



July 29, 2024

Greetings from your Executive Director:

Here are a few updates —

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#### Juvenile Access to Attorney

I sent this out in a GTWO, but you may have heard about Seattle PD making changes to its interpretation of the Juvenile Access to Attorney law- [here](#) is a local story on it and [here](#) is a column authored by the former lawmaker involved in the law itself. We have received questions about the topic and wanted to share with you the [statement](#) we have provided for any media requests- you may wish to provide it to your legal advisor. The bottom line is the law needs to be clarified and we will continue to push for changes in the next session.

#### Confidence in Police Rises

Under the heading “Some Good News-- Finally”, Gallup published this [poll](#) showing that while Americans' confidence in institutions remains low, confidence in the police has risen sharply overall. Very notable: "Over the past year, confidence in the police has risen among most major demographic subgroups of Americans, particularly three that previously expressed lower levels of confidence in the police: those aged 18 to 34, people of color and political independents."

The institutions with the highest levels of confidence among the public are small business, the military, and the police. Meanwhile, the institutions with the lowest levels of confidence in the poll include newspapers, TV news, and Congress. Make your own editorial comment here...

Related to this positive trend is an incident that occurred recently in Illinois where a Deputy was promptly fired and charged with murder in a shooting. A phrase that I keep using for these kinds of high-profile, very concerning incidents that can reduce public trust is “cavalier and outrageous.” Of course, good training and ensuring good candidates are hired in the first place are critical to preventing these types of incidents. In addition, everyone, including law enforcement, is entitled to due process, but agencies understand that when something happens that is cavalier and outrageous, prompt action is required and goes a long way to show the institution is trustworthy and accountable.

Among all the negative news, I think this poll shows people see through the political and media narratives. People want better policing not less policing. Law enforcement can and must be both accountable and trustworthy. There is much more to do, but people are starting to see and appreciate it.

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#### AG Use of Force Database Update

Also, we have been continuing to monitor the process of the Attorney General's Use of Force Database, being managed by Washington State University, and now called "WADEPS". There has been controversy surrounding the project, and our approach has been to monitor it, and to allow the team to come to our conferences to receive feedback and communicate directly with our Sheriffs and Chiefs, as they work to engage some "beta" sites. At the same time, we have specially not "endorsed" it. [Here](#) is a document recently issued by the WADEPS team outlining the fact that they are reducing the number of data elements they are planning to collect, as well as other changes. You may also be aware that they lost their original data partner, IBM, and are now planning to work with Amazon Web Services. At the same time, a \$42 million civil lawsuit has been filed against the State of Washington in regard to how the contracts were awarded. This just serves as an update on the program, and we will continue to keep a close eye on the progress, and lack thereof.

#### Juvenile Rehabilitation Freeze Update

Regarding the issue with the Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) intake suspension, [here](#) is the original freeze announcement, and [here](#) is our statement. [Here](#) is the letter sent to DCYF from the Superior Court Judges Association. DCYF transferred a number of adults being held at juvenile facilities to the Dept. of Corrections to reduce overcrowding and were subsequently sued by Columbia Legal Services. A Judge ruled in favor of Columbia, and they are being transferred back again. [Here](#) is an update on the status of the facilities, and [here](#) is DCYF's response to the entire situation for now. In addition, I received a call from Gov. Inslee Thursday this week where he acknowledged the urgency of the situation and wanted to assure WASPC that this is receiving full attention from the administration, but there are no quick answers. He did point out that there is additional capacity coming online in the next several weeks, but staffing continues to be an issue. The State is well aware that if the result of this freeze is keeping people under JR25 sentences at counties, this will likely increase the risk of lawsuits against counties from the same stakeholders suing the state, for a problem caused by the state. We will keep you apprised of any updates.

#### Former Chief Rod Covey

Many of you know former Chief Rod Covey of the Port of Seattle Police Dept, who has been a friend and mentor to many of us. Chief Covey was suspended and terminated by the department alleging racial

discrimination a few years ago, and he had to resign his position on the WASPC Board. He sued the agency for wrongful termination, and steadfastly refuted the allegations. It was clear that Chief Covey would go to great lengths to defend his sterling reputation.

Following the lengthy [trial](#), the jury awarded former Chief Covey over \$24 million in damages. While many view the position of Chief of Police as an “at will” position in all cases, this case will move the conversation positively to send the message that Chiefs still have significant employment rights. Most importantly, the process makes clear that Chief Covey’s reputation is everything to him, and this vindication is positive for our profession. We appreciate him standing up for what’s right.

#### Attack on Prosecutor and Deputy

You may not be aware of this incident that occurred last week in [Stevens County](#). Following a court appearance, a suspect with a long history approached the prosecutor on the street by their car and attacked him with a machete, causing injuries requiring 35 stitches. A Stevens County Deputy later contacted the man, and when he attempted to attack him with machete as well, the man’s violent crime spree was finally stopped and he was killed. Sheriff Manke said the Deputy is doing well. This incident is another reminder that too many agencies, jails, dispatch centers, prosecutor’s offices, and public defender offices are seriously understaffed and we have even more challenges as some may perceive the job as becoming more dangerous. All of us are grateful the Deputy is doing well.

Thanks for all you do and stay safe - Steve