From:	Andrew Farley
To:	KCC - Committee Assistants (Email Group)
Cc:	Upthegrove, Dave
Subject:	Law and Justice Committee Meeting 6/12/20 - Elected Sheriff
Date:	Friday, June 12, 2020 7:21:10 AM
Attachments:	Letter to King County Council.docx

To Whom It May Concern:

Please forward this letter to all of the Law and Justice Committee Members for the meeting today. Also please forward this letter to the rest of the King County Council as well. I have cc'd my district councilmember.

Respectfully,

Andrew Farley

To the Honorable Councilmembers of the King County Council:

I send this letter with all respect for the King County Council, its Councilpersons, and the incredible work that you all do for our community.

I moved to the State of Washington and King County a little over a year ago. So far I have found it to be a very nice, welcoming place with lots of nice people. I currently live in the Three Tree Point community within the City of Burien; I am currently represented by Councilman Dave Upthegrove.

Recently I have read an article in the Seattle Times that the Charter Review Committee and some members of the King County Council are wanting to change the Office of the Sheriff from an elected to an appointed position. I must say that I strongly oppose this proposed transition for several reasons, with the primary reason being that as an American I appreciate and value the representation I have in an elected Sheriff. An elected Sheriff answers directly to me and other voting members of King County every four years; the same as you all answer to your constituency within your respective districts. This provides the greatest level of accountability between the Sheriff's Office and the public. Being at the mercy of the voting public every four years helps to prevent political scandals and corruption within the law enforcement community.

Secondly, I find it disheartening that the King County Council may attempt to remove the citizenry's right to elect the Sheriff and have a direct voice in law enforcement. The Revised Code of Washington 36.28.010 says the Sheriff is the Chief Law Enforcement Officer and conservator of peace of the county. The Sheriff represents and provides services for every resident in King County. With no disrespect, for this to be effective, the Sheriff must be directly responsible to the will of the voting public and not to the will of a Council and/or the County Executive. On Councilman Dembowski's webpage he gives the belief that an appointed Sheriff removes politics from the office; however, this actually politicizes the office in which the Sheriff would metaphorically "walk on egg shells" with every decision in fear of losing his or her position. The Sheriff, if changed to appointed, would answer to the Council and/or the County Executive, and not directly to the citizenry which removes the American tradition/principle of a check-and-balance system in government. The elected Sheriff provides a counterweight to appointed law enforcement officials such as a city appointed Chief of Police. It also allows as a protection for the residents against unconstitutional laws and/or practices. This is why many State Constitutions mandate the position of Sheriff.

Third, there is the argument that appointing a Sheriff allows for the "best" candidate to be selected. Please allow me to explain why this is simply not true in regards to a Sheriff. The theory behind the Office of the Sheriff is that he or she is the "common-man's" law enforcement officer – a voice of the people. That he or she directly represents the values and mindset within the local public. The Sheriff is meant to come from the county they serve as they directly represent that populous. They generally have a shared common interest which builds an inherent, natural sense of trust with the public. The voting public may have even had previous personal interactions with the candidate before the election which adds even more to the trust factor that is built in the community. The aforementioned is also why the Sheriff's Office differs in practice that the Seattle Seahawks do in their selection process, which is a point of comparison Commissioner Kinnon Williams made when speaking in favor of an appointed Sheriff; surely one can see how community values, trust, and a dedication to serve differ in a selection process that picking a candidate based on statistics and athletic ability only. There is also the argument that the Sheriff is not immediately accountable to the people of the community, this is false – an elected