



# WASHINGTON STATE SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION

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FOR RELEASE

April 22, 2020

## STATEMENT OF THE WASHINGTON STATE SHERIFFS ASSOCIATION ON COVID RESPONSE

Washington's 39 sheriffs are independently elected in their counties but we all share a common goal of protecting public safety and public health in response to the unique challenges of the COVID-19 crisis. We look forward to the Governor's detailed plan on how we can work together to reopen our economy while protecting public health.

We have worked diligently to help our communities implement social distancing and other means to reduce the spread of the virus. People have shown they understand the severity of the situation and will continue to do all they can to keep themselves, their families, and neighbors safe and healthy.

Our communities are diverse and as local leaders we will continue to help explain why these disruptions to our lives are necessary and important. Working with our local public health agencies, we will provide an approach that balances the needs of health, the economy, and our families. We need to trust, engage, and empower Washingtonians to continue health safety measures while adjustments to restrictions are considered and implemented.

The Governor has issued the order under his authority in this crisis. The responsibility of our legislative branch is to write law, the responsibility of our judicial branch is to judge law, the responsibility of law enforcement is to enforce law. We are committed to educate, engage, and in extreme situations where public safety and health are at risk, use our discretion in considering the appropriate level of enforcement. It is what we have always done, and will continue to do, during this crisis.

The citizens we serve expect and trust us to do what we have been empowered to do—not more, not less, but with compassion and discretion.

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**President**

John Snaza  
Thurston County

**Vice President**

Tom Jones  
Grant County

**Secretary/Treasurer**

Brian Burnett  
Chelan County

**Past President**

Gene Dana, Retired  
Formerly Kittitas County