



February 21, 2024

Greetings from your Executive Director:

First this week, [here](#) is an article that is very important for each of us to take to heart. Chris Littrell (ret) of Kennewick PD tells his story of wellness challenges, thoughts of suicide and the journey he took to get through it and, as he says, save his life. A critical element of that journey is the response, support and environment established by his agency and Chief Chris Guerrero.

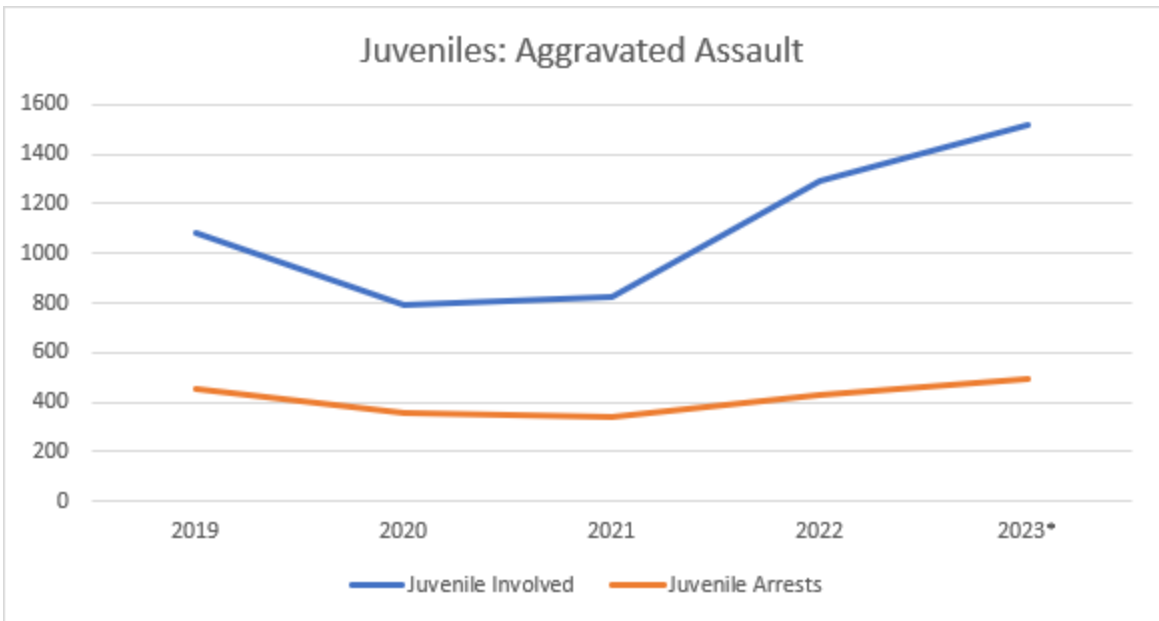
I ask you to read the article and be willing to ask if you and your agency are able to offer the same support, and ask your team if they would feel as comfortable asking for it.

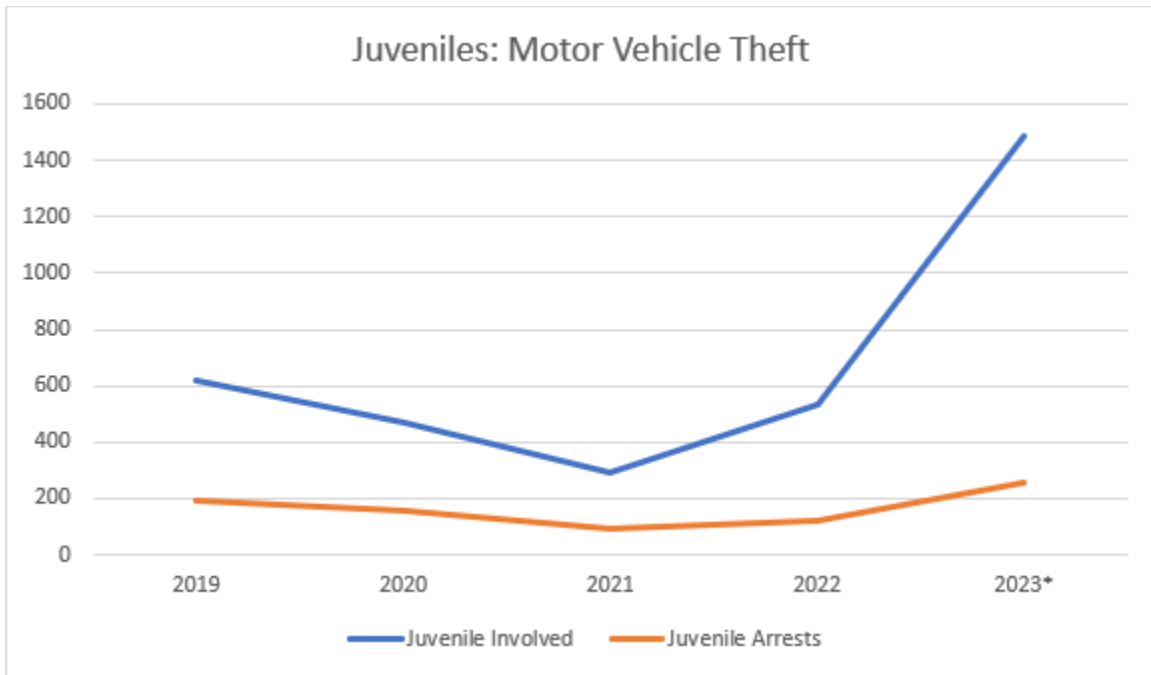
The article points out the importance of Sheriffs and Chiefs in ensuring that our teams do not feel “administrative betrayal”. Please know WASPC and our wellness coordinators, [Jamie Weimer](#) and [Terrina Peterson](#) and I are all here to help make sure you have the resources you need to provide the leadership demonstrated in this instance by Chief Guerrero. We are all in this together.

The legislative session has moved quickly past the halfway point and more of the “cutoff” dates (where bills will no longer be part of the process) and the sheer number of bills under consideration have narrowed considerably. We provide a comprehensive update on many of these bills are at our Friday webinar. Here are few updates on these and other topics:

A few weeks ago, we sent out a Clark County case where a peer support debriefing was found to be non-confidential in a court ruling, which concerns the ability of these important debriefings to continue to have value for officer wellness. We have worked with key legislators to possibly address the issue in a bill that contains other provisions regarding officer wellness. The House unanimously passed [HB 2311](#), which includes these necessary changes. Here is a [link](#) to the remarks on the House floor from the bill author, Rep. Lauren Davis, as well as other key legislators who worked on this bill. The remarks are worth hearing, including one statement from Rep. Davis who, when talking about first responders and the challenges they face, says “when others are running from gunfire, they run toward it.” It is a good reminder that while we have many challenges, there are many of our legislators are working hard to support law enforcement and the work you do. We appreciate them and are honored to work with them.

This week KOMO-TV [did a story](#) about the Seattle case where a 12 and 13 year old committed an armed carjacking and were involved in a pursuit. The story does a good job of highlighting the perverse effects of the broadly-written juvenile access to attorney law, and how it is contributing to increased crime involving juveniles. [Here are some data](#), running from 2019-2023, showing the increases in homicides, assaults, and auto theft involving juveniles and also the widening gap between juvenile involvement and juvenile arrests. This data reflects what we are seeing out there, and a law intended to “protect” juveniles is contributing to more being involved in serious crime while less are being held accountable or getting any kind of intervention. 2023 data is preliminary:





This week, KHQ-TV in Spokane did an [interview](#) with Spokane County Sheriff (and WASPC Vice President) John Nowels about recent high-profile incidents, overall trends, and better solutions to community problems. It is several minutes long but I highly recommend taking a look- great community communication and a balanced approach to bring the community together and stand up for public safety.

Many of you who attended our Law and Justice Day were able to meet WASPC's new Assistant Director of Professional Services, Randy Maynard, who recently retired from the Kennewick Police Department. Randy will be working with Professional Services Director David Doll on accreditation, LEMAPs, and training and development. Also, beginning in April our new Executive Director of the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA) will be Bryan Jeter, former Chief in Bonney Lake and Puyallup. Bryan will be working with current ED Mike Painter until Mike's retirement later this spring. Here is the [2023 WATPA Annual Report](#). Welcome Randy and Bryan!

Finally, Walla Walla Sheriff Mark Crider has indicated that he is willing to coordinate an alternative to our pre-conference golf tournament on Monday, May 20. The event would be a sporting Clays shoot at Landt Farms on the north side of Spokane – if you are interested and may want to participate please let the Sheriff know at mcrider@co.walla-walla.wa.us or let me know. We appreciate the Sheriff working on an alternative for those of you who do not golf or would prefer this option!

Have a safe week- Steve