



# 2018 POLICY AGENDA

**Home to a robust mix of employers and a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, Washington ranks as a top-10 state for job growth and a top-five state for personal income growth per capita.**

The future continues to look bright with 740,000 job openings projected in our state by 2021. However, a closer examination of economic performance reveals significant gaps in regional growth and prosperity. State policymakers have an opportunity in 2018 to lay a foundation for diversified and inclusive growth that benefits communities and individuals across all of Washington and make progress toward better preparing our students for the opportunities being created here.

## Education

Washington's greatest asset is its people. The majority of job openings in our state that offer good salaries and opportunity for advancement will be filled by workers with a postsecondary credential—such as a degree, apprenticeship, or certificate. Yet, less than one third of Washington's students attain such a credential by age 26. Far too few of the young people growing up here are getting the education and training necessary to take advantage of the career opportunities being created here. We can and must do better.

### THE ROUNDTABLE URGES THE 2018 LEGISLATURE TO:

- **Pursue the highest leverage opportunities available to reach the following goal: By 2030, 70 percent of Washington high school students will go on to attain a postsecondary credential by age 26.** This will require focused efforts to increase the percentage of systemically underserved students who enroll in education or training after high school and earn a credential.
- **Maintain the state's commitment to rigorous learning standards, assessments, and high school graduation requirements,** all of which are crucial to ensuring that Washington students graduate high school ready for postsecondary education, training, and careers.
- **In the process of implementing the K-12 education funding plan adopted in 2017, continue to direct resources to the students most in need and drive improvements at low-performing schools.** The state must ensure the plan is sustainable and school districts do not spend local levy dollars to fund basic education.
- **Ensure that Washington's youngest learners enter school ready to learn and excel,** with a focus on expanding high-quality early learning options for low-income children.



# 2018 POLICY AGENDA *(continued)*

## Economic Vitality

The Washington state economy is thriving, but prosperity is distributed unevenly, and some communities are outright struggling. Lawmakers should take steps in 2018 to foster statewide economic growth, with specific emphasis on spreading opportunity and prosperity to Washington's rural areas where recent growth has trailed the state average.

### THE ROUNDTABLE URGES THE 2018 LEGISLATURE TO:

- **Eliminate duplicative regulation and ease regulatory burdens, particularly in rural areas.**  
For example, act to resolve water conflicts that result from the Supreme Court's Hirst decision.
- **Support policies that promote economic development and job growth, particularly in non-urban regions.** This includes support for business attraction and retention efforts, incentives for greater inter-county cooperation, and expansion of broadband infrastructure to underserved communities.
- **Promote transportation infrastructure asset preservation and maintenance.** Implement the 2015 Connecting Washington package as quickly and efficiently as possible, and begin planning for the next round of transportation investments in key economic corridors.

## About Washington Roundtable

The Washington Roundtable is a nonprofit organization comprised of senior executives of major private sector employers in Washington state. Founded in 1983, the Roundtable works to effect positive change on the public policy issues that are most important to supporting state economic vitality and fostering opportunity for Washingtonians. We are committed to making Washington a better place to live, work and do business.

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