

# WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

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Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington



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Greetings from your Executive Director:

I will start this week with some bad news and some good news related to the Criminal Justice Training Commission. The bad news is that I am well aware of the tremendous concern and frustration many of our Chiefs and Sheriffs are experiencing **getting recruits into BLEA**. I am aware that some current hires are being scheduled into 2019 already (!). We have been communicating with the CJTC and are scheduling a meeting with our two organizations as well as legislative staff to do all we can to mitigate this problem. We have some strong options to help with future budget and funding, but that does not solve the immediate problem for the next several months. The budget and the scheduling are the responsibility of CJTC, but we know that this is negatively affecting our members so we will do all we can to send the strong message that this needs to be resolved. We are communicating with legislators as well. We will keep you in the loop if we hear anything positive.

The slightly better news is that the reimbursement funding for small agencies, which had been depleted previously, has been restored, so those agencies that applied for reimbursement will now receive those funds. The obvious question is why can the state do one and not the other? We are told the reason is that the Office of Financial Management (OFM) says they are two separate funds and unrelated. The restrictions of the state budget...

Let's move on to **mental health**. Our Policy Director, James McMahan, just attended this year's Behavioral Health Conference sponsored by the WA Council for Behavioral Health Care in Yakima. He let me know that the speakers and sessions have focused on:

1. That law enforcement officers ought to be trained in crisis intervention and de-escalation so fewer people get hurt/killed in confrontations with law enforcement and that they can take the person to treatment instead of jail, and;
2. That jails should establish mental health screening tools to them bring in mental health professionals who can evaluate the person and hopefully take them out of jail and into treatment.

James notes that while we certainly agree with these concepts, it doesn't seem to make sense with what we are hearing from law enforcement agencies around the state: that they can't get people into secure beds or into mental health treatment. Today he asked this question: if mental health professional want law enforcement to get people into the evaluation and treatment that they need, is there capacity to handle this additional demand? The answer, you may not be surprised to hear, is no. There is not even capacity for the current amount of people in the

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system. Basically they are advocating for us to do better jobs of putting people into a system that cannot take them...

This is a great point and I believe many of our members are experiencing the same phenomenon. We need to really focus on our public message that the entire system needs to work together, and capacity and the ability to get people into treatment is essential. Here is a link to a site that has been recommended to be by more than one mental health professional- it is from Mental Illness Policy.Org. **Their main point is that we are spending too little time and attention on the very small group of people with serious mental illness, and too much on those with less severe problems.** They support Assisted Outpatient Treatment (AOT) and believe that involuntary placement should prevent violence, not require it. This is a good place to look around for some basic information on the system and what we can do about it:

<https://mentalillnesspolicy.org/>

We continue to advocate for increased funding from marijuana revenues for enforcement teams and to deal with **illicit marijuana grows**. KUOW did a story this week, with an interesting perspective. The story looks at the problem, and highlights the low level “tenders” that care for the plants at illicit grows and the relationship to crime outside this country:

<http://kuow.org/post/pot-farmers-next-door-chinese-immigrants-drawn-illicit-indoor-grows>

You may have seen this article on a bill introduced in **California that would significantly reduce options for law enforcement to use deadly force**. We will keep our eyes on this:

<https://www.policeone.com/use-of-force/articles/476631006-Calif-advances-biggest-US-change-to-police-use-of-force/>

Finally, I don't know how this article was actually sent out in the media, but somehow it slipped through. A study has shown that **reduced criminal penalties actually resulted in increased crime**. What, you say? I know, but this definitely does not fit the current paradigm. As we continue to look at proposals each year to “reform” sentencing, we need to be aware that what seems obvious (to those of us who have actually worked in law enforcement) is actually borne out by numbers:

[https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/crime/article/Study-Reduced-criminal-penalties-contributed-to-12989538.php?utm\\_campaign=email-premium&utm\\_source=CMS%20Sharing%20Button&utm\\_medium=social](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/crime/article/Study-Reduced-criminal-penalties-contributed-to-12989538.php?utm_campaign=email-premium&utm_source=CMS%20Sharing%20Button&utm_medium=social)

Finally, we have now officially started doing WASPC podcasts—our first two are on our website (lower right hand corner), available on the Apple or Android podcast apps (just search “WASPC”), or at the links below. The first podcast is an overview of the Attorney General's Office Cold Case Unit and advances in DNA, and what they mean for any cold cases your department may have. The second podcast is about the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI), which will assist all of our departments in getting untested kits into the system and build a better database to track and identify serial rapists:

<http://www.podcasts.com/waspc-podcast-1-saki-project-e333687c4/episode/DNA-Project-fb36>

<http://www.podcasts.com/waspc-podcast-1-saki-project-e333687c4/episode/SAKI-Project-1712>

Have a great weekend—

***Work Hard- Have Fun- Stay Safe***

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