



FOR RELEASE
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Statement attribution:
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WASPC PRAISES BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT/RETENTION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

(Lacey, WA) --- Widespread and bipartisan support emerged for one of the top priorities of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) during the first weeks of the 2023 legislative session. The Governor and leaders of both the House and Senate expressed strong support for recruitment and retention of law enforcement officers at all levels across Washington State. (WASPC's legislative priorities can be found [here](#), a video of the priorities can be found [here](#).)

WASPC appreciates and praises this bipartisan support of a major public safety measure to ensure our law enforcement agencies are well-trained and well-staffed to deliver the best public service. Our communities need funds to recruit and retain additional officers. We support effective solutions that will provide local governments with more resources for criminal justice services in ways that won't raise existing taxes.

Here are examples of statements made by leaders in Olympia:

Governor Jay Inslee: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/news-media/news-media/speeches/2023-state-state>

We want to help local law enforcement agencies hire and train more officers. Last summer, Sen. John Lovick and I were joined by dozens of chiefs and sheriffs to propose new regional training centers. These new facilities will allow us to train hundreds more recruits and help law enforcement agencies recruit people from within their diverse communities.

House Speaker Laurie Jinkins: <https://twv.org/video/the-impact-2023-opening-day-special-edition-2023011040/>

...when I've met with the two police chiefs in my legislative district, what they've talked to me about is workforce. They are fully 25% to 30% understaffed...they are fully funded to 25% or 30% more law enforcement officers and they can't recruit them right now. If we were able to help local communities and the state patrol actually get the law enforcement officer that they are funded for...this is one of the big workforce issues that I think we're going to be working on this session.

House Minority Leader J.T. Wilcox: <https://twv.org/video/legislative-republican-leaders-media-availability-2023011318/?eventID=2023011318&startStreamAt=236&stopStreamAt=300>

The bottom line is that we need more police on our streets and you'll see House Republican legislation

and out efforts on the budget committees reflecting that need...more law enforcement means less crime, better resources for de-escalation, safer outcomes, and community policing.

Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig: <https://crosscut.com/politics/2023/01/why-you-should-pay-attention-2023-washington-legislature>

If you look at law enforcement, we have a workforce issue...

Senate Minority Leader John Braun: <https://tvw.org/video/the-impact-2023-opening-day-special-edition-2023011041/>

When you talk to folks around my district and around the state, they're focused on public safety...how do we get more law enforcement officers recruited, trained and on the streets in communities around the state...

These statements of support should be welcome news to every Washingtonian. For more than a dozen years, Washington has had the fewest law enforcement officers per capita, ranking 51st in the nation. Today, our State has 500 fewer officers than it did a year ago. That affects prevention and response time to 9-1-1 calls and increases stress on our remaining police officers. De-escalation, proactive policing, and supervision require resources to “team up and slow down.”

WASPC looks forward to working with these leaders and all legislators to help improve the public service of public safety for our communities.

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