



Washington Association of
**SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS**

3060 Willamette Drive NE
Lacey, WA 98516
360-486-2380 (Phone)
360-486-2381 (Fax)
www.waspc.org

August 22, 2024

Greetings from your Executive Director:

Here are a few updates this week-

First, I know that many of you have received questions from your communications centers on information they are getting from Bob Scales about issues related to WADEPS (the Attorney General's Use of Force Database through Washington State University) and CJIS data. As we have mentioned before, there is litigation and other issues related to the WADEPS system and we have sought to be open and communicative with both WSU and providing feedback for them at conferences, etc. We will have a more comprehensive and lengthy GTWO to go out either late this week or early next week providing more information from the stakeholders for review by you and your legal counsel on these issues.

Accountability

In the last newsletter, I mentioned that incidents involving police use of force that cause concern, and result in enhanced public trust when handled promptly, are when they are clearly "outrageous and cavalier". Sonya Massey was killed last month by a deputy in Illinois and while the facts of this incident are still being gathered and the former deputy is entitled to due process, the prompt response to this incident is commendable and notable.

In Washington, state laws requires stringent hiring practices and mandatory disclosure of prior employment information by law enforcement agencies. These laws are designed, in part, to prevent similar tragedies in the future, promote informed hiring decisions, and to enhance public trust in the justice system. Washington also has a robust decertification process that is fully capable of permanently expelling any officer from the profession for misconduct. Washington is a leader in providing mandatory de-escalation training and wholeheartedly remains committed to working with our communities and our legislators to find solutions that will enhance trust in the justice system.

As was noted in a [GTWO](#) sent out from the OII/IIT Ad Hoc Committee last week, the OII team will begin taking cases in Region 1 (Thurston, Lewis, Mason, Clark, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Pacific, Jefferson, Kitsap,

Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington

Skamania, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum counties). While funding for additional officers is necessary, so is an environment in our state where officers and deputies feel comfortable and supported doing their job and making difficult decisions.

Investigations and prosecutorial review of officer-involved uses of force must be based on objective facts, not political pressure or social media. Along with the good work of the existing Independent Investigative Teams (IITs), if the Office of Independent Investigations (OII) can truly demonstrate they call balls and strikes, it can ideally enhance trust and improve that level of comfort and support we need for officers doing the job in good faith and making split-second decisions. The “outrageous and the cavalier” should result in accountability; people who make tough decisions deserve support. We are looking to have additional opportunities for feedback and information at our fall conference.

Traffic Safety

We expect that next session legislators will again look at what advocacy groups last year euphemistically called “Traffic Safety for All”, prohibiting low-level traffic stops. [Here](#) is an article outlining how fewer traffic stops have resulted in increased traffic fatalities and crime. Another factor we can expect (and are already seeing to some extent) is the creation of a sort of “two level” pattern of compliance with the laws passed by our elected representatives. For example: there is a Sound Transit tax for those who live in counties within the Sound Transit area (King, Pierce, and Snohomish). There are extra taxes added to vehicle license fees in this counties to fund Sound Transit projects, like light rail. These taxes add up to several hundred dollars per year on newer cars. If low level traffic stops are prohibited, will more drivers not pay and obtain the tabs, if there is no real penalty? If so, does the burden for taxes fall to a greater extent on those who choose to comply with the laws? These are the questions our legislators will consider.

The article also points out how less traffic enforcement leads to changes in behavior. In the last three years in Washington State, policy makers adopted the perspective that removing and reducing law enforcement will increase safety, because they bought the narrative that police are the bullies, rather than those who protect you from the bullies. The result? Brazen, infuriating behavior because of the sense that there are no consequences for lawlessness. People trying to raise their kids, go to work and pay their taxes, trying to follow the rules, feel like they have been played for fools.

More politicians are now seeing that the rule of law and supporting people following laws created by our elected representatives, are more than a lesson in a civics class- they are the glue that holds our civil

society together. Fair, transparent, well-resourced policing is a central part of that solution. WASPC has been pointing that out all along, as have each of you as you talk with your communities.

Pursuits

Speaking of contempt for the law and changing attitudes toward criminals, recently California Governor Newsom urged Oakland PD to pursue more suspects. [From the story](#): “While the governor said he was “mindful of the sensitivities around vehicle pursuits, which can be dangerous to police, suspects, and innocent bystanders,” he warned of “extreme danger to the public in allowing criminals to act with impunity, and the reckless driving associated with sideshows and other criminal acts.” Well said. Communities and businesses cannot thrive without a sense of safety and the knowledge that criminals will be held accountable by professionals doing the job the right way.

Other news

A few weeks ago, the Chelan County Sheriff’s Office hosted a co-response training, and according to Behavioral Health manager Ana Gonzalez, “it was a huge success. We had 28 attendees for our 10-hour day. One reoccurring suggestion was that this training should be two days (we gave them a lot of information) and that it was absolutely fantastic and interactive. Some agencies have asked if we could do this again for their other team members that were not able to attend and if we would pay for travel. Overall, we received a lot of positive feedback.” Many thanks to Sheriff Morrison for his continued support for this program as a partner of WASPC.



Both the Chelan County and Kittitas County Jails have now implemented an [innovative new technology](#) to reduce the possibility of deaths in their jails. The technology can monitor the vital signs of a person in a cell without hooking anything up, so if there is a problem staff can immediately respond and call

medical care. Ric Bishop, WASPC Jail Liaison, will work with both jurisdictions to track progress. It may be a great new tool to keep people alive, while limiting liability on counties and cities, and stress on our jail staff.

Bryan Jeter, the Executive Director of the WA Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA) passed along [this](#) information about “license plate flippers” being used to provide anonymity in a range of crimes from toll evasion to violent crimes.

Finally, [here](#) is a great story about a Kittitas County Deputy and a Central WA University Officer who summited Mount Rainier, Mount Adams, Mount St. Helens, Mount Baker and Glacier Peak... in four days. Congratulations Nick and Marc!

Have a great week and stay safe- Steve