

# Toolkit

## ADVOCATING FOR PUBLIC HIGHER ED

### Who should I contact, why, and how?

The priority is to encourage our legislators to advocate and vote for a state budget that protects funding for 4-year public higher education in WA state, which Gov. Ferguson has indicated he intends to cut. With both House and Senate Democrats indicating a push for revenue instead of cuts in their budgets, now is the time to tell them that we need higher education included in that vision!

We recommend focusing on your local state representatives. You can find yours by searching your address [here](#). Common representative districts are also listed below. You can contact representatives via email or phone. We recommend doing both.

#### 40th District\*

##### *State Representatives*

Debra Lekanoff  
(360) 786-7800  
[Email Debra](#)

Alex Ramel  
(360) 786-7970  
[Email Alex](#)

##### *State Senator*

Liz Lovelett  
(360) 786-7678  
[Email Liz](#)

#### 42nd District

##### *State Representatives*

Alicia Rule  
(360) 786-7980  
[Email Alicia](#)

Joe Timmons  
(360) 786-7854  
[Email Joe](#)

##### *State Senator*

Sharon Shewmake  
(360) 786-7682  
[Email Sharon](#)

\*Western is in this district.

from **UFW**

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### What should I say?

Share your name and what you teach.

The best thing you can do is speak directly to how such cuts would impact you and your students. Think practically about what a 3-15% cut to your daily resources might look like and talk about that impact.

This messaging is most effective when it's personal, rooted in your experience and expertise.

### What is the goal?

To put pressure on legislators from their constituents to stand up for funding public higher education in a time when it's under attack on the national stage.

To give legislators particular stories, examples, and reasons why supporting this funding and rejecting cuts is essential to the broader health and vision for the state of Washington.

### Some Suggested Talking Points

- In its constitution, WA notes education as the “paramount duty” of the state. This should include public higher education. K-12, technical and community colleges, and public 4-year universities are part of an interrelated ecosystem not individual parts that can be separated.
- WWU already receives the least state funding *per student* of any higher ed institution in the state, including tech and community colleges. Despite this, we have high enrollment and excellent retention and graduation rates.
- Public higher education not only provides low-barrier high-quality education to students but also contributes to communities more broadly. Many of our students stay in WA and go into the public sector.
- At a time when higher education is under attack at the federal level, our state leaders should be supporting our work.

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## **How can I stay updated?**

[The Stand, news outlet for the Washington State Labor Council \(WSLC\)](#)

[AFT-WA, includes sign-up for weekly newsletter](#)

[WEA Newsletter and Legislative Updates](#)

[AAUP News and Updates](#)

[Cascade PBS, local long-form public interest news source](#)

## **How can I get involved?**

- Keep an eye out for news on actions from WEA / AFT-WA / UFWS in the coming weeks.
- Attend UFWW trainings in the Spring Quarter on Know Your Labor Rights, Building Union Power, and more (dates to come).
- Consider serving at the local or state level in labor organizing, including with UFWW and AFT-WA.
- Stay updated on what's going on in your community as well as on the national level.