



2004 Legislative Ratings

Richard Derham, Chairman

Legislative Action Principles

The Washington Conservative Union rates Washington State legislators on the basis of how their legislative votes conform to the following principles:

1. Promoting Strong Families

The family is the basic unit of society. Policies that respect stronger families benefit us all.

2. Promoting Responsible, Taxpayer-Friendly Fiscal Policies

Taxes to support necessary functions of government should be based on sound economic principles; taxpayer dollars should be spent prudently to promote the core functions of government.

3. Maintaining a Responsible Criminal Justice System

The first duty of government is to provide for the security of its citizens and their property in a manner that is consistent with personal liberty.

4. Fostering a sound educational system for Washington's youth.

Today's students must have the opportunity to attain the skills and knowledge that will equip them to lead lives of productive citizenship; competition, parental choice and school accountability all aid in achieving this goal.

5. Assuring Limited Government/deregulation/privatization

Every increase in the size of government must be tested against this question: does the expected benefit justify the economic cost and the resulting reduction in human freedom ?

6. Recognizing Constitutional Protections

The state and federal constitutions are the foundation for our liberty and our system of government and they should be the standards by which every legislative bill and government action is first

Senate Vote Descriptions (2004)

Promotes Strong Families

1. Increase accountability of local library boards. SB 5150 provides for recall of library board trustees to assure that boards are responsive to their communities. The bill passed the Senate 25-23 but died in the House. A “yes” vote is in favor of respecting community standards of decency.

Promotes Responsible, Taxpayer Friendly Fiscal Policies

2. Adopt a Responsible Budget. SB 6187 proposed a \$69 million supplemental budget, meeting necessary expenses while adding to the state’s budget reserve. It passed 28-21. A “yes” vote is a vote in favor of prudent budgeting.
3. Adopt a Responsible Budget. HB 2459, the House-passed supplemental budget, appropriated \$225 million for the current biennium. Many legislators wanted to spend even more. It passed the Senate 34-15. A “yes” vote is a vote in favor of prudent budgeting.
4. Impose job-work requirements for welfare. SB 6559 would require capable welfare recipients to seek employment. It passed the Senate 29-18, but failed in the House. A “yes” vote supports taxpayer friendly policies.

Maintains a Responsible Criminal Justice System

5. Defend society against terrorist crimes. A proposed amendment to SB 6187 would have prevented the establishment of a database regarding eco-terrorism. The amendment failed 23-26. A vote against the amendment is a vote for responsible protection of Washington’s citizens.

Fosters a sound educational system for Washington's youth.

6. Advance education choice. HB 2295 establishes a charter school system in Washington to provide alternatives for parents. The bill passed the House 51-46 and the Senate 27-22. A “yes” vote supports a sound educational system.

Assures Limited Government/deregulation/privatization

7. Support job creation. SB 5697 provides that the state’s automatic minimum wage increases will only occur when the state suffers high unemployment. The bill passed the Senate 27-22 but died in the House. A “yes” vote supports sound economic policies.
8. Reform medical malpractice law. SB 5728, the omnibus tort reform, includes ceilings on noneconomic damages. It passed the Senate 27-22 but died in the House. A “yes” vote is a vote in favor of sound economic policies.
9. Reduce unsound regulations. An amendment to HB 2460 reduced the mandatory contents of health insurance policies for small employers. It was adopted 25-23. In a revised form it became law. A vote in favor of the amendment is a vote against excessive government interference in the marketplace.
10. Limit regulatory authority. SB 5053 prohibits agencies from adopting regulations that exceed federal standards without specific legislative authority. The bill passed the Senate 26-23 but died in the House. A “yes” vote supports limited government.

Recognizes Constitutional Protections

11. Respect rights of religious organizations. SB 6516 expanded the right of religious organizations to hold church and church camp property as tax exempt. It passed the Senate 40-9 but died in the House. A “yes” vote is a vote to respect constitutional rights.
12. Standardize fees on property use. SB 6587 restricted the power of local governments to impose onerous “impact” fees on property owners seeking to develop their land. It passed the Senate 30-19 but died in the House. A “yes” vote supports private property rights.
13. Respect freedom of contract. SB 6519 would have overridden an overreaching Seattle city ordinance restricting the right of property owners to use billing services to collect utility costs. The bill passed 40-8 but died in the House. A “yes” vote is a vote in favor of freedom of contract.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION: DAN SWECKER

For advocacy of constitutional rights and effective democracy through his leadership in support of political primary reform.

House Vote Descriptions (2004)

Promotes Strong Families

1. Avoid extra burdens on marriage. HB 2481 increases

the cost of a marriage license by \$10 in order to fund domestic violence services, violating the principle that general revenues should be used for services of general benefit. (The bill passed the House 56-40 but died in the Senate.). A “no” vote is pro-family and for sound fiscal policies.

2. Reject Homosexuality as a Protected Class. HB 1809 would have expanded the jurisdiction of the Human Rights Commission to hear and adjudicate complaints about discrimination on the basis of “sexual orientation.” The bill passed the House 56-39. A “no” vote is a pro-family vote.

Promotes Responsible, Taxpayer Friendly Fiscal Policies

3. Adopt a Responsible Budget. HB 2459, the House version of the state’s supplemental budget, was \$156 million higher than the Senate passed version (see Senate vote 2).. It passed the House 51-45 and subsequently was adopted. A “no” vote preferred the smaller Senate-passed version and is a vote in favor of prudent budgeting.

4. Preserve Levy Limitations. The state constitution protects property owners by requiring that special property tax levies may be imposed only by a 60% majority of the voters. HJR 4204 would permit property tax levies by a majority vote. The measure passed the House 68-29 but died in the Senate. A “no” vote is a taxpayer friendly vote

5. Oppose increasing fees for general purpose uses. HB 1796 would raise license plate fees by \$1 with the funds used to lower cost of driver’s education for poorer students, violating the principle that general revenues should be used for services of general benefit. The measure passed the House 60-35, but died in the Senate. A “no” vote is a pro-taxpayer vote.

6. Favor competitive purchasing. HCR 4419 in effect opposes purchasing services for the state by competitive bids where the result is “outsourcing” to overseas providers. The bill passed the House 64-31, but died in the Senate. A “no” vote is a vote in favor of getting the best value for taxpayer dollars.

Maintains a Responsible Criminal Justice System

7. Support prison for child rape. The O’Brien amendment to HB 2400 substantially preserved probation and treatment for criminals convicted of aggravated categories of child rape. It passed 48-47 but was substantially modified in the Senate. A “no” vote on the amendment supports a responsible criminal justice system.

Fosters a sound educational system for Washington’s youth.

8. Advance Education Choice. HB 2295 would establish a

charter school system in Washington to provide alternatives for parents. The bill passed the House 51-46 and the Senate 27-22. A “yes” vote supports a sound educational system.

Assures Limited Government/deregulation/privatization

9. Preserve freedom to work. HB 2513 would add interior design to the growing list of occupations requiring state permission to practice. It passed the House 55-42 but died in the Senate. A “no” vote rejects occupational cartels.

10. Reduce excessive regulations. HB 1828 would increase the cost of health insurance by mandating the inclusion of mental health coverage on the same basis as medical and surgical coverage. The measure passed the House 64-33 but died in the Senate. A “no” vote avoids excessive government regulations.

11. Reduce unsound regulations. HB 2460 was an inadequate step toward reduction of the mandatory contents of health insurance policies for small employers. It passed the House, 63-33 but was substantially broadened in the Senate and ultimately became law. (Senate vote 9) A vote against the bill in its initial House form is a vote to reduce excessive government interference in the marketplace.

12. Avoid excessive requirements on public contracts. HB 2439 would increase the cost of construction on public works products by mandating use of “apprentices” beyond what would be required for the job. The bill passed the House 54-44 but died in the Senate. A “no” vote is a vote in favor of reasonable regulation of business.

Recognizes Constitutional Protections

13. Respect the rights of owners of property. HB 2870 would require landlords to pay tenant relocation cost for low-income tenants where landlords do not provide safe and sanitary conditions. An amendment which would have exempted landlords where the property is condemned due to tenant’s conduct failed 44-51. The bill passed the House but died in the Senate. A vote for the amendment is a vote in favor of equity for landlords.

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Washington Conservative Union

The Washington Conservative Union was formed in 1978 to promote the philosophy of principled conservatism in Washington State. We fully adopt the Statement of Principles of our affiliate, the American Conservative Union, which makes clear our support for free markets, limited government and confidence in traditional moral values.

As a multi-issue umbrella organization, we seek to support and work with the many effective specialized organizations active in Washington State supporting similar goals and to coordinate with the American Conservative Union on projects national in scope.

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