



Washington Association of
**SHERIFFS &
POLICE CHIEFS**

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

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Statement attribution:
Steven D. Strachan, Executive Director

WASPC STATEMENT ON LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INVOLVEMENT IN IMMIGRATION ISSUES

(Lacey, WA) --- In response to concerns regarding local law enforcement involvement in potential immigration initiatives at the federal level, the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC) has issued this overview:

Deportation, immigration, and federal law enforcement duties are under the jurisdiction of the federal courts and federal law enforcement agencies. The focus of local law enforcement is on criminal violations that affect local community safety and quality of life.

Local law enforcement agencies work with federal law enforcement and the federal court system on an ongoing basis. The collaborative partnerships between local law enforcement and federal law enforcement are primarily responsible for addressing some of the biggest threats to public safety. The resulting benefits to Washington residents have included the dismantling and interruption of cartel level drug trafficking organizations, human trafficking rings, organized crime groups, illegal gun manufacturing and trafficking, terrorist groups, and many other safety threats to our communities.

Local law enforcement is also routinely called upon to assist Federal Law Enforcement with operations in their communities. When requested, the role of local law enforcement is primarily to be on stand-by while federal agencies conduct their operations, for the purposes of officer and subject safety. These joint operations focus specifically on criminal acts, not immigration status. It is also worth noting that immigration status should not protect or impede investigation or prosecution of any person involved in a state crime.

Washington State law does not permit the housing of individuals in local jails solely for federal administrative matters such as immigration status.

The essence, and strength, of local law enforcement in our nation is that Sheriffs and Police Chiefs are accountable to the U.S. and Washington State Constitutions; to voters, in the case of elected Sheriffs; to local elected officials in the case of Police Chiefs; and to the residents in their jurisdictions. The federal government has no direct authority over local law enforcement.

WA Sheriffs and Police Chiefs want all Washington residents to know that no one in our state should fear calling 911 for help due to their immigration status. The role of our officers, deputies, troopers and agents is to serve and protect everyone. We will always seek to provide that protection fairly, and without regard to immigration status.

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Leading collaboration among law enforcement professionals to enhance public safety.