

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

3060 Willamette Drive NE Lacey, WA 98516 ~ Phone: (360) 486-2380 ~ Fax: (360) 486-2381 ~ Website: www.waspc.org

Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington



February 1, 2019

Greetings from your Executive Director:

Sorry for the extra updates but we have a lot going on this time of year—so, as always I will put the topic of each area in **bold** so you can quickly scan and read only what you need—

First, as I mentioned previously the Governor will be signing the **amended I-940 bill**, HB 1064, on Monday at 3:30. I have [attached](#) the notice which has the details- any of you who would like to attend the ceremony (in uniform preferably) are certainly invited and it would be great to see you there.

Interesting article this week about a report from the state of Maine about **changes to mental health as it relates to law enforcement** and reducing officer involved shootings- it says what we have been saying all along: do something about the system and get a better wrap-around behavioral health system, and stop expecting law enforcement to keep dealing repeatedly, with no resources, with those who have chronic and serious mental health issues. We are seeing some real progress in terms of bills and spending for system improvements being proposed, which is a good thing, but this article reinforces our message:

<https://www.pressherald.com/2019/01/28/police-shooting-task-force-recommends-training-access-to-mental-health-care/>

One of the main recommendations of the Mass Shootings Work Group from this past summer, which WASPC facilitated, was to provide additional **state funding for School Resource Officers (SROs)** to districts. Sen. O'Ban introduced the bills and they had a hearing this week—here is the video if you are interested:

<https://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2019011324>

Interesting fact from this hearing- the **Washington Education Association (WEA)**, the teachers' union, supported more standardized training for SROs but **opposed more SROs or funding for them**. I am a little confused as to why the union representing teachers doesn't want SROs in schools, but that is the position they took. If any of you have WEA members in your household, maybe you could ask (or maybe they don't know that their union is opposing SROs in schools). It always kind of amazes me to see where people come from on some of these issues...

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The next bill that you should be aware of is HB 1131, which would **legalize home grows of marijuana**. The bill information is below, and the gist of the bill is that it would allow anyone over 21 to grow up to six plants in their home:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1131&Year=2019>

The idea behind it, according to supporters, is it is just like home brewing and if it's okay for alcohol it should be okay for marijuana. We are opposing this bill for a number of reasons, and I wanted to share these with you in case you are asked about this bill and wanted to use any of this information:

- First, it gets caught up in the polarization of the “sides” of the marijuana issue- and the narrative that decriminalization since 2012 has been either a total disaster or a glorious success. As most of you know, it has had ups and downs and there have been a number of unintended consequences, but we simply want law enforcement to stop being expected to “solve” every problem created by legislation or initiatives. Any changes in marijuana law should help with the current problem, not create new ones.
- The change in legal status for marijuana in this state has created a “permissive legal environment”, where public understanding and support for any kind of enforcement is low, and the public generally feels like “don't you have anything better to do?” when departments do enforcement.
- We already have too many other priorities and demands for enforcement.
- The regulated market is creating pressure to “do something” about continued street level illicit marijuana dealing in some communities- justifiably they are saying “we follow the rules, pay the taxes, and they are not- so why is there not a consequence for that?” Home grows would make this problem worse.
- At the same time, many of our counties and cities are seeing a significant problem with large scale illicit marijuana grows, often run by foreign nationals from Asia, and there is money laundering, human trafficking for the “tenders” of the grows, and leakage across state lines as the product is being shipped elsewhere. Investigating these large scale grows is expensive, results in only low level charges against the “tenders” and again, has little support among a public who believe marijuana is legal so there is no reason to spend time enforcing it.
- Allowing home grows will inevitably increase access for juveniles to marijuana, and increase home burglaries and invasions.
- The federal government continues to raise an issue with conflict with federal law, and all of this gets caught up in that federal-state dispute, and again puts law enforcement in the middle.

Bottom line- legalizing “home grows” will only make all of these problems worse- it will further reduce any public support for any kind of enforcement, and further erode the regulated market as it exists. It would likely draw more federal attention as we would be, effectively, hitting the accelerator on access to marijuana.

I just wanted to make sure you knew where we are coming from on this issue, and had some talking points in case it comes up in your communities.

Next, I wanted to point out an interesting story from the incident in Houston last week where **five Houston Police Officers were shot**, thankfully none fatally, as they served a search warrant. When there is an officer involved shooting, not just here but anywhere in the U.S., you might notice that once the officers names are released, the coverage will frequently include whether the officer has been involved in a shooting before. The obvious implication is that they must be “trigger happy” and there must be a problem if any officer is involved more than once. This logic is turned on its head in this story- one of the officers that was injured by gunfire in Houston had been shot in the line of duty twice before this incident. I guess the implication here is what? Oh yeah-- law enforcement does a dangerous and difficult job, they run toward danger, and respond to the situation in front of them. This is a good case to keep in mind next time you see that media cliché casting an automatically negative tone about an officer being involved in a shooting previously.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/54-year-old-houston-officer-critically-injured-firefight-has-been-n964021>

By the way, if it seems like the **legislative proposals are coming at a higher and faster rate this year**, you are correct. Our Policy Director, James McMahan, let me know this week that we are now tracking and monitoring 464 (28%) of the 1,660 bills that have been introduced thus far in the first three weeks of session, and actively lobbying on 128 of them. We will always try to keep you in the loop and always invite your input and questions. Just a reminder that the WASPC Law and Justice Day at the Capitol will be February 13th- hope you can make it!

Since I keep throwing serious subjects at you and it's the middle of winter, I think we need this:

Two 95-year olds, Leo and Frank, had been friends all of their lives. When it was clear that Leo was dying, Frank visited him every day. One day Frank said, "Leo, we both loved playing baseball all our lives, and we played all through high school. Please do me one favor: when you get to heaven, somehow you must let me know if there's baseball there."

Leo looked up at Frank from his deathbed and said, "Frank you've been my best friend for many years. If it's at all possible, I'll do this favor for you." Shortly after that, Leo passed away. A few nights later, Frank was awakened from a sound sleep by a blinding flash of white light and a voice calling out to him, "Frank.. Frank '.....

"Who is it?" asked Frank sitting up suddenly. "Who is it?"

"Leo-- it's me, Leo," said the voice. "I'm in Heaven, and I have some really good news and a little bad news."

"Tell me the good news first," said Frank.

"The good news," Leo said, "is that there's baseball in heaven. Better yet, all of our old buddies who died before us are here too. Better than that, we're all young again. Better still, it's always

springtime, and it never rains or snows. And best of all, we can play baseball all we want, and we never get tired."

"That's fantastic," said Frank. "It's beyond my wildest dreams! So what's the bad news?"

"You're pitching Tuesday."

Have a great weekend—thanks for all you do!

Work Hard- Have Fun- Stay Safe

Steven D. Strachan, Executive Director
Washington Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs
3060 Willamette Drive NE
Lacey, WA 98516
steve@waspc.org
360-486-2380