

Washington State Democratic Party Advocacy Committee

September 2019 Report of the Advocacy Committee and 2020 Legislative Priorities FAQ

Recommended Ballot Measure Positions

THESE MEASURES WILL APPEAR ON THE NOVEMBER 2019 STATEWIDE BALLOT

- Initiative 976 recommendation: **Affirm our existing opposition to I-976**
- Initiative 1000/Referendum 88 recommendation: **Pass resolution urging an Approved vote**
- Tim Eyman's push polls ("advisory votes") recommendation: **MAINTAINED on all twelve**
- Senate Joint Resolution 8200 recommendation (constitutional amendment): **Approved**

Legislative Priorities FAQ

Q: What is the Legislative Priorities Agenda?

A: The Legislative Priorities Agenda is our “to-do list” for the upcoming state legislative session. It spells out a selection of policy goals from our platform that we would like the House, Senate, and Governor Jay Inslee to focus on adopting. The Priorities Agenda is furnished to our legislators upon its adoption by the SCC. This is the third Agenda developed by the Advocacy Committee, following the 2018 and 2019 ones.

Q: When will this upcoming legislative session take place?

The session begins in January and ends in March. In even numbered years, the Legislature only meets for sixty days, whereas in odd numbered years, it can meet for as long as one hundred and five days. These timeframes are set forth in the Washington State Constitution. When the Legislature cannot accomplish its essential business in a regular session (i.e. enacting budgets), it goes into special session. Since Democrats regained the State Senate majority, however, there have not been any special sessions, nor are there likely to be in 2020. Democratic legislative leaders want to end on time so that they can go out on the campaign trail. (While in session, state-level officeholders may not raise funds for their reelection; this is known as “the freeze”.)

Q: What's the difference between the Legislative Priorities Agenda and the platform?

A: The platform is a comprehensive document we develop every two years laying out our positions on the issues and our vision for Washington and the United States. It's created by the Platform Committee and adopted by the Washington State Democratic Convention. The Agenda is a document the Advocacy Committee creates each year for the State Central Committee to adopt. The platform focuses more on the long term; it is only rewritten every forty-eight months. The Agenda is more like a short-term “to-do list”, as previously stated. The Agenda is very much fueled by the platform, so while the two documents aren't the same, they are related.

Q&A continues on the next page

Legislative Priorities FAQ Continued

Q: Aside from the content in our platform, what data or input drives the creation of the Legislative Priorities Agenda? How did the Advocacy Committee decide what to put in this year's list?

A: Here's a breakdown of where the priorities in this year's Agenda came from.

- Many items (like death penalty abolition) are carried over from 2018 or 2019 because the Legislature didn't get them done and we're seeking to get them over the finish line in 2020.
- Most new items were proposed by grassroots Democratic leaders who took our Priorities survey. The survey got an excellent response, with participants from every region of the state. We heard an overwhelming desire for progressive tax reform and a capital gains tax, so that is listed first. Survey takers also heavily emphasized the need for climate action, so that is our second bucket.
- Constituency caucuses and constituency caucus leaders also influenced the content of the Agenda. For example, members of the Small Business Caucus told us they wanted to see a priority pertaining to lowering B&O tax obligations for small businesses. We acted on their input and included that.
- The Advocacy Committee also heard from Democratic legislators regarding bills they intend to work on in the upcoming session. A significant number of our priorities are bills that passed one house last session, but not the other. These are ideal candidates for a "to-do list" in a short session. Some are carried over, as mentioned above, but we've also added several new ones – like comprehensive sex ed.

Q: A bill I'm interested in isn't mentioned or referred to in the draft Agenda. Does that mean the party will not be doing any work to support that bill in the 2020 session?

A: No. Think of the Agenda as a starting point for the session. It's a reference meant to give legislators and the public a sample of the issues that we want to call attention to. The Agenda is not the extent of our advocacy; the Agenda is rather our seasonal menu, so to speak. A Priorities Agenda cannot be exhaustive because then it wouldn't be a list of priorities at all. If we were to try to prioritize everything, then we'd be prioritizing nothing.

Q: After we adopt the Priorities agenda, what happens next?

A: The Advocacy Committee plans to meet monthly following this meeting in Yakima to work on implementing the Agenda and identifying ways that Democratic leaders can effectively lobby for what they care about. We anticipate holding at least one Lobby Day in 2020 – in January – and working with local party organizations to plan actions that Democratic activists can participate in to support enactment of bills that need a lift to get across the finish line, including Agenda items. We will consult with allies like the Washington State Labor Council and the League of Women Voters to identify bills that are good candidates for actions.

Q: What has to happen for the Priorities (or any other bills we care about) to become laws?

A: Bills or budget provisos must get an affirmative vote in each chamber (fifty ayes in the House, twenty-five ayes in the Senate) after clearing the committee process and getting leadership's approval. Bills with fiscal impacts are subjected to additional scrutiny by fiscal committees – in the House, the Appropriations Committee; in the Senate, the Ways & Means Committee. The House also has a fiscal committee that focuses on revenue – the Finance Committee. Finally, Governor Inslee must sign a bill for it to become law. It's not an easy process, especially not when the Legislature is on a tight timeframe, as it will be in 2020.

Washington State Democratic Party Advocacy Committee

Proposed Rules for the Consideration of the

Legislative Priorities Agenda

As recommended by the Advocacy Committee

1. The report and recommendation of the Advocacy Committee shall be presented by its Chair or Co-Chairs, who will move and second the adoption of the Legislative Priorities Agenda as proposed by the Advocacy Committee.
2. Amendments to add new content to the Legislative Priorities Agenda as recommended by the Advocacy Committee shall not be in order from the floor. Only amendments that remove existing language shall be considered.
3. Each amendment proposed from the floor shall be limited in scope to a single item in the Agenda. Amendments that simultaneously modify more than one item in the Legislative Priorities Agenda shall not be considered.
4. Amendments to amendments may only be adopted without objection.
5. No more than two speakers per side will be allowed on motions other than the motion to adopt the Advocacy Committee's proposed Legislative Priorities Agenda, if any.
6. Motions to table the Legislative Priorities Agenda or postpone consideration of the Agenda to a future meeting will be out of order.
7. The "Rules for the Conduct of Debate at Meetings of the WSDCC" adopted at the September 2018 meeting of the WSDCC shall govern debate except to the extent modified by these Special Rules.

Washington State Democratic Party

[DRAFT] 2020 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 2020 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 regularly accounted for through a tax expenditure budget
- Safeguard tax dollars by mandating greater accountability and transparency in government contracting

Climate Action & Environmental Protection

- Reduce emissions by adopting California's standards for zero emission vehicles and medium duty trucks
- Require single-use plastic bags, straws, and containers to be phased out of stores and restaurants
- Prohibit the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife from killing any more of Washington's wolves
- Prohibit the use of neonicotinoids to save our bees and other pollinators from annihilation

Social Justice, Equity for Tribes, & Legislative Accountability

- Hold a vote on expelling militant fundamentalist Matt Shea from the State House of Representatives
- Provide public reimbursement to Northwest Indian College for non-native students
- Expand WLAD to prohibit discrimination on the basis of citizenship status whenever possible
- Pass the HEAL Act to address environmental health disparities that affect communities of color

Education

- Require comprehensive sexual health and substance abuse education consistent with learning standards
- Increase funding for vocational education, special education, early learning, and preschool
- 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

Electoral Reform

- Repeal Tim Eyman's push polls (erroneously called advisory votes)
- Require presidential candidates to disclose at least five years of tax returns to appear on our state ballot
- Strengthen funding for the Public Disclosure Commission (PDC)
- Increase the number of same-day voter registration sites and accessible voting centers

Washington State Democratic Party

[DRAFT] 2020 Legislative Priorities [PAGE 2]

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Healthcare

- Expand Apple Health to provide dental care coverage for young adults up to the age of twenty-six
- 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

Housing, Labor Rights, & Economic Security

- Enact additional protections for Washington's tenants, including rent control legislation
- Extend the property tax exemption for rural counties by five years to boost affordable housing projects
- Protect workers by establishing a secure scheduling law to set scheduling and notification standards
- Establish a minimum crew size for freight trains hauling hazardous cargo

Public Safety and Gun Responsibility

- Advance human rights and community safety by abolishing the death penalty
- Increase funding for geologic hazards mapping plus earthquake, tsunami, and landslide readiness
- Ban the sale of military-grade "assault" weapons and ammunition to civilians
- Bolster penalties for drunk driving, especially for repeat offenders who endanger the public

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

- Increase funding for multimodal transportation projects that reduce auto dependence
- Appropriate additional funding for electric vehicle charging stations
- Allow cities to protect pedestrians and transit riders by deploying cameras to enforce traffic laws
- Allocate more resources to Amtrak Cascades to enable full implementation of its long range plan
- Strengthen I-5 and make it earthquake-resilient; accelerate design of a new Columbia River Crossing