



Washington Association of
**SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS**

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Greetings from your Executive Director:

I hope this message finds you well as we move through a challenging week. As I mentioned in our most recent webinar, we will continue to lead our teams through the intensity of national events with good faith and in support of good policing. We sent this statement out yesterday:

The police actions that led to the death of George Floyd were not consistent with the training or values we work to promote and the public expects. Each person deserves justice and now the court has spoken. Washington State law enforcement must continue to improve policies, training, culture, and transparency.

We also sent out the IACP statement, found [here](#).

The legislative session is scheduled to end Sunday, and one of the main issues that continues to be a focus is the Blake decision regarding criminal possession of drugs. James and Sanjay are preparing an updated “side by side” with the current Senate and House versions of the bills to amend current law. If you are not on the legislative listserv and want a copy when it's available, just let Deb or I know and we'll send it to you. This is a very significant public safety policy issue that is being determined in a very short amount of time.

We will be planning a webinar sometime following the end of session on Sunday to go over law changes and what decisions, changes, and policy considerations they will require. At our conference, we will have another update and will also have an assistant city attorney there to provide additional insight into liabilities and policy considerations moving forward.

We need to acknowledge at this time that our agencies and our teams are facing sustained pressures, and we need to acknowledge that, while leading through these challenges. I wanted to share some comments from our WASPC President, Spokane Chief Craig Meidl:

These are unprecedented times for law enforcement. A different level of leadership is called upon during what is clearly a watershed moment in law enforcement. Leaders in law enforcement must deal with their own emotions while digging deep within themselves to keep their officers and deputies focused and ensure that their staff feel supported. There has not been a more important time to model, reinforce and encourage positivity, courage and hardiness than now. Ignoring, minimizing or denying worries are not an appropriate response. We need to acknowledge the feelings our officers are experiencing.

This is further exacerbated because we all KNOW our officers and deputies respond to very challenging calls multiple times a shift, over and over. We deal with those in crisis, detached from reality, enraged for one reason or another, contemptuous of authority, resisting arrest, all

while acting under a community expectation that we enforce the law, take people to jail that don't want to go to jail, and do it in the most professional manner possible. 99.9% of the time, our officers and deputies respond phenomenally well, showing great tactics, restraint, compassion, and decision-making. They deserve recognition for that.

There are no easy answers, no quick fixes, no ready remedies we can pull off the shelf and use to resolve these issues quickly. In the end, we must stay true to our North Star, ensure we keep our integrity intact. We must always speak the truth, and we must also remember we are professionals, we serve the entire community, and there are some genuinely hurting people out there (including those who serve in our ranks).

As leaders we have one foot in the community and the other foot in our agency. We exist to serve our community, but officers are the conduit of that service and we need them engaged and motivated. One day at a time, staying true to our values, all while ensuring we keep our batteries charged for what is sure to be a long emotional process. - Craig Meidl

And from me- we will move forward together, communicating and learning from each other. Stay Safe!

- Steve