



WASHINGTON STATE LABOR COUNCIL, AFL-CIO

2010 Legislative Agenda

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The Washington State Labor Council's 2010 legislative agenda—at both the state and national levels—is focused on jobs, jobs, jobs.

Creating jobs. Retaining jobs. Strengthening jobs.

But while we are mindful that quality jobs will lead us out of recession, the Washington State Labor Council and its more than 500 affiliated unions also recognize the moral imperative of protecting and strengthening the social safety nets that the victims of this recession need to survive; we must raise revenue to protect our families' health and safety; and we must make sure our state is prepared to effectively implement national health care reform.

Jobs, Jobs, Jobs

Creating jobs

NATIONAL

- Rebuilding our schools, bridges/roads, and energy infrastructure, and making a down payment on our nation's \$3 trillion worth of infrastructure needs. This will create hundreds of thousands of family-wage jobs.
- Investing in public works jobs that pay competitive wages and don't displace existing jobs. The first priority must be targeting investments to distressed communities.
- Funneling TARP dollars into community banks to lend to small- and medium-size businesses for the retention and creation of jobs. U.S. Sen. Patty Murray has introduced legislation to provide \$30 billion for this purpose.

STATE

- Rebuilding Washington's schools through the Washington State Jobs, Opportunity, and Better Schools Act -- financing energy efficiency and repairs in our public schools retaining and creating 40,000 jobs.
- Investing in stormwater clean-up projects helping to eradicate a major cause of pollution in Puget Sound and creating a potential 3,000 jobs. Projects should be first targeted towards distressed communities.
- Moving forward with the expansion of the Washington State Convention and Trade Center, creating some 3,000 building and construction jobs plus thousands of permanent jobs. The entire cost can be funded through existing hotel/motel taxes, without imposing a burden on state and local governments or taxpayers.

Maintaining jobs

STATE

- Closing the budget gap by eliminating or suspending tax exemptions and raising the revenue necessary to protect public services and the more than 30,000 public and private jobs associated with them. (Also see Revenue & Budget Accountability below.)
- Opposing proposed closures of Corrections facilities and state health institutions to protect our public safety and health—and thousands of jobs, many of which are located in distressed rural areas of our state.
- Opposing the deregulation of public services, including state liquor stores.

Strengthening jobs

NATIONAL

- Supporting the Employee Free Choice Act, which would enable working people to bargain for better benefits, wages and working conditions by restoring their freedom to choose for themselves whether to join a union.

STATE

- Extending collective bargaining rights to teachers, musicians, interpreters, and child care workers, allowing them a voice in decisions in the workplace.
- Codifying rest and meal breaks, protecting the health and safety of workers.

Revenue & Budget Accountability

NATIONAL

- Increasing federal aid to state and local governments to help close an estimated \$178 billion in budget deficits, protecting critical services and retaining jobs.

STATE

- Filling the Washington's state budget gap by closing tax loopholes and raising revenue, thus protecting critical services and institutions as well as 23,000 state employee jobs and an additional 14,000 private sector jobs.
- Repealing I-960 to allow legislators the opportunity to do the jobs they were elected to do: making decisions on how we finance state services and employment.

(SEE REVERSE)



2010 Legislative Agenda

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- Paying prevailing wages on all public-private partnership projects and federally funded projects, ensuring our tax dollars create quality jobs that create quality results.
- Requiring all corporations that receive state tax breaks to pledge that they are committed to creating jobs and economic prosperity in Washington state.

Health Care Reform

NATIONAL

- Supporting genuine federal health-care reform that makes insurance coverage affordable and accessible to all, and finally addressing the moral crisis of Americans that can't afford to seek medical treatment or have suffered bankruptcy just because someone in their family became sick.

STATE

- Restoring and protecting funding for critical public health, basic health and children's health services.
- Create a Joint Select Committee, including representatives of the general public, to help guide Washington State through the transition anticipated in national health care reform.

Strengthening the Safety Net

NATIONAL

- Extending a lifeline to the jobless by extending unemployment insurance benefits, food assistance and COBRA through 2010, helping to prevent further bankruptcies, foreclosures and loss of health care.

STATE

- Capturing \$98 million in federal Unemployment Insurance modernization funds by extending unemployment eligibility to part-time workers and to workers facing undue hardship; extending 2009 U.I. stimulus package through 2010 (\$45 weekly benefits and higher minimum benefits).
- Investing in creating more seats in the Community and Technical College system, providing more opportunities

for unemployed workers to retrain through the current recession, and keeping higher education affordable.

- Protecting vulnerable injured workers against unfounded attacks on the workers' compensation system. Washington's State Fund for workers' compensation is one of the least costly systems in the country (ranked 46th lowest in cost for employers when the workers' share of the premium (28%) is factored into to the cost).
- Requiring third-party administrative companies to be housed in State of Washington.

Coalition Support Legislation

- Supporting a strong Homeowners' Bill of Rights that will allow Washingtonians to recover repair costs in court if their homes are damaged by negligent construction.
- Strengthening our public initiative system to make it less vulnerable to abuse by special interests.
- Adding a labor member to Community and Technical College Boards.
- Adding a labor member to Transit Boards.
- Continuing workers' compensation survivor benefits upon re-marriage.
- Establishing a state sweat-free procurement policy.
- Waiving actuarial reduction for Washington State Ferry workers on disability retirement.

Washington State
Labor Council



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