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POLICY GUIDE

FOR WASHINGTON STATE | 3rd Edition

Foreword

by Daniel Mead Smith, President

“Every day in Olympia people come to my office and talk about their problems. But you (Washington Policy Center) come here and talk about solutions and a vision for moving Washington forward.” That ringing endorsement from a legislator is the basis for this third edition of our *Policy Guide for Washington State*. It also tells us we are doing our job—offering lawmakers positive solutions to the policy challenges facing our state.

Washington Policy Center is a think tank, not a trade association or lobbying organization. We testify before committees when invited and work with legislators at their request. We do, however, measure the impact of our ideas. It is one thing to publish studies and hold events, and another to have our ideas and analysis influence the public debate.

We continue to increase our impact by opening new research centers, working with policymakers and reporters, opening a new office just two blocks from the state Capitol, and tracking our ideas that become official policy in our state.

Our mission is to improve the lives of our state’s citizens through market-based solutions. That is what this new book offers in its ten comprehensive chapters and over 300 pages. We offer practical recommendations, for example, to improve our state’s business climate, schools, environment and traffic congestion.

This book is a revised edition and is presented in the same format as our previous policy guide books. Our state continues to rank high in the wrong categories when it comes to education,

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congestion, taxes and our business climate. By adopting the policy recommendations that follow, state policymakers can make our state a better place for all citizens.

Our *Policy Guide for Washington State* offers innovative ideas, ranging from incremental to sweeping, for reforming and improving government performance. Each of the ten chapters is divided into a number of topical subsections for easy reference. Each subsection includes background on the issue, policy analysis and specific policy recommendations, as well as listing additional resources for further information on each issue.

I encourage you to contact us at (206) 937-9691 or wpc@washingtonpolicy.org with your comments, to order additional copies of this book, or any of our individual studies. These provide additional research and information on the issues presented here.

I also encourage you to use our legislative website, WashingtonVotes.org as a resource during the legislative session and also as you vote. This free website summarizes all legislation and allows users to search by issue, track legislation during the legislative session and keep track of how legislators vote on the issues, all in an easy to use, plain-English format.

To policymakers, we thank you for your service to our state and hope you will continue to find this guide a useful resource. To citizens, we encourage you to keep our recommendations in mind as policymakers address the major issues facing our state.

Our special thanks go to our supporters, their loyal support of our organization is greatly appreciated. I also want to recognize two private foundations that provided funding for our first two editions: M.J. Murdock Charitable Trust in Vancouver, Washington and The JM Foundation in New York. This book project, which started in 2004, would not have been a reality without their early support.

On behalf of our board of directors, advisory boards and staff (all of whom are listed at the end of the book), thank you for your interest in our work and improving lives through market solutions.