

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

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Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington

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Greetings from your Executive Director:

In the last newsletter I mentioned we would be participating in an informational panel in the legislature on **issues related to homelessness**- here is a link to the [testimony](#) which features Spokane Chief Craig Meidl, Kent PD Commander Mike O'Reilly and Officer Joe Mello, and Auburn Chief William Pierson.

If you'd like to see the entire one-hour panel which includes a Seattle University professor who has written against "punishing homelessness" and city and county government representatives, here is that [link](#).

I authored a column on our view that any response to homelessness needs to **separate those who will accept help from criminal transients** who prey on vulnerable people. It should be published next week.

The legislative session marches on, and the remarkably high volume of bills continue to be s-l-o-w-l-y reduced. Our Policy Director, James McMahan, has passed along a few **bills that have "died" as of now:**

A bill that would have significantly limited the Liquor and Cannabis Board's authority to enforce recreational marijuana licensee's compliance (and eliminate their authority to enforce criminal law against their licensees);

- The bill to decriminalize Driving While License Suspended 3;
- The bill to study jails' use of mandatory overtime;
- The bill banning marijuana billboards;
- The bill that would have allowed digital license plates;
- The bill to allow microbreweries to sell wine;
- The bill to allow animal control officers to carry firearms;
- The bill to allow motorcycles to overtake another vehicle in the same lane;
- The bill to expand the DUI lookback from 10 years to 15 years;
- The bill to allow beer and wine licensees to serve spirits; and
- The 50% good time bill.

Keep in mind that bills are only truly done once the Legislature actually adjourns. At least one of these (50% good time) will come back with the budget bills later.

I have also attached a [letter](#) we sent to members of the House regarding our **opposition to SB 5288, which would remove Robbery in the 2nd Degree from offenses leading to a "Third**

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Strike” life conviction. Our Policy Director, James McMahan, testified that many of the 2nd Degree Robbery convictions were, in fact, more serious and violent offenses, frequently involving a weapon. The committee asked for facts to back that up, and here they are. It is apparent that while there is an impression that some Third Strike offenders got “caught up” in a technicality while committing a relatively minor offense, the facts show otherwise in many cases. If there is a specific case where the facts and the life sentence do not match the severity of the Third Strike outcome, there is already a remedy for that situation- the Clemency and Pardons Board, which can hear those facts and recommend clemency to the Governor. The Governor has granted clemency in some of those cases already. The conversation about justice and making sure people don’t get “caught up” in the Third Strike sentencing laws when it is not appropriate is worthwhile, but we need to make sure we focus on facts and specific cases.

You may have seen this [article](#) this week, or hear other references to **efforts in California to significantly change the use of force law** in that state:

The article is like many others that uses loaded language and repeats rhetoric that divides and confuses the issue. The story uses the phrase “the proposal would allow officers to kill only if there is no reasonable alternative”, implying that we all want to kill people and are held back only by pesky laws. The last sentence also contains a quote from the legislative author, who says, “Hopefully we won’t be dealing with the issue of people being unarmed and shot.” This proposal in California is a product of the narrative that has now become widely accepted that no one who is unarmed can be dangerous, ever, and that law enforcement has a supernatural ability to determine in a split second, and in the dark, whether there is a weapon, whether it is real, and what the person means to do with it. Our speaker at the Spokane WASPC conference coming up, Missy O’Linn, is an attorney well versed in these issues and will be exploring this dynamic and how best for us to plan for and respond to the rapidly changing public and legal environment.

At the Chelan conference last year, we had Dr. Bryant Marks speak about implicit bias- just a reminder that if you wish to send any of your folks to Dr. Marks’ upcoming appearance in Moses Lake, the registration deadline is May 1- the information is [here](#). If you or your team have not seen him, I highly encourage it. Remember that registration is free for you and your department employees:

Have a great weekend-

WORK HARD- HAVE FUN- STAY SAFE

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