

2015 Annual Report





LETTER | FROM THE PRESIDENT

Washingtonians are independent, smart, innovative and generous. We value community. We value perspective. We value facts, because they help us develop our perspective.

Washington Policy Center (WPC) has come a long way since its founding, but our vision remains constant, to improve the lives of those who call the Evergreen State home by being a source of credible, high quality research and analysis. WPC is a non-profit, independent research and education organization with offices in Seattle, Olympia, Spokane and Tri-Cities. Just as Mt. Rainier stands as a beacon of our state, so WPC stands at the heart of Washington's policymaking activity.

In 2015, we expanded our Young Professionals program, because we understand the value of developing the next generation of leaders; we worked to keep charter schools open, our state's first public education choice option; we saw WPC recommendations become a reality from remote testimony to congestion relief being added as a transportation priority by the state. We saw more people engage with WPC through our events, our social media platforms and our research than ever before.

A lot has been accomplished but much lies ahead. We will work with renewed focus and drive this year to build on our successes of 2015, and continue to make Washington state the best place to raise a family and start a business. We appreciate your generous support in making our vision a reality and for making the impact found in these pages possible. We look forward to what the future holds, knowing that because of your partnership, the best is still to come here in our great state.

Dann Mead Smith
WPC President



"Washington Policy Center is a valuable resource in the state legislature..."

Sen. Judy Warnick (R-Moses Lake)

"Every year, Washington Policy Center brings together some of the brightest minds, those are truly invested in moving our nation forward through sound, reasonable policy changes."

Governor Susana Martinez, WPC's 2015 Annual Dinner keynote speaker

"We use WPC's research in our education policy, in our budget policy and also for our transportation policy."

Sen. Andy Hill (R-Redmond)

"I really appreciate [Washington Policy Center's] good data, their analysis and their perspective."

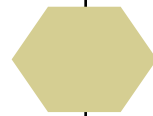
Sen. Reuven Carlyle (D-Seattle)

"Washington Policy Center is an important player in state policymaking. It has earned respect and gained influence with decision makers who want to create a more efficient government."

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers

"Washington Policy Center is one of the most outstanding of the state think tanks. Being at AEI [American Enterprise Institute], I can tell you we rely on the creativity of the state think tanks, because the states are the laboratories of America..."

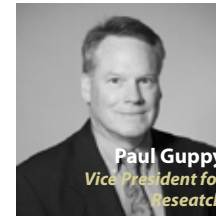
John Bolton, WPC's 2015 Eastern Washington Annual Dinner keynote speaker



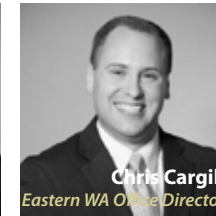
Our Team



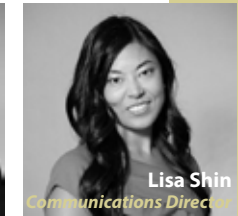
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*Director, Center for
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Jason Marcier
*Director, Center for
Government Reform*



Todd Myers
*Director, Center for the
Environment*



Bob Pishue
*Director, Coles Center for
Transportation*



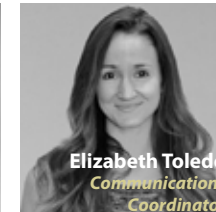
Erin Shannon
*Director, Center for Small
Business & Labor Reform*



Roger Stark, MD
Health Care Policy Analyst



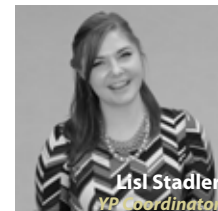
Katie Bulger
Events Manager



Elizabeth Toledo
*Communications
Coordinator*



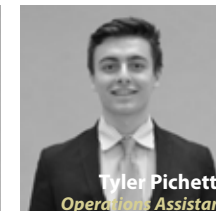
Tashina Kreilick
Development Coordinator



Lisl Stadler
VP Coordinator



Maggie Douglas
EWA Research Assistant



Tyler Pichette
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POLICY CENTER
Improving lives through market innovation

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Team



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Our Events

Snapshots of WPC events in 2015

Annual Dinner

WPC's Annual Dinner encompassed three separate events—the Eastern Washington Annual Dinner event in Spokane, and two in Bellevue including the main event and the Young Professionals Annual Dinner. Together, these events attracted more than 2,000 elected officials and business and community leaders, and raised over \$950,000 to support WPC's work.

Night at the Antique Car Garage

Our Pillar Society members and their guests toured a must-see, antique car and memorabilia collection, hosted by Pillar Society member Bruce Wanta before hearing an off-the-record update from former *Wall Street Journal* editorial board member Stephen Moore.

Wake-up Forum Series

We connected our supporters to legislators at the State Capitol via live video conference at 12 hosted breakfast events held in communities across Eastern Washington during the legislative session.



4,768 attendees enjoyed

40 WPC events held across the state

Pierce County Small Business Forum

We joined with the Tacoma-Pierce Chamber of Commerce to engage with business and community leaders in Pierce County and discuss the important issues facing small businesses, including workers compensation and onerous regulations.

Sips & Solutions

Starbucks hosted our Young Professionals group at their corporate headquarters, where more than 80 YPs heard from a senior Starbucks executive on the role and responsibility of a for-profit, public company and enjoyed an exclusive coffee tasting!

2nd Annual Young Professionals Debate Series

More than 600 college students on three college campuses, as well as a statewide online audience via TVW, joined us to hear experts debate important policy issues facing young professionals at our 2nd Annual College Debate Series.

Should Spokane build an electric trolley?

In response to a proposed \$300 million sales tax increase, we brought in transportation policy experts for a special breakfast event in Spokane to discuss the important question: Could less expensive options serve the same purpose?

2nd Annual Solutions Summit

More than 600 community, business and policy leaders joined us for our two-day, statewide conference, sparking meaningful discussions about solutions to the most pressing policy issues in our state. Idaho Governor Butch Otter and former New York Governor George Pataki gave insight into key policy successes in their respective states that we could employ to make Washington a better place to live and do business.

Evening in the Desert

More than 100 of our top supporters joined us for an exclusive reception in beautiful Palm Desert to hear from *The Wall Street Journal's* Kimberley Strassel, who gave attendees an insightful look into the national political climate.

13th Annual Health Care Conference

We welcomed The Cato Institute's Michael Tanner to offer insight into the future of health care and why we need meaningful reform to Medicare, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. The event also included a legislative review panel for attendees to learn how our state legislature affected their health care in 2015 and what to expect in 2016.



Events

WPC 2015 Top

Achievements

- Based on WPC's recommendation, lawmakers of both parties defeated proposals to impose \$1.5 billion in new state-level taxes, including a new capital gains income tax and a costly cap-and-trade system.
- WPC's research work brought public attention to the secretive collective bargaining talks the governor held with labor union executives.
- Following a WPC recommendation, the state Senate is now allowing citizens to testify via live video from remote locations.
- Congestion relief was added as a priority by the state based on WPC recommendation.
- During the 2015 Legislative Session, 51 bills were introduced based on WPC's recommendations, and WPC analysts testified by invitation before legislative committees 41 times.
- WPC's education expert Liv Finne was named a 2015 "Game Changer" by *SeattleMet* Magazine. *SeattleMet* described her as someone who "is determined to set the Evergreen State on course, away from national laughingstock and toward top-notch education."
- Based on WPC's research, Spokane-area voters rejected a sales tax increase proposal, which included building an expensive trolley system.

WPC impact:

2,558 media hits

on average **7** hits per day

51 bills introduced
based on WPC research

41 legislative testimonies

489 total publications

2015 by the numbers

Total

2015



WPC: 6,039 likes

added 1,465 likes
32% increase



2,178 followers

added 808 followers
59% increase



215 followers

added 94 followers
First year engaging on LinkedIn



8,238 views

increased by 4,437 views
117% increase



222,698 visitors

increased by 21,157 visitors
9.5% increase

Facebook: 2,331 followers in 2015

Website: 138,330 visitors in 2015

Washington Votes.org

Franz Gregory, Project Director

Achievements

our website
got a
re-design



Our Research Work



Center for Government Reform

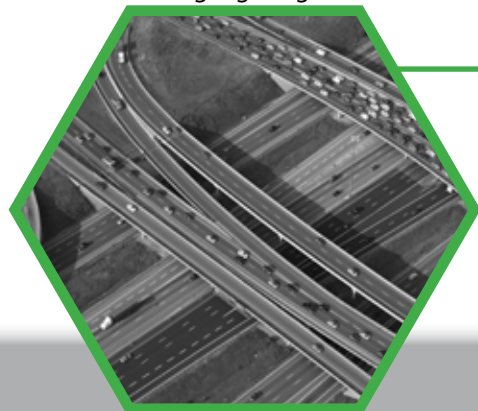
Jason Mercier, Director

The final 2015-17 state budget adopted in 2015 included no major tax increases. WPC consistently argued against creating a capital gains income tax and encouraged lawmakers to use the \$3 billion in revenue growth already available instead of raising taxes that the Governor proposed. Remote testimony is also now a reality for Washington state, at least in the Senate. Following our successful test, the Senate adopted rules to allow remote testimony. Several hearings from the Tri-Cities and Spokane have already used live video remote testimony.

The Center for Education continued to write editorials, research publications and blog posts to preserve and expand education options for families. During the legislative session, the Center described the benefits of a bill offering parents \$5,000 to educate their children, the benefits of cutting state college tuition, options for complying with the *McCleary* decision without raising taxes and, suggested better ways to structure school funding. The Center also published Washington's School Achievement Index, translating the index into letter grades for all K-12 schools in our state. After the state supreme court ruling against charter schools, we immediately responded and worked with School Choice Media to create videos highlighting the reasons why parents and students in Washington were fighting to keep their charter schools.

Center for Education

Liv Finne, Director



Coles Center for Transportation

Bob Pishue, Director

State lawmakers enacted many reforms based on WPC's recommendations to prioritize transportation projects and reduce the cost of building roads and ferries, including: passing legislation to add congestion relief as a priority, streamlining bridge replacement and creating a more competitive bidding atmosphere for ferry construction. In addition, the Coles Center for Transportation has been featured in numerous media outlets for its work on the I-405 Express Toll Lanes controversy.

WPC celebrated the fifth year of its Eastern Washington office in 2015. In addition to a record number of event attendees east of the Cascades and 720 media appearances, our research experts crisscrossed Eastern Washington, providing updates on everything from the record-breaking legislative session, to an effort to bring a costly and wasteful electric trolley system to Spokane. The groundwork was also laid for expansion of WPC's work into the agricultural policy arena, not just in Eastern Washington but to the entire state.

Eastern Washington

Chris Cargill, Director



Center for the Environment

Todd Myers, Director

Providing timely analysis of his climate proposals, the Center for the Environment helped defeat the governor's \$2 billion climate tax increase and highlighted serious problems with his proposed regulation. We also began highlighting opportunities to harness the power of smartphones and information, taking power from government and giving it to individuals to meet the environmental challenges of the 21st century. The Center continued its regular contributions to *The Wall Street Journal* as a designated "Expert" panelist for energy and the environment.



Center for Small Business and Labor Reform

Erin Shannon, Director

The Center for Small Business continued to educate elected officials, media and the general public on the unintended consequences for employers and workers of increasing the minimum wage. We released a series of short videos featuring small business owners and their employees providing their perspectives. Continuing the Center's increasing focus on labor reform, we released a study modeling the economic and employment impacts a right-to-work law would have in Washington. The study revealed under right-to-work, nearly 235,000 more Washingtonians would be working, and wage and salary income would increase by \$27.1 billion after 10 years.



Center for Health Care

Roger Stark, MD., Analyst

The Center for Health Care published "Health care reform: Lowering costs by putting patients in charge," outlining a comprehensive plan for health care reform. We have actively promoted the study with a speaking tour throughout the state. The Center held its 13th Annual Health Care Luncheon, which began with a legislative update from the 2015 legislative session featuring legislators and a representative from Governor Inslee's office. Michael Tanner, author and Senior Fellow at The Cato Institute, was the luncheon speaker and discussed the critical need for health care and entitlement reform.

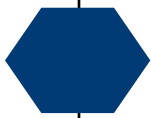


Young Professionals

Our outreach to 20-30-year-olds continues to expand with our Young Professionals (YP) group. In 2015, we expanded our program to three different colleges: University of Washington, Seattle University and Washington State University. With these WPC campus clubs and the YP group, we reached over 1,400 college students and young professionals in 2015. Each college club held on-campus events, including our annual Young Professionals Statewide Debate Series at UW, WSU and Gonzaga. We also held our two signature events: our YP Summer Social and YP Annual Dinner. With the recent hiring of YP Coordinator Lisl Stadler, we look forward to growing the program even more!



Research



Our Support

Our annual budget of \$2.7 million, though impressive for a state-based think tank, is dwarfed by those of special interests. We don't receive government money; we don't ask for it and we wouldn't take it even if it were offered. WPC relies on the generous support of our donors – people like you who understand that free-markets are superior to a government-rigged economy, and liberty is the air that a free people must breathe.

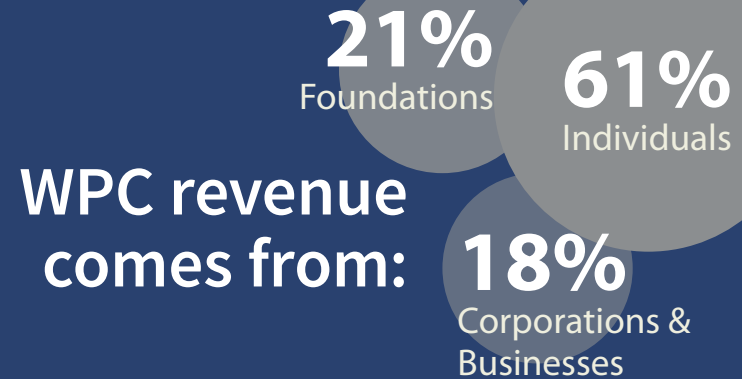
About WPC's Pillar Society:

WPC's Pillar Society distinguishes donors who make a substantial three-year pledge to Washington Policy Center. Pledge levels start at \$15,000 over three years and include Annual Dinner tickets or a table and personalized support programs to fit the donor's interests.

About WPC's Legacy Partners:

The Legacy Partners program recognizes people who have made a bequest or indicated they have included WPC in their estate plans. Legacy Partners have all the same benefits as our highest level of membership and satisfaction of knowing their legacy will live on through WPC's important work.

Total 2015 Revenue: **2014 Revenue:**
\$2,746,786
(New record for WPC)
\$2,306,205



For more information on how to support WPC with a gift of stock, monthly giving or to join our Pillar Society or become a Legacy Partner, please contact WPC's Development Director, Sydney Jansen at sjansen@washingtonpolicy.org or (206) 937-9691.

Washington Policy Center is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. To preserve our independence, we accept no government funding, and we do not perform contract work. Contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes as allowed by law. Our tax Id # is 91-1752769.

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and businesses who are members of WPC's Pillar Society, Legacy Partners and President's Council. These generous contributors are an integral part of our success.

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A quick glance back...





...before we keep moving forward.



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