

# Fairness for Washington Workers.

**Keeping Washington's economy robust requires broad based policy initiatives. The Governor, Senate and House have pursued an agenda that creates jobs with fair wages and benefits.**

## Collective Bargaining and worker rights

- Granted Washington State Patrol permission to negotiate pay and wage level with the State (2005, 2SHB 1188).
- Extended collective bargaining rights to professional and technical employees of Western Washington University and retroactively applied cost-of-living adjustments (2006, SHB 2976).
- Provided collective bargaining rights to family child care providers and adult family home providers (2006: E2SHB 2353; 2007: ESHB 2111).
- Provided 8,000 professional staff at community and technical college and four-year- public colleges the same collective bargaining rights currently available to faculty and civil service employees (2007: HB 2361).
- Granted collective bargaining rights to student employees at Washington State University (2008: SHB 2963).
- Created a program for the Washington State Patrol and the state to select an interest arbitration panel before the bargaining process begins (2008: SHB 3002)

## Wages and Benefits

- State employees their first raise in three years. (2005: operating budget)
- Over the past 5 years, we've strengthened retirement benefits and pensions for our state's teachers, firefighters, police and state employees (2005: HB 1319, 1321, 1327, 1936; 2006: SESHB 2680, SHB 2684, SBH 2688, HB 2960; HB 3019)
- Created program to implement a wage ladder for child care workers, providing better wages for employees of participating child care facilities (2005: SHB 1636).
- Provided additional funding to the prevailing wage program (2006: SB 5236).
- Increased penalties for violations of wage payment requirements (2006: SHB 3185).
- Protected against possible elimination of provisions under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act by bring the state program into partial conformity with the federal program (2006: SSB 6185).
- Enabled part-time academic employees at community and technical colleges to accumulate sick leave (2006: ESSB 6396).
- Became the second state in the nation with state family leave insurance to allow workers to better balance their family and job responsibilities (2007: E2SSB 5659).
- Included health care hours purchased through a trust when calculating time loss benefits (2007: SHB 1244).
- Created the Workers Family Tax Credit to provide sales tax refunds to working Washingtonians who qualify for the federal earned income tax credit (2008: ESSB 6809).
- Required employers reasonable leave to and expanded leave sharing program to employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking (2008: SHB 2602, SSB 6572).



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## ***Unemployment Insurance and Workers' Compensation***

- Barred an employer from using certain short term disability policies to deny family leave rights (2005: SSB 5850).
- Paid higher unemployment benefits to workers with irregular earnings histories by establishing a two quarter averaging for two years (2005: EHB 2255).
- Protected laid-off workers from drastic reductions in their UI benefits by making payment of benefits based on the two-quarter averaging permanent (2006: ESB 6885).
- Increased penalties for employers who knowingly evade successor employer unemployment contribution rates provisions (2006: SSB 6359).
- Increased the minimum worker compensation benefit for the first time since 1969 (2007: ESB 5675).
- Banned workers' compensation claim suppression (2007: SSB 5443).
- Provided for a better advocacy system for self-insured workers to help avoid legal costs and lengthy disputes by creating a L&I Ombudsman (2007: EHB 1833).
- Modified the industrial insurance presumption of occupational disease for firefighters to include certain heart injuries and certain cancers (2007: ESHB 1833).
- Eased the economic and health burdens injured workers suffer during worker compensation appeals processes by requiring all employers to provide benefits for their employees during the appeals process (2008: E2SHB 3139).

## ***Improving, training for and creating jobs***

- Required public works projects valued at \$1 million or more to have apprentices perform at least 15 percent of the projects labor hours (2005: SB 5097).
- Created and continued funding the opportunity grants program to providing funding for postsecondary workforce education (2006: ESSB 6386; 2007: 2SHB 1096).
- Expanded apprenticeship opportunities for high school graduates (2006: 2SHB 2789).
- Granted tax incentives to aerospace, health care, and biotech industries to retain local family-wage jobs (2003: HB 2994; 2006: SHB 2640, SHB 2670).
- Established the Washington Customized Employment Workforce Training Program which allows employers to receive funds for employee training. Employers receive 50 percent business and occupation tax credit. (2SSB 6326).
- Established a pilot program for vocational rehabilitation services (2007: ESSSB 5920).
- Established the underground economy in the construction industry taskforce and implemented recommendations that reduce actions of negligent business owners (2007: SB 5926; 2008: 2SSB 6732).
- Added an additional "good cause quit" provision to cover individuals who left work to enter an approved apprenticeship program (2008: SSB 6751).
- Provided \$5 million for building trades and aerospace apprenticeships.
- Funded the collective bargaining agreements: over \$200 million in health care and salary increases (2005-2007).
- Funded I-732 & health care increases for K-12 -- over \$255 million (2005-2007).
- Funded home care worker collective bargaining agreement - \$31 million (2005-2007).