

# New & Higher Taxes: The People Aren't Buying It

[Results are from a Jan. 2025 poll conducted by EMC research.](#)

## Key Findings

- The people of Washington are more pessimistic than optimistic about the budget and the deficit. They are concerned about the economy and the availability of good-paying jobs.
- However, they are optimistic about the future of Washington.
- People are more likely to say the deficit is due to the state legislature failing to control spending rather than a result of inflation, increased demand, population growth, etc.
- People overwhelmingly believe they will be the ones to bear the cost of any increased spending.
- Nearly two-thirds believe Washington will lose good-paying jobs as a result of increased spending.
- Fewer than one-fourth think past state spending has improved our quality of life and don't think new spending will be any different.
- Opposition to increased spending only grows after hearing the messaging from both sides.

## Statistics

### General Mood

- 54% think things in Washington have seriously gone off on the wrong track. Only 41% think we are moving in the right direction.
- 71% are concerned about the economy and the availability of good-paying jobs.
- 53% are optimistic about Washington's future.
- 70% are proud to call themselves Washingtonians.

### About the Legislature

- 76% think the State Legislature has enough money to address important priorities and that they just need to spend it more effectively.
- 65% do NOT trust the Legislature to spend their tax dollars wisely.
- 70% do NOT trust the Legislature to make sure the tax dollars it spends create meaningful progress on things like homelessness and affordable housing.
- 74% do NOT trust that the State Legislature has an effective plan to address critical issues like homelessness, housing affordability, public safety and education.



## About the Deficit

- Before hearing any messaging, 59% believe the budget deficit is due to the Legislature's failure to control spending.
- After hearing the messaging from both sides, the percentage of people who think the Legislature's uncontrolled spending is to blame raises to 62%.

## State Worker Salaries

By a 20-point margin, Washingtonians oppose raising taxes by \$2 billion per year to fund a salary increase for state employees.

Strongly oppose = 39% (compared to 17% who strongly support)  
Oppose = 59% (compared to 40% who support)

## Quality of Life

- 54% of Washington state voters think it has had little to no impact at all.
- 77% rank the impact at less than 50 on a 100-point scale.

## Increasing Spending & Potential Consequences

- 56% of Washington voters think it is a bad idea for the Legislature to dramatically increase state spending to fund "important state programs that help address homelessness, create more affordable housing, improve education, and provide affordable health care for Washingtonians." (42% think it's a good idea.)
- 52% think it is unlikely these investments will help with critical programs, such as childcare, job training and placement, public education, services for seniors, and affordable health care.
- 63% think it is likely that Washington will lose good-paying jobs because employers will be less likely to expand in Washington state.
- 83% say it's likely companies will pass the billions per year in new taxes on to customers, resulting in an even higher cost of living in Washington.

## Effectiveness of Opposition Messaging

- The cost of higher taxes on businesses/employers will get passed on to consumers and raise the cost of living. **77% convincing**
- State spending has more than doubled over the past 12 years. Spending on housing has increased tenfold, yet Washington ranks last on affordable housing and homelessness has increased by 88% in the past 10 years. Stop throwing money at every problem and hold the Legislature accountable for delivering meaningful, measurable results. **75% convincing**
- Constantly making it more expensive for employers to do business here will push businesses to leave or expand elsewhere, costing our state current and future family-wage jobs. **71% convincing**
- After Seattle implemented its payroll tax, more than 25,000 jobs left the area, costing Seattle hundreds of millions in revenue and economic activity. Seattle currently has a 30% vacancy rate in commercial buildings, compared to only 10% in Bellevue. When governments make things more expensive, businesses close or move and take jobs with them. **71% convincing**
- The budget has grown over 50% faster than the increase in population and inflation. The Legislature has a spending problem, and it is past time they fix it. **71% convincing**
- Even though supporters say Democrat taxes will only affect Washington's most profitable businesses, with a \$12 billion deficit and a huge list of news spending ideas, legislators won't be able to resist expanding the scope of their taxes like they always do. **65% convincing**

**No more than 52% of the people think the pro-spending, pro-tax messaging is convincing after they heard it.**

