

# 2021 Legislative Priorities [PAGE 1]

*Washington State Democrats, as citizens of the planet, place the well-being of the people as our highest priority. We believe in the values of community, empathy, equality, tolerance, opportunity, and the common good of the interdependent world we share. These are our 2021 Washington State legislative priorities.*

## **Fiscal Responsibility & Revenue Reform**

- Levy a capital gains tax on the wealthy to fund K-12 schools and higher education
- Lower business and occupation tax obligations for small businesses by raising the exemption threshold
- Require that tax breaks/exemptions be accounted for and displayed as part of our operating budget
- Create the Washington State Investment Trust so we have our own publicly-owned state bank

## **Climate Action & Environmental Protection**

- Commit to climate action by putting a price on pollution to accelerate our transition to clean energy
- Reduce emissions from our transportation sector by requiring a clean fuel standard
- Prohibit the use of neonicotinoids to save our bees and other pollinators from annihilation
- Pass the HEAL Act to address environmental health disparities that affect communities of color

## **Police Accountability**

- Ban the use of chokeholds, tear gas, and other brutal tactics by Washington's police departments
- Require truly independent investigations and prosecutions of deadly force incidents
- Establish a duty for officers to intervene and to report the misconduct of other officers
- Create publicly accessible databases of police uses of force and of police disciplinary actions

## **Social Justice & Racial Equity**

- Advance human rights by repealing the state's unenforceable death penalty statute
- Implement the recommendations of the AGO's Hate Crimes Advisory Working Group
- Provide public reimbursement to Northwest Indian College for non-native students
- Uphold tribal fishing rights by improving water quality and removing barriers to fish passage

## **Electoral Reform**

- Repeal statewide "advisory votes" for bills that increase or recover revenue
- Require automatic voting rights restoration and local government Voting Rights Act preclearance
- Overhaul how ballot titles are developed to eliminate abusive practices like ballot title shopping
- Create a citizen initiative review (CIR) process to evaluate initiatives

## **Education**

- Increase pre+K12 funding to support virtual learning, special education, and Career Technical Education
- Ensure our deaf and hard of hearing children have a fluent first language by kindergarten with LEAD-K
- Take care of our educators by restoring cost of living (COLA) increases for Plan 1 retirees
- Require education on climate disruption, mass extinction, and actions for environmental protection

## **Stronger Rural Washington**

- Establish a sustainable farms and fields grant program to strengthen Washington's agricultural sector
- Require dairies to register under the Dairy Nutrient Program and Confined Animal Feeding Operations
- Empower the Department of Natural Resources to provide competitive community forest grants
- Make it easier for public utility districts to provide broadband connectivity to rural Washingtonians

# 2021 Legislative Priorities [PAGE 2]

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## **Healthcare**

- Establish a universal single payer healthcare system for all Washington residents
- Create the occupation of dental therapist to improve oral hygiene care for rural and tribal communities
- Adopt an evidence-based approach to modernize the control of communicable diseases like HIV/AIDS
- Grow the Nurse-Family Partnership to serve more of Washington's rural counties
- Allocate funding to expand the establishment of Medically Assisted Treatment Centers to aid communities impacted by substance abuse and opioid addiction
- Ensure access to the full range of reproductive services, including abortion and contraception options

## **Attainable and Sustainable Housing & Labor Rights**

- Enact additional protections for Washington's tenants, including just cause eviction legislation
- Create a Worker Protection Act to protect whistleblowers and address wage theft
- Protect workers by establishing a secure scheduling law to set scheduling and notification standards
- Prevent foreclosures by expanding resources for families that belong to communities of color

## **Public Safety & Gun Responsibility**

- Pass the Treatment and Recovery Act to decriminalize the possession of small amounts of drugs
- Clarify that possession of firearms is not allowed when there are outstanding protection orders
- Ban the sale of military-grade weapons, modifying accessories, and ammunition to civilians
- Prioritize treatment over penalties for drunk driving, especially for repeat offenders
- Bring back parole for all and create a Community Review Board to reduce incarceration rates
- Provide for the elimination of cash bail

## **Emergency Readiness & Pandemic Response**

- Increase funding for geologic hazards mapping plus earthquake, tsunami, and landslide readiness
- Create a dedicated funding source to improve Washington's wildfire response capability
- Amend our RCWs to reduce reliance on recurring emergency proclamations during pandemics
- Protect our health departments from anti-science political interference during public health crises
- Fund a Working Families Tax Credit/Recovery Rebate to help low income Washingtonians pay the bills

## **Technology**

- Adopt the Washington Internet Privacy Protection Act
- Strengthen our state's digital defenses to protect critical data like our voter rolls
- Secure public cyber resources and means of gathering public input against abuse by bots
- Bar the use of facial recognition technology by state agencies and local governments

## **Transportation**

- Provide financial assistance to transit agencies that have been pummeled by the pandemic
- Strengthen I-5 and make it earthquake-resilient; accelerate design of a new Columbia River Crossing
- Reevaluate WSDOT's planned highway expansion projects to determine if they're really necessary
- Increase WSF funding and accelerate the work of electrifying the Washington State Ferries' fleet