WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SHERIFFS & POLICE CHIEFS

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Serving the Law Enforcement Community and the Citizens of Washington

December 19, 2018

Judge Jay Leach, Chair
Data Dissemination Committee
C/O John Bell, Contracts Manager
Administrative Office of the Courts
P.O. Box 41170
Olympia, WA 98504

The Honorable Judge Leach:

Subject: WASPC Request for Access to Judicial Access Browser System (JABS)

WASPC respectfully requests law enforcement access to the Judicial Access Browser System (JABS). Access to JABS will allow WASPC staff to carry out the requirements established by SHB 1501, related to denied firearms transactions.

In the 2017 legislative session the Washington Legislature passed SHB 1501 amending RCW 9.41 to require that "A dealer shall report to the Washington association of sheriffs and police chiefs information on each instance where the dealer denies an application for the purchase or transfer of a firearm, whether under RCW 9.41.090 or 9.41.113, or the requirements of federal law, as the result of a background check or completed and submitted firearm purchase or transfer application that indicates the applicant is ineligible to possess a firearm under state or federal law."

With the passage of SHB 1501, RCW 36.28A.420, directed WASPC to: "… establish a grant program for local law enforcement agencies to conduct criminal investigations regarding persons who illegally attempted to purchase or transfer a firearm within their jurisdiction." While developing the grant program, WASPC determined that there was a need for a mechanism by which law enforcement agencies were made aware of denied transaction records for individuals or situations that met certain criteria, so that those records could receive more prompt attention from the law enforcement agency where the attempted transaction occurred. In the short time that our organization has been receiving records from dealers, we have received over 4,000 reports of denied firearms transactions. We have directly referred 979 transaction records to local law enforcement for consideration, of those 534 have been referred based on information available through court records.

Two of the current criteria used to determine if an individual's transaction record is deserving of more prompt attention by local law enforcement include: whether or not the individual's criminal history contains certain prohibitive criminal convictions; and whether or not the individual is listed as the respondent in an active protective order issued in or recognized by the State of Washington. When determining whether one of these criteria is present for an individual, WASPC currently utilizes JIS via

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the public user access profile. The only mechanism for our organization to generate a positive match is by matching the name, date of birth, and descriptive information for an individual named in a record submitted to our office to a record contained in JIS.

As court records management systems change and evolve, and policies closely follow, it is our understanding that the quality and completeness of the information contained in JIS (to include dates of birth and descriptive information) will likely be greatly reduced using our current application and level of access. Additionally, as access to information regarding King County cases will change following King County Superior Court's transition to KC JAMS. WASPC's ability to search for King County information will be adversely impacted. Until our request for JABS access is considered, WASPC will be searching multiple systems, some without the ability to confirm dates of birth. It is for these reasons that our organization is requesting access to the Judicial Access Browser System (JABS) at the law enforcement security level. The Committee's timely consideration of this request will be very much appreciated.

Please contact Jamie Weimer, WASPC Projects and Programs Manager with any questions regarding WASPC's request for access to JABS. Jamie can be reached at (360) 486-2419 or jweimer@waspc.org.

Sincerely,

Steven D. Strachan
Executive Director