

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

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Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington

April 26, 2019



Greetings from Your Executive Director:

Washington State law enforcement came together for the second time in less than a month to memorialize a fallen Sheriff's Deputy this week. For those who could not attend the **memorial for Cowlitz County Deputy Justin DeRosier**, here is a [link](#) to the service from KGW in Portland. There were amazing and eloquent remarks by Chief Jim Kelly of Woodland, Whitman County Sheriff Brett Myers, Cowlitz County Undersheriff Darren Ullman, and Michael Kingsley, Deputy DeRosier's close friend. It has been amazing to see the leadership of Cowlitz County Sheriff Brad Thurman and Kittitas County Sheriff Gene Dana over these last several weeks, in the most tragic of circumstances.

As we head toward July 1 and the **upcoming changes driven by I-1639 on top of the July 1 NICS changes**, many of you have received memos or information from the Dept. of Licensing, the Washington State Patrol and NICS. The information may be leading to more questions and more concern. We just want to make clear that we are working to help provide as much clarity and information as we can, but ultimately some of these changes have no direction and no source for clear answers. As we have mentioned before, we are putting together a panel on I-1639 for our upcoming Spokane conference, but be aware that while we want to provide all the information we can, there will be areas that will really come down to a conversation with your legal representative. We will be providing a two-sheet overview of what is coming up, but it will really serve as a guide for the meeting you need to have with your attorney.

We have received a few questions about **HB 1166, which has been passed and signed by the Governor**. This is the bill about sexual assault kits, sexual assault survivors and DNA. We supported this bill. Basically the most significant immediate impacts are on the State Patrol lab, as it shortens the expected, or goal, timeframe for DNA analysis from the current year or longer (because of severe resource limitations) to 45 days, and adds some resources for the WSP to attain that. The bill also lengthens the statute of limitations for investigation and charging of crimes based on a DNA "hit" from the current one year to two years, which should help ensure departments have time to assign, attempt to find involved persons, and get the information to prosecutors. Here is a [link](#) to the bill.

This week, the **House Public Safety Committee** had a short hearing aimed at what the committee should focus on once the session is completed. Our Policy Director, James McMahan, testified and I am including the link below- it's only a few minutes long but it summarizes some important messages for all of us- and it includes an "ask" for the committee and for all of us:

- We encourage elected legislators to focus not just on offenders, but to remember victims and those affected by crime;

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- We encourage legislators to help us build public trust and recognize that it is sometimes politically easy and popular to criticize and demonize law enforcement, but it does not move us forward. Engaging in the politically easy but divisive rhetoric has to stop.
- Law enforcement continues to be among the most respected professions, along with the military and small business. (Here are a few links with more details):

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/niallmccarthy/2016/03/31/americas-most-prestigious-professions-in-2016-infographic/#73d0a21d1926>

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/245597/nurses-again-outpace-professions-honesty-ethics.aspx>

- We strongly encourage legislators to learn about what law enforcement really does- **do a ride along, see what officers and deputies are facing**, and increase their understanding of the difference between the rhetoric and the real world.

So- please think about reaching out to your legislators to do just that once the session is over. Understanding that many of our legislators are already doing that, and some are current public safety professionals themselves, such as Rep. Klippert (Benton Co. Sheriff's Sgt) , Rep. Griffey (Firefighter), Rep. Irwin (Seattle PD) and Rep. Lovick (former Snohomish County Sheriff and State Trooper), increasing that understanding overall would be critical for us. Thanks in advance! Here is the [link](#).

A few weeks ago, I sent along a video of a hearing on homelessness, and I subsequently authored a column outlining the necessity to stop using law enforcement as a political football and to delineate between homeless persons and criminal transients. The column appeared this week in the Seattle Times and here is a [link](#).

Speaking of using law enforcement as a political football to the detriment of our profession and public safety, here is **one of the most egregious examples I have seen in a long time**. Minneapolis PD has seen more than its share of controversy, and their Mayor, looking for an applause line during a speech, announced he was prohibiting the police department from participating in "warrior" training, which he characterized as training that "encourages officers to believe they are always under threat". He forbade officers from going to this type of training even on their own time. He received the expected applause and political coverage.

This week, the Minneapolis police union, attempting to further politicize and defy the Mayor's announcement, held their own [announcement](#) to say they are sponsoring free training of this type for their members.

I bring this up because as we mourn the murder of a second law enforcement officer in our state in less than a month, we are seeing politicians and the union in another state using training as a political tool, all the while continuing to denigrate and reduce trust in law enforcement. **Training and officer safety are way too important to get caught up in this**. As we mentioned in the video link above to the House committee, there is too much positive

reinforcement politically in criticizing and demonizing law enforcement officers right now. Whatever your opinion of "warrior" style training, **in-service training and its content are the purview of Sheriffs and Chiefs in consultation with our community**- not politicians looking for applause and "likes" on social media. As we have demonstrated in our state, we can sit down with stakeholders, including community groups and law enforcement labor, and have a constructive conversation that results in more thoughtful policy.

Have a good week-

WORK HARD- HAVE FUN- STAY SAFE

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