



Dated: July 21, 2010

Share Your Expertise At State Budget Meetings

Governor Gregoire is holding a series of public hearings across the state on her initiative to “transform Washington’s budget”. This is an opportunity for citizens to testify in front of the Governor and the committee she appointed for this process.

At the first hearing in Tacoma on July 19th, reports are that the majority of people testifying were state employees, union members, environmental activists, and people on public assistance. While their views are important, the voice of small business was not heard. The primary message was that raising revenues is necessary and cuts are unacceptable.

Business organizations are calling on small business owners to speak up at these hearings. If possible, you and your employees are encouraged to speak up also – explain the effect that increased taxes would have on your business and your ability to keep employees.

You all have personal experience in setting and maintaining a budget. You know how to cut expenses when things get tight. Share your expertise with the State.

The next meeting is tonight in Everett, followed by meetings in Vancouver and Spokane next week.

Wednesday, July 21, 2010

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Everett Community College

Parks Building, Multi Purpose Room

2000 Tower Street • Everett, Washington

Tuesday, July 27, 2010

7:00 – 9:00 pm

Administration Building Room 110

Washington State University- Vancouver Campus

14204 NE Salmon Creek Avenue • Vancouver, Washington

Thursday, July 29, 2010

Time to be announced (Evening)

Spokane City Hall City Council Chambers

808 W. Spokane Falls Boulevard • Spokane, Washington

Immigration Summit Scheduled For August 12 In Seattle

A one-day conference and strategic planning session for employers who rely on immigrant workers and grasp the urgent need for immigration reform is being held on Thursday, August 12 at the Sheraton Seattle.

The summit will bring together engaged employers from across the U.S. – business advocates from the Northwest and members of ImmigrationWorks coalitions from Georgia to California – to share ideas about how best to advance immigration reform in 2011.

Feature speakers at the Summit include Washington State's Senator Patty Murray, business advocates from across the country, and a panel of employers who rely on immigrant workers – small business owners who know and can explain better than anyone how immigrant workers keep U.S. businesses running and contributing to a dynamic, competitive economy.

If you are interested in attending, visit the ImmigrationWorks USA website at <http://www.immigrationworksusa.org/index.php?p=212>.

WALP Supports Workers' Comp Initiative

The WALP Board of Directors recently voted to support the Washington Farm Bureau's endorsement of Initiative 1082, which would allow private insurers to sell industrial insurance in Washington State.

The goal of Initiative 1082 is to lower industrial insurance (workers' compensation) costs for employers, while also maintaining safe workplaces. I-1082 would dissolve the state-run monopoly on workers' comp by allowing private insurers the ability to sell industrial insurance in the State. Even though fewer claims have been filed (a 55 percent decrease in claims frequency since 1990), administrative costs at L&I have gone up 82 percent in the past 10 years. I-1082 does not seek to address or limit the benefits injured workers should receive.

"Initiative 1082 would give us a tool to fix Washington's broken workers' comp system simply by providing choices," said Washington Farm Bureau President Steve Appel. "Forcing the State to compete in a free marketplace, rather than allowing it to continue to run an inefficient monopoly, would allow Washington to become more competitive with other states vying for businesses and jobs."

Initiative 1082 would set up a system in which employers could choose where to purchase industrial insurance: The state fund, a private insurance company, or self-insurance. Washington is currently one of only four states that forbid private insurance in favor of a government monopoly. As such, the Department of Labor & Industries, which administers the state fund insurance program, has no incentive to run its program in a manner consistent with best practices in the private sector.

Washington Farm Bureau has lobbied the legislature for bipartisan changes in this system for the past several years, including during the 2010 legislative session.

Questions on any of the topics addressed in this "WALP Watch"? Contact the WALP Office at info@walp.org or (425) 967-0729.