



Washington Association of  
**SHERIFFS &  
POLICE CHIEFS**

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Statement attributable to:  
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Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs

**STATEMENT ON FUNDING FOR MORE POLICE OFFICERS**

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) applauds Governor Ferguson for delivering his pledge to provide grant funding for the hiring of more law enforcement officers in Washington State, and local options for ongoing funding. Governor Ferguson has signed HB 2015 into law and, along with the \$100 million he secured in the budget, it represents a significant first step toward increasing the number of law enforcement officers in Washington.

WASPC was pleased to see so many legislative proposals this year seeking to provide state support to hire more local law enforcement officers, including SB 5060 (Holy), HB 1435 (Abell), HB 1095 (Walen), HB 1428 (Rule), SB 5285 (Holy), HB 1436 (Abell), and HB 1896 (Abell). WASPC appreciates those legislators who sponsored and supported measures that would have had a more direct impact on law enforcement officers and public safety staffing.

While we recognize the positive elements of HB 2015, it is not "\$100 million for law enforcement hiring". In its final form and after many revisions, HB 2015 would actually allow the full \$100 million of the state budget to be spent without hiring a single new officer. HB 2015 is, however, a significant step in the right direction, in light of the Legislature's refusal to enact similar proposals in recent years.

If a community chooses to implement a local sales tax increase allowed by this bill, hiring may include not only law enforcement officers and behavioral health professionals, but also devote funds to emergency management planning, environmental hazard mitigation, security personnel, community outreach and assistance programs, alternative response programs, and mental health crisis response. The legislation also requires applicants to comply with reporting and training programs that have not been implemented by the state.

WASPC will work closely with law enforcement leaders across our state to monitor how these hurdles and challenges may be overcome, and to do all we can to work to meaningfully increase law enforcement staffing. Increased staffing is key to de-escalation, supervision, training, wellness, and officer retention. It is what our communities deserve and expect.

WASPC has advocated for state support to hire more local law enforcement officers for several years, with no significant engagement by the Legislature. Governor Ferguson's leadership and commitment to public safety has clearly been the key to this effort. It is clear to us that, without Governor Ferguson's leadership on this issue, the Legislature would have never considered supporting funding the hiring of additional law enforcement officers. We look forward to working with the Governor and legislative leaders on next steps to ensure Washington has enough law enforcement officers so all communities can be and feel safe.

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