

OUR FIRST JOB IS CREATING JOBS



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Senate Democrats' middle class jobs package

Senate Democrats believe an overall economic development strategy is needed to create jobs and stimulate the economy. Our focus is on immediate recovery and long-term investment.

We consulted the recommendations of the Washington Economic Development Commission – which is a partnership of business, labor and government – and applied its three-pronged framework of investment, talent and infrastructure.

INVESTMENT

More green buildings, more green jobs

- Every house should have the opportunity to be energy efficient and every home should be able to be heated affordably. Thousands of Washington houses and buildings leak heat and waste energy, driving heating costs through the roof.

We can close this window by performing energy assessments and weatherizing buildings that will reduce carbon emissions, utility bills and create local jobs. These jobs can provide work for thousands of unemployed and dislocated workers in our communities, retrofitting leaky homes and installing energy efficient options. Existing apprenticeship and training programs can be enhanced and modified to train this work force of tomorrow.



“There are thousands of homes and businesses in our state that can save money with home based technologies like solar. We aim to empower communities and local workers to do energy assessments and make needed improvements to save money and reduce greenhouse gases.” **Sen. Phil Rockefeller, D-Bainbridge Island**

- The energy efficient materials needed are right here in Washington. Our innovative renewable energy industry is surging ahead, creating technology that will fuel our energy needs for the future. The backbone of this industry will be local jobs. This session, Washington State Democrats will encourage incentives for these “ready to install” renewable energy facilities and energy efficient products such as solar. Gone are the days of shipping labor overseas and relying on foreign fossil fuels. Washington jobs will create, install and maintain our energy independence.



“We will ask housing agencies, utility districts and advocacy groups to partner in their clean energy efforts.”
Sen. Phil Rockefeller, Bainbridge Island

New private-sector jobs

- Stimulating private investment in our communities often relies on making public improvements. This year, Senate Democrats propose the creation of a community revitalization financing tool to empower local communities to make the investments in roads, sewers, environmental remediation, and other infrastructure needed to spur private sector investment and job creation. This tool will enable communities to have growth pay for growth, mirroring an approach used by nearly every other state. (SB 5045)



“Helping local governments invest in infrastructure like roads and sewers can leverage our tax dollars by moving forward with construction projects that provide jobs in the short term but will also create the infrastructure needed to revitalize our communities in the long term.” **Sen. Derek Kilmer, D-Gig Harbor**

- Small businesses are the backbone of our economy. During these challenging economic times we must ensure Washington is a good place for small businesses can grow jobs – where entrepreneurs can start-up successfully and where existing businesses can weather the economic storm. With that in mind, Senate Democrats will propose a job creation tax credit for small businesses that create new family wage jobs. This will be a tool to provide tax relief to small businesses while incentivizing what our economy needs – more good jobs. (Sen. Derek Kilmer)

- To put people to work in the short-term and to lay the foundation for job growth in the long-term, we must see new construction move forward. While much of the attention has focused on public works projects, Senate Democrats will also propose a new strategy to encourage private sector investments in new construction. By providing a sales tax deferral or exemption for investments in new construction in key industries, we can encourage private investments to move forward. (Sen. Derek Kilmer)
- Regulatory and environmental review shouldn't get in the way of private sector investment and job creation. It's time to reexamine our process to make sure they work efficiently. We can reduce paperwork and streamline regulatory review so that so-called "ready to go" projects are truly ready to go. And projects that bring a net environmental benefit deserve special consideration.



"Regulatory review is important, but it can be streamlined without losing our safeguards. We need to make sure projects that create jobs and improve competitiveness aren't delayed down for no good reason." Sen. Jim Kastama, D-Puyallup

TALENT

Expanded worker retraining

- The recent announcements of 4,500 Boeing lay-offs and the likely job terminations from the potential closure of the Seattle P-I are the latest in a string of job losses employees and employers are facing across our state. The 11,600 unemployed workers served by retraining programs in 2008 represent a 25 percent increase over the previous year. That rate of increase is expected to double this year.

Training, retraining, and other investments in Washington's workforce can help us retain jobs and capture new jobs in emerging fields. Workers need top-notch skills to be prepared for the jobs of today and tomorrow. And employers need a skilled workforce to innovate, grow, and remain competitive. We'll propose reforms to our worker training programs to ensure workers and employers have the tools they need to be competitive.



"Creating and protecting jobs – that's our most important priority this Legislative session. We need to return people to the workforce, and provide them with the skills they need to secure jobs in the occupations of the future." Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, D-Seattle



"Studies show workers entering the work force today will change jobs 16 times by the time they reach age 30. We need to provide training for those jobs, and we need to focus our training on the jobs that will provide the most meaningful employment." Sen. Jim Kastama, D-Puyallup

More career opportunities in health care

- There is a shortage of more than 12,000 health care workers in Washington ranging from dental hygienists and pharmacists to nurses and radiology technologists. We can solve this problem and get our economy moving again by training unemployed workers-particularly women- to enter the growing health care industry; and providing current health care professionals with opportunities to move up the career ladder. We will look at tapping federal economic stimulus funds or unemployment insurance funds to make this proposal a reality.



"The health care sector is one part of the economy that is still growing. Creating a pathway for unemployed workers to enter the industry- and helping those already in the field advance- makes a lot of economic sense. This proposal will allow more people to enter the health care field for the first time, and it gives current health care workers a way to move up the career ladder. This is the type of economic investment we need to get people back to work and address the shortage of health care workers in Washington." Sen. Karen Keiser, D-Kent

Smarter work study

- We propose expanding the state work study program, focusing on providing more opportunities in private sector jobs in high-demand sectors of the economy such as science, technology, engineering, and math fields. In addition to provide critical help to students to help them pay for college, this will strengthen the connection between college and careers, providing real-world experiences that open doors, help students refine their career goals, and encourage program or degree completion. (SB 5044)



“Washington’s employers can become more competitive with access to a greater pool of homegrown talent. Smarter work study programs can help students pay for college, empower them with experience in growing industries and emerging sectors of the economy, and give employers access to new talent.”
Sen. Derek Kilmer, D-Gig Harbor

INFRASTRUCTURE

Public works

- Jobs and infrastructure have one big thing in common: They’re huge investments in our future. We have projects ready to go, now, that can provide good jobs and living wages to families that are hurting. This not only fuels our recovery today, it positions us for long term success both as employees and as a state.



“We can help people now, creating jobs today that will continue to pay into the future. We want meaningful jobs: jobs in trades that pay livable wages, on projects that are ready to go now.”
Sen. Karen Fraser, D-Thurston County

We can further capitalize by focusing on projects that recognize the priorities of the future. That means jobs linked to emerging technologies, green buildings and energy, education and training, natural resources and outdoor recreation, and cleaner transportation.



“A job in a dying field will pay people today; a job in an emerging green or high-tech industry will pay them better and keep them employed for years to come. A job building a road will help today; a job that creates more efficient transportation and better education and training will make Washington a better place long term.”
Sen. Jim Kastama, D-Puyallup

We don’t want to stimulate our economy arbitrarily; we want to do it in ways that pay dividends for the future. We can target a backlog of projects that boost our technology and tap new energy sources such as wind, solar, bio and hydro power.



“If we want to lead, we need to steer money to projects that will move our state – and our technologies – forward.”

Sen. Karen Fraser, D-Thurston County

We need to ensure that the most valuable projects are funded. We will develop criteria that favor projects that tap private-sector capital and improve our state’s education/talent pipeline. Projects must balance investment between urban and rural communities and benefit the state’s longer-term goals of innovation, economic recovery, quality of life and competitiveness.



“Our criteria are simple: We will invest in projects that improve the quality of jobs and training, make our businesses more competitive and boost our economic recovery. And we will balance investment between urban and rural communities.”

Sen. Jim Kastama, D-Puyallup

Greater access to broadband

- To increase educational opportunities, access to high-paying jobs, health care services and information, government, and community and economic development, Senate Democrats have made an ongoing commitment to expanding high-speed Internet access across Washington. Communities with broadband access experience higher levels of rapid economic growth than those without. For every job involved in deploying broadband, more than four additional jobs are created. President-Elect Obama has made this same commitment to expanding high-speed Internet infrastructure. Because of the steps that our state has already taken, we are poised to immediately receive any Federal stimulus funds directed to the states for this priority.



“No one should be denied economic opportunity because of living in an unserved or underserved part of our state, as in many rural areas as well as some urban areas. By expanding broadband, not only do we create jobs today but we are also making an investment to secure the jobs of the future.”

Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, D-Seattle