



The Impacts of the Recession on Washington State

The worst recession since the Great Depression has created severe hardships for Washington's working families. It threatens the economic foundations of our state as well as the promises we have made to our kids, the elderly, and people with disabilities. These promises include providing our kids with a good education, having a dependable healthcare system that prevents unnecessary suffering, supporting our elderly and disabled so they can live a life of dignity, and protecting our quality of life so that we attract new high quality jobs to our state.

Impacts of last year's cuts

In 2009 the legislature slashed billions from the state budget. These deep reductions cut into the muscle and bone of important programs. Because of last year's cuts:

"These cuts have killed."

"In the last session 900 people were eliminated from the Adult Day Health program and we had the unique and tragic experience of seeing what happened to them. Two-thirds lost functioning. People who used to be able to walk cannot walk; people who used to be able to feed themselves cannot feed themselves; people died."

**Nora Gibson, Executive Director of
ElderHealth Northwest**

- Class sizes swelled, teachers were laid off and important education programs were eliminated;
- Tuition at our state colleges and universities rose nearly 30 percent, pricing many students out of a college education;
- 40,000 working people were pushed off the Basic Health Plan;
- Elderly people suffering serious illnesses like Alzheimer's and people with disabilities lost critical adult day health rehabilitation, in home care, and other home and community based services; and
- Our clean air and clean water were put at risk, and toxic contamination cleanups were slowed.

What we stand to lose in 2010

As the recession continues to deepen we now face an additional \$2.6 billion deficit in 2010. To rebuild our economic future we need to follow the example of more than 30 states that have taken a more balanced approach to the recession. The consequences of relying only on

further spending reductions to close the budget gap would be truly devastating, and would result in tens of thousands of lost jobs across Washington State. Some of the projected impacts include:

- **100,000 additional Washington State citizens would lose their health insurance** – including 16,000 children – and the total number of uninsured in our state will top one million;
- **Class sizes will swell**, early learning programs for children under 5 will be cut, school districts in less wealthy areas will lose funding and more than 10,000 students will be priced out of a college education;
- **85,000 seniors** would no longer be able to afford their medication;
- **50,000 pregnant mothers** would lose critical prenatal support;
- The state would **abandon programs to protect clean water** and clean up toxic pollution;
- **Working parents across the state would lose access to childcare**, threatening their ability to work

“The most vulnerable suffer.”

“I treated a woman who was transferred to our hospital with a tooth abscess. She didn’t have health insurance and so she took a lot of aspirin because she couldn’t afford to see the doctor. When she came to us with pregnancy complications her blood was too thinned, and **she ultimately died because she didn’t have early access to dental care or pre-natal care.** I don’t want to see anymore patients like this, but under this budget, we will.”

Nancy Gladsjo, Labor and Delivery Nurse - Swedish Hospital, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW

There is a better way forward!

Legislators in Olympia should take a more responsible approach to the recession by:

- **Preventing further erosion** of the things that residents value so much about our state: quality schools, affordable healthcare, a safety net for the most vulnerable, affordable housing, public safety, and a clean environment.
- **Adopting a balanced approach** to closing the current budget shortfall that includes closing unfair tax loopholes and identifying new revenue sources to stabilize the funding for these programs in the short and long term.

If we don’t invest in education, transportation, human services, job training, clean air, clean water, and healthcare now, our state will be poorly positioned for when prosperity returns.

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