

FIX WASHINGTON.

2024 Session Recap: House Republican Priorities

- State Democrats made little progress fixing the six major crises facing average Washingtonians:
 - ✗ No funding for **more police** despite ranking dead last in the nation in officers per capita.
 - ✗ No effort to reduce **fentanyl trafficking** in our state despite leading the nation in overdose deaths.
 - ✗ No progress on rampant **homeless encampments**.
 - ✗ No action to reduce the **price of gas** or reduce tax burdens on lower and middle-class families.
 - ✗ No attention paid to the fact that 60% of all students are **failing math** and 50% are failing **reading**.
 - ✗ No attempt to reduce the **cost of child care** or make it more accessible for working families.
- Democrat leaders began session claiming they wanted to “grow the number of officers in Washington state,” but ultimately did nothing to attract or retain them. Instead they prioritized a [bill](#) that would make it easier to sue police officers in their personal capacity when they are doing their jobs protecting our communities.
- Despite spending billions, the state’s homeless population has doubled. But Democrats continue to invest in failed strategies like the governor’s [encampment response program](#) that has spent over \$143 million to move 1,100 people into mostly temporary shelters and housing, equating to about \$130,000 per person.
- Washingtonians pay some of the highest prices in the nation for basic necessities like housing, groceries and gas. Instead of fixing this, Democrats made things worse by passing a [ban on natural gas](#) that will increase energy rates around Puget Sound and cost gas homeowners thousands to convert to electricity.
- Half of all Washington students are failing math and reading, yet zero attention was paid to improving academic achievement. Instead, Dems were laser focused on passing [legislation](#) incorporating DEI into learning standards for every subject in every grade level.
- Republicans defeated several bills that would have made Washington even less affordable, including: [SB 5770](#) which would have tripled local property taxes; [HB 2276](#) which would have increased the real estate excise tax making it more expensive to buy and sell a home; [HB 2114](#) which would have artificially capped rent increases ultimately reducing supply and increasing prices; and [HB 2409](#) which would have increased the costs of many household consumer goods and groceries.
- Democrats initially refused to hold hearings on any of the six initiatives despite the state constitution’s clear mandate that initiatives to the Legislature, “shall take precedence over all other measures.” But after relentless pressure from House Republicans, including a series of floor motions demanding immediate consideration, Democrats agreed to consider and pass three of the six initiatives.
- The other three initiatives will be sent to the November ballot. Democrat leaders spent the session trying to sway public opinion with false claims about catastrophic cuts to education and transportation projects, but you can get the real facts at our [Initiative Fact Check](#) here: houserepublicans.wa.gov/fact-check

Fix the public safety crisis.

Criminal activity has exploded in Washington earning us the spot of #8 most dangerous state. Homicide is up 96% since 2019. Our state ranks #1 for retail theft, #1 for burglary, #2 for property crime and #3 for motor vehicle theft. Our state also ranks dead last in police officers per capita, which helps explain why 61% of violent crimes go unsolved. Find more **Crime Facts** here: houserepublicans.wa.gov/crime-in-wa

Republican Solutions:

- ✓ [I-2113](#) reinstates vehicular pursuit laws so officers can chase individuals committing motor vehicle theft and property crime. *Passed House 77-20 and Senate 36-13, takes effect June 6, 2024.*
- ✓ [HB 1989](#) empowers WSDOT to pursue a graffiti abatement program to stop the perpetrators and clean-up public rights of way. *Passed House 96-1 and Senate 38-11, takes effect June 6, 2024.*
- ✗ [HB 1380](#) provides recruitment and retention bonuses for police officers to improve both manpower and morale. *No action taken.*
 - *Democrats voted down a budget [amendment \(42-53\)](#) that would have provided \$150 million per year in grants to local police departments to increase the number of officers in our communities.*
- ✗ [HB 2358](#) increases penalties for illegal highway blockades to prevent protestors from shutting down critical transportation routes. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 2202](#) offers funding to counties for police but in return requires counties to meet officer staffing ratios designed to take our state from last in the nation to middle of the pack. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 1456](#) modifies the definition of theft so that security officers can actually stop shoplifters when they conceal merchandise rather than only when they leave the store. *No action taken.*

Fix the drug crisis.

Washington is at the epicenter of the fentanyl crisis. The amount of fentanyl seized by the federal DEA in our state has increased 1670% since 2019. Opioid deaths have more than doubled since 2019, and Washington also experienced the #1 largest increase in drug overdose deaths of any state this past year.

Republican Solutions:

- ✗ [HB 1520](#) enhances penalties for fentanyl distribution to reduce the flow of illegal drugs throughout our state. *No action taken.*

- ✗ [HB 2324](#) establishes a new Bureau of Narcotics within the WSP to fight sophisticated drug trafficking rings that operate across local government jurisdictional boundaries. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 1162](#) makes it a crime to expose children and vulnerable adults to fentanyl and other controlled substances. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 2233](#) requires children to be removed from homes when caregivers are abusing fentanyl. *No action taken.*
 - Democrats voted down an [amendment \(46-49\)](#) that would have required children to be removed from homes where illicit fentanyl is present unless the parent can prove the home is safe.

Fix the affordability crisis.

Housing and transportation cost 30% more in Washington compared to the national average. Our state has the 4th highest combined sales tax rate in the country and is the 4th most expensive state for groceries. And thanks to the Democrats' carbon tax, Washington drivers now pay the 3rd highest gas prices in the nation. Learn more about all the [taxes & fees](#) passed by Democrats here: houserepublicans.wa.gov/tax-increases

Republican Solutions:

- ✓ [I-2111](#) prohibits the state, counties, cities and towns from imposing or collecting income taxes. *Passed House 76-21 and Senate 38-11, takes effect June 6, 2024.*
- ✗ [I-2117](#) repeals the Climate Commitment Act and the associated carbon tax and prohibits state agencies from imposing a future carbon trading program. *No action taken, headed to November ballot.*
- ✗ [HB 2040](#) provides a \$200 gas rebate to Washington drivers funded by surplus carbon tax revenue to help offset high gas prices caused by the Climate Commitment Act. *No action taken.*
 - Democrats voted down a budget [amendment \(41-53\)](#) that would have provided a \$150 gas rebate to 5.9 million registered vehicle owners.
- ✗ [HB 1704](#) reduces the state sales tax rate by 0.5% which will help reduce burdens on families during high inflation and make our state tax system more fair. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 1011](#) repeals the unpopular long-term care insurance program and payroll tax. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [I-2124](#) gives employees and self-employed individuals the ability to opt out of the state's mandatory long-term care insurance program to ensure that workers aren't forced to pay for benefits they don't want or need. *No action taken, headed to November ballot.*
- ✗ [I-2109](#) repeals the capital gains tax on the sale or exchange of capital assets over \$250,000. *No action taken, headed to November ballot.*

Fix the housing & homelessness crisis.

Thanks to years of irrational land use policy and costly building regulations, Washington has the fewest number of housing units per household of any state which has caused housing costs to surge. As a result, 88% of families can no longer afford a median priced home and 46% of all renters are cost burdened paying more than 30% of their income toward rent. State spending on preventing and addressing homelessness grew by 883% over the past decade yet our homeless population has more than doubled. Washington now has the 4th largest homeless population in the country. Find more **Housing & Homelessness Facts** here: houserepublicans.wa.gov/housing-crisis

Republican Solutions:

- ✓ [HB 2003](#) establishes a leasehold tax exemption to incentive development of affordable housing on state public lands. *Passed House 95-2 and Senate 46-0, takes effect June 6, 2024.*
- ✗ [HB 2033](#) provides a new tax credit to encourage landlords to voluntarily lower or freeze rents creating more stable and affordable housing. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 1245](#) authorizes lot splitting to create more parcels of land to build starter homes and other forms of affordable housing. *Passed House 94-4, no further action.*
- ✗ [HB 1401](#) creates a low-cost, expedited permit process for single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and ADUs that target low and moderate-income households. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 1373](#) provides funding to cities and counties to clean up encampments and provide services if they enforce camping bans near schools, parks and child care centers. *No action taken.*
 - *Democrats voted down a budget [amendment \(42-53\)](#) that would have provided \$320 million to clean up encampments and \$28 million to transit agencies to prevent drug use in their facilities and to decontaminate facilities from methamphetamines and fentanyl.*

Fix the education crisis.

Despite record investments in our public schools, academic performance has plummeted. Right now, 60% of students are failing math and 50% are failing reading. Scores are even worse for minority and low-income children who fell further behind their peers during the school closures. And public schools have lost over 60,000 students suggesting that families are not satisfied with the education they are receiving. Find more **K-12 Education Facts** here: houserepublicans.wa.gov/k-12-education-facts

Republican Solutions:

- ✓ [I-2081](#) enacts a "Parents' Bill of Rights" that guarantees parents and guardians of public school children the right to review instructional materials, inspect records, receive notifications and opt out of particular activities. *Passed House 82-15 and Senate 49-0, takes effect June 6, 2024.*
- ✗ [HB 2387](#) puts tutors in schools and more paraeducators in classrooms to deliver high-dosage tutoring which is the most effective way to get students back on track in math and reading. *No action taken.*
 - *Democrats voted down a budget [amendment \(45-50\)](#) that would have provided \$50 million to increase paraeducator staff and salaries before ultimately agreeing to the Republican-proposed level of funding in the conference budget.*
- ✗ [HB 2142](#) funds reading literacy coaches in elementary schools with prioritization for low-income children and students who have fallen furthest behind their peers. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 1615](#) funds education savings accounts for students who are low-income, eligible for special education or in persistently failing schools, so that all children can exercise the privilege of attending private school or homeschool, not just those who can afford it. *No action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 1044](#) creates a grant program to help school districts in economically disadvantaged areas build schools. *Passed House 93-0 and Senate 46-2 with differences that were not resolved, bill will not take effect.*

Fix the child care crisis.

After a decade of excessive regulations, Washington's child care system is broken. There are massive child care deserts across our state and 63% of children under five don't have access to nearby child care which reduces the state workforce by around 133,000. Our state also has the 9th most expensive infant care in the nation and the average family spends over 35% of their income to send two children to child care.

Republican Solutions:

- ✗ [HB 1716](#) provides a B&O tax credit to employers that voluntarily provide child care assistance to employees to help parents remain in the workforce. *Public hearing, no action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 2179](#) relaxes licensing and regulatory requirements for providers in child care deserts so children can get care and parents can get to work, no matter where they live. *Public hearing, no action taken.*
- ✗ [HB 2300](#) tackles child care workforce shortages by creating a pathway for child care workers to become certified based on prior work experience. *No action taken.*