**FOR RELEASE**

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CONTACT:

Steven D. Strachan

Executive Director, WASPC

(360) 486-2380

**WASHINGTON LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENICES WORKING HARD TO SOLVE CRIMES**

**REPORT SHOWS SLIGHT OVERALL DECREASE STATEWIDE**

(Lacey, WA) – Overall crime in Washington state went down slightly in 2018 according to a report released this week by the [Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC)](https://www.waspc.org/waspc) . The annual report tracks crime and arrest data from contributing law enforcement agencies throughout Washington.

The [*Crime in Washington 2018*](https://waspc.memberclicks.net/assets/CJIS/Crime%20In%20Washington%202018-small.pdf) report is compiled data from state, county, municipal, and tribal agencies and is published in conjunction with the FBI, which will compile and release national data based upon state reports later this year. The report is designed to give citizens, elected officials, and law enforcement data-driven evidence about crime in their communities.

“Our state’s law enforcement officers continue to run into the most dangerous situations and resolve nearly all of them peaceably and quickly,” said Steve Strachan, WASPC executive director.  “We work every day to improve training and community trust and these statistics show why we also need to balance that with an appreciation of what officers are facing and the critical and necessary work they do.”

Crimes against persons, property and society are the three primary categories in the report. Together, these “Group A” offenses were down a total of 0.7 percent from the previous year. Crimes against persons were up 4.3 percent; crimes against property were down 3.3 percent and crimes against society increased 6.9 percent. More than 7 percent of crimes indicated drug or alcohol usage during the commission of the crime.

A summary of the 582-page report shows law enforcement works hard to prevent and solve crimes in every community. For example: domestic violence made up 49.1 percent of crimes against persons; juveniles comprise 6.4 percent of total arrests and more than 28,489 persons were arrested for DUI. With just over 11,000 sworn law enforcement officers in Washington, there were a total of 1,688 assaults on officers in 2018, two of which were killed in the line of duty.

Notable trends from this year’s report include:

* **There were 1,688 assaults against law enforcement officers reported in 2018, 105 of which resulted in injuries to the officers or deputies.  Assaults against officers have been increasing each year and are up 40 percent since 2014.**
* **In 2018, 8,414 people were in possession of weapons when arrested by law enforcement officers, 2,592 of whom had a firearm. There was a total of 182,715 arrests in 2018.**
* **Murders were up 5 percent in 2018 and have increased 37 percent since 2014.**
* **8.2 percent of murders were committed by suspects who were “unarmed,” using only hands, fists, and feet.**
* **Violent crime increased 16 percent between 2017 and 2018, which includes murder, forcible sex offenses, robbery and aggravated assault.  Over half of these crimes were committed against female victims.**
* **There were 534 hate crime incidents reported in 2018, the three most common types of which were intimidation, simple assault and destruction of property.  This was a .6% increase over last year.  Training and policies continue to be improved and developed to recognize and properly investigate hate crimes.**
* **For the past eight years, Washington State ranks 51st out of 51 states (when Washington, DC is included) in the number of sworn law enforcement officers per 1,000 residents.**

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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 several 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.