

**King County Dems Legislative Action Committee**  
**October 18, 2015**  
**Burien Library**

**Introduction**

In drafting the 2016 LAC agenda, the Legislative Agenda for 2015 is our starting point. We reviewed it for progress and crossed off the items that were accomplished, notably the transportation package and safer oil transport trains. This is a multi-year effort. We do not expect a transportation agenda in 2016.

**Revenue & Tax Reform**

Capital gains tax was not voted on in the House, to avoid harming Democrats in swing district. It is not enough to pay for McCleary Basic Education, but it is over \$1 billion and would be a good start toward \$3.4 billion needed.

About 450 of the 650 tax exemptions are discretionary. We should require that all of them have a stated purpose, measurable outcomes and sunset dates to review their effectiveness. The Department of Revenue should be required to report on tax exemptions every two years instead of every four years. They collected \$6.5 billion and exempted \$7.6 billion in B&O revenue, per the 2012 report. Add in sales tax, \$20 billion in exemptions. Reuven Carlyle sponsored a bill to require transparency of tax exemptions, but he is moving to the Senate.

**Transportation**

Both transportation goals, the transportation package and the oil train safety bill, were passed, at least in part. So this section was removed as the Republicans are not going to do any more in the next session.

**Election Finance Reform**

Our best bet now is to collect signatures for the initiative and pass the initiative in 2016. Both MT and CO did pass the joint resolution in their states. Therefore, passing a joint resolution is no longer a priority.

**Education**

McCleary funding is still being held up by the Republicans in the legislature. Their idea of local levy reform is revenue-neutral, although it would result in King County property owners paying more. The legislature did pass a 25% reduction in higher ed tuition, so we need to rethink our position on funding higher education. School construction, required by McCleary, has not been considered, but may be a focus of the supplemental capital budget. Free college is now a discussion in the presidential campaign.

**Environment**

The Governor's carbon cap and trade bill was blocked by Senate Republicans and did not pass.

Two initiatives are being worked. Carbon WA has a pollution tax instead of a cap, but it's revenue neutral, offset by lowering sales tax and some B&O taxes. It would not help the environment. The Alliance for Jobs and Energy is going to push a cap and trade alternative that would raise revenue and achieve other goals. Naomi Klein spoke here last week against a revenue-neutral carbon tax. We need to transition to a green economy and help the damage done to indigenous peoples.

Clear cutting is a major cause of environmental destruction in our state.

### **Labor**

The \$12 (?) billion transportation budget was a major infrastructure investment that passed. Raising the minimum wage to \$12, paid sick leave and a wage theft bill are still on the table.

### **Housing and Human Services**

The safety net was slightly increased, but it is really thin and still needs to be strengthened. The State Housing Trust Fund was funded at \$75 million. In the midst of a housing crisis, the HTF needs to be increased in the supplemental capital budget, if there is one. Medicaid Supportive Housing is moving forward with a waiver at the federal level.

### **Criminal Justice**

Passing sentencing reform did not make progress, but is more likely now, especially due to tight budgets, lack of prison space and a task force by the Sentencing Guidelines Commission. However, their recommendation that eligibility begins at age 60 is not acceptable. Cannabis regulation was a major topic of the last session, resulting in a compromise law that pleased almost no one. More reform is needed, especially for medical cannabis patients.

### **New issues**

These are notes from a brainstorming session. Additional issues will be considered, and we have received some email suggestions. Discussion, prioritization and voting will take place at the November 15th LAC meeting. LDs are encouraged to make sure they are represented. Meetings are open and all are welcome, but there will be one vote per LD on the draft to be presented to KCD at the Dec. meeting of the Executive Board.

Oregon and California have passed a bill to automatically register to vote everyone who gets a driver's license

Washington State has no parole. There is a prisoner/community movement to reinstate parole, as well as higher ed in prisons and to provide support programs for released prisoners to successfully integrate into the community.

Reforming legal financial obligations (LFOs), including 12% interest, should be added to our agenda. There was a lot of advocacy by Poverty Action Network, among others, on this issues

last year. Indigent felons should not be bearing the costs of administering county courts. Restitution should be given priority, instead of court costs.

We need more information on Ban the Box. Is it illegal to discriminate against ex-felons in the State or just Seattle?

Legalize and support industrial hemp, as in Kentucky.

Make voter registration automatic when you apply for a driver's license or state ID. Oregon and California have passed a bill to automatically register to vote everyone who gets a driver's license. Universal voter registration for college students?

Limit the ability to opt out of required immunizations for school.

Source of income discrimination prohibits excluding Sec. 8 and other government funding. This is a major priority of the Washington Low-Income Housing Alliance.

Help tenants by limiting excessive rent increases ("economic evictions"). Support Seattle City Council's request to lift the ban on local control over rent stabilization legislation.

Ban plastic microbeads in consumer products such as toothpaste.

### **Health Care**

The bill for single-payer health care, the Washington Health Security Trust (HB 1025/ SB 5132) has 39 Democratic sponsors and one Republican co-sponsor last session. There are 13 Democrats who have not sponsored it. Single-payer does not poll well. Prefer "Medicare for All."

### **Considerations in forming a legislative agenda, from Sarajane Siegfriedt and Steve Zemke**

We advocate for legislation that is likely to be heard and debated in the 2016 session. This is a short session with only a supplemental budget, so it will be limited in scope to policy bills and funding Basic Education. They must be issues that are consistent with our platform and would be supported by 90% of all King County Democrats. They should be simple enough to be stated in one sentence, without explanation or justification, and easily explained in a brief conversation with our legislators.

For strategic reasons, we prioritize issues that have strong coalitions and full-time lobbyists in Olympia behind them, such as the priorities of the Environmental Coalition, the Low-Income Housing Alliance, The Washington Budget & Policy Center and our Labor allies.

We will advance our agenda by sending them to our King County legislators, asking King County Democrats to talk with their legislators and bringing them up at Town Hall meetings. As these issues become bills, we will track them and report scheduled hearings and votes to our LAC email list, so that activists may weigh in with their opinions and support them on a timely

basis. We will again sponsor a Lobby Day in Olympia on Presidents Day, the 3rd Monday in February.

Questions or comments?

Sarajane Siegfriedt, Co-chair

Sarajane3h@comcast.net