



COUNTY OF LAKE

Board of Supervisors

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April 6, 2021

Senator Scott Wiener
State Capitol Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 271 (Wiener) – Oppose As Introduced January 28, 2021

Dear Senator Wiener,

We are writing this letter in opposition to SB 271, County Sheriffs: Eligibility Requirements. This bill would in essence, and as currently presented, eliminate all eligibility requirements to become a County Sheriff.

We understand that this is part of the social justice movement to help diversify the sheriffs in our state, and to help broaden the scope of the conversation on what policing is, and what policing should be. We never want to shy away from these conversations. Diversity helps us understand each other better, and better serve the public in a more meaningful and understanding position. Policing, while fundamentally similar to when it first began, has changed over the course of our social evolution. We support the conversation on how best to serve our communities and how best to ensure the safety of our communities. Reinforcing that appropriate processes and protocols are utilized is paramount to building trust within our communities in regard to policing. These conversations are continuous and productive.

However, there is one aspect of policing that should not change: training and experience. Obtaining the appropriate educational and certification requirements are all part of ensuring that we evolve in a best practice approach. Rural counties, such as Lake County, commonly rely on their elected Sheriff to actually perform law enforcement functions. If police-community interactions are a concern now, what kind of outcome would we expect when a person with no training or real-world experience with respecting civil rights decides to engage in law enforcement as the county's senior law enforcement officer?

In larger counties, it is true that the elected sheriff may not perform tasks as they have many support personnel and staff with requisite experience to handle things such as administrative and personnel matters, policy updates, community engagement, and a myriad of other responsibilities. The reality for small and medium sized counties is that sheriffs themselves often perform these functions. The experience and training required to carry out these tasks properly and

effectively comes after many years. It doesn't occur simply because you get more votes than someone else. A county which has a sheriff that needs to go through a learning curve that takes years to attain will be disserved.

We seek experienced and knowledgeable candidates who understand the law and the Constitutions to which they take an oath. While experience and training does not always speak to the character of the individuals that are elected to the position of Sheriff, it speaks to an understanding of the legal processes and the rights that they are meant to preserve.

We believe strongly in quality policing in Lake County and strive to be better in how we interact with our communities and how we keep them safe. SB 271 will not help us in this endeavor. In fact, we fear that it may do just the opposite. This is why we oppose SB 271, and hope that this bill will not continue its path to the Senate Floor.

Respectfully,

COUNTY OF LAKE

Bruno Sabatier, Chair

Brian Martin, Sheriff

cc: Honorable Assembly Member Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
Honorable State Senator Mike McGuire