



Washington Policy Center's 2011 Policy Recommendations

Washington Policy Center analysts work closely with lawmakers of both parties to develop sound public policy that improves the lives of people in Washington state. We are often asked about our top policy recommendations for 2011. For easy reference these are listed below by issue area. WPC's professional staff is dedicated to developing proposals based on objective, fact-based research. If a policy idea is not supported by the data, we will not recommend it to state leaders. Our goal is to present constructive, commonsense reforms that serve the public interest.

More information on each policy recommendation, along with supporting research, is available by contacting our office or visiting our website, www.washingtonpolicy.org.

Budget, Taxes, and Open Government

- Enact a constitutional tax and spending limit (with two-thirds requirement to raise taxes).
- Enact constitutional legislative transparency reform.
- Enact constitutional emergency clause reform.
- Collective bargaining reform: bring legislature back into the collective bargaining process, as it was prior to the 2002 Civil Service law.
- Reform competitive contracting: allow agencies to make contracting more proactive (create a Competitive Contracting Council).
- Create a tax transparency website for taxpayers to quickly and easily understand what taxes they pay to all levels of government in Washington.

Transportation

- Make congestion relief a statewide policy goal.
- Enact a constitutional amendment to protect toll revenue for highway purposes.
- Repeal the state's VMT (vehicle miles travelled) reduction targets.
- Ferry Reform: include Washington Policy Center's recommendations into the Governor's ferry system reform legislation.
- Make the Washington State Department of Transportation study the traffic performance of tolling I-405 and compare results to the traffic performance of the I-5 Master Plan.

Education

- Repeal the ban on charter public schools.
- Allow innovation schools, putting the principal in charge.
- Allow middle and high school students to select online courses approved by OSPI.
- Repeal automatic tenure for school principals.

- Allow any qualified professional to teach in a public school.
- Allow merit pay and bonuses for teaching excellence.
- Allow school principals freedom from collective bargaining rules that prevent schools from operating in the best interest of students.

Environment

- Develop a personal incentive to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by creating a revenue neutral carbon price and offering investment tax credits to promote creativity and innovation.
- Give school districts the flexibility to make building improvements by removing the costly and ineffective “green” building mandates.
- Complete a comprehensive review of the Growth Management Act and two decades of amendments and changes.
- Ensure the state is receiving the carbon emissions reductions it pays for by requiring audits and accountability of emissions reductions projects.
- Analyze Washington’s environmental priorities with a comprehensive cost/benefit analysis of the state’s top environmental expenditures.

Small Business Climate

- **Workers’ Compensation Reform**
 - Allow for Medical Provider Networks
 - Legalize settlement options
 - Long-term disability pension reform
- **Regulatory Reform**
 - Sunset provisions
 - Better peer review process
 - Moratorium on expansion of professional licensure and certification
 - Limit on rulemaking authority by restricting broad grants of regulatory authority
- **Prohibit the state from competing with the private sector**
- **Unemployment Insurance Reform**
 - Rate “smoothing”
 - Do not expand program eligibility

Health Care

- **Opt-out of Medicaid**
 - Federal government should turn into a block grant program
 - Voucher program
- **Health insurance exchange**
 - If an exchange is to be adopted, follow the Utah model vs. Massachusetts
- **Individual health insurance market**
 - Legalize the sale of mandate-free or mandate-light plans
 - Allow more competition within the market