

WASHINGTON
POLICY CENTER



2008

Improving lives through market solutions



Greg Porter
Greg Porter
Chairman



A governor once told a group of high school students touring the capitol that what happens in Olympia in many ways has a greater impact on people's day-to-day lives than what goes on in Washington, DC. We agree.

How our state policymakers address the challenges facing our state has deep ramifications in the lives of all Washingtonians. Whether it's the soaring cost of health care, clogged roads, an unsustainable state budget, crippling environmental regulations, failing public schools, or improving the state's business climate, policymakers need ideas. Mindful of this, a group of concerned citizens and community leaders formed Washington Policy Center. They sought to bring

an independent voice for fiscal responsibility and the free market to the public debate.

Since its humble origins the Center has grown to an annual budget of nearly \$2 million, a staff of 16 (including seven research centers), opened a satellite office in Olympia, and completed a \$4.2 million capital campaign. A top-notch staff and the skillful leadership of a dedicated board have made these things possible. But your support is the critical ingredient. Without it we would be unable to advance our mission of shaping the public debate and improving lives through market solutions.

Thanks for making 2008 such a great success for Washington Policy Center.

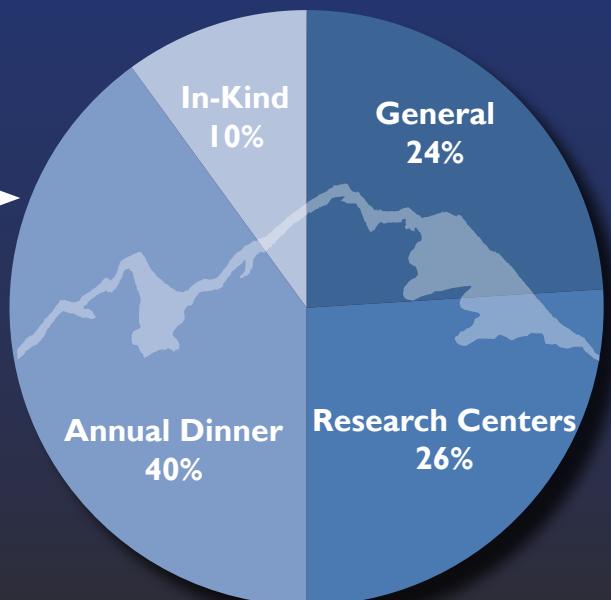
Dann Mead Smith
Dann Mead Smith
President



WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER'S 2008 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2008 *by the Numbers*

Revenue:	\$1,333,864	→
Online Media Appearances:	690	
Print Media Appearances:	412	
Radio Appearances:	90	
Television Appearances:	72	
Invited Legislative Testimony:	17	
Total Staff:	16	
Events:	15	



RESEARCH CENTERS

Small Business

This year the Center for Small Business traveled the state and held six regional small business issue forums in King County, Wenatchee, Spokane, Tri-Cities, Clark County, and Pierce County. Policymakers, small-business owners, and community leaders gathered to tell us what's on their mind and learn more about how health care, tax, transportation, and environmental policy impact their businesses. More than 600 people attended the forums.

Center director Carl Gipson also completed a 4-part series of studies on the state's onerous Business & Occupation Tax, which culminated in econometric modeling revealing that the tax's "pyramiding" problem is much worse than previously thought.



Environment

Rational, fact-based approaches to issues such as climate change and environmental regulations are often missing from the public debate in Washington. In 2008 the Center for the Environment brought a unique perspective to the environmental policy debate.

In July the Center brought Bjørn Lomborg, author of *The Skeptical Environmentalist*, to Seattle to address the 300 attendees at WPC's annual Environmental Policy Luncheon. Prior to the lunch, WPC held its first ever Environmental Policy Conference, which featured panels on climate change and eco-fads.



Health Care

Washington Policy Center hired retired surgeon Dr. Roger Stark to lead our health care analysis. Roger's longstanding relationship with WPC as an advisory board member and his extensive involvement in the health care community give him a truly unique insight into health care policy.

The annual health care conference is a must-attend event for policymakers and health care industry professionals. More than 300 people attend regularly. The highlight of the 2008 conference was a panel on health information technology, keynoted by Peter Neupert, Vice President of Microsoft's Health Solutions Group. He discussed new technology that is making health care more efficient. Grace-Marie Turner of the DC-based Galen Institute keynoted the conference, talking about the presidential candidates' reform plans.



Transportation

The Center for Transportation keeps the transportation policy debate in Washington focused on congestion relief and mobility.

In 2008 the Center conducted a statewide poll finding that 70% of voters were dissatisfied with the state's handling of congestion relief. The poll results were included in the signature publication **5 Principles of Responsible Transportation Policy**.

In June the Center brought Heritage Foundation senior fellow Dr. Ron Utt to Seattle to discuss the importance of congestion relief at the 2nd Annual Transportation Event.



Government Reform

Citizens won a major victory for government transparency in 2008 with the passage of a bill putting all state spending online in a searchable format. The bill was based on research from Center for Government Reform director Jason Mercier, who worked with policymakers throughout the process of crafting the law. The website went live in December.

The Center also held a national conference in Seattle, attended by more than 100 people and bringing together analysts from dozens of state think tanks to discuss government transparency reforms. Former U.S. Comptroller David Walker keynoted the conference.



Education

Washington Policy Center launched the Center for Education in January 2008 with the hiring of Liv Finne as director. She hit the ground running during the legislative session, and her research and analysis of a proposal to unionize daycare workers revealed the bill was more about helping unions than protecting children or daycare workers (see the *Seattle PI* clip below). The bill did not pass the legislature.

Liv also authored an in-depth study of Washington state's online public schools, shining light on an innovative way many students are receiving an education.



BOOKS

In addition to dozens of Policy Briefs, Policy Notes, Legislative Memos, and Opinion-Editorials, Washington Policy Center published two policy books in 2008.

Policy Guide for Washington State

The 3rd edition of our comprehensive book contains 140 market-based recommendations for solving Washington state's policy challenges. Policymakers of both parties use our book as a reference guide.

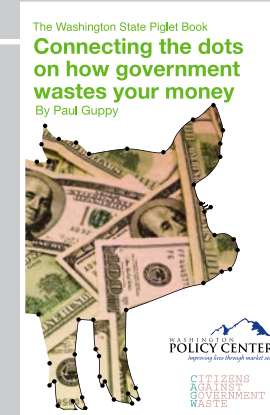
Shortly after releasing the book WPC sent copies to legislative candidates and many commented that it was their most valuable campaign tool.



The Washington State Piglet Book

Published jointly by Washington Policy Center and Citizens Against Government Waste, the book identified nearly \$200 million in wasteful state spending.

WPC held a press conference with State Auditor Brian Sonntag at the capitol in January to release the book. The book received significant television, print, and online media coverage.



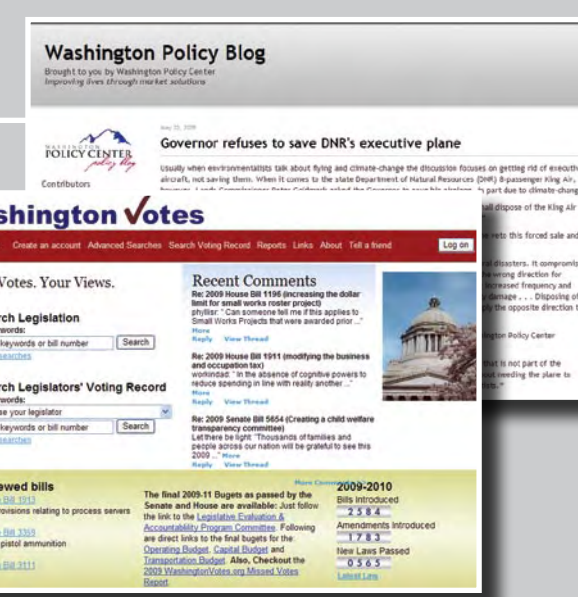
ON THE WEB

www.WashingtonPolicyBlog.org

Launched in 2007, Washington Policy Blog continues to give our analysts another tool for quickly disseminating research and commentary. Traffic on the blog has grown steadily and the blog is a proven resource for media. It's not uncommon for us to see it influencing media coverage, and when we visit with capitol press reporters in Olympia we regularly hear praise for our blog.

www.WashingtonVotes.org

Since 2003 Washington Policy Center has provided the free public service website, WashingtonVotes.org, which gives plain-English bill descriptions and easy access to state legislators' voting records. This is the premier legislative information website in Washington, and it is used by newspapers across the state, policymakers, and citizens.



ANNUAL DINNER

1,100 people gathered on October 1 to join Washington Policy Center in honoring Czech Republic President Vaclav Klaus with the 2009 Columbia Award. Charles Simonyi introduced President Klaus.



Phil Smart Sr. received the 2009 Stanley O. McNaughton Champion of Freedom Award, and Susan Hutchison graciously served as Master of Ceremonies. Political analyst and columnist Fred Barnes addressed the dinner crowd about the 2008 presidential election.

Our annual dinner is the largest of its kind in the Pacific Northwest and is a must-attend event for the state's business leaders and policymakers.



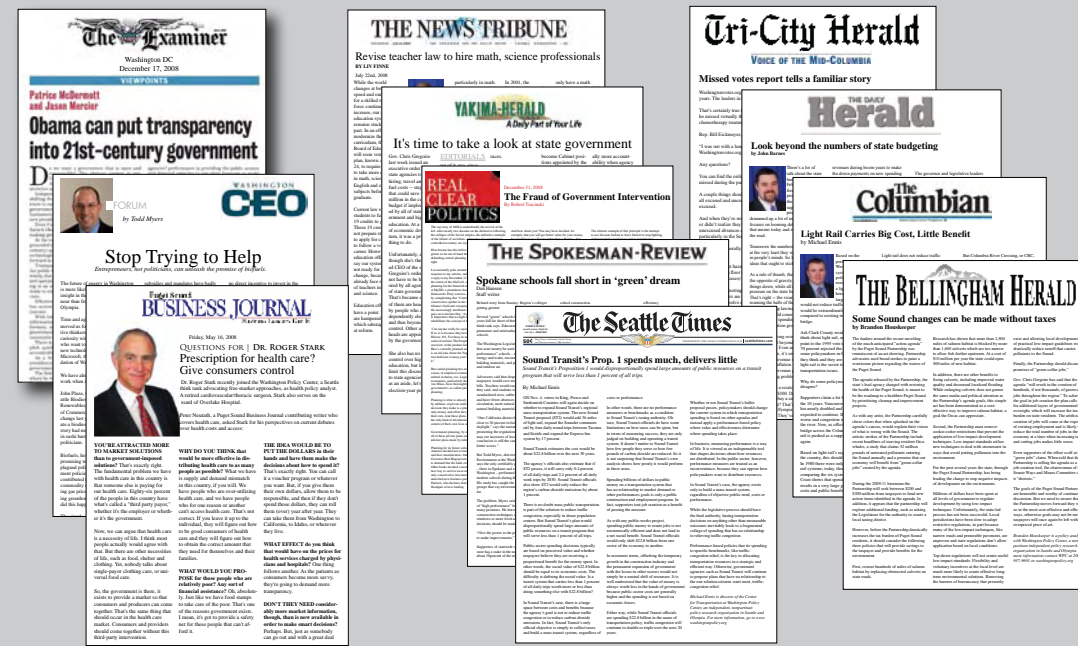
IMPACT

Improving lives through market solutions

- Lawmakers enacted our recommendation to create a searchable website of state spending during the 2008 legislative session, and the website went live in December.
- Our research and analysis of the state's "green" building mandate continued to expose the program's false promises of cost savings and increased efficiency.
- Our analysis of a home construction warranty proposal during the 2008 legislative session educated policymakers on the costs and unintended consequences of such a law and the bill did not come up for a floor vote.
- Our analysis of a proposal to unionize daycare workers showed the bill was more about helping unions than protecting children and daycare workers. The bill did not pass the legislature.
- Our Small Business Forums held in six cities across Washington once again connected small business owners with policymakers and gave voice to their biggest concerns in health care, tax policy, transportation, and more.

MEDIA

Shaping the public debate



CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Free markets for Washington

Washington Policy Center launched *Free Markets for Washington* in 2006 with the goal of raising \$4.26 million to fund eight research centers. In 2008 the campaign raised the final \$800,000, successfully completing the campaign!

WPC greatly appreciates the generous support of those who gave to the campaign! In 2008, their support allowed us to open our seventh research center, the Center for Education. The campaign has also strengthened the other six research centers, allowing them to become leading and respected voices on policy issues in our state.

At the end of 2008, seven research centers were up and running:

Center for Small Business	WashingtonVotes.org
Center for the Environment	Center for Government Reform
Center for Health Care	Center for Transportation
Center for Education	

Major Campaign Contributors

- Bill & Marilyn Conner / Campaign Co-Chair
- Doug & Janet True / Gull Industries / Campaign Co-Chair
- The Charles Simonyi Fund for Arts and Sciences / Center for the Environment Benefactor
- James E. & CK Coles Foundation / Center for Transportation Benefactor
- John & Kathy Connors Foundation
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washingtonpolicy.org | washingtonpolicyblog.org | WashingtonVotes.org

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Environmental Center Director	Todd Myers
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