FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement attributable to:

Steven D. Strachan, executive director

Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

STATEMENT ON FUNDING TO HIRE MORE POLICE OFFICERS

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) has consistently supported Governor Ferguson’s leadership regarding his pledge to provide $100 million in grant funding for the hiring of more law enforcement officers in Washington State, and local options for ongoing funding. We have raised this issue for many years and are thankful progress is being made this year, and both houses of the legislature have now passed bills to provide funding through grants as well as potential ongoing local funding sources.

It’s an important step that we continue to support, and we appreciate Sen. Dhingra, Sen. Holy, and the State Senate making substantial amendments to the bill to resolve many of the concerns we raised. We hope the measure that goes to the governor addresses our concern that the grant process be equally accessible to smaller and rural agencies as it will be to well-resourced larger agencies. We are asking our state’s Chiefs and Sheriffs to let us know if the Senate passed version of HB 2015 will meaningfully increase officers and deputies serving their communities.

Washington has ranked 51st in the nation for officers per capita for 14 consecutive years, and we have fallen further behind, according to the FBI’s Crime in the United States report.

The bill that goes to the governor for his signature should focus on putting more officers on the street, available to prevent crime and serve victims. It is what the public expects and deserves.

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