



Washington Association of  
**SHERIFFS &  
POLICE CHIEFS**

3060 Willamette Drive NE  
Lacey, WA 98516  
360-486-2380 (Phone)  
360-486-2381 (Fax)  
www.waspc.org

**President**  
Chief Craig Meidl  
City of Spokane

FOR RELEASE  
March 5, 2021

**President-Elect**  
Sheriff Rick Scott  
Grays Harbor County

Statement attribution:  
Steven D. Strachan, Executive Director

**Vice President**  
Chief Steve Crown  
City of Wenatchee

**WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS AND POLICE CHIEFS  
STATEMENT**

**Past President**  
Sheriff John Snaza  
Thurston County

**Treasurer**  
Chief Brett Vance  
City of Montesano

**Executive Board**  
Chief John Batiste  
Washington State Patrol

Chief Gary Jenkins  
City of Pullman

Sheriff Mitzi Johanknecht  
King County

Sheriff Tom Jones  
Grant County

Chief Darrell Lowe  
City of Redmond

Chief Rafael Padilla  
City of Kent

Sheriff James Raymond  
Franklin County

Director David Trujillo  
Washington State  
Gambling Commission

Don Voiret, SAC  
FBI—Seattle

Steven D. Strachan  
Executive Director

(Lacey, WA) – The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) today reaffirmed its commitment to police reform measures that focus on increasing public trust, protecting victims, and improving public safety. We want to build on our record of supporting programs that, when appropriate, divert people away from the criminal justice system and toward behavioral health, mental health, and addiction services. The Washington Legislature is more than halfway through its 2021 session and WASPC is urging lawmakers to support measures that ensure the right balance of reforms with good, engaged policing.

The legalization of controlled substances without substantial commitments to build and fund the infrastructure to address the root causes of addiction represent the worst of both worlds. Last week’s Washington Supreme Court ruling (State v Blake) has taken away one of the primary means the Legislature gave law enforcement to handle calls for service where drugs and addiction are involved. It is now up to the Legislature to decide what efforts will be made to respond to the decision and to combat substance use disorder, including simple possession, use, and the victimization and criminal behavior that can be associated with supporting addiction.

While we are deeply troubled by the Court’s ruling, the Legislature now has an opportunity to make meaningful improvements to help those who need help. At the very least, the Legislature should take action to address the constitutionality of the simple possession statute. The Legislature, however, should not stop there. We ask our policy makers to take this opportunity to also make prevention, intervention, and treatment services as readily available in the community as drugs may be.

As the legislature starts to consider the next biennial budget we ask them to ensure support for robust programs that help get people into treatment and support and enhance public safety in our communities. Drug courts, mental health courts, and programs administered by WASPC including [Mental Health Field Response](#), and [Arrest and Jail Alternatives Program](#) are examples of solutions that work.

Community expectations are urgent, and we need to provide outcomes that balance reform and public safety. These are conversations and changes that cannot wait, and it is our collective responsibility to get it right. We will work to bring communities together and continue to be committed to the best possible outcomes for community

***Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington***

expectations and public safety.

###

*About WASPC:*

WASPC was founded in 1963 and consists of executive and top management personnel from law enforcement agencies statewide. With more than 900 members it includes the 39 elected county sheriffs, and 240 police chiefs, as well as the Washington State Patrol, the Washington Department of Corrections, and representatives of Tribal and federal agencies.

WASPC is the only association of its kind in the nation combining representatives from local, state, tribal, and federal law enforcement into a single body, working toward a common goal. WASPC's function is to provide specific materials and services to all law enforcement agencies in the state, members, and non-members alike.