The 2026 Legislative Session. Sixty days, hundreds of bills, one uphill battle for the future of Washington.

DECEMBER 2025

Record Tax Increases, Another Budget Deficit. After passing the largest tax increase in state history in 2025, Democrats closed the year with another multi-billion-dollar deficit and open calls for tax increases – including a state income tax.

DECEMBER 17

The Pie Crust Promise. On December 17, the Senate Majority Leader, whose caucus voted to ban state income taxes less than two years ago, dismissed that vote as a "pie crust promise: easily made, easily broken."

DECEMBER 18

Dueling Budget Visions. On December 18, Rep. Travis Couture unveiled his "Affordability First" Budget – a balanced proposal that limited new spending, restored recent Medicaid cuts, protected K-12 funding, and avoided new taxes. Five days later, Gov. Ferguson released his own 2026 budget proposal and announced his support for a state income tax.

DECEMBER 23

The Pre-Session Launch of the State Income Tax. Before the legislative session even began, Democrats began promoting their plan to enact a state income tax. While branding it a "millionaires' tax," they simultaneously admitted this would eventually be a tax on everyone. When asked publicly, "Why should the public assume that it's not going to be an income tax on them by 2031?" a member of House Democratic leadership responded candidly, "You shouldn't."

JANUARY 12

The 60-Day Legislative Session Begins with a Regressive Bang. The 2026 legislative session convened on January 12. Democrats wasted no time blaming Trump for all of the state's problems. Alongside the income tax, they advanced legislation that would increase the price of groceries, clothing, tires, and electricity.

JANUARY 13

A Partisan State of the State. In his State of State address, Gov. Ferguson adopted a markedly different tone from last year where he urged reform and described taxes as a last resort. He reiterated his support for a state income tax and criticized U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

JANUARY 28

Democrats Refuse to Hear the Initiatives. Before the legislative session began, Rep. Jinkins and Sen. Pedersen publicly announced their intention to disregard two citizen initiatives outright – without hearings, debate, or public input.

FEBRUARY 3

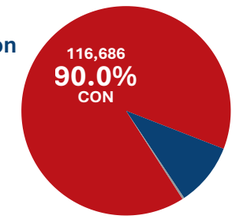
House Republicans Give a Voice to the People. Republican leaders convened public listening sessions on February 3 – giving Washingtonians a voice. More than 100 citizens attended and testified in support of the initiatives.

FEBRUARY 17

Defeating another 5:00 Cutoff Bill. At 5:00 p.m. on February 17, the Speaker brought forward legislation that would have allowed for early release of dangerous juvenile offenders. Republicans, joined by several moderate Democrats, filed more than 60 amendments and prepared for extended debate. Amidst sustained opposition, the Speaker was forced to pull the bill from the floor.

FEBRUARY 24

Record-Breaking Opposition to the State Income Tax. When the state income tax was heard in the House Finance Committee on February 24, more than 100,000 people signed in opposed – shattering previous records. Combined with Senate testimony, nearly 134,000 individual citizens formally registered their opposition to the income tax.



FEBRUARY 28

Operating Budget Passes with Bipartisan 'No' Votes. House Democrats claimed to "solve" the deficit by increasing overall spending by $2 billion, drawing down reserves, and tapping a pension account. Republicans debated the budget for nearly seven hours and offered 20 amendments, but only one was adopted. In the end, five Democrats joined Republicans in voting no.

MARCH 10

Washington's First Income Tax Passes the Legislature. Despite unprecedented public opposition and a 24-hour floor battle by House Republicans, Democrats passed the state's first income tax. Though initially applied to income above $1 million, Democrats rejected a constitutional amendment that would permanently limit the tax to millionaires – reinforcing concerns that the tax will expand to regular people in future years.

The Taxpayer Exodus Accelerates. Mere hours after the income tax passed, former Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz announced he is leaving Washington for low-tax, business-friendly Florida, joining a growing list of entrepenuers and job creators leaving our state.

Gov. Ferguson Signs the Income Tax Bill into Law on March 30.

MARCH 12

Sine Die. The 2026 legislative session ends. This session, 1,244 bills were introduced in the House and Senate but only 276 were ultimately passed by the Legislature and delivered to Gov. Ferguson. Of this amount, 66 were sponsored by Republicans.