



Washington Association of
**SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS**

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Greetings from your Executive Director:

Hope you are having a good and safe summer. Last week we published the annual [“Crime in Washington”](#) report, which WASPC has prepared yearly since 1980. Here is the [press release](#) and the [PowerPoint presentation](#) we used for the media briefing.

[Here](#) is one article and interview that was part of the coverage of the data, as well as this [column](#) that was published across the state and this [story](#) from a Seattle station.

As many legislators have said repeatedly, “show me the data”, so as WASPC has for decades, we did. You may have heard as part of the political response to these alarming numbers, “...*there is no evidence that more police will reduce crime...*” Actually, beyond common sense and seeing with our own eyes, there is evidence. [Here](#) is an article citing a study that states, “The effects are driven by large and statistically significant effects of police on robbery, larceny, and auto theft, with suggestive evidence that police reduce murders as well.” [Here](#) is another that states “Solid data suggests that even if you take a realistic view of the police, spending money to hire more police officers — an idea espoused by both Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama — is a sound approach to the multifaceted problem of criminal justice. More police officers, in particular, doesn’t need to mean more arrests and more incarceration. More beat cops walking the streets seems to deter crime and reduce the need to arrest anyone. And some of the best-validated approaches to reducing excessive use of force by police officers require departments to adopt more manpower-intensive practices.” Finally, newly-elected Maryland Democratic Governor Moore is advocating for more [law enforcement officers](#) as that state deals with rising crime.

Our Policy team, James McMahan and Taylor Gardner, sent out the “end of session” report with comprehensive information on what passed last session—I know I join each of you in thanking James and Taylor for their ongoing great work!

This week, KUOW did an extensive and informative [story](#) about the navigator and outreach programs in Port Angeles, which are part of WASPC’s grant administration of state funds for these programs. The story does a great job of providing real-world information on the challenges and, sometimes, successes of these programs. Kudos to Chief Smith and his team, and we appreciate the good work of Jamie Weimer and her team at WASPC who provide support for these programs all over the state.

Many of you have been aware of ongoing concerns with the Dept. of Commerce’s Strategic Plan changes which may reduce or limit available grant funds through Justice Assistance Grants (JAG) for drug task

forces. This week, the Executive Director of the Community Safety Unit of Commerce, Kate Kelly, sent [this letter](#) to task forces, in which they have indicated funding will continue through next year, with changes coming later in 2024. The letter says “Further, in recognition of concerns about changes to previous practices, we have offered to extend existing Task Force contracts an additional nine months through June 30, 2024 using unspent JAG funds at a cost of \$2.1 million. This will allow extended opportunity for task force leadership - and local and state lawmakers - to explore alternate, sustainable funding using the results of the Task Force Assessment due to be complete in October 2023.” WASPC has already been working with legislators on a bill for the '24 session that would require ongoing state funding for drug task forces to replace, and increase, the Byrne/JAG funds that may be taken away—just wanted to give you an update.

Finally, we have all become accustomed to “Trueblood” funds being expended and allocated each year from the State of Washington for programs, some of which fund outreach in our communities. This week, the federal judge who originally fined the state for their shortcomings in behavioral health and treatment, especially regarding restoration services, [slammed the state](#) with language you rarely see in judicial orders. The judge is not pleased. We will keep you posted as the state and the legislature will, undoubtedly, continue to work on this issue, which affects our agency operations as well as a lot of residents in our communities.

Several of you have asked, and are working through, the requirement in the most recent pursuit law changes that requires training in pursuit intervention techniques. We are aware the State Patrol is working through their Assistant Attorney General on what those would look like and what qualifies as that training, and we will advise as soon as we hear back.

It has been a busy few weeks- I hope you and your families are doing well and as always, thanks for all you do-

Stay Safe- Steve