing as a concerned Pierce County resident to strongly oppose the proposed amendments C-1 through C-5, as outlined in the February 9th packet (particularly the chart on page 93 and detailed proposals on pages 94–104). These changes appear designed to undermine the elected Sheriff's independence, dilute voter authority, inject controversial state policies into our local Charter, and shift power away from democratic processes toward executive or unelected control.

1. **Amendment C-1 (Article III, Section 3.70 – Sheriff):** This amendment inserts language mirroring SB 5974, imposing new qualifications on the Sheriff. While professional standards for law enforcement are important, embedding state-level mandates into our County Charter risks overriding voter choice in electing our chief law enforcement officer. Sheriffs are constitutional officers accountable directly to the people through elections—not to state boards or unelected bodies. This change could enable removal or disqualification based on external criteria, eroding local democratic control. I oppose any effort to limit who voters can choose for this critical role.
2. **Amendment C-2 (Section 1.20 – Intergovernmental Relations):** This proposal seeks to embed principles from the Keep Washington Working Act into the Charter, which limits local cooperation with federal immigration enforcement and has been criticized for prioritizing non-enforcement over public safety and federal law compliance. Our Charter should not be used to lock in one-sided immigration policies that could hinder law enforcement's ability to address serious crimes or coordinate with federal authorities when necessary. Pierce County residents deserve Charter language that supports impartial, safety-focused governance— not ideological restrictions on intergovernmental cooperation.
3. **Amendment C-3 (Article 4, Section 4.7 – Grounds for Removal):** This amendment adds specific grounds for removal from office, seemingly targeted at the Sheriff, while allowing the County Executive to appoint a replacement. Creating tailored removal mechanisms for an elected official circumvents established processes like recall elections or judicial removal. It concentrates too much power in the Executive

branch and threatens the separation of powers. Voters, not the Executive, should hold elected officials accountable.

4. **Amendment C-4 (Article 4, Section 4.7 – Vacancies):** By imposing strict timelines and processes for filling vacancies in partisan offices, this change strips political parties of their traditional role in appointments when seats are vacated mid-term. This could disenfranchise voters who elected officials under a party banner and opens the door to manipulation if minor procedural errors occur. Maintaining party input ensures continuity and respects the partisan nature of these offices as chosen by voters.

5. **Amendment C-5 (Article 4, Section 4.7 – Vacancies/Executive Control):** This proposal grants the Executive direct control over the Sheriff upon any accusation—without due process or voter input. This is an alarming power grab that could paralyze the Sheriff's office based on unproven claims, undermining law enforcement stability and independence. Accusations alone should never trigger executive takeover of an elected constitutional office.

These amendments weaken the elected Sheriff's authority, reduce voter influence, import divisive state policies, and shift power to the Executive branch. The Charter should protect democratic accountability, local control, and the separation of powers—not erode them. I urge the Commission to reject C-1 through C-5 in their entirety and preserve the current structure that ensures the Sheriff remains directly accountable to Pierce County voters.

Thank you for considering public input.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Anderson
9005 19th Ave E Tacoma, WA 98445
Pierce County Resident

From: Kristy Gledhill <kg.antiracistproject@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, February 6, 2026 5:38 PM

Subject: Proposal re sheriff - from Kristy Gledhill

Brenda, Martha and Justin, hello,

First, thank you, all three of you, for your courage and resolve in taking this volunteer position to help shape our county charter. I understand some of what you're facing and I just want to express my gratitude.

In that spirit of gratitude, I want to offer my help as a resident of Gig Harbor (unincorporated Pierce County) who is connected to groups of people (LD26, Indivisible GH and more) across the county who stand ready to help you do your job. Please reach out if I can ever be of assistance. I'd love to actually have a conversation with one or more of you about what you need from residents so that I can take that information to my friends and colleagues.

Last thing: I know that the appoint/elect question regarding the sheriff is one of many things you will consider as charter review members. And it may be the most contentious. It is certainly one that I care about. I've been working with a team of Pierce County residents to dig into public records requests to try to keep Swank accountable and expose some of his worst behavior.

So please let me just put this out there: Our elected sheriff now is completely untouchable and unaccountable to anyone but the voters. But my comrades and I have realized that a recall would be prohibitively costly, time-consuming, and a long shot. Swank is not accountable to the council or the executive, and came into office last year in a combative stance against them, as well as against the prosecutor and anyone else he identified as a "libtard."

Here's what I think we need: An appointed sheriff, hired according to criteria and following a process that includes community input. Ongoing accountability and "guardrails" that include community oversight is also imperative, as is some sort of ombuds position that could field community complaints and concerns about the sheriff. As it is, as residents we have no recourse when we have legitimate, tangible complaints against his office or against him personally.

I have heard that there is a form for residents to complete to register their concerns and proposals for the charter review committee. I have not been able to find such a form. If there is one, please let me know and I'll happily fill it out.

Again, thanks for all you do, and are about to do. And please reach out if I can help.

Sincerely,

Kristy Gledhill
206-375-7503

From: Laurie Layne <laurielayne1@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, February 9, 2026 9:11 AM

Subject: Sheriff C-1 Support of SB 5974

I'm against this amendment as it supports SB 5974. We now elect our sheriff. And can hold him accountable to us. This seeks to have him accountable to others and at their mercy! I have personally been quite alarmed at how Sheriff Swank has been treated

by some governmental officials. Since we have elected him and can vett him as voters. That should still stay that way! As voters it seems we are being removed from this process. This is unacceptable to me. Our Sheriff deserves better than this honestly and so do we. Thank you.

Susan Johnson

2307 8th Ave Milton WA 98354

pacificnorthwest2015@outlook.com

I understand there is a move to remove the Pierce County Sheriff position from an elected position to an appointed position by the PC Council. I am against any Pierce County Council appointing the County Sheriff. And yes, I understand at the local level, such as Milton, the Police Chief is appointed. However, at the county level, I disagree with this thought of having the sheriff appointed.

2-23-26 Packet

Corwyn Hopke

9120 170th St Ct. East

Puyallup WA 98375

chopke@gmail.com

Date: Sunday, February 15, 2026 4:12:02 PM

I strongly oppose the proposals to end the democratic process in regards to any elected position, including sheriff. Law enforcement should not be political pawns. By electing our sheriff, local enforcement becomes accountable to the entire population instead of just the political winds of the day.

In this era of massive concern over protecting democracy, the last thing anyone should support is literally killing democracy.

Jacob Hansen

Roy WA 98580

jacob.hansen.work@gmail.com

Date: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 12:16:23 PM

There is hereby created the executive department of Sheriff. The Sheriff shall be a nonpartisan position, elected by the voters of the County and shall serve full time. (Amendment No. 28 proposed by Ordinance No. 2007-18, Approved November 6, 2007; Amendment No. 19, Approved November 7, 2006; Originally Adopted November 4, 1980). - Section 3.70 of the current charter.

The amendment proposed to alter this position specifically states that if a Sheriff is "nonpartisan" that they may be removed and replaced with an APPOINTED Sheriff. The Sheriff SHALL be nonpartisan according to the original charter and ELECTED by the voters. The position of Sheriff is a crucial position to the rule of law. To not only enforce the law of the state "as the elected Sheriff deems necessary," but to more importantly protect the people of the state, and prevent loss of life. By using the legally skewing wording of NONPARTISAN and SHALL BE APPOINTED, the proposed amendment not only subverts the original charter in a bid to gain power and push unconstitutional law through out the state, but it misdirects the trust of the people. To have an elected Sheriff, part of the community, to protect and serve. Builds the trust, loyalty, and honorable intentions of the people. The honor, integrity, and security of this elected position MUST be protected, to retain order among chaos. To reflect the will of the voters, and maintain the security to which the current generations have grown accustomed to. I, and many other law abiding, good willed citizens of Washington State (specifically Pierce County) are AGAINST this amendment.

To preserve the integrity of this office, I propose the following adjustments to the language of the amendment. Strike all language suggesting the Sheriff position may be converted to an "appointed" role based on its nonpartisan status. In the event of a vacancy or the inability of a Sheriff to serve, the Charter should mandate that "an emergency election shall be held, as the new Sheriff shall be elected by the voters of the County." During the period of an emergency election, the Sheriff's duties should be divided among the existing leadership within the department. This prevents the concentration of non elected power in a single individual until the people have lawfully exercised their right to vote.

***** Note Lisa commented on multiple proposed Amendments. The commentary for each will be associated to their specific Amendment *****

From: Lisa Sauve <lisa98446@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2026 7:37 AM
Subject: 6 Amendments up for review at this weeks meeting

Dear Katey,

I would like my position to be registered as noted below on the 6 amendments up for review at this week's Charter Review meeting.

Amendment C-1

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: Voters determine fitness for office - not partisan amendments. Also, singling out the Sheriff undermines equal treatment under the law.

Amendment C-2

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: The Charter is a framework for governance, not a platform for ideological statements. Intergovernmental coordination must respect federalism and constitutional hierarchy.

Amendment C-3

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment expands removal authority beyond the constitutional presumption of innocence and it undermines voter sovereignty by bypassing electoral accountability.

Amendment C-4

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment weakens party authority in offices explicitly chosen through partisan elections. It also disregards the will of voters who selected a candidate aligned with a party.

Amendment C-5

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment undermines separation of powers within county government and it subverts the will of voters who elected the Sheriff.

Amendment C-6

I oppose this amendment for the following reasons: This amendment the Charter derives authority from the electorate - citizens and legal voters and foundational documents must use exact legal language.

Thank you for recording my opposition to these Amendments. Please leave our elected Sheriff alone. He is doing his job and he is doing it well!

Sincerely,

Lisa Sauve

From: Stacie Snuffin <staciesnuffin@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 7:33 PM

Subject: Subject: Governance and Ethics Concern Regarding Charter Review Process

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting this comment to raise a process-based ethics and governance concern, not a personal allegation, regarding the work of the Pierce County Charter Review Commission.

Charter Review Commissioners are entrusted with reviewing the foundational structure of county government on behalf of voters. Because the Charter determines how power is exercised and how voters retain oversight, public confidence in the neutrality and independence of the review process is essential.

Some proposed amendments currently under consideration would significantly centralize authority, including shifting elected offices to appointed positions and expanding executive control. When commissioners also hold professional roles in policy or advocacy organizations that routinely engage with centralized administrative systems, it is reasonable for members of the public to ask whether those perspectives could influence charter recommendations, even unintentionally.

I am not alleging misconduct or unlawful behavior. However, good governance requires not only the absence of actual conflicts of interest, but also careful attention to the appearance of impartiality. Transparency through disclosure and, where appropriate, recusal helps preserve public trust in the Charter Review process.

I respectfully urge the Commission to reaffirm its commitment to neutrality, voter accountability, and transparency, particularly when evaluating proposals that alter the balance of power between elected officials and the public.

This comment is submitted in the interest of maintaining public confidence in the Charter Review process and ensuring that all recommendations clearly reflect the will and authority of Pierce County voters.

Best regards,

Stacie Snuffin

Stacie Snuffin

7808 66th Ave Ct NW

Gig Harbor WA 98335

staciesnuffin@gmail.com

Date: Wednesday, February 18, 2026 5:25:28 PM

I submit this comment in strong opposition to Amendment Tracking No. C-1, which proposes converting the Pierce County Sheriff from an elected office to an appointed position.

Under the current Pierce County Charter, the Sheriff is elected by the voters and accountable directly to the public. This amendment would remove that accountability by transferring appointment authority to the County Executive, with confirmation by the Council. This change eliminates the public's ability to choose their chief law enforcement officer and concentrates power within the Executive branch.

The Sheriff exercises significant authority over law enforcement, corrections, and public safety. That authority has historically been balanced by direct voter oversight. Replacing an elected Sheriff with an appointed one undermines that independence and creates political dependency on the same officials the Sheriff may be required to challenge.

The rationale offered — establishing professional qualifications — does not justify removing an election. Washington State

already imposes certification, training, and professional standards on law enforcement officers. Additional qualifications could be addressed without stripping voters of their right to elect the Sheriff.

Charter review should improve governance while preserving democratic accountability. This proposal does the opposite. For these reasons, I urge the Pierce County Charter Review Commission to reject Amendment C-1 and retain the elected Sheriff as provided in the Charter.

***** Note Mr. Haskins commented on multiple proposed Amendments. The commentary for each will be associated to their specific Amendment *****

Mark Haskins

haskinsmark@hotmail.com

Date: Sunday, February 22, 2026 7:49:07 PM

After attending a District 6 listening forum recently, I have a better understanding of the important work of the Charter Commission, as well as some of the amendments that are being proposed to our County Charter. I am taking the time to make comments because I was dismayed by two apparently popular proposals in particular that reflect a shortsighted and highly partisan response to the current political climate, rather than a thoughtful approach to a charter that facilitates an efficient and effective operation of Pierce County FOR THE NEXT 10 YEARS.

1. **First, I strongly opposed a change to the charter that would make the County Sheriff an appointed official versus an elected one.** It is actually shocking that we would consider such a change that so obviously erodes the democratic process in the county. The reason that 95% of sheriffs nationwide are elected is so that they are accountable to the people: ALL the people, directly, not through some faceless bureaucracy chosen for their ideological homogeneity. If the people are unhappy with their choice, they can elect someone else during the next cycle. If there are legitimate, LEGAL reasons for removing a sheriff during their term (as opposed to ideological ones), there is a process to do that. Arguably, the fact that our current sheriff was elected by a majority of voters in a county that leans heavily in a different ideological direction is indicative of one thing on which a MAJORITY of Pierce County voters agreed: public safety had been allowed to deteriorate to an unacceptable level. (Even our legislature had to respond, as evidenced by their amending of the "no pursuit" law.). The people should be able to elect a sheriff that serves their priorities, especially public safety, which is perhaps the primary function of government. To remove this voice from the people should be appalling to any American.
2. Similarly, it is shortsighted and dangerous to amend the charter to allow our county to selectively withhold support to federal agencies: I strongly oppose this as well. As a minimum, it limits our insight and ability to influence their activities within the county. At worst, it politicizes the relationship, which could result in federal

funding impacts to our county. Considering our proximity to a volcano and major fault line, I want the federal government under any administration to be there for us in the event of a natural disaster. I am unimpressed by the newly minted constitutional "scholars" who are now waving the 10th Amendment in our faces: It does not apply in matters under federal jurisdiction, such as federal immigration law.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of these important matters. I am putting my trust and faith in you to carry out your charter, avoid allowing this process to be hijacked by those looking at the charter through a soda straw of current events, and help us produce a charter that will meet the needs of Pierce County for the next 10 years.

Barbara Smith

kenbarb828@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 8:34:17 AM

I ask you to preserve the office of Pierce County Sheriff by retaining it as an elected position. The Sheriff serves the people of his/her county directly and is currently accountable to us. By making it an appointed position that Sheriff would be beholden to the will of one council/political party. That is not right. One political party already has a stranglehold on this state. We need our Sheriff to be free of that.

Beryl Emberson-Nash

berylbonash@aol.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 8:22:32 PM

Please give us "the people" a choice for voting for our "elected" Officials. Especially our Sherriff

Chris Camire

pcotwofive217@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 8:00:39 AM

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in opposition to this legislation.

At its core, this proposal alters the constitutional structure of the Office of Sheriff in Washington State. The Sheriff is a constitutional officer directly elected by the people. That independence is not accidental—it is a deliberate structural safeguard rooted in separation of powers and local accountability.

While individual counties may have authority to determine certain aspects of local governance consistent with the Constitution, the Legislature does not have authority to subordinate a constitutional office to the discretionary control of an unelected commission or executive official. This bill moves in that direction.

1. Conditioning a Constitutional Office on Certification

The legislation would require a sitting Sheriff to obtain and maintain certification from the Criminal Justice Training Commission. Failure to obtain or maintain that certification would automatically create a vacancy in the office.

This effectively places a constitutional office at the mercy of an unelected body. No other constitutional officer—Governor, State Senator, State Representative, or Judge—is required to receive and maintain certification from an administrative commission as a condition of holding office. Creating such a requirement for Sheriffs undermines the independence of the office and sets a troubling precedent.

2. Mandatory Background Investigations for Candidates

The bill would require candidates for Sheriff to undergo background investigations prior to the election filing deadline. These background standards are designed for employment as a law enforcement officer, not for eligibility to run for public office.

The background review process includes examination of affiliations and social media activity. Conditioning ballot access on review by the Washington State Patrol and verification by the Criminal Justice Training Commission introduces a gatekeeping function that does not currently exist for other elected offices.

Voters—not administrative boards—should determine who is qualified to serve as Sheriff.

3. Removal from Office Through Decertification

The proposal creates an automatic vacancy if a Sheriff is decertified or determined not to meet certification requirements. This grants an unelected commission the power to effectively remove a duly elected constitutional officer outside of the established recall process provided to voters.

Removal of an elected official should occur through the constitutional mechanisms available to the public, not through administrative revocation of certification.

4. Appointment of Replacement by County Executive

If a vacancy is created under these provisions, the county executive or county legislative authority would appoint a replacement. In practice, this shifts power from voters to the executive branch of county government. The Sheriff would no longer be accountable solely to the electorate but could be indirectly controlled through appointment authority.

5. Limiting the Sheriff's Traditional Authority

The bill revises longstanding statutory language recognizing the Sheriff's authority to call upon the public for assistance when necessary. Historically, this authority has existed to allow rapid response in emergencies and preserve public safety.

Replacing this language with cross-references to interagency collaboration statutes narrows the Sheriff's independent authority and risks reducing the office to a department subject to centralized policy control.

6. Broader Impact on Law Enforcement Leadership

The legislation also affects police chiefs and removes certain statutory roles currently recognized in law. These changes collectively centralize authority and diminish locally accountable leadership.

Conclusion

This legislation fundamentally alters the balance between constitutional independence and administrative control. It conditions ballot access on certification approval, permits removal through decertification rather than recall, and shifts replacement authority from voters to executive officials.

The Office of Sheriff exists as a direct link between the people and local law enforcement leadership. Any change that weakens that accountability should be approached with extreme caution.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose this legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Respectfully,

C. Camire

Precinct Committee Officer, 25-217

Cody Ruscheinsky

Codeman.codyr@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 2:48:08 AM

You will be in violation of the U.S Constitution and state constitution of the voting rights act. You don't have the power to remove our elected sheriff. We also have the power to remove you from office during mid terms you decide to go through with. You will also be getting lawsuits.

Elizabeth Smatlak

info@mannavision.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 11:33:38 AM

I am DEEPLY concerned about your consideration of changing means of filling the position of our Pierce County Sheriff from being elected to being appointed. This IS a glaringly obvious POLITICAL move.

This takes the will of the electorate out of consideration and puts the role of the sheriff in the hands of an appointed body where political whims can dictate how our sheriff responds to law enforcement issues. The sheriff should be responsible ONLY to his/her Constitutional duties, defined by State and Federal law, not to the pressure of pleasing the political whims of the those who appointed him/her. This is very a very dangerous and slippery slope.

Do not overstep on this issue. The rights of citizens in WA State are being systematically being eroded. Do not place this additional concern on the citizens of Pierce County.

Thank you, Elizabeth Smatlak

J Breshears

castyourcares2018@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 7:55:33 AM

Our family supports our local sheriff and we demand you stop interfering on our right to vote for Sheriff.

Joey Crunkilton

crunkiltonjoseph@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 9:11:20 AM

The sheriff should be an elected position, not an appointed one. As a Pierce County resident I stand strongly in opposition of what the state is attempting to do here. We support Sheriff Swank.

Jonathan Anderson

jonwayne@comcast.net

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 3:27:22 PM

I urge you to reject any proposal that would change the Sheriff from an elected to an appointed position. Voters restored the elected Sheriff in 2006 with strong support and have reaffirmed it since. Direct elections ensure accountability to the public for this vital law enforcement role. An appointed Sheriff nominated by the Executive and confirmed by Council would reduce transparency and voter power, risking

politicization over merit. Public safety demands democratic oversight. Please preserve Article III, Section 3.70 as is and oppose making the Sheriff appointed.

Thank you for considering this input.

Katherine Martin

1112 Sequalish Street
STELIACOOM Wa 98388

Katherinewelsh82@gmail.com

Date: Friday, February 20, 2026 9:22:56 AM

By not letting the community elect their own leadership, sheriff or other council members takes them out the decision process and is no longer a democratic election. The public should never be denied those choices in their own community. Its people's power to choose not to be "appointed" or forced.

Kristin Haskins

Haskinsky@hotmail.com

Date: Sunday, February 22, 2026 6:31:29 PM

I attended a charter review listening forum yesterday in Steilacoom and I feel the need to register my comments. I am normally very reserved and don't usually engage in public discussion, especially about politics. I felt marginalized and outnumbered and did not feel comfortable speaking with some of the loud critics in the room, but I do want to register my opinions for the record.

I didn't know what issues would be discussed or how I even felt about them, but I can't stop thinking about some of the strong opinions I heard, particularly about the sheriff and cooperation with ICE.

I feel strongly that the office of Pierce County Sheriff should remain an elected position. More that 95% of sheriffs in our nation are elected by the people in order to keep them accountable to the people they serve. If they do a bad job, they won't win next time, just like all of our other elected offices. If they do something criminal, they can be removed for cause. I feel that this call for appointed sheriff is a direct reaction

to a person that some find unpopular for whatever reason. But the fact remains that they were elected by a majority to provide for public safety in response to out of control crime. I think it needs to remain an election so I can have a direct say and not be spoken for by other elected officials that most often are not aligned with my values here in Washington State.

The other issue that concerns me is the discussion to not cooperate with federal agencies. This is obviously a major concern for many right now with the ICE operations in many cities. I feel that the use of the 10th Amendment in the discussion was used incorrectly to justify not cooperating with the Federal Government agencies. I think it is extremely short-sighted and reactionary to encourage a charter Amendment that will limit cooperation with the Federal government. We need to be more collaborative and work to enforce laws and handle natural disasters and pandemics and things we can't even anticipate. There is a dangerous culture of mistrust and it should not be the impetus for major, long-term amendments to our county charter. I appreciate the careful work you are doing and I encourage you to filter out the anger and fear and make choices that serve the well-being of all of the people of Pierce County, even the quiet ones. Thank you.

Marc Christensen

Marcsharonc@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 7:56:40 AM

I most strongly urge you to keep the county sheriff as an elected position.

Sheriff's have unique constitutional and legal roles and responsibilities that no other law enforcement officials have. Because of this, the sheriff must remain directly responsible to the citizens of the county through election.

Renee Brewer

Snowysunsets@yahoo.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 4:50:12 PM

Our sheriff should definitely be an elected position. Being able to vote and have our voice heard is an important part of our government. Additionally sheriff is not just another job to be applied for and interview. It is a critical component to a safe, healthy community.

Robert Balzer

Robertbalzer100@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 6:07:34 AM

The sheriff needs to continue answering to the legal voters!! Full stop!

Scott Berry

straightarrow253@proton.me

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 2:54:17 PM

It is imperative that the office of Sheriff remain an elected position, without interference from the state for county council. Our sheriff is our last line of defense against unconstitutional laws. We the people elect who we want as sheriff.

Scott Nelson

1340 Packwood Ave

DuPont WA 98327

scott.nelson401@gmail.com

Date: Friday, February 20, 2026 9:28:05 AM

The County Sheriff should ALWAYS be elected by the people

and NEVER appointed. I am not sure why our state lawmakers thought that was a good idea. I strongly oppose any movement away from the public electing a County Sherriff.

Shelly Longley

Sllongley28@yahoo.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 7:09:33 PM

I want the Commission to know that I want the right to vote for the Pierce Co Sheriff. This is the people's right, to vote for who they want to be responsible for our safety and wellbeing. This is not a position that any political party should have the right to control. We are not a communist country, state, or city! I'm tired of this state's legislators ignoring the will of the people and choosing to do what they want and thinking that then know what's best for the people, so they feel their decision should override the will of the people because they feel we are too stupid to know what's best for us. Well, we're not all stupid. We choose to elect our sheriff, and we want it to stay that way.

Please listen to the people of Pierce Co! Do the right thing for once and preserve our right to vote for our sheriff! Thank you.

w steve Gillett

gillett7@comcast.net

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 7:15:03 AM

The sheriff should be elected by the citizens of Pierce Co.

William Rowland

billrowland00@gmail.com

Date: Monday, February 23, 2026 7:27:44 AM

It is amazing to see how Pierce County wants to take full control over everything in order to FORCE THEIR WILL. We have seen numerous UNCONSTITUTIONAL laws, policies and ordinances passed. the only law enforcement officer tasked with enforcing constitutional laws is the Sheriff. The Sheriff is the only officer who can

arrest public officials. I contest any change to how our Sheriff is chosen. Current county executive has a history of overreaching actions. No need to give him more power to INFLICT HIS WILL on citizens of Pierce County. What is the county afraid of by letting citizens chose their sheriff? NONE, with execption of CONTROL. WA Constitution Article 1 Section 1 states "All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights." This section says it all - voters are in control in order to protect individual RIGHTS!!!

3-9-26 Packet

Kristen Bridgan-Brown

beautydesigned@hotmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 2, 2026 8:02 PM

Good evening Commissioners,

I appreciate the thoughtful discussion around the structure of the Sheriff's office. I'd like to respond briefly to several of the arguments raised against keeping the Sheriff elected.

First, the claim that sheriff elections are often uncontested or "low information" does not mean elections lack accountability. The possibility of challenge itself constrains behavior. We do not eliminate elections for judges or prosecutors simply because incumbents frequently win. If engagement is low, the solution is greater civic participation, not removing voters from the process altogether. Appointment narrows accountability to a small group. Elections broaden it to the entire county.

Second, concerns about autonomy and conflict with other officials overlook the checks already in place. Sheriffs operate

within state and federal law, under court oversight, subject to civil liability, constrained by county budgets, and reviewed by prosecutors and independent investigations. Disagreement between elected officials is not dysfunction. It is how separation of responsibilities works. The real question is: should law enforcement leadership be accountable to voters, or to a small appointing authority?

Third, regarding history: the office of sheriff originated under appointed authority in England. Colonists intentionally shifted to elections as a safeguard against centralized control. That change reflected a deliberate choice for local accountability.

History here is not accidental tradition; it represents a principle that law enforcement authority should answer directly to the people.

Finally, on stability, qualifications, and diversity. Experience and continuity can be strengths in public safety leadership. Appointment does not eliminate politics, it simply moves decision-making behind closed doors. Voters are fully capable of evaluating credentials and track records. And while representation gaps in the profession are real, changing the selection method alone will not solve them. Expanding recruitment, mentorship, and leadership pipelines is what creates meaningful diversity, not removing the electorate.

At the end of the day, systemic disparities in outcomes are driven by state law, prosecution decisions, court rulings, sentencing policy, budgets, and broader socioeconomic factors, not by whether the Sheriff is elected or appointed.

What elections provide is clear: direct public accountability.

The question before you is not whether the Sheriff should be accountable. It is whether that accountability should rest with the voters of this county, or be concentrated in the hands of a few.

Thank you for your consideration.

LARRY GERINGER

LTGERINGER1@COMCAST.NET

Sent: Monday, March 2, 2026 12:40 PM

I believe the position of Pierce County Sheriff should remain an elected office. The residents and voters of our county should be the ones to select by secret ballot the position of Pierce County Sheriff. Appointed offices are largely political versus election which produces more qualified persons to lead our Sheriff's Office.

Steve McCoy

steve.earthborn@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 2, 2026 9:50 AM

Please, just be honest. The changes you're pushing erode our democratic rights and invite chaos, much like the disastrous mass immigration policies crippling the UK right now. If that's your vision for Pierce County, own it publicly.

Your amendment to add "resident" to the Charter's preamble serves to diminish citizens. A citizen is a legal resident with voting rights, a stake in the community, and a commitment to upholding law and order. Why broaden it to include anyone who just shows up, with no pledge to protect our system? Are you deliberately devaluing citizenship to appease those who haven't earned it? This isn't about compassion—it's about dilution. In the UK, similar "inclusive" policies have flooded communities with unvetted migrants, leading to skyrocketing crime rates: burglaries up, violent assaults surging, and entire neighborhoods transformed into no-go zones. Is that what you want for Pierce County—illegal entrants weakening our civic fabric. Be honest.

You are also pushing to switch the sheriff from elected to appointed, handing the power to the county executive and council. We voted for our sheriff. We chose who enforces the law in our communities. You got your seats from our votes— why strip us of ours? This isn't "professional qualifications"; it's a power grab that insulates leaders from accountability. Again, look at the UK: Appointed officials rubber-stamp policies that prioritize migrants over citizens, resulting in lax enforcement and crime waves—home invasions, murders, and yes, even rapes that shatter families.

Crime thrives on lawlessness; it's not opinion, it's fact, backed by data from places ignoring borders. If you're modeling Pierce County after that mess, defend it. Explain to your neighbors why they should tolerate more break-ins, more violence, and less say in who keeps them safe.

By June you will finalize these for the November 2026 ballot, the public deserves reasons for your amendments. This is an open letter—I'll be posting and distributing. The community deserves to know. Feel free to defend your positions at the next meeting, or in writing so we can determine if you are serving the citizens of Pierce County citizens or if you're undermining us.

Just be honest. What kind of county do you really want?

3-16-26 Packet

Anna Burt

mrsburt22@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 8:34 PM

Just because a few people disagree with the elected sheriff doesn't mean the position should be moved to appointed. We've seen the fall out in king county and how that's affected residents here. Keith swank was elected just like everyone else serving on this board and this should not be taken away from the people of Pierce county. Whether you like it or not. Urge a no vote. Let the people speak!

Claudia Yeaman

cyeaman360@comcast.net

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:46 AM

PLEASE do not change the Piece County Charter from elected to appointment. The voters deserve the right to elect the sheriff.

Dale Huber

dale.huber@comcast.net

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:45 AM

The people voted for Sheriff; the legislature should respect the voice of their constituents.

Jacy Christensen
jacylc@yahoo.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:53 PM

Please stop trying to override the will of the people.

Jason Albers
Jasonalbers13@gmail.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 7:21 AM

I am 100% for retaining the voice and freedom of legal Pierce County residents to be able to vote for and elect OUR Sherrif. To have an appointed Sherrif is silencing our voices and squashing our free will. The continuance of an elected Sherrif, and any other public office, is paramount to the free will of the people, for the people, and by the people.

Jason Little
8ntsolittle@gmail.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:22 PM

Keep the right to vote for sheriff! Do not follow the state on this. Fight the state. Yall are loosing the citizens trust!

Joseph Stumpf
Josephrobertstumpf@gmail.com

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 3:14 PM

I would like to voice my opposition to an appointed sheriff

Judy van houte

judyvanhoute@yahoo.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:13 PM

Please do not allow the change. We, the people, need to elect our sheriff.

Kenneth Schwarm

Kgschwarm@msn.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 6:18 PM

Keep our Sheriff an ELECTED Sheriff. Nothing more nothing less!

Kristi Merritt

Kristi7264@comcast.net

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:15 PM

Vote to keep our Sheriff an elected position.

Electing a sheriff is one of the most direct ways communities can maintain accountability in law enforcement. When a sheriff is elected by the people they serve, they answer directly to voters rather than to a SMALL GROUP OF POLITICAL LEADERS. This democratic process ensures that the sheriff remains responsive to community concerns, priorities, and values.

An elected sheriff also helps preserve the INDEPENDENCE of the office. Law enforcement decisions should be guided by public safety and the rule of law—NOT by political pressure from those who might control an appointment. Elections help prevent the concentration of power and reduce the risk that a sheriff could feel obligated to satisfy the preferences of a single executive or governing body rather than the broader public.

Finally, elections encourage transparency and public engagement. Candidates must present their ideas, policies, and leadership approach openly to the community. This process invites discussion about policing priorities, community safety, and the role of the sheriff's office. By giving citizens a voice in choosing their chief law enforcement officer, electing a sheriff strengthens democratic governance and helps build trust between law enforcement and the people they serve.

Lisa Olson

StandUpWA@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 6:01 PM

Dear Pierce County Charter Review Commission,

As a concerned resident of Pierce County, Washington, I am writing this testimony to strongly oppose any charter

amendments or proposals that would switch our county sheriff from an elected position to an appointed one.

As a lifelong Washingtonian who values democracy and public accountability, I urge you to reject this proposal and preserve the voters' right to choose our sheriff. Our current system ensures that law enforcement leaders are directly answerable to the people, not to political insiders or unelected officials.

Switching to an appointed sheriff would undermine the core principles of democracy, erode accountability, and politicize law enforcement in ways that could harm our communities.

In Washington State, where sheriffs in 38 of 39 counties are elected (with only King County appointing its sheriff since 2020) voters have made their preference clear. This is evident from the overwhelming 87% public opposition to Senate Bill 5974, which sought to empower governor-appointed boards to remove elected sheriffs. Critics, including myself, view such measures as 'anti-democracy' because they override the will of the people. Elected sheriffs must face the ballot every four years, allowing us to hold them accountable through recalls or reelections. In contrast, appointed sheriffs would be beholden to county executives or boards, inviting cronyism and decisions that prioritize elite interests over the needs of everyday residents like me.

Appointed systems strip sheriffs of the independence granted by voter mandates, leading to favoritism and undue political influence. In Pierce County, where our sheriff oversees critical duties like rural patrols, jail management, and law enforcement, an appointed leader might not reflect our local values or demographics. This could widen community divides and pressure appointees into partisan policies, further eroding trust amid ongoing challenges like staffing shortages and calls for reform.

Pierce County's own history provides chilling examples of the dangers of appointed law enforcement. From 1997 to 2000, under our former charter (which voters wisely reverted to elections in 2008), Mark French served as an appointed sheriff. He retired amid controversy, and in 2004, he pleaded guilty to felony child pornography possession after facing seven initial charges. This scandal highlights how appointments can allow serious misconduct to evade the public scrutiny and shows that

voters like me had no direct say in his selection or removal during his tenure.

Similarly, the tragic case of David Brame, appointed as Tacoma Police Chief from 2001 to 2003 by the city manager, underscores these risks. Despite prior allegations of abuse (including a 1988 date-rape claim and domestic violence reports) Brame was placed in power. In 2003, amid a divorce exposing his behavior, he murdered his wife and then himself. Investigations revealed a "culturally corrupt" department where warnings were ignored, all because appointed leadership lacked the voter oversight that could have prevented such a disaster.

Even in King County, the post-2020 appointed system has faced ongoing criticism. Appointee Patti Cole-Tindall has been called out for rising excessive force complaints and uninvestigated misconduct, echoing problems from earlier appointed eras that insulated leaders from public input.

These issues aren't isolated to Washington. Other states like Hawaii, Rhode Island, and California offer broader warnings about appointed sheriff systems fostering corruption without voter checks. In Hawaii, scandals include a 2025 lawsuit alleging retaliatory false arrests by top officials, linked to harassment, a deputy's suicide, and unchecked discrimination. Rhode Island has seen repeated sexual misconduct, such as 2026 charges against deputy Winston Cruz for workplace assaults and a similar 2025 case, demonstrating delayed accountability. In San Mateo County, California, even partial board removal powers led to the 2025 ousting of elected Sheriff Christina Corpus for nepotism and retaliation, mirroring the chaos of appointed oversight.

Based on these real-world examples, I firmly believe that appointing our sheriff would disenfranchise Pierce County voters and invite political interference, repeating disasters like those involving French, Brame, and others. Elections keep sheriffs responsive to us, the people they serve.

If change is needed, let voters drive it through the ballot box, not hand it over to unelected appointees. I implore the Charter Review Commission to listen to residents like me and reject this harmful proposal. Preserve our democratic voice in law

enforcement for a safer, more accountable Pierce County.

Sincerely, Lisa Olson

Resident of Pierce County, Washington

Marisa Kellcy

marisakellcy@yahoo.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 6:06 PM

Sheriff must remain an elected position!

Marsha Hannah

mhannah21@aol.com

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 5:14 PM

please don't take my vote. I voted for sheriff Swank. you should not be able to take that right away.

Martin Miller

Marty2055g@msn.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 5:58 PM

Share your Comments here. I remember when we had a corrupt county government and Sheriff. Mafia like crimes rampant. Vices like prostitution and drugs rampant. Pierce county council members were involved. Murder, assault, arson were happening and who to go to for help? The elected sheriff is so much better. Sheriff Swank the best Sheriff in my lifetime of 68 years by far. The grift grant fraud going on with taxpayer money being laundered through NGOs is shameful. I can see why they don't want an honest uncorruptable Sheriff.

Matthew Smith

Mdsmith000@gmail.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 1:18 PM

Keep the Sheriff an Elected Position

I strongly oppose changing the Sheriff from an elected position to an appointed one.

The office of Sheriff is one of the few law enforcement roles

that answers directly to the people. When the Sheriff is elected, citizens have the power to hold that person accountable through the ballot box. If the Sheriff fails to lead effectively, the public can vote for change. That direct accountability is a cornerstone of local democracy.

If the position becomes appointed, that accountability shifts away from the public and into the hands of a small group of political officials. Instead of answering to the community, the Sheriff would answer primarily to whoever appointed them. That change risks politicizing the position and reducing transparency.

An elected Sheriff also ensures independence. Law enforcement leadership should be able to make decisions based on public safety and the law—not political pressure from appointing authorities.

Our community deserves a Sheriff who is directly accountable to the people they serve. Removing the public's ability to vote for this position removes an important layer of democratic oversight.

For these reasons, I urge you to keep the Sheriff an elected office and preserve the public's voice in choosing its law enforcement leadership.

Thank you.

Monika Wingfield

Monikaw@comcast.net

Sent: Saturday, March 7, 2026 1:35 PM

Regarding the Proposed Amendment to Charter Section: Article III, Section 3.70 – Sheriff, Section 4.90.

So you want to take power away from the people and give more to the government. Let's be honest. You don't like the sheriff that the people have chosen and so now you want to change the charter so that this doesn't happen again. This is partisan and is wrong.

What if we voted in a conservative council? Would you then agree that the sheriff should be appointed?

If you vote this in, you are standing for taking the voice away from the people.

Let us decide who is or is not fit for office. Apparently, you think the people are not smart enough to make their own decisions. That's what dictators think.

Olivia Marquiss

annalisesmom46@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 5:13 PM

This government needs to stop there over reach

Patrick Moore

patrickmoore@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:36 PM

I am writing to express my strong support for maintaining the election of the County Sheriff rather than moving toward an appointed position.

The office of Sheriff is one of the most important roles in county government. It carries significant responsibility for public safety,

community trust, and the fair enforcement of the law. Because of this, the position should remain directly accountable to the citizens it serves.

Paul Pavolka

Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2026 11:26 AM

The office of Sheriff should be an elected position. Not appointed by a political party.

Ronald Morlan

morlanfamily@comcast.net

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:24 PM

Pierce County sheriff position should remain an elected position

Sam Warren

Samuellhwarren@live.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 11:04 AM

Please ignore the partisan nonsense from the house and senate and allow the residents of pierce county to elect our own sheriff

Sandi Paul

sandi.paul@yahoo.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 9:05 PM

We want to continue to be able to vote for sheriff. We do not want the position to be appointed. Please listen to what Washington people want.

Sandra Johnson

Averyjohndon05@comcast.net

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 4:02 PM

I am opposed to our Sherry being appointed. I want to be able to vote the person into office.

Shannon ZIMMERLY

papertrail253@live.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 4:22 PM

I am here to strongly oppose any proposal allowing the County Executive to appoint the Sheriff instead of keeping it an elected position. The Sheriff is the only law enforcement role in our county that answers directly to the people through the ballot box. This isn't just tradition — it's the foundation of accountability. Voters get to vet candidates, hold them to local

values, and replace them if they fail to protect our communities. Shifting this power to an appointed position hands it to a single executive or unelected board, stripping citizens of their voice and opening the door to cronyism, favoritism, and centralized control from Olympia or beyond. We've seen what happens when officials aren't directly accountable: selective enforcement, retaliation against whistleblowers, and

protection of insiders over public safety. As someone who has experienced this firsthand through years of reporting county violations only to face backlash, I know the importance of an elected Sheriff who serves the people, not the powerful. This change sends a dangerous message: "The people don't know best." It undermines democracy at a time when we need more transparency, not less. Let the voters decide who enforces our laws — keep the Sheriff elected.

I urge you to reject this appointment proposal and preserve our right to choose.

Suan sargent

susanasargent@yahoo.com

Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 3:30 PM

I am part of "We the People" and request that you leave it up to "the People" to decide who should be Sherriff. let's keep it fair and let us vote on who should be in this position. You do not have authority to decide for me.

Tony Sagastizado

sagastizadot@gmail.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 10, 2026 9:56 AM

Sheriffs are a constitutional position that deserves to be elected by popular vote of the people. If you change any of the rules you are against democracy and against the will of the People.

Trudy Stensland

Trudystensland@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:31 PM

It is so very important that we the people of WAState are able to elect our sheriffs. This election of the sheriff helps to lend credibility and a sense of fairness over all of law enforcement. Without a sense of fairness, people will feel wrongly accused or that people are not being treated fairly within the scope of the law and the courts. Do not take away our right to vote for

sheriff. They are the cornerstone of our system and we deserve the right to chose them.

Trudy Stensland

Veronica Shriver

vshriver@comcast.net

Sent: Monday, March 9, 2026 3:24 PM

Please overturn this. The elected people decide on who the sheriff is. Not the kings at the legislature level.

3-23-26 Packet

Allisa Hawks

Allie@polarispayments.com

Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2026 2:15 PM

I've been really disturbed by the legislation coming through recently from the state of Washington. I'm especially concerned about the fact that we no longer get to appoint a sheriff.

The changes you're making without the consent of the people is disturbing.

Bronwyn Clarke

bronwynclarke95@gmail.com

Sent: Sunday, March 15, 2026 6:16 PM

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I am writing in strong support of the proposed Charter amendment to make the position of Pierce County Sheriff appointed rather than elected.

Recent events have highlighted why this structural change is a

necessity. Pierce County Sheriff Keith Swank was recently asked by the Pierce County Prosecutor to retract a statement indicating he would refuse to hire lawful permanent residents (green card holders) for law enforcement positions. The Prosecutor explained that such a policy would conflict with Washington State law, which explicitly allows lawful permanent residents to serve in these roles. When the County's chief law enforcement officer publicly signals an intent to disregard state law, it raises fundamental questions about his qualifications to enforce such laws.

This concern is not isolated. Pierce County has also experienced past incidents involving elected sheriffs that raised significant public concern the treatment of our neighbors of color. These situations underscore the risks of placing enormous law enforcement authority in an office that relies almost exclusively on elections as its only accountability mechanism.

An appointed model would allow Pierce County to establish clear professional qualifications, expectations, and performance standards for the role of sheriff. At minimum, the County should ensure that the individual entrusted with this authority demonstrates a consistent commitment to respecting the law, protecting civil rights, and maintaining the public's trust.

The role of sheriff is too important to rely solely on electoral politics as its guardrail. Pierce County deserves a system that ensures the office is held by someone who meets widely recognized professional and legal standards. Making this position appointed would make our community safer.

For these reasons, I urge the Commission - and anyone who supports the rule of law - to support the proposed amendment.

Sincerely, Bronwyn Clarke Parks Tacoma Commissioner

Conny Gaffke

connygaffke@yahoo.com

Sent: Friday, March 13, 2026 2:09 PM

When We the People vote someone to the sheriff position, we don't appreciate the state government interfering. Stop the government overreach!!!!!!!!!!

Curtis Stahlecker

cdstahlecker@gmail.com

Sent: Friday, March 13, 2026 2:45 PM

The Sherrif needs to remain an elected position and changing the Pierce county charter needs to be done by a vote of the people.

Jon Kvinsland

[jhkvinsland@yahoo.com](mailto:jhkvinfosland@yahoo.com)

Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:39 AM

Please DO NOT change the Sheriff's status from the voter approved elected to the obvious partisan appointed status. You are wasting my tax dollars with all this posturing. If you don't like the way the people voted then send it back to the voters for their opinion.

Jon H Kvinsland DDS

Joshua Satterfield

josh.satterfield@yahoo.com

Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 11:10 AM

As someone living in Washington State just a hair outside Pierce county I fully oppose any actions against an elected sheriff by bureaucrats who hate the citizens

of their own county. It is disgraceful and the states recent actions are marching us all directly into dangerous stand offs over the rights of the people to elect who they wish to represent them.

I'm concerned than neither side will back away from the edge you the council and the legislature are leading us towards.

Kathy Glaser

kdrglaser@msn.com

Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 11:20 AM

I believe that the sheriff position should be appointed by someone who is educated in how our justice system works and who would best serve Pierce County. The voters have very little knowledge or access to the inner workings of law enforcement.

Keith Swank

keith.swank@piercecountywa.gov

Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 4:26 PM

I'm sorry that I cannot speak to you tonight, but I have a community event to attend during the same time as this meeting. Did you see the story in the Tacoma News Tribune regarding crime stats for Sheriff Swank during his first 15 months? Violent crime is down 17% and property crime is down 22%. Before you say, "Crime is down everywhere", I would like you to know that crime is up in Tacoma. That's the city that my opponent, a person who was never a cop on the street, is now the Chief.

Tacoma is in the top 25 most dangerous cities in America. If you live in Tacoma, you have a 1 in 15 chance of being a crime victim. After the last meeting, where we discussed qualifications of elected sheriffs, I started thinking. We should have qualifications for most elected positions. For instance, members of the Charter review commission should have a firm grasp of the US Constitution, the Washington State Constitution, and the Pierce County Charter. Since the charter is our County Constitution, and you all are helping to change it, I believe that anyone who runs for

this position should have to take a non-partisan test covering all three constitutions and obtain an 80% passing grade. Don't you want the people who are trying to change our charter to understand the constitutions and how to write law. A bonus would be to check for criminal histories on all candidates. I bet some of you here have convictions. That way the voters would have the required knowledge to make an informed decision.

The Assessor/Treasurer should a licensed real estate (commercial and residential) appraiser. How could someone who doesn't have an appraiser license be the Assessor/Treasurer. The Auditor should be a CPA with progressive experience and training. Both of these officials should have a background check. It is very important that candidates be of the utmost quality. The Pierce County Executive oversees 11 departments and over 3,000 employees. In order to qualify to run for Executive a candidate should have a thorough background check (to make sure the person won't steal), and the person must show that they have progressive experience with budgets, understanding how the various departments work, and leadership of at least 500 people. As one of the commissioners said last week, she works in HR, and people from HR are experts at hiring and qualifying who should be in the various positions. I hope to be able to address you in person soon so that I can share some more good ideas with you. Thank you.

Linda Siegel

nurselindasue@gmail.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:35 PM

The proposal to change the process of choosing/appointing the person who will serve as Pierce County Sheriff is misguided and wrong. The Pierce County Sheriff should be ELECTED BY THE PEOPLE, not APPOINTED BY biased, partisan, politically-affiliated electeds.

Michele McFadden

mlmcfadden@centurytel.net

Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 2:04 PM

I am writing in support of sending the proposal for the position of sheriff being changed to appointed. Opponents would have anyone who dislikes the sheriff be forced into a recall process. When public life was civil that did work, but now in this heated political environment and the age of doxxing, a legitimate voter would put his or her life on the line to sign a recall petition which requires an address. Sheriff Sanders from Thurston County offered a valid hybrid response to the state's need to apply quality controls throughout the state, including the potential for withdrawal of certification of "peace officers", but Sanders' solution would require a constitutional amendment. I much prefer that quality control happen BEFORE a sheriff is elected. I note that King County has switched between elected and appointed several times, finally settling on appointed.

Since the heat always lands at the County Council anyway, they ought to have a functional way to address it. Waiting years for another election, while a rogue sheriff is a liability to the taxpayers, is simply a bad way to do business. Best of luck in your efforts. (I am a bit concerned about the second sentence of the proposed language, it may need some refinement.)

Pat Backlund

Kitchqueen@hotmail.Com

Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 5:30 PM

I support voters electing the Sheriff for Pierce Co. because the candidate must campaign to voters as to their credentials, character, & electability.

Comments: every person elected or not has a right to free speech according to the USA CONSTITUTION. Complaints made against Sherrif Swank were anonymous no one has a right NOT to be offended @ another person's speech/opinion, especially elected officials. Also. all elected officials should be held to the same standard as an elected Sheriff, such as inappropriate BEHAVIOR (drunkenness DUI) background checks, psychological testing as to their character & suitability for office.

From: Pat Baum pat.baum11@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 16, 2026 7:04 PM

Subject: Sheriff

I strongly urge you to change the method of choosing a sheriff. The sheriff position doesn't get a lot of attention during the election process. It doesn't get the vetting that many other positions do. This is the second time in a row voters have voted for unqualified candidates and Pierce county citizens pay the price.

A search process should do a much better job of finding the best candidate Thank you

Pat Baum

RAUL Campos

radac1950@gmail.com

Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 10:17 AM

The people should decide when it comes to electing representatives and that includes the sheriff. We can not let a few council members dictate what the majority might want. It is very obvious that some members of the Pierce County Council do no care for Sheriff Swank but he appears to be doing a very job in keeping Pierce County safer that places like Seattle who are struggling to keep officers.

Sarah Howard

jrhoward2@comcast.net

Sent: Thursday, March 12, 2026 4:04 PM

Please keep our sheriff as an elected position and not appointed.

From: tamra smilanich faithnotangel@yahoo.com

Sent: Tuesday, March 17, 2026 2:23 PM

Subject: Re: My public comment on proposed amendment to the charter on the election vs appointment of Sheriff

Please archive my public comment regarding the year 2026, Pierce County Charter and the review committee considering an amendment to the following...

Charter Section: Article III, Section 3.70 – Sheriff Section 4.90

I object to Amendment C-1 as presented by Commissioner Jake Hunter.

I believe that the Pierce County Sheriff Position should be an elected position from the living, registered voters of Pierce County.

When King County revised their rules in having the King County Sheriff position go from an elected position to an appointed position, this created demoralization sentiment

amongst some King County Sheriff Deputies whom many of those Sheriff Deputies prefer to have an elected Sheriff and not an appointed sheriff.

Many Sheriff Deputies feel more connected and accountable to the voters of their county.

Sincerely, Tamra Smilanich

Tacoma, Washington resident

3-30-26 Packet

Greg Mullins

gm9317@yahoo.com

Wednesday, March 25, 2026 2:04 PM

I encourage the Charter Review Commission to appreciate the value of an appointed rather than an elected sheriff (Article 3). Electing sheriffs may have made sense in the 1820s when communities were small and law enforcement had not yet become professionalized. In the 21st century public safety is best served with

professional law enforcement leaders, and the county executive is better positioned to assess those professional competencies. Above all, our public safety is NOT served if politicians seek election to sheriff. In the news this week: a California sheriff who seized ballots from election officials to "count" them--a publicity stunt for a sheriff seeking electoral glory.

From: Lisa Sauve <lisa98446@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 6:13 PM

Subject: C1 - Appoint Sheriff, Qualifications for Appointment

I feel very strongly about this. Voters would give up their right to elect the sheriff and would give that power to the County Executive who would also direct the Sheriffs' duties. My experience with Pierce County Council is not the best, there are people pushing through what THEY want not what the PEOPLE want. You are elected officials and you are responsible to push through what your CONSTITUENTS want not what you want. As point of reference the Pierce County Council pushed through the RTA tax that we, the people of Pierce County, voted DOWN.

This also makes the Sheriff subject to undefined qualifications as decided by the County Council. Our feeling is it is not the job of the Pierce County Council to determine what these qualifications are.

Please don't forget, we THE PEOPLE have the RIGHT to elect our Sheriff not rely on a very partisan County Executive to make decisions based on what THEY want.

Please listen to the people of Pierce County and leave the Sheriff alone.

Respectfully,

Lisa Sauve lisaS844c@gmail.com

253-20S-2043

Phoenix Milligan

phoenxfourleaf@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 8:58 AM

I am writing in favor of having the sheriff go back to being an appointed position. Having an elected sheriff creates a position in which the sheriff is more interested in posting on social media and maintaining his popularity with his voters than he is in doing his job and upholding the law. The sheriff should hold more credentials than just being popular enough to get elected in a race with few or no qualified candidates. He should be accountable to a governing body other than the only option being to wait for the next election to get rid someone who is openly bigoted and contemptuous of the law. The residents of Pierce County deserve better than a sheriff that broadcasts his hate for transgender citizens and immigrants on his social media platforms. They deserve someone who has respect for law and doesn't express that he will have his staff start wearing masks if the voters choose to ban the wearing of masks by law enforcement. The County is opening itself up to expensive lawsuits by employing a sheriff who states his disregard for the rights of transgendered people and legal immigrants for equal opportunity employment. I think we should consider the elected sheriff system to be a failed experiment and go back to having it be an appointed position with standards and accountability.

4-6-26 Packet

Colleen Wise

colleenwise2015@gmail.com

Monday, March 30, 2026 2:37 PM

There has been a mountain of comments on this subject.

First, it should not be a conversation at all. Electing a Sheriff is a great process. The candidate runs, the people choose. The candidate runs on his or her credentials and the public determines if they are qualified to serve. This is not a personality contest as it appears when listening to the testimony at the meetings. Out of all the counties in Washington, this would make us one of the exceptions. I expect that this should stay with the voters and not depend on one person to choose the Sheriff. Please let the citizens of

Pierce County have the elected representation they deserve.

Kandy Morgan

kandymorgan253 <kandymorgan253@gmail.com>

Saturday, March 28, 2026 7:24 AM

Subject: Appointing a PC Sheriff

Commissioner Hobbs,

Im not sure how this procedure works but assuming you have say in these ammendments, I'm respectfully asking that this ammendment NOT go forward.

We must keep high (office) positions voted in by the citizens so these powerful people would have to answer to the public. This is our 1st Amendment rights as the governed. Please vote NO. Thank you,

Kandy Morgan

Appoint Sheriff, Qualifications for Appointment – Hunter

Voters would give up their right to elect the sheriff and would give that power to the County Executive who would also direct the Sheriffs' duties. Also makes the Sheriff subject to undefined qualifications as decided by the County Council.

4-13-26 Packet

Matthew Caras

m23echoes@gmail.com

Monday, April 6, 2026 6:27 PM

I believe that Keith Swank's rhetoric has created division and made our community distrustful of our law enforcement officers. Moreover, ICE has created fear and has split families and community members apart. The pain and trauma that one endures from ICE is troubling and to have our Pierce County Sheriff wanting to collaborate with them is absolutely abhorrent.

PAULA LONERGAN

mplonergan@nventure.com

Thursday, April 2, 2026 7:12 PM

I do not believe there should be an appointed sheriff. Unlike the democrats who only want to maintain and control everything, I trust that the citizens who voted to elect their sheriff knew what they were doing and can take out their elected official anytime they like just like in any other situation where the citizens are not happy! We don't need a sheriff who serves at the pleasure off and, therefore, is totally controlled by a political party. If the people aren't happy with their selection, let them and not others who are not required to attend and complete some training to prove they're capable of doing their job and may put someone into this position who will not focus on protecting the citizens and only want to keep their job!

<castyourcares2018@gmail.com>

Sunday, April 5, 2026 8:47 AM

Charter Amendment C1 - Sheriff

My family and I oppose this entire line of government control. This amendment to the Charter takes away the right of the voter. The same people screaming about elections and fairness are trying to take away the voter's will simply because some are fearful of a Sheriff who follows the U.S. and even State Constitution and hold himself accountable to the people vs to the controlling and corrupt government of Washington State. We voted for Sheriff Keith Swank. We oppose any and all attempts to revoke our right to this vote. Elected AND appointed individuals need to take a sincere look in the mirror and ask if their lives, their every move, would hold up to the scrutiny they're placing on Sheriff Swank. A sincere and honest look.

Thank you,

The Breshears Family South Hill, WA

Veterans and Free Americans
