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Washington Association of
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Wednesday, May 13, 2020

Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

RE: Request to Re-Suspend Personal Service of Protection Orders

Governor Inslee,

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC), and the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (WAPA) respectfully request that you again issue a proclamation to suspend the requirement that protection orders be personally served. This provides protections for victims and law enforcement during COVID-19.

WASPC and WAPA appreciate that you suspended the requirement for personal service in Proclamation 20-45. We understand that there were concerns with the due process of suspending the 14-day timeframe for protection orders. We hoped that despite the concerns, all parties would have signed the extension while the parties worked toward a long-term solution.

While we disagree with the failure to extend Proclamation 20-45, we also disagree that Proclamation 20-45 is an "all or nothing" proposition. We appreciate that Senator O'Ban and the Senate Republicans have offered a compromise. We support this compromise.

WAPA has communicated with elected prosecutors around the state and found that most prosecutors and their courts are already meeting the 14-day time period. Every Prosecutor we spoke to was in support of continuing to suspend personal service without continuing to suspend the 14 day hearing requirement. It strikes a balance by maintaining due process procedures for the protection order process, while returning the waiver of personal service that is so important for victims and law enforcement.

Law enforcement agencies are also in support. Law enforcement agencies are going to great lengths to reduce unnecessary physical contact between officers and members of the public. Not only is this consistent with your previous orders and public health guidance, it protects the safety of our officers.

A Proclamation from your office like Senator O'Ban's proposal would ensure safety for victims, maintain procedural safeguards, and protect law enforcement.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Strachan
Executive Director
WASPC

Russell Brown
Executive Director
WAPA