



# Capitol Update

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## News

**WA Learns Makes Preliminary Higher Ed Recommendations**

### WA Learns Makes Preliminary Higher Ed Recommendations

At a meeting on the UW campus on June 28, the Washington Learns Higher Education Advisory Committee heard a presentation from their consultants on preliminary recommendations for improving the higher education system in Washington State. Titled "Proposal for the Steering Committee: Five Big Ideas," the recommendations cover a wide range of issues from raising educational attainment to providing stable funding and changing higher education governance.

A summary of the consultant recommendation can be found on the Washington Learns website at this link:

<http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/materials/HigherEdMemo060710.pdf>

At the WA Learns Steering Committee meeting in Sea Tac on July 10, the Governor directed each of the advisory committees (including higher education) to prioritize their recommendations and develop "phase-in" options for those strategies that are estimated to be the most expensive. The Higher Education Advisory Committee meets again in Burien on July 18.

**State Populations Continues to Surge**

### State Population Continues to Surge

Washington's population increased an estimated 120,000 over the last year, largely due to people lured here by the state's bright employment climate according to a new study released by the Office of Financial Management (OFM).

**Estate Tax Repeal Signature Drive Appears Successful**

The 2006 population estimate, prepared annually by OFM, places the Washington population at 6,375,600 as of April 1. Population growth based on in-migration is primarily driven by people seeking or taking new jobs in Washington. Total employment in Washington has been growing twice as fast as the national average. Aerospace employment in the state gained 12,000 jobs over the past two years and is expected to add an additional 7,000 through 2008. If state growth remains strong, Washington should increase by 1 million people over the present decade and reach 6.8 million by 2010.

**Senator Delvin Named to Life Sciences Advisory Board**

Drivers' license data also shows that California contributes the largest share, about 40 to 50 percent, of the net movement into Washington from other states.

**Olympia News and Notes**

As for regional population trends, the majority of growth since 2000 remains concentrated in Western Washington, with the largest six-year gains being increases of 98,254 in King County, 72,682 in Pierce County, 65,776 in Snohomish County and 58,262 in Clark County.

Detailed information on the April 1, 2006, population estimates for cities, towns and counties may be found on the Office of Financial Management web page at

<http://www.ofm.wa.gov/pop/april1/default.asp>.

## Estate Tax Repeal Signature Drive Appears Successful

Supporters of an initiative that would repeal Washington's estate tax turned in more than 377,000 signatures to the Secretary of State's office on Friday June 30. Since only 224,880 valid signatures are needed to qualify, it appears that Initiative 920 is headed for a spot on the November ballot.

Currently, Washington estate tax revenues are deposited into the Education Legacy Trust Account where they are used for a variety of education purposes including enrollment funding for the University of Washington.

Washington State has had some form of an inheritance or estate tax for more than 100 years. An inheritance tax hits beneficiaries after they have received their share of an estate. An estate tax targets assets before they have been distributed to heirs.

Voters repealed the state's inheritance tax in 1981. However, the measure permitted the state to collect an "estate" tax based on certain provisions in the federal tax code. In 2005, the Washington Supreme Court ruled that the state could no longer collect its own estate tax because of changes to federal estate tax laws that were passed in 2001. Based on the court's decision, the legislature enacted a new state estate tax measure last session that complied with the new federal provisions. Under the new measure, taxes only apply to that portion of an individual's estate above \$2 million in value.

Initiative 920 is supported by the Association of Washington Business, the National Federation of Independent Business chapter in Washington. Seattle developer Martin Selig was a significant contributor to the signature gathering campaign as was John Nordstrom. Opponents include the League of Education Voters, the Washington Education Association and UW Regent Bill Gates Sr.

## Senator Delvin Named to Life Sciences Advisory Board

Senate Republican Leader Mike Hewitt recently announced the appointment of **Senator Jerome Delvin** (R-Richland), to the **Life Sciences Discovery Fund** Authority's Board of Trustees.

The Life Sciences Discovery Fund, created in 2005 with passage of Senate Bill 5581, will deploy \$350 million over ten years to support private-sector firms in the development of life sciences-related research conducted within Washington. The 11-member Board of Trustees, which includes one legislator from each caucus, is assembled to manage the fund and oversee the grant-making process. Delvin will replace **Senator Bill Finkbeiner** (R-Kirkland), who recently announced he is not running for reelection this fall.

Delvin was elected to the House of Representatives in 1994 and moved to the Senate in 2004. He serves on the Senate Agriculture and Rural Economic Development; Water, Energy and Environment; and Early Learning, K-12 and Higher Education committees. He has served as a Richland police officer since 1979 and is a former military police officer and Hanford Patrol officer. He is a lifelong resident of Benton County.

Delvin's appointment is expected to take effect before the board's next meeting on July 18.

## Olympia News and Notes

**Stan Pynch**, the Director of Senate Committee Services (the non-partisan staff arm of the Washington State Senate) retires this month after 30 years of state service which included stints with the Senate Ways and Means Committee and the Office of Financial Management. His successor is **Richard Rodger**, the past staff coordinator for the Senate Water, Energy and Environment Committee.

**Sen. Joyce Mulliken** (R-Moses Lake) has announced she will step down from her Senate seat for an appointment to the Eastern Washington Growth Management Hearings Board. **State Representative Janea Holmquist** (R-Moses Lake) quickly announced that she will seek to fill the district's Senate seat being vacated by Joyce Mulliken. Holmquist, Mulliken's former aide, has served in the House for the last five legislative sessions. Also believed to be considering a run is former state **Representative Gary Chandler**, who currently works for the Association of Washington Business. Ellensburg's **Lisa Bowen** is the only Democrat in the race.

Former **Senator George Clarke** of Mercer Island passed away on June 25, three days after his 100th birthday. A Republican, Clarke represented the 41st Legislative District (Bellevue, Newcastle and Mercer Island) in the House of Representatives from 1967-71 and in the Senate from 1971 until 1985. He was a graduate of Franklin High School and an alumnus of the University of Washington where he received both his B.A. and his law degree. At the UW, Clarke was also a three-year letterman and captain of the tennis team.