

# Viewpoint

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER



## Why families support charter schools

### IN OUR WINTER ISSUE

WPC testifies before Congress on Obamacare

Transportation: why 63% of surveyed voters gave state officials a negative rating

How the environmental left became the new climate deniers

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# Viewpoint

THE QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF WASHINGTON POLICY CENTER

WINTER 2014

Dear Friends,

With the start of 2014, we are excited at Washington Policy Center for what lies ahead. 2013 was a great year for us and we are proud of the work we accomplished. With the 2014 Legislative Session now underway, our policy experts are working hard to help you and our state's policymakers understand the state's key policy issues, as you will find in this issue.

We are especially excited about a project that we began in 2001, WashingtonVotes.org, which is Washington state's long-running independent, legislative information and tracking website, and where it is headed. This year, we have expanded this service and created WashingtonVotes.org News; which will cover important legislative action in Olympia and provide subscribers and users with brief reports about committee hearings, floor action and much more that they will not receive elsewhere.

In this issue, you will find more information on WashingtonVotes.org News, as well as a glimpse at the work WPC has continued steadfastly on behalf of the students in our state. Our Center for Education has kept a close eye on the progression of charter schools, since voters passed Initiative 1240 in 2012. This year, the Washington State Charter School Commission will approve up to 8 applications for the first new charter schools in our state. Our feature article tells the story of some of the diverse groups applying for charter schools to be opened in their communities.

Also included in this issue are the results of a statewide transportation poll commissioned by WPC in light of the debate over a statewide transportation package; as well as a summary of WPC's first-ever Congressional testimony on Obamacare at the U.S. Capitol.

We have also provided an opportunity for you to let us know if there are friends or family members who would be interested in receiving all the benefits of being a WPC member, such as receiving *Viewpoint* and other mailings and invitations to our events. We encourage you to write down a few names and return the designated card in the envelope enclosed so we can add them to our mailing list.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Viewpoint* and find the news and analysis valuable and informative.

Very truly yours,



Greg Porter  
Chairman



Dann Mead Smith  
President





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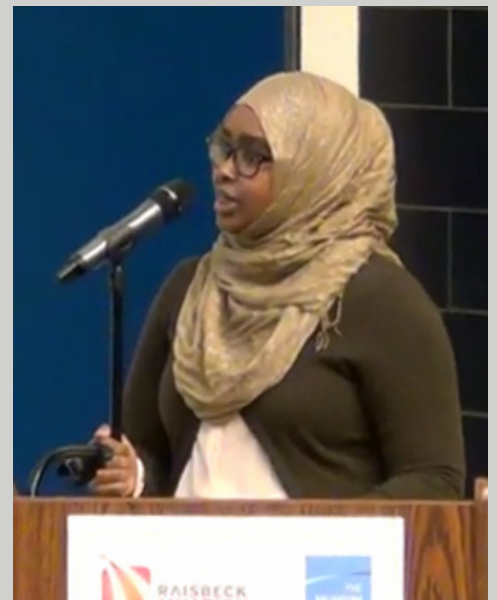
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WPC's  
2014  
Jennifer  
Dunn-  
Thomson  
SCHOLARSHIP

In 2005, WPC honored Congresswoman Jennifer Dunn with our annual Champion of Freedom Award for her contributions throughout her distinguished Congressional career. In addition, we honored her strong leadership, support of free-market principles and being a friend to small businesses and taxpayers based on her leadership of the death tax repeal and other tax reforms.

We continue to honor her legacy by presenting the 4th Annual Jennifer Dunn-Thomson Scholarship through the Jennifer Dunn-Thomson Fund for America's Future. The \$5,000 scholarship will be awarded to a female college student who embodies Jennifer's values of leadership and commitment to public service and free-market principles. The recipient of the scholarship may use the money to pay for tuition or for an internship on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. WPC will help the recipient with an internship placement with a member of Congress in the fall of 2014.

For details on the scholarship, Jennifer's life and previous recipients, visit:  
[www.washingtonpolicy.org/jenniferdunn](http://www.washingtonpolicy.org/jenniferdunn)

WPC is accepting applications until April 15, 2014.



Meet Marina Giloi,  
2013 scholarship recipient

*Marina, from Redmond, WA, is a senior at Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, CA, where she is pursuing a dual major in Economics-Accounting and Philosophy, Politics, and Economics. Marina has served as an intern at the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region, Washington Policy Center, Rob McKenna's 2012 campaign for governor and as the Editor-in-Chief of the Claremont Independent, a student newspaper at her college.*

# YOUR DONATION COUNTS.

Here's what people are saying about WPC

Dec. 4, 2013

*I've grown to depend on the research your organization does to help guide my voting decisions. Please keep up the good work to shed light on what our state and local governments are doing. Your research and analysis are necessary!*

*Patty S.  
Seattle*

## “Who funds WPC?”



*By Stephanie True, WPC Development Director*

We're very proud to say that WPC receives no government funding; we're an independent organization funded by you: our valued supporters. WPC is supported exclusively by concerned citizens, business owners and select charitable foundations who recognize the value of our work. These are people who know what we know: **policy matters.**

And, thanks to you, 2013 was our most successful year to-date! WPC is making real strides to ensure a sound fiscal footing for all communities and industries. Just a few examples of our recent impact include eleven bills signed by the Governor during the 2013 Legislative Session were based on our research and analysis, our position prevailed on five out of six ballot measures during the last election, and our research is now in the media an average of over five times per day!

Our ultimate goal is that Washington state remains among the best places to raise a family, earn a living and run a business. We work hard for you, providing research and clear policy analysis, advancing our goal of spending discipline, low taxes and limited government. By donating to WPC, you are putting your dollars toward a time-tested, professional organization that will fight for your principles long into the future. Be assured that we are working hard to give our policymakers, especially now during the Legislative Session, and citizens, the information they need to make fiscally responsible choices.

To support WPC's vital work and new endeavors and to ensure our impact continues to grow, WPC launched an exciting new fundraising initiative. **This program, called The Pillar Society, distinguishes donors who make a substantial pledge which is paid over three years** (*Pledges start at \$5,000 per year.*) **We would like to sincerely thank our current Pillar Society members and also to urge you to join us!**

Along with the prestige of being a WPC Pillar Society member, benefits include premier tables at our conferences and Annual Dinner (reserved before the event sells-out!), varying recognition throughout the year and invitations to private events with key public officials and thought leaders. We listened to you—our supporters—many of whom told us they want to increase or maintain their financial support of WPC, but that they only want to be asked for a gift one time per year. The Pillar Society answers this need.

**We hope you will consider joining our Pillar Society.** We are on your side and we are honored to have your trust. For more information, please contact WPC's Development Director, Stephanie True, at (206) 937-9691 or [strue@washingtonpolicy.org](mailto:strue@washingtonpolicy.org).

# SOLUTIONSSUMMIT

Washington Policy Center's Statewide Policy Conference



Scott Rasmussen, *New York Times* bestselling author, Co-Founder of ESPN, and President of the Rasmussen Media Group at WPC's Solutions Summit

LAST NOVEMBER, Washington Policy Center was pleased to host its inaugural Solutions Summit, which brought together over 600 local business and policy leaders from across the state to discuss the key issues facing our state. This highly anticipated event was held in Eastern Washington at the Red Lion Hotel in Pasco and in Western Washington at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bellevue, making it a truly statewide conference.

WPC was honored to welcome a number of esteemed guests to speak on these topics including Senate Majority Leader Rodney Tom, former State Auditor Brian Sonntag, Spokane Superintendent Dr. Shelley Redinger, Tom Miller of the American Enterprise Institute, Dr. Ronald Utt of the Heritage Foundation and many more, with a keynote address delivered by national pollster and *New York Times* bestselling author Scott Rasmussen of the Rasmussen Media Group.

The Solutions Summit featured panels on a number of topics critical to the future of Washington State, including the Affordable Care Act, education after the passage of the Charter School Initiative, the benefits of public-private partnerships for transportation, opportunities for sustainable government budgeting, the impact of the impact of the “buy local” trend on the environment and world

hunger, and the Right to Work issue.

At lunch WPC was pleased to welcome Scott Rasmussen for his keynote address, “Governing in an iPad Era.” Rasmussen took the stage to an enthusiastic round of applause and thanked WPC for their positive impact on politics in Washington State.

Mr. Rasmussen began by reminding us of the false impression that the news media gives of American voters. According to Rasmussen, most Americans do not care about ideology or policy, but rather are looking for ways to solve problems.

Although there has been a trend toward centralization in American politics for some time, Rasmussen notes that this trend must reverse in part due to new technology. He explained that we all use these powerful new digital technologies in different ways and for our own individual purposes and that the power of individual choice has empowered people to demand better, faster service from everyone. This, in some ways, poses a problem for the government, which continues to lag behind public opinion and remains inflexible to change which is in fact a promising trend according to Rasmussen, who noted that over time, “society moves and government catches up.”

Rasmussen reflected on how quickly the cultural landscape has changed. “We may have some bumpy years ahead of us in politics, but America’s best years are surely still ahead of us,” said Rasmussen.

The first annual Solutions Summit was an overwhelming success, and continued WPC’s commitment to make an impact on key policy issues in Washington State. Our outstanding speakers were able to shed light on what our state’s citizens will face in the years to come and how they can make a difference by being involved.

Watch a recap of the Solutions Summit at [www.washingtonpolicy.org](http://www.washingtonpolicy.org).



*Supporters of the SOAR Academy in Tacoma smile after testifying before the Charter School Commission.*

**The state’s Charter School Commission recently held public meetings to consider proposals to open the first round of charter schools. The Commission heard proposals from 19 community-based groups around the state seeking to open charter schools. The law allows just eight such schools to open the first year for a total of 40 over five years.**



K-12 EDUCATION REFORM AND ALLOWING CHARTER SCHOOLS IN OUR state are long-standing Washington Policy Center recommendations. Initiative 1240, the charter school initiative that Washington state voters passed in 2012, made our state the 42nd state to authorize the popular independent public schools. Our Center for Education has been monitoring the implementation of I-1240 over the last year as part of WPC's I-1240 Charter School Follow-Up Project, to ensure the highest possibility of success for new charter schools and the students who will attend them.

The commissioners convened a public meeting at Seattle's Aviation High School in a crowded auditorium filled with over 200 parents and community members, including WPC's Liv Finne who attended several of these community meetings. Many moving testimonies were given about what opening the proposed King County Academy would mean for the children in their community.

Channie Butler testified, representing a group seeking to open a school for children living in south Seattle, including the children of immigrant families from Somalia and other East African countries. She reported many families found traditional public schools fail to meet the needs of immigrant and at-risk children. The proposed charter school would include a rigorous core curriculum and STEM-based math and science courses.

Hassad Hassan, introduced himself as part of the Somali community and expressed the frustration many families feel about Seattle Public Schools:

*"I am a father and I am not happy with the academics my children are receiving from the public school district. A charter school will have long hours and early intervention in read, math and technology. If King County Academy opens their doors tomorrow, I will not hesitate to enroll my children and recommend the same to all the members of my community."*

Another speaker described the hope families feel at the chance to send their children to a good school after fleeing war-torn areas of Africa:

*"I am overwhelmed by the support of the community and by the opportunity the commission and the voters of this state have given to support charter schools. My [Somali] community came from a background of a civil war, from a country that used to be one of the best in education in Africa. They have difficulty. America has supported these people to come over here, to have a second chance of life. I would also like to commend that America has given our community the opportunity to get a good education."*

One mother expressed the excitement many parents feel about the prospect of a charter school opening in their area:

*"A charter school would bridge the gap we have in our community... Our children are being held back in public schools that are not equipped to fill our need.... King County Charter School is going to be awesome. The parents are ready. Everyone is ready."*

An earlier public meeting held at South Seattle Community College was packed by union members opposed to charter schools, who aggressively dominated the agenda. In the audience was union executive Jonathan Knapp, president of the Seattle Education Association. His union as well as the state teacher's union strongly opposes allowing parents to send their children to a charter school. The meeting at Aviation High School was attended mostly by parents and community representatives.

Another public forum held in Renton for three charter school applicants, saw more than 350 people during the course of the meeting, with standing-room-only for the first hour. Immigrant, low-income and upper-income parents testified about their hopes for their children to attend one of the three proposed charter schools.

The first presentation came from computer scientists employed at Microsoft and Amazon, who hoped to open Coral Academy of Science Charter School, an established, successful charter school program seeking to provide a rigorous, integrated Science Technology Engineering and Math education to at-risk students in Kent. The school's reputation for excellence elicited these public comments:

A truck driver said he wanted his children to attend Coral Academy of Science Charter School, so they could receive an education and have a better life.


*cover story continued from page 9...*

A college student, the son of immigrants, said the school in Nevada prepared him for majoring in computer science at the University of Washington.

The second school was presented by Adel Sefrioui and Brooke Valentine, education leaders from Kent. They wished to open Excel Public Charter School a 6th through 12th grade school for disadvantaged students. Excel Public Charter School would offer the equivalent of 80 additional days of learning through longer and more school days, double the time spent on reading and math, a mix of instructional methods to suit the children and a culture of high expectations.

Many people from Kent spoke in enthusiastic support of Excel Public Charter School. Mychal Boiser, Executive Director of Kona Kai Coffee, who employs and trains high school drop-outs, eloquently described the need of parents in Kent to have the choice of sending their children to Excel Public Charter School.

The third proposal came from Cedar River Academy, a private school wishing to become a charter school so more children could have access to its highly individualized successful program. Two mothers testified in tears that the academy's alternative program had offered their daughters a real chance at success in school.

These meetings revealed some of the enthusiasm charter schools are generating among parents who are underserved by traditional schools and who want to give their children a better life through education. The hopes and dreams of parents filled the rooms, fueled by the men and women working hard to open Washington state's first charter schools. 

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## WPC CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

*Edited Congressional Hearing Testimony given on November 14, 2013 by Dr. Roger Stark, MD, FACS and WPC Health Care Policy Analyst before the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee.*



AT the current rate of spending increase, funding of the existing Medicaid program will double compared to current levels in nine years, that is, by fiscal 2021. At an average growth rate of 8 percent a year, Medicaid is the fastest growing federal entitlement program. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that, without changes made to current policies, the existing Medicaid program alone will comprise almost 6 percent of the nation's gross domestic product by 2017. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) will add an estimated 16 - 23 million more patients to the "expanded" Medicaid and will only make this cost problem worse

Washington state has been very proactive about establishing a state health insurance exchange. Our state exchange opened for enrollment on October 1st, and except for temporary, first-day problems, it has been successfully

accepting applications. We anticipate that ultimately we will see 320,000 to 400,000 new Medicaid patients enrolled through the exchange.

As of October 31st, our exchange had a total of 105,000 applicants with 70,000 of these in the new Medicaid program. This represents 67 percent of the total.

Of these applicants, 55,000 completed the enrollment process with 48,000 of these completions in the new Medicaid. This represents 87 percent of the total.

In other words, almost 90 percent of completed applications were done in the new Medicaid program where no upfront premium fee is required. We have exchange board members who are calling this skewed enrollment pattern “Medicaid on steroids” with a huge “adverse risk selection.”

Although the ACA is written such that state taxpayers will eventually pay only 10 percent of the cost of the new Medicaid, it should be noted that state taxpayers are also federal taxpayers. Medicaid is a pay-as-you-go entitlement. Therefore, Washington state taxpayers will ultimately pay for essentially the entire cost of the new Medicaid, or \$17.8 – 22.2 billion over 10 years depending on enrollment.

Many Medicaid reform proposals have been recommended through the years. Some of these, such as negotiating discounts for services, increasing provider fees to keep patients out of emergency rooms, and attempting to control drug costs, do not address the underlying problem of funding a broad health care entitlement.

Similarly, there is virtually no evidence that any of these ideas have significantly impacted the cost or the effectiveness of Medicaid. On the other hand, such initiatives as health savings accounts (HSAs), pursuing fraud aggressively, tightening eligibility requirements, and using block grants to states, have been shown to be effective in controlling costs.

**\$17-22  
BILLION**

What WA State taxpayers will pay for new Medicaid over ten years

**13  
PERCENT**

The number of non-Medicaid ACA enrollments in WA's Health Exchange

**18-24  
PERCENT**

Physicians who are not taking new Medicaid patients


Watch Dr. Stark's testimony and Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers' introduction online



The current Medicaid program is arguably the worst health insurance plan in the country. It has expanded massively beyond the original intent in 1965 and is now one of the two or three largest budget items for nearly every state. In spite of massive annual increases in spending, Medicaid chronically experiences budget-breaking costs. Expanding Medicaid, as the ACA requires, will only compound these problems.

Like any entitlement program, Medicaid encourages over utilization. The tragic irony is that because of low provider reimbursements, access for patients is severely limited. The number of doctors who are not seeing new Medicaid patients grows larger each year. All Medicaid patients, by definition, have health insurance, but just having health insurance does not guarantee one will receive health care services.

Another tragedy is that after more than 40 years, there is no evidence Medicaid has improved health outcomes for the vast majority of either children or adults enrolled in the program. Medicaid, like any entitlement that offers services apparently for free, has encouraged over utilization of health care resources. When services appear to be “free,” the health care market has no ability to place a true value on that service and no way to know if limited resources are being allocated efficiently.

Limited public safety net programs will always be needed to provide health care for the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society. However, the bloated and expanding Medicaid entitlement program, as it is presently structured, is not sustainable. Even though the new program will be funded by federal taxpayers, costs will explode as we have seen since 1965. The federal government will then have only three choices, all of which are bad – run huge budget deficits, raise taxes, or ration medical care by limiting funding. 

# POINT OF VIEW

Recent Opinion/Editorials from WPC's research centers.

## Reduce congestion by building roads faster, smarter and on budget

By Bob Pishue, Director, Center for Transportation.



LAWMAKERS closed up their fourth session of 2013 without agreement on how to improve the movement of goods and people on the state's road network. State Senate and House proposals would increase the gas tax by 10.5 to 11.5 cents per gallon, but this may be hard to sell to the public as new polling data from

Washington Policy Center shows many voters aren't impressed with how state officials are currently managing the state's roads, highways and bridges.

1. Lawmakers have not improved traffic flow. According to the statewide poll of 500 likely voters, 58 percent said that reducing traffic congestion is personally important to them, but even more think the state isn't doing enough to make travel easier. Sixty-three percent gave state officials a negative rating.

The results aren't surprising. Lawmakers eliminated performance benchmarks that guide how transportation taxes should be spent. State policy used to make faster travel times a top priority, but lawmakers repealed that guidance in 2007. Now lawmakers say it is acceptable if traffic gets worse, as long as longer travel times for people are "predictable."

2. Voters don't want new taxes for mass transit. Local bus agencies currently receive money from local taxes. Voters were asked if they would support a new state tax to fund local transit and 48 percent said they would oppose the new tax, while only 37 percent said they would support it. Even with low public support, the House transportation bill introduced earlier this year would shift \$250 million in gas taxes to local bus agencies.

Transit serves the local community and should continue to be funded by local taxes. Bus agencies together

already collect more in local taxes than the entire state does in gas taxes. Giving transit officials a cut of state revenue too would be unfair to the traveling public, breaking the promise that gas taxes are a true user fee.

3. Voters want gas taxes to be used for highways, not costly policies or other programs. The public wants state officials to build and maintain roads with less waste of their tax dollars. Seventy-two percent of respondents said that maintaining roads and adding lanes to reduce congestion should take priority over other uses, and a plurality want to pay for it by lowering the cost of building roads.

Citizens are told that a gas tax increase is needed for transportation infrastructure, yet much of the money unfairly gets diverted to other programs or policies. For example, the state currently charges itself sales tax on transportation projects, unnecessarily increasing project costs by \$540 million over the last decade.

Excessive planning and permitting also leads to waste. Officials spent \$400 million on planning and permitting for the new 520 bridge, more than the inflation-adjusted cost to build the entire bridge in 1963.

It doesn't have to be this way. Under pressure in a crisis, state officials know how to build public projects faster and smarter.

When the Skagit River Bridge collapsed, state leaders eliminated administrative rules that normally would cause unnecessary cost and delay. By streamlining permits, securing funding upfront, and using design-build planning, the bridge replacement was finished in just four months. Under the usual rules, the project would have taken several years and cost twice as much.

Policymakers should make faster and smarter building the rule, not the exception.

The proposed gas tax increase would impose the fifth highest fuel tax in the nation on Washingtonians. Through multiple ballot measures, the public has shown an aversion to tax increases. Before increasing taxes, lawmakers should first show they want to serve the public interest, by providing congestion relief, keeping their promise to spend gas taxes directly on road projects, and building public projects faster and smarter. As people living near the Skagit River learned, we know they can do it.



# Climate Science: How the environmental left became the new deniers

By Todd Myers, Director, Center for the Environment.



"THE UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change raises the level of alarm. ... global warming deniers are now on a par with Holocaust deniers..."

- Ellen Goodman, *Boston Globe*, 2007

When the U.N.'s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

released its report in 2007, the response of the environmental left was close to hysterical. The left called its findings the "climate consensus." People who questioned the IPCC's authority, some said, had the mentality of holocaust deniers.

Recently the IPCC released a new assessment, with improved calculations. The new predictions are less dire and the IPCC's old fans have become the new climate deniers, dismissing the new report as "political."

For example, writing in *The Wall Street Journal* actress Darryl Hannah, who frequently protests with climate scientist James Hansen, says action is needed "urgently, if we are to avoid a 4-degree Celsius raise." Her claim, however, was wrong before the new report was released, and is more so now.

The latest projection of the IPCC for temperature increase under the most likely scenario is 1.8 degrees Celsius by the year 2100 – less than half what Hannah claims. In fact, her claim is beyond the median projection for the most extreme scenario of 3.7 degrees C.

Claims about sea level are similarly inaccurate. The Sightline Institute claimed "the world's leading climate scientists warn of the sea level rising by three feet by 2100." On Twitter, Northwest NPR was even more extreme, asking how Seattle "would be affected if sea levels rise 1 foot by 2020."

Even the most extreme scenario projects an upper limit of sea level rise of 32 inches by 2100 – less than the three feet claimed by Sightline. NPR's 2020 estimate is more than ten times the IPCC's estimate.

Finally, Governor Inslee repeatedly mentions ocean acidification as a reason to take action on carbon emissions. Pointing to shellfish mortality in Washington's waters, he claims, "We know that two of the most challenging threats we face to our environment are climate change and ocean acidification." The pH of our waters, he notes, has recently acidified at the rate of about 0.1 per year.

Less than one percent of that trend, however, can be attributed to CO2 emissions. The IPCC reports, "The pH of ocean surface water has decreased by 0.1 since the beginning of the industrial era." The acidification the Governor attributes to carbon emissions annually is actually the amount that occurred over more than 100 years.

Some realize their cataclysmic projections are no longer in line with consensus science. Instead of adjusting their claims, they turned to undermining the IPCC instead.

One *New York Times* columnist accused the IPCC of "bending over backward to be scientifically conservative," claiming it was intentionally low-balling projections.

Another left-wing environmental activist claimed "the IPCC report is more of a political document than a scientific one." That is exactly the view of the best-known climate "denier," Oklahoma Senator James Inhofe who told an audience prior to the last IPCC report, "This is a political document, not a scientific report."

The left has abandoned the IPCC, after years of touting the agency's unshakable standard of excellence. What changed were not the IPCC's standards but its conclusions. New science has sparked the left's new denial.

Real solutions to the risks associated with carbon emissions will come only when policies are consistent with the latest science. The new, left-wing science deniers are more interested in trimming the science to suit their pre-determined politics. As a result, they don't just deny the science, they deny the solutions for a cleaner Earth too. 🏔️

*WashingtonVotes.org, WPC's long-running independent, nonprofit legislative information and tracking website, launched a regular news service that covers important legislative action in Olympia.*

WashingtonVotes.org News, under the leadership of Washington Votes Director Franz Gregory, will provide subscribers and users with reports about committee hearings, executive sessions, floor action and upcoming roll call votes on important bills and amendments, along with timely comments from key players at the state capitol.

WashingtonVotes.org News reports will be provided by experienced analysts who are thoroughly familiar with the legislature's often obscure and complex ways of getting things done.

"We've been watching lawmakers at work for twelve years, and we've seen every twist, turn and legislative maneuver there is. Normally our analysts trade information about bill sponsors, hearings, committee action and floor votes among ourselves. Now we will share those insights with readers of WashingtonVotes.org News," said Gregory.

To date, the site has covered nearly 30,000 legislative measures and reported over 10,000 roll call votes. The site has thousands of registered users and has become an important resource for citizens, government officials, lobbyists and lawmakers to keep up to date on detailed committee work and House and Senate floor action.

*Sign up today at [www.washingtonvotes.org/account.aspx](http://www.washingtonvotes.org/account.aspx) to follow your legislators during this year's 60-day legislative session.*

## WAVotes.org's tools:

- ✓ A searchable database of all bills introduced, including bill number, short title, sponsorship and committee assignment since 2001.
- ✓ Timely legislative updates of all bill action.
- ✓ Free daily e-mail updates for subscribers.
- ✓ A free Weekly Roll Call service reporting on major bills to news outlets across the state, including the voting records of local lawmakers.
- ✓ Information on how to contact your lawmakers and see their bill sponsorships and voting records.
- ✓ A comments section that links users to social media.
- ✓ A Scorecard feature that allows users to track legislative votes based on their own criteria.
- ✓ The popular yearly Missed Votes Report showing the attendance record of every Senator and House member during the legislative session. The report provides a section that allows lawmakers to explain why they may have missed certain roll call votes or missed a large number of votes.



# EAST OF THE CASCADES

Keeping Eastern Washington involved in Olympia



By Chris Cargill  
Eastern Washington Director



IT'S the middle of winter. Snow blankets the ground in much of Eastern Washington. The weather situation is even worse

over Snoqualmie Pass. And yet, like every year before, hundreds of Eastern Washingtonians will make the dangerous trek to Olympia for two or three minutes.

And so it goes for those who live so far away from the capitol. The ability to be involved in the legislative process is limited to a short statement during a public hearing – if they get enough notice to be there.

Enter Washington Policy Center. For the fourth straight year, we've teamed with Wake-Up Call Fine Coffee and other local sponsors for legislative "Wake-Up Call Forums." These free, public service events give citizens the chance to connect to their legislators live in Olympia.

Each forum features two legislators who join the event live via video conference.

The Wake-Up Forums for the 2014 legislative session will be held in:

- Spokane (Jan. 15th and March 5th)
- Tri-Cities (Jan. 29th and March 12th)
- Yakima (February 19th)
- Moses Lake (February 26th).

For more information, go to [washingtonpolicy.org/wakeupcall](http://washingtonpolicy.org/wakeupcall).

## Tax limitation measure approved again

Yakima has become the second city in the state to approve WPC's recommendation for a supermajority requirement to raise taxes.

By a nearly 70% margin last November, voters approved requiring the city council to get five of seven votes – or a simple majority vote of citizens – to sign off on tax hikes.

Voters in Spokane also approved the requirement in 2013. Pierce County voters made the change in 2012. State voters have approved a similar requirement for the legislature five times.



Catch WPC research directors statewide as they give legislative updates weekly throughout the legislative session.



## SPOKANE

Chris Cargill, Eastern Washington Director, joins Mike Fitzsimmons  
4:00 p.m. each Thursday



## YAKIMA

Chris Cargill, Eastern Washington Director, joins Dave Ettl  
7:45 a.m. each Monday



## TRI-CITIES

Jason Mercier, Center for Government Reform, joins Good Morning Northwest on KVEW TV to give a legislative update  
6:30 a.m. each Wednesday



## SPOKANE

Chris Cargill, Eastern Washington Director, joins Dean Allen and Teresa Lukens  
7:30 a.m. each Monday



## PUGET SOUND

Paul Guppy, Vice President for Research, joins David Boze every Monday morning on **Sexy Politics with Policy Stud Paul Guppy**

## THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



### WPC STAFF, 2014

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Front row, left to right: Liv Finne, Education Director; Stephanie True, Development Director; Jason Mercier, Government Reform Director; Mary Catherine McAleer, Communications Coordinator; Braden Goodwin, Operations Manager; Todd Myers, Environment Director; Lisa Shin, Communications Director.

(Not pictured: Dr. Roger Stark, WPC Health Care Policy Analyst).