



LAW AND JUSTICE DAY: FEBRUARY 6, 2024 • 9:00 AM • COLUMBIA ROOM

RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT FUNDING

2022 was the 13th consecutive year that Washington State had the fewest number of law enforcement officers per capita, ranking 51st in the nation according to FBI data. Washington is falling further behind, with a net loss of 565 officers in the past two years alone. Having too few officers has direct impacts on preventing crime, limits de-escalation, and increases the likelihood of the use of force. Washington relies too much on the use of mandatory overtime, resulting in tired officers running call to call. De-escalation requires teaming up and slowing down.

WASPC seeks to secure ongoing state funding to retain current officers and recruit and retain additional law enforcement officers. Further, WASPC would like to include sufficient state funding for other criminal justice partners—jails, prosecutors, public defenders, judges, clerks, etc.

VEHICULAR PURSUITS

The 2021 Legislature enacted HB 1054 which, among other things, established counterproductive restrictions on vehicular pursuits. As a direct result, an environment of emboldened criminals has been created and led to reduced public safety and reduced respect for the rule of law in Washington. Data shows that vehicular pursuits have declined nominally, while vehicles fleeing detention have increased exponentially. Legislation enacted in the 2023 session was necessary, but insufficient to address this public safety problem.

WASPC seeks to modify RCW 10.116.060 to enact a balancing test where the risks of the pursuit cannot exceed the risks of the reason(s) for the pursuit. *NOTE: WASPC does not seek to allow for pursuits for any reason or under any circumstance.*

JUVENILE ACCESS TO ATTORNEY

The 2021 Legislature enacted HB 1140, which requires law enforcement officers to connect a juvenile with an attorney prior to any waiver of constitutional rights. This law fails to recognize the constitutional rights of juveniles, the role of parents/guardians, and has prevented juveniles from providing exculpatory information to law enforcement officers. Further, this law had led to fewer opportunities to divert from arrest. Data comparing adult and juvenile arrests for 2021 and 2022 show that juveniles arrests increased 35%, compared to only a 6% increase in adult arrests.

WASPC seeks to modify RCW 13.40.740 to:

- 1. Allow juveniles to provide an exculpatory statement;**
- 2. Clarify that juvenile victims and witnesses are not required to consult an attorney before cooperating with law enforcement; and**
- 3. Prohibit telephonic attorneys from asserting or waiving a juvenile’s rights without the juvenile’s consent.**

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