



Washington Association of
**SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS**

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Greetings from your Executive Director:

As we head into the new year and the legislative session, here are a few updates for you—

First, each of us has been following the developments nationally. Here are the statements from the [National Sheriffs Association](#) and the [International Association of Chiefs of Police](#). I appreciate that the IACP statement acknowledges concerns about preparedness and response, while also saying “we must not lose sight of the fact that the officers who willingly place themselves in harm’s way to protect others deserve our gratitude and support each and every day.”

Our primary theme for public policy reform is to encourage support for proposals that bring communities together. Law enforcement is locally accountable for public safety but we need partnerships with community leaders and elected officials to ensure meaningful and lasting reforms. Here is a [statement](#) we have prepared as we head into the legislative session which starts next week. During a hearing in the Washington State House Public Safety Committee in late 2020, Dr. Phillip Atiba Goff of Yale University remarked, “These conversations have been weaponized and politicized in a way that’s unnecessary given the amount of political overlap and agreement we have”. We will continue to work with the legislature to better support the men and women doing this job the right way, every day.

Among all the tumult, the economic, political, and pandemic anxiety, and the bad news and the focus on it, we are all called upon to continue to work in our communities, providing support and leadership. Our deputies, officers, troopers, corrections staff, and support services are tasked with showing up, 24/7, and helping people in crisis, always while providing selfless service. Pay attention to your health, your families, and your colleagues as we do our best to provide for public safety and public service. I am proud to work with you—

Next, we sent out a couple of GTWO messages asking for your agencies to participate in a short survey to get an idea of needs and/or plans at the county and local health department level for **vaccinations for law enforcement and jails**. The survey results will help us identify any gaps and make the State Department of Health aware of areas that need greater focus as the vaccination rollout proceed. So far, we see some counties and local areas have plans in place, and are communicating with law enforcement, while some others have not. As the surveys mentioned, we are not looking to replace existing plans, just identify and help fill gaps where there may not be one now. This week, the state also sent out their [priorities plan](#), which provides direction for local health departments. It appears that law enforcement will be included in high-risk critical workers group. Thanks again for your help with the survey-- please complete by January 12 if possible.

Finally, and very importantly, here is a message from our Policy Director, James McMahan:

WASPC members,

Happy New Year. We hope you are all safe and well.

The 2021 Legislative session convenes on Monday (January 11) for a long (105 day) session, and we wanted to give you some information on what to expect.

First, we are proud to welcome Sanjay Walvekar to the WASPC Policy Team as the Deputy Policy Director. Sanjay comes to WASPC after having previously served as the Outreach and Legislative Affairs Manager for the Washington State Bar Association since 2017. Sanjay is a seasoned legislative affairs professional and a practicing attorney, with prior experience as a political and campaign consultant and policy/research analyst. Sanjay grew up in the Tri-Cities and received his bachelor's degree from the University of Washington, double-majoring in Political Science and Economics. He received his Juris Doctor from the University of Washington Law School, where he was the Executive Articles Editor for the Washington International Law Journal (formerly Pacific Rim Law and Policy Journal). You may be hearing from Sanjay as he gets settled in, but feel free to reach out to say hello to him in the meantime by emailing him at sanjayw@waspc.org.

Those of you who participated in any of our recent legislative updates and briefings will recall hearing that **the 2021 Legislative Session will be conducted entirely virtually**, with very few legislators or staff allowed on the capital campus. Lobbyists and members of the public will be prohibited entry into any legislative building. All committee hearings will be conducted via Zoom, as will most floor sessions. We're still not sure what to expect, but we will do our best to keep you updated on issues relevant to law enforcement and public safety.

The best way to get updated from WASPC on the happenings of session is to **sign up for our Legislative E-List**. Those who have signed up for the Legislative E-List will receive:

- One email each day containing:
 - Links to a list of all bills introduced in the House or Senate that day;
 - A listing of which bills introduced that day were added to the WASPC bill tracker;
 - A list of committee hearings scheduled for the following day and WASPC's planned participation (testify pro/con/etc), complete with links to watch the hearing online; and
 - A list of bills that WASPC is seeking information to determine the financial impacts to your agency.
- Weekly Emails
 - One email each week showing which WASPC-tracked bills are scheduled for committee action the following week; and
 - One email each week listing which bills WASPC is seeking information on to determine the financial impacts to WASPC members if enacted.

To join the WASPC Legislative Committee Email List:

1. Go to www.waspc.org
2. Click the 'Member Login' button on the top right
3. Enter your username and password and click "login"
4. Click "My Profile"
5. Hover your mouse over "My Features" and click on "E-lists" in the drop down menu
6. You will see there is one "E-list available to join." Click "Subscribe" next to the Legislative E-List.
7. Check the "Email delivery" box, enter your email address, then click "save."

For those of you who may be interested in testifying in committee hearings, the remote nature of the 2021 session means that you no longer have to travel to Olympia to testify. Instructions to register or provide written testimony is available on the [participation in committee hearings](#) website. We do request that you let us know if you intend on participating in a committee hearing (whether it be testifying, signing in without testifying, or submitting written testimony) so that we can do our best to be aware of and support your efforts, and avoid any potential conflict between WASPC and you. Coordinating your legislative activities, inquiries, and communications with James McMahan or Sanjay Walvekar at james@waspc.org or sanjayw@waspc.org helps us help you.

Finally, the subject of law enforcement reform will continue to be a major focus for the 2021 Legislature. WASPC will continue to pursue our [legislative agenda](#), and respond to legislation consistent with our [Principles for Community Trust](#) that we adopted in January of 2019. In the end, however, **the most important legislative communication are those between you and your legislators.** We encourage you, especially now, to use your voice to advocate for your agency, for your officers, for your community, and for those who carry the burden of being victimized by crime. Your legislators are hearing clearly from some about the need to reform law enforcement. Let's make sure that your legislators hear from you how to do it right.

-James

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Thanks again to all you for all you do—

Stay Safe - Steve

Steven D. Strachan, Executive Director
Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs