**May 6, 2022**

**Greetings from your Executive Director:**

First this week, we sent out a GTWO yesterday advising you that the Supreme Court did suspend the changes to juvenile court records that would have created significant public safety issues.  [Here](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwaspc.memberclicks.net%2Fmessage2%2Flink%2F68c10ebd-190b-4f1d-946e-9cb48d794c07%2F2&data=05%7C01%7Crharwood%40waspc.org%7Ca7bbffd5253a4d59718108da2faf0a3d%7C34d6dce08ae04697a70d42aa839a729c%7C0%7C0%7C637874726085971861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=MEMKd7FsoiFRoFlWNEBCnADMRx6cB4xBGbRF5xELkhg%3D&reserved=0) is a copy of the letter we sent to the Court and [here](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwaspc.memberclicks.net%2Fmessage2%2Flink%2F68c10ebd-190b-4f1d-946e-9cb48d794c07%2F3&data=05%7C01%7Crharwood%40waspc.org%7Ca7bbffd5253a4d59718108da2faf0a3d%7C34d6dce08ae04697a70d42aa839a729c%7C0%7C0%7C637874726085971861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=iNPotJeEdoFo73qR%2B1gtTgJa%2FHRg%2F%2BTPf5Pxf6s2YaM%3D&reserved=0) is the Order from the Court itself.  We will keep you in the loop as this issue moves forward.

After the most recent census, I was redistricted into a new state legislative district and found a flyer hanging on doors in my neighborhood this past weekend.  It was from the Senate incumbent and they wanted to introduce themselves and ask if residents had “any input” on the past session and what they should do as they run for re-election this fall.  While I have not had the chance to speak to the Senator, this is what flashed through my mind:  our elected leaders fumbled away opportunities for constructive changes for public safety, law enforcement, and improving public trust.  They chose reactive and reckless experimentation, passed laws that ignored valid concerns from law enforcement, went to the extremes instead of bringing people together, and have done long term damage to public safety.  These have led to real outcomes for peoples’ lives.   Then, when they saw what they did, tried to “fix” some of it but in a fractured and overly political way, and we continue to see the results.

Our elected leaders need to consistently support public safety and good policing.  We need improved behavioral health systems and more police, not less.  Washington State is still 51st in the nation in staffing, and I guarantee that will get worse when we get our numbers for 2021.  Crime keeps going up and people are genuinely concerned.  Public safety is a core function of government.  My message to my new legislator?  Quite frankly, this is not a game.  Be less political and more thoughtful.  Our communities deserve it.

Speaking of legislation, [here](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwaspc.memberclicks.net%2Fmessage2%2Flink%2F68c10ebd-190b-4f1d-946e-9cb48d794c07%2F4&data=05%7C01%7Crharwood%40waspc.org%7Ca7bbffd5253a4d59718108da2faf0a3d%7C34d6dce08ae04697a70d42aa839a729c%7C0%7C0%7C637874726085971861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=0kZnfMqJCMxsk%2FVyxPG8WDv6HKVeW%2Fbh27fiUBNaXW8%3D&reserved=0) is an article from New Jersey about how legislators have quickly made changes to their recent pursuit restrictions after seeing a rapid rise in car thefts.  In that state, they saw a 37% increase last year.  You may remember that as of last month, our state was up 88% over last year.

Here is the big picture:  We work for the best public safety policy, period.  Too many agencies are experiencing reduced staffing, higher crime, and the environment of emboldened criminals.  Our elected leaders can find constructive ways to change that by:

* supporting increased staffing to implement safer outcomes, de-escalation, and reduced crime;
* fixing the overly restrictive pursuit law;
* finding a common sense solution to the Blake decision that includes incentives to get people into treatment, and,
* providing [behavioral health and treatment support](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwaspc.memberclicks.net%2Fmessage2%2Flink%2F68c10ebd-190b-4f1d-946e-9cb48d794c07%2F5&data=05%7C01%7Crharwood%40waspc.org%7Ca7bbffd5253a4d59718108da2faf0a3d%7C34d6dce08ae04697a70d42aa839a729c%7C0%7C0%7C637874726085971861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=cV%2B0pX4B9xc%2BJjUG59A7XmfGLWyNkSseIdF%2BVK%2FapvI%3D&reserved=0) to get people off safe and off the street.

All of these things require bipartisan leadership and the leadership of Sheriffs and Chiefs, and that is why we are here.

Puyallup Chief Scott Engle shared this [presentation](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwaspc.memberclicks.net%2Fmessage2%2Flink%2F68c10ebd-190b-4f1d-946e-9cb48d794c07%2F6&data=05%7C01%7Crharwood%40waspc.org%7Ca7bbffd5253a4d59718108da2faf0a3d%7C34d6dce08ae04697a70d42aa839a729c%7C0%7C0%7C637874726085971861%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=FBMmsaSOP8JxlTau5FPKhU9PZs4bsDxIRoWe3I%2FaNwQ%3D&reserved=0) he provided to his City Council recently.  It is a good example of transparent communication with local leaders.  Chief Engle also wrote to his Council and his agency:

In the midst of very challenging times, one must also see the good.  The good for us in Puyallup is our officers are still trying.  They are still out there attempting to apprehend criminals, maintain law and order, keep the peace, and help people where we can.  Candidly, I have never ever seen something like this in my career.  It has never ever, ever been harder to be a police officer than right now.  We are fortunate to have folks still answering the call and serving our community.  Some days it’s overwhelming for our officers, the amount of crime and complete disregard for the law that is occurring, but we keep pushing forward to do all we legally can to fight crime, build trust, and help people- our department goals for 2022.

Our department continues to adjust our resource deployment, utilize technology, and seek justice for victims of crimes as our main means of addressing the rising crime in our community.  These are the things we can control as there are many things occurring right now contributing to the rise of crime that are definitely out of our control.

Finally, I encourage all of you to go on a ride-along with our officers.  We always welcome your interest and support.

Great message from the Chief and I could not say it any better.  Thanks to each of you for all you do, and see you at the May Conference!

Stay safe - Steve