

→ **Poll: Should Washington State raise taxes or hold the line on spending?**

Link to story and enter the quick poll:

<http://blogs.seattletimes.com/opinionnw/2013/03/21/poll-should-washington-state-raise-taxes-or-hold-the-line-on-spending/>



→ **AHC EVENT:**

AHC Member Public Meeting: **Opening Doors to Housing & Jobs**

2^N Quarter Member Meeting: Program, Networking, Light Lunch

Wednesday, February 13 noon – 1:30

1323 South Yakima Av, Tacoma

RSVP: connie@tpcahc.org

→ **AHC MEMBERS' EVENTS:**

Habitat for Humanity

Changing Lives Luncheon

Tuesday, March 5

check-in: 11:30

program: noon-1pm

Greater Tacoma Convention & Trade Center – 1500 Broadway, Tacoma

Register: http://www.tpc-habitat.org/special_events/2013_changing_lives_luncheon.html

→ **Useful HUD Links for Housing Counselors**

February 14, 2013 from 2 to 4 PM Eastern time. Housing Counseling NOFA Training Webinar.

This FREE webinar from the HUD Office of Housing Counseling will discuss the FY2013 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for HUD's Comprehensive Housing Counseling Program, and will cover changes to the application process including the new charts, funding methodologies, the rating factors with information on specific charts, as well as submission requirements and other technical issues. Special Instructions: There is no call-in number for this webinar; all audio will be through your computer speakers. Please keep the e-mail you receive after you register, you will need it to access the webinar. This webinar will be archived and closed captioning is available. Registration required no fee. Registration Link:

<http://www.visualwebcaster.com/event.asp?id=92181> Questions: E-mail us at:
housing.counseling@hud.gov

HUD Housing Counseling: www.hud.gov/housingcounseling

Events & Training Calendar:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?mode=dispage&id=OHC_TRAINING

Contracting Opportunities:

http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/program_offices/cpo

Career Opportunities: <http://www.usajobs.gov>

Grant Opportunities:

http://portal.hud.gov/portal/page/portal/HUD/program_offices/administration/grants/fundsvail

Presidentially Declared Disaster Areas:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/program_offices/housing/sfh/nsc/disaster

Foreclosure Assistance:

http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/i_want_to/talk_to_a_housing_counselor

Making Home Affordable: <http://www.makinghomeaffordable.gov/pages/default.aspx>

→ [A Paramount Duty: Funding Education for McCleary and Beyond](#)

→ **New Bills Promote Economic Security and Transparency**

Several recently-introduced pieces of legislation would help create jobs, build lasting prosperity, and foster a more transparent and accountable state budget process. These measures, based on our research, would provide more resources and opportunities for struggling workers and families, while giving policymakers and the public more complete information about the ongoing costs and benefits of public investments.

These bills reflect the policy recommendations we made in our [Framework for Prosperity](#) to create a strong economy for all Washingtonians.

[SB 5638](#) Fiscal Impacts-would add transparency and accountability to budget decisions by providing lawmakers with more information, including how cuts to one program may impact other areas of the budget. A broader view of the impact of budget decisions will help aid policymakers in making the best, most-informed judgments on how to prioritize state resources. Click [here](#) for analysis we did on a similar proposal.

[HB 1734/ SB 5643](#) Exemptions from the five-year time limit for recipients of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) - provides more opportunities for people to find and keep a job by curtailing an onerous red tape barrier – an arbitrary time limit that is not connected to the state of the economy --that prevents struggling families from receiving work supports. It would ensure that parents who have disabilities, are victims of domestic violence, or live in areas with high unemployment (among other exemptions) would be able to continue to receive services. Click [here](#) for additional research.

[HB 1671/ SB 5595](#) Child care- improves access to affordable child care for parents, supporting their efforts to find or keep a job. The proposed legislation increases the benefit amount provided to parents, allowing them greater access to providers, and establishes a program to reward child care providers for

providing high-quality care. Click [here](#) for additional research.

→ Proposed ‘Supermajority’ Amendments Would Protect Latest Tax Loophole for the Wealthy

In the wake of the [State Supreme Court](#) decision to allow wealthy married couples to avoid paying the estate tax on a legal technicality, at great cost to public schools, policymakers should be able to act responsibly and simply close the legal loophole. But thanks to the state law that requires a “supermajority” vote of the legislature to raise revenue, as few as 17 state Senators can block any attempt to rationally solve the problem.

It’s just the latest hurdle caused by the supermajority law, which has resulted in four years of legislative dysfunction and sluggish economic growth. Today, lawmakers are hearing three proposed measures – Senate Joint Resolutions [8200](#), [8204](#), and [8205](#) – which would permanently cement this job-killing law into the State Constitution. At a time when policymakers should be focusing all of their attention on getting more resources to our badly underfunded schools, these proposals are a destructive distraction.

The supermajority law bars policymakers from raising additional tax revenue without a [two-thirds majority vote of the legislature or a public referendum](#). As [we’ve written previously](#), the law, by allowing a small group of lawmakers to block legislation, effectively hands all state budget decisions over to a handful of people who are opposed to raising any additional revenue for any reason.

As a result, this minority of legislators (who represent a small portion of Washington state’s population), has forced the majority to accept round after round of debilitating cuts to vital investments in health care, education, and safe communities. These cuts have eliminated [thousands of jobs](#) and hampered Washington state’s economic recovery, [taking an enormous toll on struggling Washingtonians](#) from Yakima to Mount Vernon.

If that weren’t bad enough, a recent State Supreme Court decision created an enormous loophole in Washington state’s estate tax, a voter-approved tax that only impacts the heirs of the super-rich. Due to a legal technicality, the Court’s decision (known as the “[Bracken decision](#)”) allows wealthy married couples to completely avoid paying estate taxes and shirk their obligation to help support schools. (All revenue from the estate tax is dedicated to education.) The court decision is projected to cost Washington state \$160 million in the coming 2013-15 budget cycle, widening the already [yawning gap](#) between our needs and the resources we have to meet them.

Not surprisingly, the Washington State Department of Revenue has found that estate planners and lawyers are already developing strategies to help their ultra-rich clients take advantage of the Bracken loophole.

The supermajority has done enough damage to Washington state. Enshrining the law into the State Constitution would make it impossible for the majority to rebuild a state economy that benefits all Washingtonians.

→ Prices, sales improve in Pierce County Home Sales

➔ **Habitat for Humanity Important updates in our homeownership program:**

New application process and lowered minimum income guidelines, and please forward this email to anyone you think may be interested in applying or may know someone who could benefit from owning a simple, decent and affordable home. If you would like to be removed from this distribution list or know someone who would like to be added, please reply to this email.

First, **households interested in purchasing a Habitat home may now submit an application without attending an application meeting first**. If you know someone interested in applying, please have them email me at cbenbow@tpc-habitat.org, call Family Services at (253) 627-5626 or stop by the office Monday – Friday (9am – 5pm, weeknights and Saturdays by appointment only) to pick-up an application form. Applicants will need to submit the attached application form (must be signed!), a \$20 credit check fee (cash, check, money order made out to T/PC Habitat for Humanity), and copies of photo ID and social security cards for all adults in the household before we can process their application.

Second, **we are holding weekly office hours in Tillicum and Parkland!** Households interested in applying for to our program can come to the office hours to pick-up or submit an application or simply learn more about our program.

- **Wednesdays, 12 – 1pm:** Habitat for Humanity office (4824 South Tacoma Way, Tacoma, 98409)
- **Thursdays, 5 – 7pm:** Garfield Book Company (208 Garfield St, Suite 101, Tacoma, 98444) – second floor, wheelchair accessible
- **Fridays, 2 – 4pm:** Tillicum Community Center (14916 Washington Ave SW, Lakewood, 98498)
- **Saturdays, 10:30 – 11:30am:** Garfield Book Company – second floor, wheelchair accessible

Habitat staff can also come to you and give a short presentation about our program to your staff, clients or community partners.

Fourth, **our minimum income guidelines have been lowered and monthly payments can now be as low as \$500** for mortgage payment, property taxes and homeowners' insurance combined! Income guidelines are based on how many people will be living in the Habitat house and can be seen below. As always, eligible income includes wages, child support/alimony, SSI/SSA, TANF, self-employment and any other documented income expected to continue for at least 3 more years (excludes food stamps, work study and unemployment benefits). **Households with 1 or more people encouraged to apply.**

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Minimum Annual Income	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$21,050	\$22,750	\$24,450	\$26,150	\$27,800
Maximum Annual Income	\$24,600	\$28,100	\$31,600	\$35,100	\$37,950	\$40,750	\$43,550	\$46,350

We also have a home repair program for Pierce County veteran homeowners or homeowners with veteran living with them – if you know someone in need of a 0%, affordable loan to fix a health or safety related home repair, please have them contact Habitat for more information. We do not offer immediate/emergency home repair services but we can address home repair needs such as a roof in need of repairs or replacing, leaking plumbing, holes in the floors, etc...

If you have any questions about our homeownership or home repair program, please contact me at (253) 627-5626 or cbenbow@tpc-habitat.org for more information. Thank you for helping us reach more families in need of safe, decent, affordable housing and have a wonderful rest of the week!

➔ **Construction employment opportunities**

Employment training opportunities on Absher's Hillside Terrace Revitalization [Tacoma Housing Authority] project. Interested parties should contact *Brandon Koenes* at (253) 448-8292 from Workforce Central. http://www.workforce-central.com/page_details.php?pageid=69

Absher is recruiting 30 participants to take a six-week pre-apprenticeship construction program beginning March 4th. Graduates from this training will be eligible to interview with Absher and their subcontractors during the construction of the project. Applications are due February 22nd.

➔ **"A Regional Short Course on Local Planning"**

Wednesday, February 20, 2013, 6:30-9:30 pm at Tacoma Public Utilities Auditorium, 3628 S. 25th Street (parking available in Lot B1 or Lot C across the street). It's free, no registration required.

At this three-hour workshop, Attorney Phil Olbrechts and AICP certified planners, Ed McGuire and Deborah Munkberg, along with the City's Planning Services Manager Ian Munce, will present current planning efforts and issues in Tacoma-Pierce County area, the legal basis of planning in Washington State, comprehensive planning and implementation basics, and the roles and relationships of the Planning Commission, the City Council and the community in the planning process. There will also be a panel discussion and Q-n-A time.

A number of such short courses are held each year around the State by the Department of Commerce's Growth Management Services and the Planning Association of Washington. They are conducting one in Tacoma at the request of the City's Planning Commission and the Planning and Development Services Department. This should provide a great opportunity for elected officials, planning professionals, students, stakeholders, community activists and citizens to learn more about the legal framework for planning and decision-making, both at the regional and local levels.

Please visit either the State's website at: www.commerce.wa.gov/shortcourseplanning or the City's Planning homepage at: www.cityoftacoma.org/Planning.

➔ **National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH) Event**

Learn about federal policy priorities to end homelessness, how the political climate in D.C. is affecting these efforts, and how you can make an impact.

When: Friday, February 22, 4-6pm

Where: The Housing Alliance office

1411 4th Avenue, Suite 850

Seattle, WA 98101

Guest Speakers:

Steve Berg, Vice President for Programs and Policy, NAEH

Kate Seif, Policy Outreach Coordinator, NAEH

This event is a casual reception with a short program and ample time for mingling. If you are in town for the NAEH conference, or reside nearby, please come to learn how our partners in D.C. are working to implement policy to end homelessness.