



Rebuilding Our Economic Future

**A Coalition
working for a fair,
humane and sensible
budget in
Washington State**

Lobbying Tips and Key Messages:

General approach: The purpose of these meetings and calls is to show legislators that people in their district are concerned about the proposed budget cuts and support a balanced approach that includes raising funds to prevent further cuts to the critical services that will help rebuild our economic future. Another purpose is to find out where your legislator stands on raising revenue and the budget cuts.

Don't know your legislators' contact info? Call the legislative hotline at: 1-800-562-6000. They will tell you who your legislators are, and what their direct office numbers are.

Tips:

- **Tell your personal story.** Explain why you are concerned about the cuts or about programs that you really value. When possible site local impacts of last year's cuts or what would be lost by proposed cuts in the Governor's Budget. (See the fact sheet for overview of the impacts of the cuts on different sectors). **Legislators will remember stories much longer than facts!**
- **Be honest and straightforward.** Do not be afraid to admit that you do not know an answer. Write the question down, and pass it on to us. We will help you will follow up with more information.
- **Ask the legislator to take action in response to the problem** by taking a more responsible approach to the recession: adopt a balanced approach to closing the current budget shortfall that includes closing unfair tax loopholes and identify new revenue sources to stabilize the funding for these programs in the short and long term.
- **Please ask the following questions and record their responses:**
 1. Do you support passing a revenue package that prevents further cuts to services?
 2. If yes what kinds of revenue do you support and how much do you think it will raise?
 3. What cuts do you support making from the budget?
- **End on a positive note.** Thank them for taking the time to talk to you and mention anything else you appreciated.
- **Send notes from the call or meeting to Liz Elwart at liz@oureconomicfuture.org**

(Over)

Key messages:

The human toll of the proposed cuts will be devastating.

An additional \$2.6 billion in cuts, as is currently under consideration, would devastate our health care system, lead to disaster for our vulnerable populations including seniors, children, the poor, and working families, and would undermine basic environmental protections. Reducing our educational system even further and eliminating health care for another 100,000 Washington State citizens – including 20,000 children – will undermine the long term economic future of Washington State.

Our basic social services and the core protections we all rely on are on life support.

The \$3.6 billion in funding that was cut last year from our education and healthcare systems, programs that protect clean air and water, and services that protect the most vulnerable has put these programs on life support. We are not talking about minor trims – this is about the complete elimination of core programs. We can not afford to take deeper cuts to services at a time when the need for those services continues to grow.

The legislature must consider a more responsible, balanced approach.

In addition to making targeted cuts and identifying opportunities for greater efficiency, closing the current budget shortfall will require additional sources of revenue. Everything must be on the table. The strong statements by Governor Gregoire and House and Senate leaders that an all-cuts budget wouldn't honor our core values are correct. The governor's mention of raising around \$700 million is a starting point for discussions, but we believe the need is greater than that. We need to make sure we save programs like those that help working families pay for childcare, prevent costly health problems by supporting at-risk pregnant women, and clean up toxic sites. That requires a bigger revenue package.

Making the case for revenue.

Raising revenue is consistent with past practices. States often reduce taxes during economic expansions and increase them during downturns. In the recession of the early 1990s, some 44 states raised taxes; in the early 2000s, some 30 states did so. This is also consistent with balanced approaches to economic recessions from Washington's past in 1981, 1993 and 2001. Thirty states have raised taxes in the last year. (Source Budget and Policy Center)

Finding sources of revenue.

We need a more balanced and more responsible approach to dealing with the current budget shortfall. Closing unjustified tax loopholes should be at the top of the list along with sin taxes. We need to have a full and open dialogue about all of the possible revenue options that are on the table. If general tax increases are considered they should be structured to minimize the impact to low- and middle-income families.

For more information contact:

Rebuilding Our Economic Future Coalition

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