

# WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

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Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington

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Greetings from Your Executive Director:



I have had a few Chiefs and Sheriffs talk with me about forums and “debates” around the state on I-940, as we head into the homestretch before the election in a few weeks. The main point we want to emphasize is that **legislators need to pass the “final draft”, or HB 3003, of I-940, which is unfortunately not on the ballot, whether the initiative passes or not.** Our main concern with I-940 as written is the complex and confusing deadly force standard, and the unintended consequences of the first aid requirement, both of which have been clarified in the final draft.

Please feel free to contact me if I can be any help with questions or concerns you might get in your community- here is a program that public TV station KBTC did on the topic, along with a very good editorial on the Columbian newspaper expressing why they recommend a “no” vote:

<https://www.pbs.org/video/5459c42c-5bbe-463c-89d6-260938cbe80a/>

<https://www.columbian.com/news/2018/oct/02/in-our-view-vote-no-on-initiative-940/>

In this week’s edition of “I See What You Did There”, here are **two different newspapers writing about a tragic incident** in Florence, South Carolina last week. Officers were executing a search warrant and the suspect started shooting at them with a rifle as they approached, killing one officer and injuring six others. Now, take a look at the way these two stories, about the same incident, are written and the intentional use of certain words to create an impression with the reader, and how very different they are in their direction and tone:

From the New York Times:

*Seven law enforcement officers were shot — at least one of them fatally — in an extraordinary barrage of firepower after the authorities sought to serve a search warrant in South Carolina on Wednesday, officials said, transforming a residential subdivision into a tragic battleground. The episode, punctuated by evacuations in a tactical vehicle and a protracted standoff between a barricaded suspect and the authorities, was among the American police shootings with the greatest bloodshed in recent years.*

The use of the word “barrage” and “firepower” is intended to highlight the military aspects of the operation, and the action of the police, in serving the warrant, is suggested as the reason for “transforming a residential subdivision into a tragic battleground”. The police action is the focus, not the actions of the suspect. The author makes sure to point out the “tactical vehicle” and the great bloodshed as associated with “American police shootings”.

Now, compare that use of loaded language and phrases with this introductory paragraph on the same incident, from the Washington Post:

*Authorities in Florence, S.C., on Thursday said they had begun a “very large, intense investigation” into the barrage of gunfire that killed one police officer and injured six others a day earlier.*

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*The violence sent tremors through the law enforcement community, prompting condolences from across the country that echoed the outpouring seen after officers were slain in Dallas, Baton Rouge, Iowa and New York in recent years. The shootout occurred on a residential street as police attempted to serve a warrant, highlighting the dangers that officers face during some routine interactions.*

This is an amazing disparity in tone and focus between two media outlets and both create an emotional response. The Post focuses on the danger to the officers and highlights other examples of officers being targeted for wearing the uniform. These are just another example of how provocative and emotion-laden language can direct a reader in a certain direction.

You might remember a few weeks ago I sent out the ACLU's **recommendations for people to stay safe when interacting with law enforcement**- their list said:

- Stay calm and stay put. Don't run or suddenly move.
- Keep your hands where the officer can see them and free of any objects if possible.
- Never touch any police officer.
- Follow instructions. You can always make a complaint later if you feel your rights were violated.

As we continue to work with the community to increase safety and reduce the chances of interactions with law enforcement requiring force, these suggestions would make an amazing difference, but we don't seem to talk about the responsibilities of these who contact officers and deputies. Along the same lines, here is a link to a story where schools are requiring education on keeping everyone (including law enforcement) safe in these interactions:

<https://www.nbcdfw.com/news/local/North-Texas-Schools-Prepare-Lessons-on-Police-Interactions-496159311.html>

Finally, this past week I spoke with Chief Pete Fisher at Fife PD who attended the IACP Conference in Orlando along with one of the members of his department. He mentioned that each year they have an "**Officer of the Year**", and that person is able to attend IACP as part of the recognition for their good work. I thought that was a great idea and am passing it along...

Have a great weekend—

***Work Hard- Have Fun- Stay Safe***

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