

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

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Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington



December 20, 2018

Greetings from Your Executive Director:

It has been a busy few weeks as we head toward the holidays—

First, in case you had not already heard about this, Whatcom County Sheriff Bill Elfo's adult son was very seriously injured in a crash two nights ago. He was airlifted to Harborview and is very critical. Please keep the Sheriff and his family in your prayers.

One of the most significant elements of our upcoming legislative agenda is better mental health resources, especially for chronic and serious mental illness, and those who contact law enforcement most frequently. The Governor rolled out an **ambitious mental health budget proposal** this past week, which includes over \$600 million for substantial changes to Western and Eastern State, as well as community facilities, some that will be run by community mental health providers and some by the state. Like many of you, when I hear the word “community” I too often equate that with “the state will give up its responsibility and have someone else do it, and not fund any of it”. The Governor’s Office has been clear that this is not where they want to go, and that system wide improvements are the goal. They have also said they will not start shutting down facilities, or plan on budget savings, until the added facilities and programs are up and running.

So- what we are hearing is good but, as always, now we need to see how much is actually budgeted and what the details look like. Here is a podcast link, that is also available on the WASPC podcast site, that goes into greater detail on the Governor’s proposal:

<http://www.podcasts.com/waspc-podcast-1-saki-project-e333687c4>

In addition, the current budget includes additional funding for **Mental Health Field Response programs**. This year, we are administering \$1 million in programs around the state. One part of the Governor’s budget, which is included as part of the “Trueblood” settlement agreement so it is likely to be funded by the legislature, adds \$4 million more for mental health field response for the next biennium. However, it is important to note that \$3 million of the funds are specifically directed toward jurisdictions in Pierce, Spokane, Clark and Skamania Counties, due to a lack of resources there that was cited by the lawsuit. The additional \$1 million will be available for programs around the state along with one staff person to be used for education and coordination around mental health issues. We will advocate for more resources for field response for the entire state in addition to these “earmarked” funds.

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As I mentioned in the last newsletter, key members of the legislature are committed to **introducing and passing “I-940 Version 2.0”** as soon as they go back into session in January. Here is something tangible as we move toward that change- the House and Senate have each already pre-filed House Bill 1064 and Senate Bill 5029 which both have the same text as last year’s HB 3003, which is the agreed-upon language for changes to I-940. The only change is to make it immediately effective when it passes. Note also that the sponsors of the bill include Representatives and Senators from both parties:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?Year=2019&BillNumber=1064>

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5029&Year=2019&initiative=>

As we continue to work under the current law of I-940, and knowing it will likely be amended in January, just keep in mind that the current law does require **independent investigations**. Under the 940 language, that means the investigation needs to be independent of the agency whose officer or deputy was involved. Knowing that the specific rules have not been created yet, the best direction in this unusual situation is to follow this with the best faith we can. Yakima PD had an officer involved incident this week, and the investigation is being handled by their multi-agency team in that area. If you have any specific questions about incidents during this period between the new law going into effect and the likely change, we would, as always, encourage you to check in with your legal counsel.

Let’s move on to I-1639. We have had some questions about **effective dates for provisions of the firearms initiative** (if you would like to check out the entire text it is here: [1639](#)). Basically the provision that prohibits FFLs from selling to those under 21 goes into effect January 1, but the rest of the law would start July 1, 2019. Related to these dates is the upcoming NICS change which goes into effect June 1. Remember that the NICS change means they will no longer do “courtesy” checks for FFLs for handgun purchases, and that will increase the workload for departments for backgrounds.

I-1639 is being challenged in court- there has been a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Seattle by the Second Amendment Foundation and National Rifle Association. We will monitor all of this closely as the court case and the effective dates come up. We will also be actively engaged and as always we will keep you advised.

Here is a link to an interview KING 5 did this week on the **Mass Shootings Work Group**, which was facilitated by our Policy Director, James McMahan:

<https://www.king5.com/video/entertainment/television/programs/new-task-force-to-prevent-mass-shootings-is-in-motion/281-42963548-0c44-4d63-8208-c59b9e0eed77>

Thanks for all you do and as I come up on a full year in this position please know how much I appreciate being able to work with you, and support each of you as you do a difficult and critically important job- providing leadership for public safety in your communities-- Happy Holidays!

Work Hard- Have Fun- Stay Safe

Steve

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