



Washington Association of  
**SHERIFFS &  
POLICE CHIEFS**

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Steven D. Strachan  
Executive Director

**June 8, 2022**

**Greetings from your Executive Director:**

It was good to see many of you recently at our Spring Conference and we appreciate your continued engagement- congratulations to our newly elected officers: President Chief Steve Crown of Wenatchee, President-elect Sheriff Tom Jones of Grant County, Treasurer Chief Brett Jones of Montesano, Vice President Chief Darrell Lowe of Redmond PD, Sheriff-at-Large Brad Thurman of Cowlitz County, and Chief-at-Large Rafael Padilla of Kent PD.

As we discussed at the Conference, we are excited to announce the beginning of outstanding leadership training opportunities resulting from several years of discussion and inquiry by your Training and Education Committee and supported by the Executive Board. Watch for our “Get The Word Out” communication on June 14th that is when we will launch our online leadership training program with instructions on how you can get all personnel in your agency signed up.

Model Policy – Use of Force

We sent out a GTWO a while back on the [proposed draft language from the Attorney General’s Office](#) regarding the Model Use of Force policies. Many of you have reviewed and sent comments, and here is a reminder that they are due by June 9. The AG’s office intends to finalize these, as required by the statute, by July 1. We encourage you to take a look, and I want to bring you up to date on our communications and work on this issue.

We have had the document reviewed by three experienced defensive tactics instructors, two of whom are experienced “train the trainer” master patrol tactics instructors who do I-940 de-escalation training, and who are strongly committed to the concepts of de-escalation and the sanctity of human life.

They have provided feedback, which we have communicated to the Attorney General's Office, which includes:

- The document is too long, is often redundant, includes areas that should be in training and procedures documents, and most concerning, is often confusing and contradictory.
- The trainers have advised they would recommend their respective agencies not adopt the policy, and they felt very comfortable in providing specific reasons why it would/should not be adopted.
- The policies should be much more focused on the language of the statute, which is already being trained by many agencies. Adding ambiguous and extraneous elements is not helpful.

It is worth noting that the Attorney General's Office has offered to meet with our staff and the defensive tactics instructors. WASPC will follow up in more detail with the AG and with our staff the week of June 13. Again, I do encourage you to also provide your perspective and that of your agency on this important issue. I know the staff at the Attorney General's Office have been receptive and have taken the time to meet stakeholders and hear more, so that is worth mentioning and underlines the importance of providing the input.

Finally, be aware that the model policy, however it is released, is one that by statute your agency must either adopt or provide an explanation of why your policies differ. This is similar to the requirement for the policy created by the Keep Washington Working law a few years ago.

### Pursuits, Auto Thefts

Last week, [this story](#) was published regarding the ongoing problems with the environment created by the overly restrictive pursuit law. KHQ in Spokane did [this story](#) on the problem, and I also did an interview on [KIRO Radio](#) that starts at 21:30 on this podcast version. We continue to work to change the law to a more balanced approach next session, and I know you are working to best provide public safety within these present constraints. WASPC will hold a webinar Thursday, June 9 from 2:30-4:00 PM about one-time funds available from the Auto Theft Prevention Authority this year that will provide grants for equipment to reduce auto theft in your community.

### **Auto Theft Grant Concepts**

**Thursday, June 9, from 1430-1600.** [Click here to register.](#)

### Voices of support for public safety

Seattle Times columnist Danny Westneat authored [this example](#) of how reckless reform has produced unintended and counterproductive outcomes. Nationally, [here is a story](#) from the New York Times about a recall effort involving the prosecutor in San Francisco. Tuesday the prosecutor was recalled by voters in a landslide. In the story, a former deputy in his office who is supporting the recall says, *“He of course ran on a platform of reform, and reform is necessary in the criminal justice system. But you have to be able to balance that with your primary obligation of maintaining public safety.”* Well said.

Speaking of well said, [here is a story](#) about Snohomish County's Mayors working together, across party lines, to express support for paying full attention to our public safety crisis, along with a commentary from the [Everett newspaper](#).

There has been a lot of attention to staffing in law enforcement, and our CJIS department has already posted some updated numbers on staffing statewide that is current up to 2021, and has historical data back to 1980. It can be found [here](#): go down to “Full Time Law Enforcement Employees 1980-2021” for a searchable spreadsheet.

Finally, here is a brief synopsis for a series of incidents in and around Gig Harbor, sent along from Chief Kelly Busey, that illustrate the current set of challenges to provide justice for victims, and points to the need for a more balanced approach by our policy makers. This example sort of “has it all”:

*On Saturday, we took the report of a stolen Jeep from within the city limits. Later, that same Jeep fled the scene of a purse theft while someone was working at the community garden located within Wilkinson Park.*

*The State Patrol happened to have an aircraft in the area and located the Jeep as it entered Kitsap County. Kitsap County Deputies engaged in a brief pursuit, but since the occupants of the Jeep were “only” involved in property crimes, they were not able to continue the pursuit by law.*

*The aircraft operators did observe the passenger in the Jeep throw the stolen purse out the window during the chase and it was later recovered for the victim.*

*The plane continued to track the Jeep until it came to a stop back in Pierce County. Our officer went to that location and the occupants fled into the woods. The officer located a male and female a short distance away laying in the brush.*

*Both were taken into custody. Both also had fentanyl pills on their person, but these were not arrestable offenses under current law.*

*The female admitted to the purse theft and implicated the male in the theft of the Jeep. Due to Covid booking restrictions at the Pierce County Jail, both subjects were given a drug referral card and released at the scene pending a potential summons for theft.*

Again, I thank each of you for all you do and the leadership you provide as we move forward!

Stay Safe- Steve

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