

WASHINGTON *Independent Distributors of Energy Report*

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Washington State Voters Uphold Liberal Policies in Latest Election

In contrast to much of the nation's rightward shift, Washington state leaned even further blue in the recent election. Democrats maintained control over all statewide elected offices and rejected an attempt to repeal the Climate Commitment Act, which includes the Cap and Invest Program and LCFS.

Governor:

Washington's Attorney General, Bob Ferguson, emerged victorious in the gubernatorial race, defeating Republican and former Congressman Dave Reichert with 56.3% of the vote to Reichert's 43.5%. This extends the state's streak of electing Democratic governors, unbroken since 1980. Ferguson, though expected to prioritize similar issues as outgoing Governor Jay Inslee, is less exclusively focused on climate change. During his tenure as Attorney General, he focused heavily on consumer protection and became known for filing lawsuits against policies enacted by the Trump Administration.

Initiatives:

Three of the four initiatives aimed at reversing the state's cap-and-trade program, capital gains tax, and payroll tax for long-term care were defeated. The initiative to repeal the Climate Commitment Act failed, with only 38% of voters supporting a repeal. The single initiative currently passing, Initiative I-2066, would block state and local efforts to phase out natural gas service. However, it leads by a slim margin (51.32% to 48.68%), and opponents have already signaled intentions to challenge it in court, arguing it violates the single-subject rule—a legal stumbling block for similar initiatives in the past.

The "No" campaigns on these initiatives were heavily funded, raising over \$33 million compared to the approximately \$9 million raised by Let's Go Washington for all four initiatives. Additionally, critics argued the ballot titles, crafted by the Attorney General's office, were confusing to voters.



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With the Climate Commitment Act intact, Washington is likely to continue discussions about linking its carbon market with California and Quebec. Legislative efforts to further refine and implement the program are anticipated in the upcoming session beginning in January.

Legislature

Democrats currently hold a majority of 58-40 in the House and 29-20 in the Senate. While they hoped to expand their margins, Republicans focused on maintaining their seats. Democrats are just one vote shy in each chamber from a 60% majority, which would allow them to pass certain budget-related votes without bipartisan support. If achieved, this could potentially leave Republicans out of budget negotiations, which have historically been bipartisan.

House:

Republicans are poised to lose at least one seat in the 26th Legislative District (Gig Harbor/Port Orchard/Bremerton). Two additional races in Clark County remain too close to call, though Republican candidates are currently leading, with trends favoring them in recent counts.

- 26th District (likely Democratic gain): Adison Richards (D) is leading former Rep. Jesse Young (R) by 2,877 votes.
- 17th District (potential Republican hold): David Stuebe (R) leads Terri Niles (D) by 147 votes.
- 18th District (potential Democratic gain): John Lay (R) leads John Zingale (D) by 1,299 votes.

Senate:

Democrats might gain one or two seats, although some races are still too close to call. Encouragingly for Republicans, recent vote tallies have trended in their favor.

- 18th Senate District (too close to call): Adrian Cortes (D) leads Brad Benton (R) by 354 votes.
- 10th Senate District (too close to call): Incumbent Senator Ron Muzzall (R) leads Janet St. Clair (D) by just 153 votes.
- 17th Senate District (likely Republican hold): Rep. Paul Harris (R) leads Marla Keethler (D) by 1,149 votes.

In the newly redistricted 14th Legislative District in Yakima, Republicans successfully defended all three seats. This district, traditionally a Republican stronghold, was redrawn to have a Latino majority, making it more competitive for Democrats who spent heavily trying to flip the seats. Longtime Republican

Senator Curtis King, who has been a significant figure in labor and transportation issues, moved to the district to run again.

Moderate Democrat Rep. Larry Springer also fended off a strong left-leaning challenge and was re-elected. Known for his business-friendly stance, Springer serves as Deputy Majority Leader for the House Democratic Caucus and is a key liaison with the business community.

Congress

All incumbents are leading in early results, but two of Washington's congressional seats will see new members due to open seats:

- 3rd Congressional District:** Incumbent Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (D) leads challenger Joe Kent (R) by 11,997 votes.
- 4th Congressional District:** Incumbent Dan Newhouse (R) leads Jerrod Sessler (R) by 7,477 votes.
- 5th Congressional District:** Former State Senator and current Spokane Treasurer Michael Baumgartner (R) won by 63,657 votes, replacing retiring Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers.
- 6th Congressional District:** State Senator Emily Randall defeated Drew MacEwen with 57.28% of the vote, prompting a forthcoming appointment and special election to fill Randall's state senate seat.

2025 WIDE Convention Relocates to Spokane

The 2025 WIDE

Convention will take place June 18–20 at the Davenport Grand Hotel in downtown Spokane, marking the first venue change in 16 years. Based on attendee surveys expressing interest in a new location, the Convention is shifting from its long-standing Suncadia setting. The new downtown venue offers more opportunities for vendors and private events, with lower costs than Suncadia. The 2025 schedule will shift to a Wednesday-to-Friday format, and organizers are eager for feedback on this new experience. Be sure to mark your calendars!

