

2023 Legislative Issues  
Presentation to  
LWVTPC Unit Meetings  
January 2023

Cynthia Stewart

# 2023 Session

- Long session: 105 days (1/9/23 – 4/24/23)
- In-person; some committees may allow hybrid for out-of-town testimony
- All bills start anew
- Biennial budget will be adopted

2023

## January

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## February

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28				

## March

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

## April

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

print-a-calendar.com

# 2023 Session

Legislative balance  
remains the same as  
before the 2022 election

- Senate: 30 D to 19 R
- House: 57 D to 41 R

But individuals have  
changed

- 6 Senators did not run for reelection
- 20 Representatives did not run for reelection (7 ran for Senate or Congress)

# Session Context

Revenue forecast down from 2022

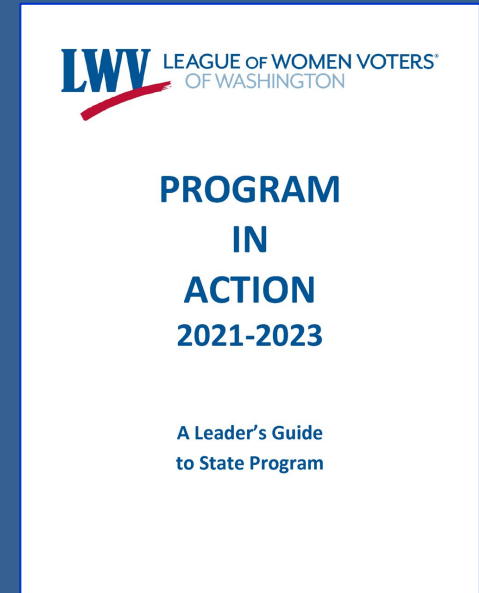
Several important committees will make recommendations:

- Tax Structure Work Group
- Universal Health Care Commission
- Commercial Aviation Coordinating Commission

# League Lobbying

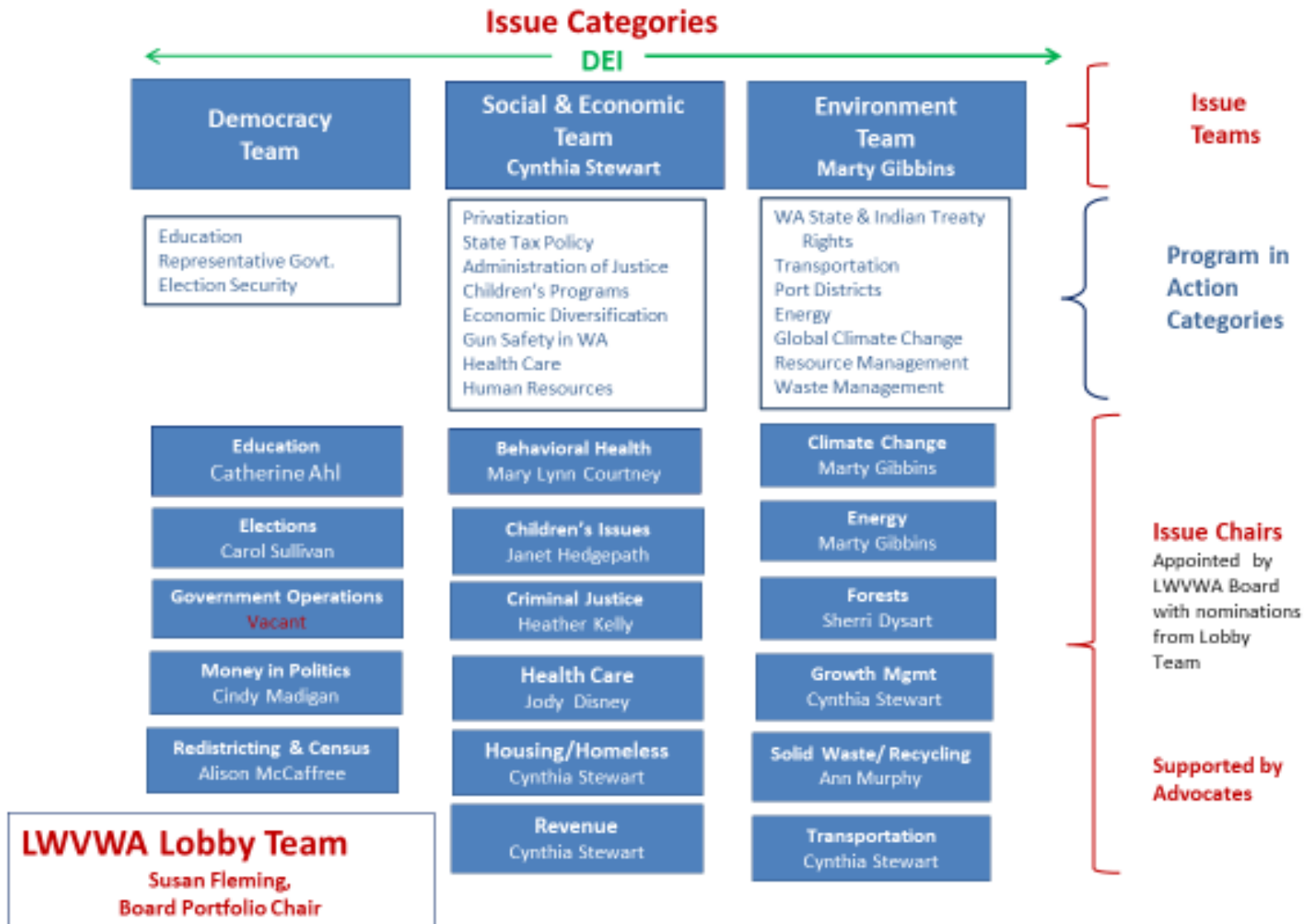
- Must be consistent with adopted positions
- WA State – only by LWVWA-appointed advocates
- Can use LWVUS or LWVWA positions

<https://www.lwvwa.org/league-positions>



# Only LWVWA Lobby Team can advocate for League

But League members are encouraged to support League positions as individuals



# Revenue Forecast

Forecast  
drives  
budget

- Forecasts are produced in November, February, June and September
- Revenues for last biennium were higher than forecast
- The September 2022 forecast was
  - higher inflation;
  - lower personal income growth, housing construction, and construction employment;
  - lower expected revenue for next biennium
- November 2022 forecast slightly better but still below last biennium

# Budget Issues

Budget  
drives  
Programs

## Raising taxes is problematic

- WA has the most regressive tax structure in the US;
- Raising taxes is politically unpalatable;
- It also affects those at the lowest incomes the most

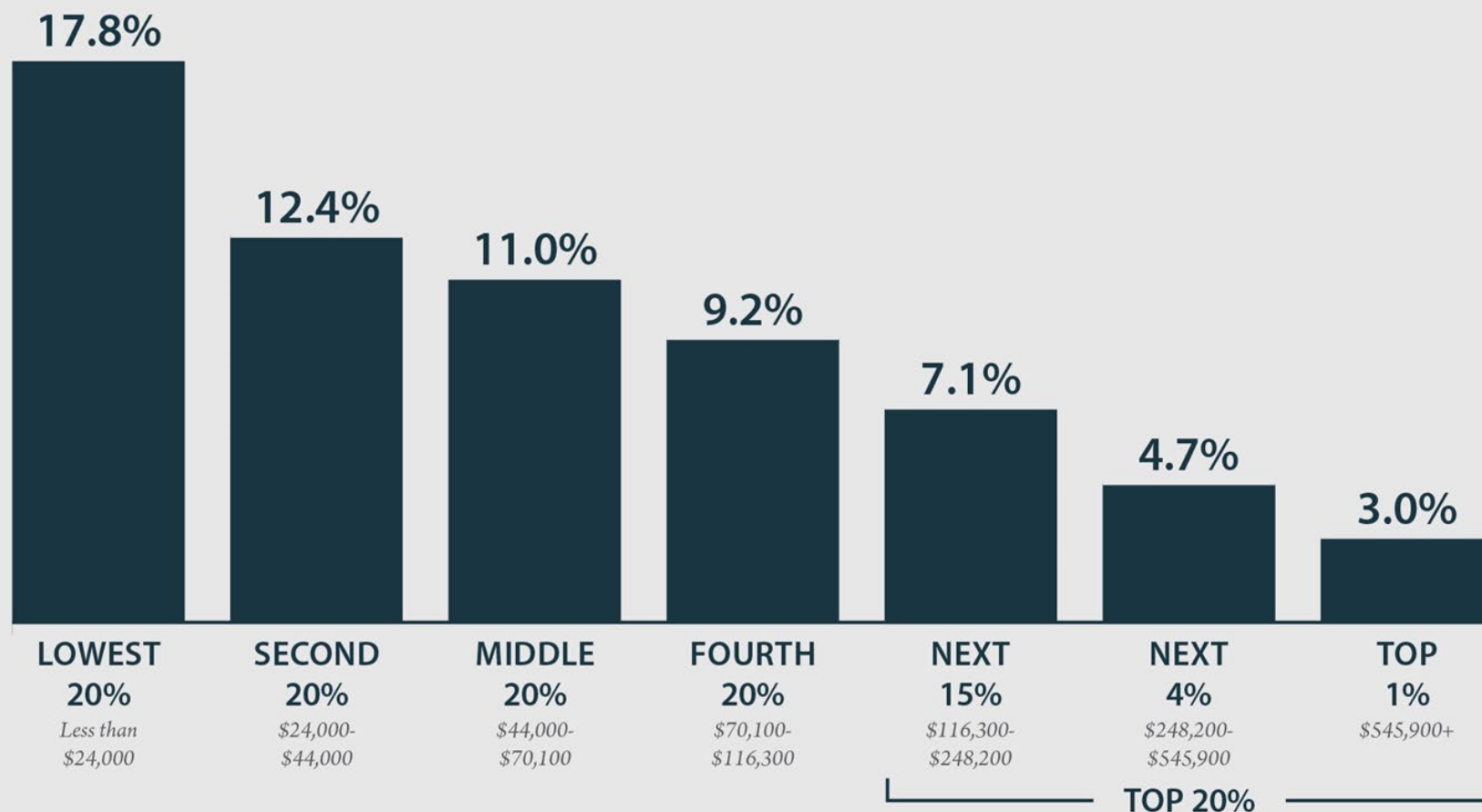


# Issues – Tax Structure

## TOTAL STATE AND LOCAL TAXES IN WASHINGTON

*Share of Family Income*

REGRESSIVE



# Racial Disparities

## WA State Budget & Policy Center reports that...

1 in 3 Black & Latinx families  
– **can't pay rent/mortgage**

1 in 6 non-white households  
with children **do not have enough food**

Latinx families with children  
are 3 times more likely to  
have **no health insurance**

1 in 10 non-white children  
**do not have internet or digital device**



# Proposals to Change Tax Structure

Coalitions proposing  
greater change than  
Tax Structure Work  
Group

- 2019 Tax Structure Work Group Appointed
- 2021
  - Capital Gains tax
  - Working Families tax credit
- 2022
  - Report to Legislature due in December
- 2023 Likely tax change proposals:
  - Wealth tax
  - Replace B&O tax w/ margin tax
  - Local govt. property tax limit increase

# Issues: Housing/ Homeless- ness

## Problems

- Housing shortage
- Income inequality
  - Homeless
  - Cost-burdened, at risk for homelessness
- Cost of housing

## Solutions

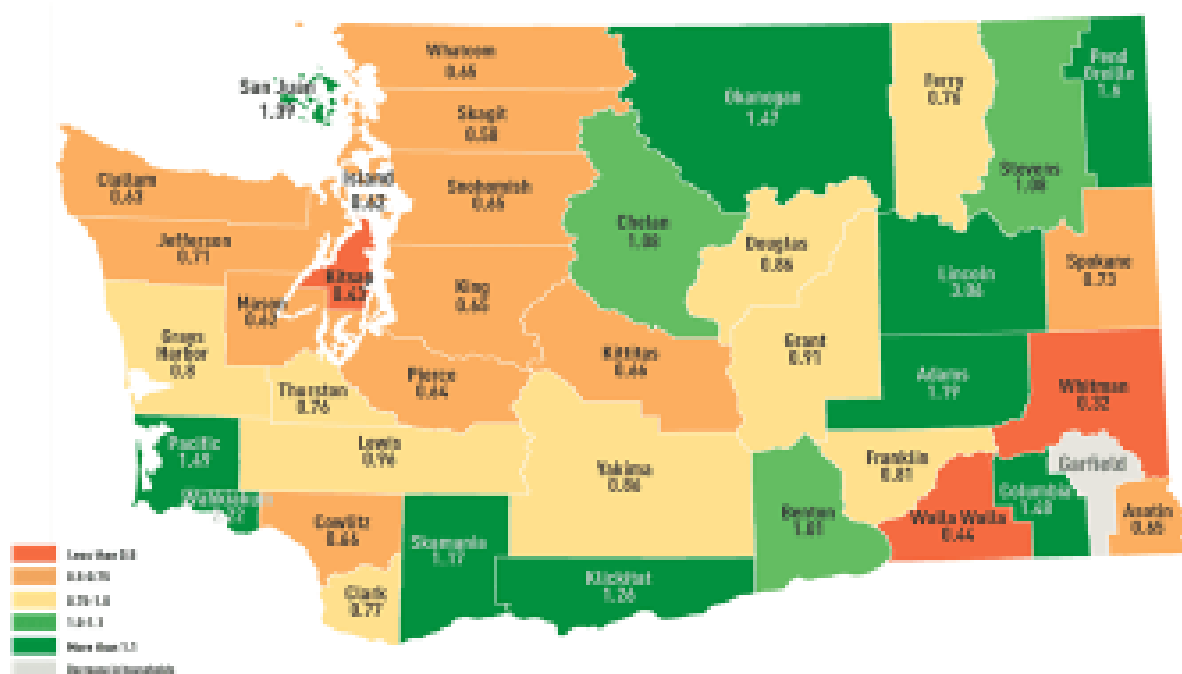
- Prevent loss of housing
- Create new housing
- Subsidize housing for lowest income people
- Provide supportive housing for those with long-term need
- Help people get ahead with education, training, reasonable wages



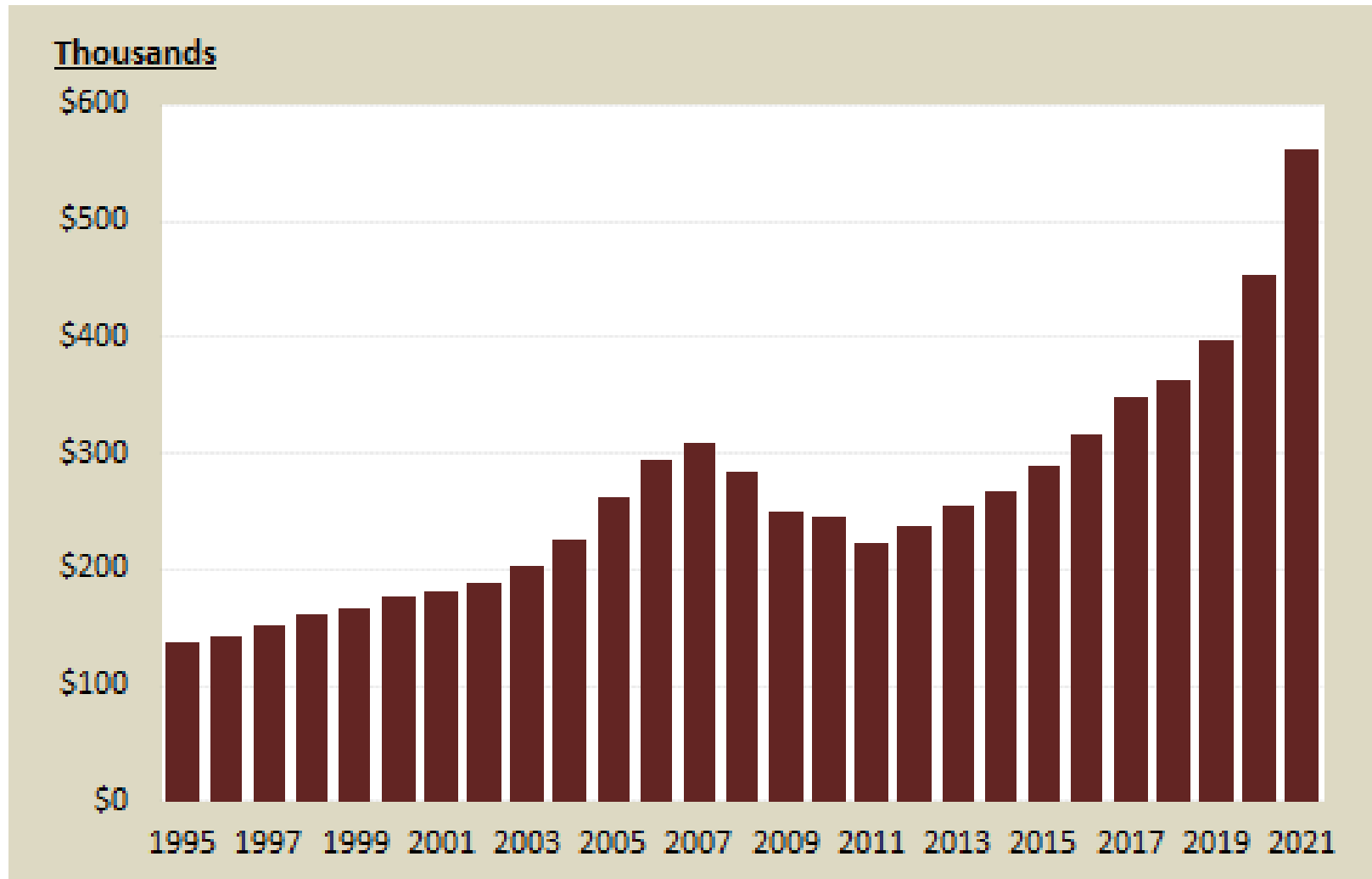
# The Biggest Underlying Need is Affordable Housing

WA State housing shortage 225,000 units;  
population growth exacerbates this shortage

COUNTY-LEVEL RATIO OF HOUSING UNITS VS. HOUSEHOLD FORMATION (2010-2017)



# Housing Price Trend



# Legislative Proposals for Housing/ Homeless- ness

- Homelessness Prevention
  - Eviction prevention
  - Cash assistance
  - Housing & Essential Needs rental assistance.
  - Workforce stabilization
  - Tenant protections
  - Utility stabilization
  - Home ownership programs for people of color
- New Housing
  - Funding for Housing Trust Fund
  - Lower cost of housing through comprehensive planning



# Issues: Health Care



## Problems:

- Inadequate workforce for all needs
- Non-secular care providers with restrictions
- Protection of freedom of reproductive choice
- Long-term care funding



# Issues: Health Care, cont'd



## Anticipated legislative proposals:

- Additional protection of reproductive rights, legal protections and possibly a constitutional amendment proposal
- Assurance that health system acquisitions improve, rather than harm, access to affordable quality health care
- Increased access to death with dignity
- Move toward universal health care
- Hearing aid coverage requirement for private insurance
- Protection of the WA Cares Act

# Issues: Behav- ioral Health Care

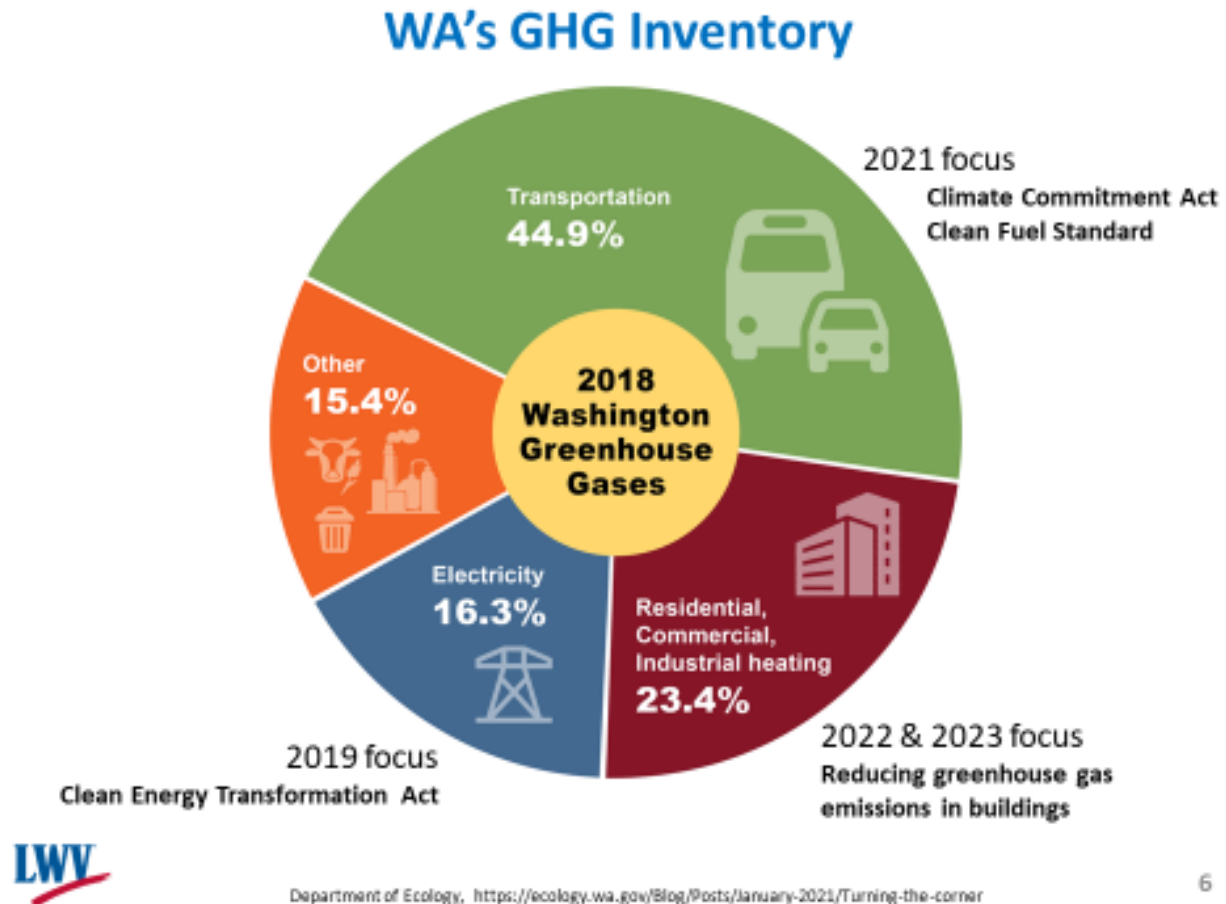
Problem: Lack services relative to need

## Anticipated Legislative Proposals:

- Increase the behavioral health workforce.
- Increase access to behavioral health services in underserved areas and for underserved populations.
- Provide behavior health services in locations convenient and familiar to persons who might need those services, places such as schools and physicians' offices.
- Ensure access to behavioral health services at every level across the spectrum of services, from preventative care to inpatient hospitalization.



# Climate Change & Transporta -tion



# Issues: Trans- porta- tion



## Problems:

- Inadequate alternatives
  - To single-occupancy motor vehicles
  - For non-drivers, disabled, seniors, low-income
- Cost of infrastructure
- Greenhouse gas emissions

## Anticipated Legislative Proposals:

- Transit-oriented development
- Increased funding for transit
- Examination of how railroads can be better utilized
- Alternative fuels
- New Airport

# Issues: Climate Change



- Anticipated legislative proposals:
  - Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions in buildings
  - Solar energy
  - Salmon recovery strategies
  - Climate resiliency in local comp plans
  - Forest preservation

# Issues: Criminal Justice

Problem: Racial & Economic Injustice

League Focus: Address paths to incarceration

Legislation Proposed:

- 45 bills pre-filed as of 1/2/23 out of 233 total
- Law Enforcement Training
- Incarceration Standards
- Holding w/out bail
- Sentencing
- Access to Counsel
- & Many more

Sentencing Discretion Incarceration  
Unjust Break the Cycle Judges  
Reduce Recidivism All Jobs  
States Civil Rights  
Detention Barriers Behavior  
Change Recurring  
Laws Just Cost  
Probation Federal Criminal Record  
Ex-Offenders Expunged Records  
Parole Drug Use Society Felons  
Effective Employers Non-Violent  
Alternatives Public Safety  
Background Checks Parole

# Issue: Democracy

## Proposals:

- Enhance voting rights act
- Abolish advisory ballots
- Updating voter registration processes
- Limiting Governor's rule-making power
- Documentation of citizenship on certain identification
- Rulemaking & open meetings



# Issue: Education

## Proposals:

- School safety
- Financial assistance to small districts
- Access to dual programs
- Equity in highly capable student programs
- Paraeducator employment standards
- Lower minimum age for compulsory education





# Legislative Web Site: <https://leg.wa.gov/>

The screenshot shows the Washington State Legislature website. A red arrow points from the text 'Committee hearings' to a dropdown menu labeled 'Today' next to 'Scheduled hearings and floor sessions:'. Another red arrow points from the text 'Find bills & status' to the 'Bills' link in the 'Find' section of the right sidebar.

**Legislative Home**

House of Representatives  
Senate  
Find Your District  
Laws & Agency Rules  
Bill Information  
Agendas, Schedules, & Calendars  
Legislative Committees  
Coming to the Legislature  
Civic Education  
Legislative Agencies  
Legislative Information Center  
Email Updates (GovDelivery)

During 2021, in response to COVID-19, the House and Senate have made operational changes to adhere to public health guidance. Please go to the House Covid-19 Operations and Senate Covid-19 Operations plans for more details. All proceedings can be viewed on TVW. To view legislative proceedings click here for TVW. Please click here to go to the committee website pages. To contact your Legislator click here for a Roster of Members.

**What's happening on the floor?**  
The Legislature will convene for a Regular Session on January 10, 2022.  
Please check the Committee Schedules website for the most up-to-date information concerning individual committee meeting dates and agendas.

Scheduled hearings and floor sessions: **Today** ▼

Committee	Agenda	Date/Time	Location	View Video	Last Updated
JLARC - Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee (J)	Agenda	12/01/2021 10:00 AM	Virtual	<a href="#">View Video</a>	11/29/2021

**Highlights**  
**Legislative Hotline: 1.800.562.6000**  
Election Results  
Employment Opportunities  
**Public Records Requests**  
For information about submitting a public records request to either the House or the Senate, please follow the links below:  
[House Public Records Request](#) | [Senate Public Records Request](#)  
2021 Redistricting Commission  
Visit the Redistricting website to stay connected with the work of the Commission.

**More Information**  
**Get bills via web services:** The Legislature makes bill, committee, and law information available via web services for developers using automated systems. For more information, see the Legislative Web Services page.  
**Budget Links**

**Let Your Voice Be Heard**  
[Contact Your Legislators](#)  
[Participating in the Process](#)  
[Find Member Information/Rosters](#)  
[Accessibility Information](#)  
**Find**  
[Laws & Rules](#)  
[Your District & Legislators](#)  
[Bills](#)  
[Committee Meeting Schedules & Agendas](#)  
[Audio & Video on TVW](#)  
**About the Legislature**  
[House](#)  
[Senate](#)  
[Committees](#)  
[Legislative Agencies](#)  
[Legislative Information Center](#)

You can participate:

- Virtual testimony
- Sign-in for/against bills online

Find bills & status

# Resources

- Legislature's Web Site: <https://leg.wa.gov/>
- League of Women Voters Legislative Newsletter:  
<https://www.lwwva.org/League-Newsletters>
- Universal Health Care Commission:  
<https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/who-we-are/universal-health-care-commission>
- Tax Structure Work Group:  
<https://taxworkgroup.org/>
- WA Low Income Housing Alliance:  
<https://www.wliha.org/>
- Disability Rights WA:  
<https://www.disabilityrightswa.org/>

## Resources, cont'd

- Health Care for All:  
<https://www.healthcareforallwa.org/>
- Health Care is a Human Right:  
<http://healthcareisarightwa.org/>
- Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action (PSARA):  
<https://www.psara.org/>
- Washington State Budget and Policy Center: <https://budgetandpolicy.org/>
- Balance Our Tax Code:  
<https://balanceourtaxcode.com/>
- AARP WA:  
<https://states.aarp.org/washington/>
- Transportation Choices Coalition:  
<https://transportationchoices.org/>