



June 2, 2020

From Your Executive Director:

*We express our condolences to Mr. Floyd's family, friends, loved ones and advocates. We support the full pursuit of justice in the investigation and prosecution of those responsible for his death.*

Our challenges get greater and require even more leadership, and I thank each of you for providing that leadership right now. You have myriad operational issues to handle, so out of full respect for your time, and in support of your communication with your community, this report provides the following:

- We are [attaching](#) a highlighted version of our "Principles for Community Trust", which includes this important section. This statement was adopted in January 2019- this is not in response to these protests, this has been our stated position for well over a year.

*WASPC acknowledges that implicit and institutional bias and discrimination exist in all aspects of society: criminal justice, education, housing, health care, finance, and more. We will work in concert with policy makers and others to make systemic improvements to understand, reduce and control the implicit and institutional biases and barriers that inhibit every person's success.*

- Here are [examples](#) of statements from fellow Chiefs and Sheriffs on the tragic murder of George Floyd. There has been universal and prompt condemnation of the appalling action by the officer, and the inaction taken by his fellow officers, including from [WASPC](#) last Wednesday.

Our State's Sheriffs and Chiefs, through WASPC, supported and worked with community groups to come to agreement on groundbreaking reforms to deadly force law, de-escalation training, and support of the guardian concept as advocated in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing report, which are supported by our department accreditation process. **There is much more work to do, and we are here as partners.**

Also, kudos to Bellevue Chief Steve Mylett- here is the story from [KOMO](#).

Finally, so many of our Sheriffs and Chiefs have shared their condemnation of what happened in Minneapolis, but I really appreciated the heartfelt message this week from Hoquiam Chief Jeff Myers, who is also the Chair of the Criminal Justice Training Commission. He has expressed what so many of us are feeling. I am including it, edited for brevity, here:

## *A PROMISE TO OUR CITIZENS FROM THE CHIEF- ABOUT MINNEAPOLIS...*

*I have had the honor of being the Chief of Police for the City of Hoquiam for 14 years. During my 32-years in law enforcement, I learned the value of community policing and how it is our job as peace officers to help make the community stronger; because a strong community is a safe community.*

*The video I watched this week from Minneapolis, and asked each of our department members to watch, with three Minneapolis officers holding down a handcuffed African-American man on the pavement next to a patrol car, with one officer with his knee on George Floyd's neck for eight minutes until Mr. Floyd died, was one of the most disturbing things I have ever witnessed.*

*I commend the swift action of the Minneapolis police chief in terminating all four officers- either because they participated in this use of force, or because they failed to stop it.*

*But there is no way to rationalize, justify, explain or comprehend the actions of the Minneapolis officers, especially the white officer who held Mr. Floyd down with his knee on his neck, until he died. This was not proper police procedure; this was not an acceptable application of training; this was not justified; and this was not humane.*

*In my experience working and living here as a peace officer, I have seen many things. I have experienced trauma personally, witnessed trauma to our officers and shared in the trauma to the citizens and families we work so hard to serve every day. We see every aspect of the impact of crime, to include dealing with the suspect through the criminal justice system and trying to console victims and their families.*

*There have been so many incidents over the years that I am at a loss today to often understand why human beings treat others the way we do. The actions of the Minneapolis officers being yet another.*

*Police officers are people and we get it wrong sometimes. But in the millions of interactions between officers and citizens each day in this country, most of the time we get it right- things like this (thankfully) do not happen.*

*But yet again, it has happened. Now this incident in Minneapolis, compounded by rioting, looting and arson, just drives another wedge between the people who wear a badge and the people we try so hard to serve.*

*We are not at war with our community. We have a job to do, often a job no one else wants to do, and we do it to the best of our ability every day, night, holiday and weekend of the year. As peace officers, we understand no one likes to get a traffic ticket and being arrested can be humiliating. Our actions cause some people not to like us- we get it and we live with it because we believe we are serving the community and helping to make it stronger by taking a unified stance against crime, violence, disorder and disregard for the law.*

*We enforce the laws your elected representatives pass. We understand sometimes people don't like it- that is okay. What is not okay is what happened this week in Minneapolis. The actions of*

*one white police officer against one handcuffed citizen of color will resonate across our country for years to come.*

*Albeit thousands of miles for Hoquiam, it makes a difference here too. The actions of this officer, and his apparent disregard and disrespect for basic human life, has damaged the relationship between the community and the police as well as endangered the lives of every peace officer because we rely on the voluntary cooperation and support of citizens. Without your support, we are not safe. We cannot do this job without you.*

*As the Chief of Police for the Hoquiam Police Department, I am proud to hold our department to the highest standards of professional law enforcement. We are an accredited agency through the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs and we are constantly learning, training and improving. Our next re-accreditation inspection is in 2021.*

*We conduct annual management reviews, to include every use of force incident involving our officers (which is defined as any force beyond compliant handcuffing) as well as impartial policing as reflected in the enforcement action we take. We review all enforcement, to include civil drug seizures and forfeitures, to make sure no race, ethnicity, age, gender or other protected class is being targeted or singled-out.*

*All of our leadership team, including the deputy chief, our five sergeants and our office manager lead by example and make sure we are doing the right things for the right reasons every shift of every day. Our department members have grown up in a culture to understand there is a difference between what we 'CAN DO' and what we 'SHOULD DO'.*

*I only wish for Mr. Floyd, his family, the citizens of Minneapolis as well as the men and women of the Minneapolis Police Department, on Monday these four officers would have recognized the same. I am confident they will be held accountable for their actions.*

*- JEFF MYERS, Chief of Police*

***I wish you all the best as we work through this unprecedented time with our communities and our teams.***

***Stay Safe- Steve***

**Steven D. Strachan, Executive Director**  
Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs