

January 14, 2013

Dear Lawmakers,

As you begin your work on the people's behalf our hope is that you will ensure that the legislative process remains open and transparent so the public can be meaningfully involved. Among the legislative transparency reforms that you should consider is a proposal by the Washington Policy Center that would:

- Provide mandatory public notice and waiting periods before legislative action;
- Ban title only bills; and
- Subject the legislature to the same transparency requirements that are placed on local governments.

We've seen all too often the problems that occur when the public is cut out of the legislative debate. Please give your support to these transparency protections so the people have a real opportunity to participate in the 2013 Session.

Sincerely,

Association of Washington Business  
Greater Pasco Area Chamber of Commerce  
Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce  
Home Builders Association of Tri-Cities  
Kittitas County Chamber of Commerce  
Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce  
Moses Lake Chamber of Commerce  
National Federation of Independent Business  
Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce

Spokane Home Builders Association  
Tri-City Regional Chamber of Commerce  
Walla Walla Valley Chamber of Commerce  
Washington Coalition for Open Government  
Washington Newspaper Publishers Association  
Washington Policy Center  
Washington State Americans for Prosperity  
Washington State Farm Bureau  
Washington State Grange



# Washington Policy Center Legislative Transparency Reform Proposal

Contact: [Jason Mercier](#), Director Center for Government Reform (360) 705-9068

## Increasing legislative transparency

AN ACT Relating to providing mandatory notice and waiting periods before legislative action; banning title only bills; subjecting the legislature to the open public meetings act; amending RCW 42.30.020; and adding new sections to chapter 44.04 RCW.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

### **NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW to read as follows:**

(1) All bills introduced, and any proposed substitute, striking amendment, or conference committee report thereon, must be made publicly available to the members of the Legislature and the public at least seventy-two hours before such a bill is eligible for a public hearing, is eligible for legislative action, or is eligible to be voted on by the senate or the house of representatives.

(2) At least seventy-two hours notice shall be given of all public hearings held by any legislative committee. Such notice shall contain the date, time and place of such hearing together with the title and number of each bill, or identification of the subject matter, to be considered at such hearing.

(3) No bill shall be eligible for legislative action of any kind unless it has first been subject to a public hearing in the same session of consideration.

(4) No bill shall be eligible for legislative action on the floor of either the senate or house of representatives until forty-eight hours after it has been placed on the floor calendar.

(5) No bill shall be eligible for final passage in either house of the Legislature unless copies of the bill, in the final form to be passed, have been made available to the members of that house of the Legislature and the public for at least twenty-four hours.

(6) This section may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members elected to the house of the Legislature in which it is pending, and every individual consideration of a bill or action suspending this section must be recorded in the journal of the respective house of the Legislature.

### **NEW SECTION. Sec 2. A new section is added to chapter 44.04 RCW to read as follows:**

No bill shall be eligible for public hearing or legislative consideration of any kind unless the bill shall lay forth in full the changes to any act or sections of law. Title only bills shall be prohibited.

### **Sec. 3. RCW 42.30.020 is amended to read as follows:**

As used in this chapter unless the context indicates otherwise:

(1) "Public agency" means:

(a) Any state board, commission, committee, department, educational institution, or other state agency which is created by or pursuant to statute, other than courts ~~and the legislature;~~ . . .

## Newspaper Endorsements for Legislative Transparency Reforms

*Tri-City Herald*: [2013 state Legislature has shot at needed reforms](#) (January 9, 2013)

*Tacoma News Tribune*: [Brian Sonntag leaves big shoes to fill as state auditor](#) (January 8, 2013)

*Olympian*: [Commit to transparency](#) (January 4, 2013)

*Vancouver Columbian*: [Legislators must regain public confidence by emphasizing transparency](#) (December 26, 2012)

*Vancouver Columbian*: [Legislators routinely set aside principles of open government](#) (March 2, 2012)

*Everett Herald*: [Legislature's under a cloud](#) (March 13, 2011)

*Spokesman Review*: [Bill creates prudence on hasty money measures](#) (January 26, 2011)

*Olympian*: [Quest for open government is noble cause in this state](#) (January 19, 2011)

*Vancouver Columbian*: [State leaders have strong recommendations for making Legislature more transparent](#) (January 17, 2011)

*Everett Herald*: [Shine a light on the legislature](#) (June 15, 2010)

*Seattle Times*: [Ensure public scrutiny of legislative deal-making](#) (June 13, 2010)

*Longview Daily News*: [It's National Sunshine Week, but state's transparency forecast remains cloudy](#) (March 14, 2010)

*Kitsap Sun*: [Sunshine and Clouds in Olympia](#) (March 14, 2010)

*Tacoma News Tribune*: [State government clings to double standard](#) (March 7, 2010)

*Everett Herald*: [Public input? Who cares?](#) (March 5, 2010)