

SOLUTIONS FOR A BETTER WASHINGTON

MADE IN WASHINGTON

Washington's economy is struggling under record unemployment and job losses. We must exhaust every option to improve Washington's business climate, empower employers and protect employees.

COMMON-SENSE SOLUTIONS:

1. Protect and create jobs by revitalizing Washington's economy and attracting new investment.

- ✓ Return people to work sooner by improving the efficiency of our workers' compensation system. (HB 2879, dead)
- ✓ Protect employers from sharp UI tax increases by "smoothing" out the increases over multiple years. (HB 2920, dead)
- ✓ Protect unemployment insurance improvements passed into law during the 2009 session.
- ✓ Encourage competition with the workers' compensation fund, reducing costs and saving employees from contributions. (HB 3149, dead)
- ✓ Make common-sense updates to the current state-run workers' compensation system to cut costs while still offering the benefits injured workers expect. (HB 2950, dead)



2. Provide regulatory relief by reforming government services to ease burdensome and costly regulations.

- ✓ Require agencies to issue permit decisions within 90 days or the permit is automatically granted. (HB 2043, dead)
- ✓ Require new state agency rules be reviewed by the Legislature before being adopted. (HB 2502, dead)
- ✓ Put burden of proof in agency rule disputes on the agency instead of the citizens. (HB 1617, dead)
- ✓ Give employers 48 hours to correct mistakes before an agency can issue a fine or penalty. (HB 2603, passed Legislature and signed into law)

"When I talk with employers around the state, the consistent message continues to be the fact they can't keep people working if they are buried in red-tape. State agencies must refocus the way they interact with the public, they must move away from their adversarial position into a customer service role."

– Rep. Norma Smith, lead Republican on Community and Economic Development and Trade Committee

3. Increase affordable, renewable energy supply

- ✓ Support energy policies that increase our power supply and renewable resources while keeping energy affordable for families and employers. (HB 2432, HJR 4215 — both dead)
- ✓ Recognize hydropower as a renewable resource. (HB 2432, HJR 4215 — both dead)
- ✓ Reduce red-tape and provide incentives for constructing new energy cogeneration facilities that provide clean, low-cost power. (HB 2813, dead)

4. Protect workers health care with reforms that reduce costs and protect consumer choice

- ✓ Protect workers' health care with reforms that reduce costs and protect consumer choice. (HB 1868, dead)
- ✓ Allow consumers to choose health insurance plans across state lines. (HB 1871, dead)
- ✓ Prevent lawsuit abuse. (HB 2814, dead)
- ✓ Create an affordable 'core benefit' plan for young adults ages 19 to 34. (HB 1866, dead)

HOUSE REPUBLICANS BELIEVE:

1. Washington's leaders should be exhausting all resources and making every effort to attract jobs to our area and retain critical family-wage jobs in the state.
2. Empowered employers retain and create jobs.
3. New or higher taxes and fees hurt jobs and, ultimately, families. How can employers keep their doors open and people employed when they face a 7.6% increase in workers' compensation premiums, increased unemployment insurance taxes and prevailing wage increases?
4. Boeing recently chose to locate its second 787 production plant in South Carolina, costing Washington state an estimated 3,500 new jobs. Washington must address the cost of doing business in the state if we want to keep Boeing and the thousands of employers who supply to Boeing and support our communities.
5. Washington's leaders must declare the state "open for business" and invite new and innovative employers to the state to bolster all sectors of employment and lift us out of the recession.
6. **We can make "Made in Washington" mean something again!**

“We want to protect families from higher costs and further job losses. The last thing we should be doing in this difficult financial time is adding more economic burdens to our families, or embracing policies that will cost us jobs.”

Rep. Shelly Short, lead Republican on climate change issues

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS:

MYTH #1 - Washington State is a great place for business; Forbes Magazine just ranked Washington State the 2nd best state to do business.

FACT #1 – Forbes Magazine also ranked Washington state below-average (27th) in the “Business Costs Index” based on costs of labor, energy and taxes.

- ✓ Our unemployment insurance system taxes our employers at the sixth-highest rate in the nation. Unlike most states, we also levy our unique gross receipts tax on businesses, which taxes them regardless of whether they turn a profit.
- ✓ Our workers’ compensation system is out of step with the rest of the nation – employers pay the second-highest cost per employee in the nation and provide the third-highest benefit package.

MYTH #2 – Washington must take drastic steps now to protect future generations from climate change.

FACT #2 – Washington creates less than 3/10ths of 1 percent of global emissions because of our innovative energy production.

In comparison, in one week China produces emissions equal to what our state produces in one year. Drastic steps put Washington at a competitive disadvantage with no affect on climate change.

MYTH #3 - There are 47,194 new “green jobs” in Washington and that number continues to grow.

FACT # 3 – The green jobs reported are not new jobs, just newly reclassified jobs pulled from a survey. Green jobs counted included blasters, bus and truck drivers, and loan officers. It ignores the fact that the state has over 300,000 people looking for work and continues to lose jobs in the private sector.

MYTH # 4 – Washington's energy supply needs more renewable resources.

FACT #4 – Nearly three-fourths of our state energy generation comes from renewable hydropower, a resource recognized as “clean and green” everywhere except under Washington state law.



“Like many small employers struggling under the weight of the recession and the cost of doing business in Washington state, I have had to trim my staff, lower my overhead and make sacrifices to keep my doors open. Any increased costs, such as the workers’ compensation tax increase, will only make it more difficult for me to consider hiring or expanding even when the economy takes a turn for the better.”

— Rep. Cary Condotta, small-business owner for 27 years, lead Republican on commerce and labor issues