



Washington Association of  
**SHERIFFS &  
POLICE CHIEFS**

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**December 19, 2023**

**Greetings from your Executive Director:**

I know it's almost the holidays, but I do have a few things to send your way this week- and I would start off by mentioning a comment that U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland said this week at a violent crime conference. It summarizes well a great message we can all agree on and one I would hope all of our legislators can support:

"... every person deserves to feel protected, and violent crime undermines safety while destroying people's trust in government and each other."

- Attorney General Merrick Garland

We don't often focus on federal issues, but I will stay in that area to pass along a [letter](#) we sent this week, with Board approval, to our Congressional delegation. [HR 1525](#) would severely limit asset forfeitures and is opposed by HIDTA, the Major City Chiefs, Major County Sheriffs and National Sheriffs Associations. We will let you know how that progresses.

Last week, we sent out a [GTWO](#) with information on a WA House hearing on crime trends. Some of you have asked about James' PowerPoint- [here it is](#) and feel free to use it any way you wish. Also, [here](#) is the most current data on auto thefts in our state.

This week, we sent out postings for the [Asst. Director of Professional Services](#) and WATPA (WA Auto theft Prevention Authority) [Director](#). Mike Painter, who has been involved and expanded these programs in his time here at WASPC, retires this spring and he is definitely leaving a tremendous legacy for our association and our profession. I have been privileged to work with Mike both here at WASPC and in my time at Kent P.D,

If you manage a jail, here is some information particularly related to a [letter](#) you received from CJTC about Corrections Officers Academies. There is ongoing concern, not only from smaller jails but all facilities, about the backlog and delays in getting COs into required training, and we continue to communicate that we need additional capacity sooner than later.

In 2022, the Legislature created a Taskforce to determine if there should be changes made to the current local jail standards model. This was a very diverse taskforce made up of advocate groups, legislators and two jail managers representing WASPC. Assisting the coordinating staff from the *Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington*

Washington Attorney General's Office, was WASPC's Jail Liaison Ric Bishop and Jail Program Manager Curt Lutz (both non-voting members).

The group met several times, toured several facilities in the state and took public comments on the work. On December 1, 2023, the Taskforce published its [recommendations](#). The recommendations may be viewed as sweeping, expensive and potentially devastating if adopted in their entirety and left to local agencies to fund out of existing resources.

WASPC supports changes that provide a safe environment for those incarcerated in, working in, and visiting local jails. Our main message, however, is that any changes or standards must not create an unfunded mandate on local taxpayers, must be achievable, and must support putting people in jail who threaten our community safety. We expect there will be more bills this session with mandates and well-intended but unworkable requirements. The bottom line is we need to have the facilities, staffing, training and capacity to keep dangerous people off the streets and bring justice to victims. We will keep pushing for increased capacity for training, and getting the legislature to help with jail staffing and facilities instead of focusing on task forces loaded with advocacy groups who too often ignore victims of crime.

Finally, all of us at WASPC want to wish you and your families a very happy and safe holiday season. It is our honor to serve you. Personally, this time of year I always think back to those families and community members who would bring in food for those of us in patrol who would be working the holidays, and it is a reminder of how much you and your teams are valued as you ensure public safety all over our state- thank you!

Stay Safe- Steve, and all of us at WASPC