

WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

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Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington

November 21, 2018



Greetings from Your Executive Director:

Here are some quick updates as we head into the holiday weekend-- first, many thanks to those of you who could attend our Chelan WASPC conference last week. We have gotten great feedback on the open communications on CJTC and the issue of **BLEA funding**. Part of that discussion led to Sheriffs Trenary, Johanknecht and Pastor speaking to the Governor's office and reinforcing the message that we need to shorten the wait times for BLEA for all of our agencies, statewide. Today we were notified that the Governor will be putting a "base" of 19 classes in the budget for 2019- a significant increase and this creates the "foundation" for the budget as we go into the legislative session. This is very significant and is indicative of the communication and coordination with all of the stakeholders and our Chiefs and Sheriffs--thank you!

Many of you have read this week about the media coverage of the Chief in Republic indicating he will **not enforce laws pertaining to I-1639**. At WASPC we do not tell our members what to do, but Chief Thomas, Sheriff John Snaza, and I would offer the following points if you choose to use them:

AS LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS, WE ARE SWORN TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION, BOTH FEDERAL AND STATE, AND TO UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW. THE CHIEF'S CONCERNS ABOUT THE INITIATIVE ARE RELATED TO THE CONSTITUTION, AND THE COURTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RULE ON THE CONCERNS RAISED. THE RULE OF LAW IS ABOUT RESPECTING THE VOTERS, THE COURTS, AND THE LAWS THEMSELVES. WE WILL UPHOLD THE RULE OF LAW AND RESPECT THE ROLE OF THE COURTS IN INTERPRETING THAT LAW.

Speaking of **I-1639, the gun initiative**, there are a lot of questions regarding what will be required of us now that it has passed. The bottom line is that there is no specific injunction right now (there may be one in the future, but that is unknown), so the requirement to be 21 to purchase any firearm starts January 1, and the remainder of the bill goes into effect July 1, 2019. If you read the attached [analysis](#) from James McMahan, our policy director, you will also note that some of the changes merely require future legislative changes or to allow the state to possibly go to a single point background check system. We have been updating our members on that ongoing conversation, and I will keep you in the loop if and when the legislature proposes any changes to firearms background checks.

So- there are no specific required changes right now, but we need to stay engaged in any possible change legislatively on background checks, and once the law becomes effective, if it survives legal challenges, we would need to start treating long gun purchases the same as pistols. Note also that the upcoming NICS change in doing FFL checks via phone for long guns will also affect our workload at our departments.

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You have likely been hearing about the federal "**First Step**" Act- which is a prison reform bill that affects federal sentencing and prisons. The International Chiefs of Police (IACP) as well as the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) are supporting the current version of the bill. The National Sheriffs Association (NSA), the Major City Chiefs Association, and the Major County Sheriffs Association have all raised concerns with the bill and the [attached](#) letter explains the position. There is also an attached document about the [suggested amendments](#) which would help alleviate some of those concerns. Note also that the current bill has received the support of President Trump. There is an expectation that all Democrats in both houses will vote for the current version, so the focus for amendments is on Republicans who support the act but may be open to the amendments. I just want you to be aware of the issues and the different perspective from different law enforcement groups.

Following issues raised at the Chelan conference during our CJTC panel, CJTC Director Rahr asked that we send along the attached "[save the date](#)" for law enforcement input on changes being contemplated for BLEA curriculum and I-940 rulemaking.

Here is a very good editorial this week on I-940 and the continued message we need to send to legislators, returning and newly elected, to pass the agreed amendments to the initiative:

[The Legislature needs to focus on fixing Initiative 940, the Union-Bulletin argues](#)

In the next few weeks, the Mass Shooting Workgroup, facilitated by WASPC and our Policy Director, James McMahan, will release their official recommendations. One of those recommendations will be to make funding available to districts for School Resource Officers. There will not be any kind of mandate, just a recommendation to make funding available and that SROs are a valuable part of school safety and improving school climate. As a former SRO myself, I have seen over and over that SROs serve to keep students in school, on track, and out of the criminal justice system. In addition, the relationships and communications they build creates a better environment to prevent violence. Here is a great story on an SRO in Florida who demonstrates the service and humility of SROs:

<https://wsvn.com/news/special-reports/helping-hands/>

Speaking of quiet professionalism and humility, a few weeks ago we saw that clearly demonstrated by one of our colleagues in the most difficult of circumstances. Chief Steve Mylett of Bellevue PD, as you may know, was placed on administrative leave while allegations against him were fully investigated. Recently, the findings were outlined in this story in the Seattle Times:

<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/i-wouldnt-wish-this-upon-anybody-bellevue-police-chief-moving-ahead-after-investigation-clears-him-of-womans-rape-accusations/>

The clear and unambiguous findings of the investigation are important, but what I find also notable and admirable are Chief Mylett's comments. Yes, he wants the person who made the accusation held accountable, but also focuses on the strength and support of his family, his faith, and how it has helped him to hopefully become a better person. Chief Mylett mentions his

increased understanding of those falsely accused, and for those placed on administrative leave. I am bowled over by the profound humanity of his thoughtful remarks. Thank you Chief Mylett.

All of us have much to be thankful for, and I wish you all the best for you and your families this holiday season- Happy Thanksgiving!

WORK HARD- HAVE FUN- STAY SAFE

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