

# 2010 SURVEY OF 18+ REGISTERED VOTERS IN WASHINGTON ABOUT GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND THE STATE BUDGET



AARP's Washington State Office, in response to its commitment to protect important services for all state residents, commissioned this survey to explore the views of its 18+ registered voters about the importance of maintaining state services and ways to balance the state budget.

These results are based on a telephone survey, fielded November 19 through December 3, 2010 of 18+ registered voters in the state of Washington. A total of 803 interviews were completed yielding a sampling error of  $\pm 3.5$  percent.

A weighted, annotated survey of responses begins on page 2, and detailed methodology is on page 13.

## SURVEY-IN-BRIEF

- ❖ **18+ Washington registered voters believe that funding for all state services must be maintained—K through 12 education, public safety and local government aid top the list of services.**
  - ✓ 85 percent say it is extremely or very important to maintain funding for K-12 education. About seven in ten believe maintaining funding for public safety (73%) and local government aid (70%) is extremely or very important.
  - ✓ Just over two-thirds believe it is important to maintain funding for transportation (68%) and public colleges and universities (67%).
  - ✓ More than six in ten believe it is extremely or very important that funding be maintained for services that allow older people to stay in their homes such as meals on wheels and transportation (64%) and assistance with activities of daily living (62%). Six in ten also believe funding should be maintained for alternative housing arrangements such as adult family homes or assisted living (62%).
  
- ❖ **Nearly all 18+ Washington registered voters are aware that the state has a budget imbalance and many believe that new revenue sources must be found to mitigate or avoid cuts to state services.**
  - ✓ 92 percent know there is a budget deficit in Washington.
  - ✓ 45 percent say the state needs to cut services AND find new ways to raise money to balance the budget. Another 32 percent believe the state needs to find new ways to raise money WITHOUT cutting services.
  
- ❖ **In order to help balance the state budget 18+ Washington registered voters are the most supportive of closing business loopholes and taxing services that are not currently taxed if these revenues were dedicated to health and long-term care services.**
  - ✓ Half or more strongly or somewhat support closing loopholes for businesses (56%) and taxing services that are not currently taxed such as accounting, dry cleaning and legal services (50%).
  - ✓ Fewer strongly or somewhat support taxing goods that are not currently taxed such as candy, soda pop and gum (42%).
  - ✓ 18+ Washington registered voters are the least supportive of raising the sales tax: (32% strongly or somewhat support).

**2010 Washington State Legislative Issues Survey**  
**(Survey Sample: 18+ Registered Voters in Washington)**  
**(N=803, sampling error = ±3.5%)**

**INTRODUCTION/SCREENER**

Hello, this is \_\_\_\_\_ calling from Woelfel Research Inc. an opinion research company. We are not telemarketers and are not trying to sell you anything. We would like to find out your opinions on some important legislative issues in the state of Washington. Your views are important and we would greatly appreciate your participation. All your responses will be kept entirely confidential.

**Screening Questions**

S1. What is your age as of your last birthday? [IN YEARS] \_\_\_\_\_ [RECORD ACTUAL AGE AND USE THE AGE GROUPS BELOW TO KEEP TRACK OF HOW MANY RESPONDENTS WE ARE GETTING IN EACH GROUP]

- 1) 18-49
- 2) 50-64
- 3) 65 or older
- 4) [DO NOT READ] Under 18 [ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE 18 OR OLDER AND REPEAT S1. IF NO ONE 18 OR OLDER, TERMINATE]
- 5) [DO NOT READ] Refused [TERMINATE]

S2. And just to confirm, are you a resident of Washington state?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No [TERMINATE]

S3. Are you registered to vote in Washington state?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No [ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE IN HOUSEHOLD WHO IS REGISTERED AND REPEAT S1. IF NO ONE IS REGISTERED TO VOTE, TERMINATE.]

## Main Questionnaire

Q1. The state of Washington provides many services for its residents. Now I would like to ask your opinion on what services are important to you.

How important is it to you for Washington state to maintain current levels of funding for [INSERT, READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS A THROUGH I]. Would you say it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important, not at all important, don't know [DO NOT READ] or not at all important?

		Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know [DO NOT READ]	REF [DO NOT READ]
a.	Home care services that allow people to stay in their own home such as meals on wheels and transportation	22%	42%	25%	6%	3%	1%	<.5%
b.	Home care services that allow people to stay in their own home such as assistance with daily activities like getting dressed, bathing and preparing meals	23%	38%	25%	8%	3%	1%	1%
c.	Services that provide relief for caregivers such as adult day care and respite care	18%	38%	31%	6%	5%	2%	<.5%
d.	Housing arrangements for people who can no longer live in their own homes such as adult family homes, boarding homes and assisted living facilities	22%	40%	27%	6%	3%	2%	<.5%
e.	Education for K through 12 students	47%	37%	9%	2%	3%	1%	0%
f.	Washington public colleges and universities	24%	43%	24%	3%	5%	1%	<.5%
g.	Public safety including courts and prisons	28%	45%	20%	3%	3%	2%	<.5%

Q1. continued

		Extremely important	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not at all important	Don't know [DO NOT READ]	REF [DO NOT READ]
h.	Transportation, construction and maintenance for roads, bridges, and mass transit	23%	45%	24%	5%	2%	1%	<.5%
i.	Local government aid to support fire and police, parks and recreation and senior centers	28%	43%	22%	4%	2%	1%	1%

Q2. How much have you seen, heard or read about Washington's state budget in the last year? Would you say you have seen, read or heard a lot, a little or nothing at all about the Washington's state budget?

58%	A lot
37%	A little
5%	Nothing at all
1%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
0%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q3. Do you know that the state of Washington currently has a budget deficit?

92%	Yes
8%	No
1%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
0%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

The state of Washington is facing difficult economic choices as the Governor and State Legislators try to balance the state budget. When the Washington state legislature convenes in January 2011 it will be facing a budget shortfall estimated to be between \$4 billion and \$6 billion. There are three major approaches to balancing the budget: cutting current services, increasing state revenues, or a combination of service cuts and revenue increases.

Q4. Please tell me how strongly you support or oppose the following ways to raise money if the money were to be dedicated to health and long-term care services in the state of Washington. How strongly do you support or oppose [INSERT, READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS A THROUGH D] in order to avoid cuts to health and long-term care services? Do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose?

		Strongly support	Somewhat support	Neither support nor oppose	Somewhat oppose	Strongly oppose	Don't know [DO NOT READ]	REF [DO NOT READ]
a.	An incremental increase in the state sales tax [THE CURRENT SALES TAX IN WASHINGTON STATE IS 6.5% IN CASE RESPONDENTS ASK]	13%	19%	9%	13%	43%	3%	<.5%
b.	Closing loopholes for certain businesses	36%	20%	13%	6%	10%	13%	2%
c.	Taxing services that are not currently taxed such as accounting services, lawyers, and dry cleaning services	25%	25%	11%	14%	24%	2%	<.5%
d.	Taxing goods that are not currently taxed such as candy, soda pop, gum and other processed foods	26%	16%	5%	10%	41%	2%	1%

Q5. Which of the following statements best represents your opinion on how the Governor and State Legislators should go about balancing the state budget in Washington? [READ AND ROTATE STATEMENTS A AND B. ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER. ALWAYS READ STATEMENT C LAST.].

16%	Washington state should cut state services without finding new ways to raise money
32%	Washington state should find new ways to raise money without cutting state services
45%	Washington state needs to do both, cut state services and find new ways to raise money [ALWAYS READ LAST]
6%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
2%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about the recent political campaigns in the state of Washington.

Q6. How much have you seen, heard or read about the most recent election campaigns in Washington state? Would you say you have seen, read or heard a lot, a little or nothing at all about these campaigns?

68%	A lot
25%	A little
6%	Nothing at all [SKIP TO Q9]
<.5%	Don't know [DO NOT READ] [SKIP TO Q9]
0%	Refused [DO NOT READ] [SKIP TO Q9]

Q7. Which of the following statements best describes what you thought about the television, radio, and print advertisements on the most recent election campaigns in Washington state? [READ AND ROTATE STATEMENTS A AND B. ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER.]

79%	The main point of the ads were to attack a political opponent rather than provide information about the candidate and his or her position on the issues
7%	The main point of the ads were to provide information about the candidate and his or her position on the issues rather than attack a political opponent
9%	There was a mix of ads as some were attacks on political opponents and some provided information about the candidates and their positions on the issues [DO NOT READ]
1%	Other [DO NOT READ]
3%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q8. As you think about television, radio and print advertisements you saw during the most recent election campaigns how informative would you say these ads were about [INSERT, READ AND RANDOMIZE ITEMS A THROUGH C]? Were the ads extremely informative, very informative, somewhat informative, not very informative, not at all informative?

		Extremely informative	Very informative	Somewhat informative	Not very informative	Not at all informative	Don't know [DO NOT READ]	REF [DO NOT READ]
a.	The ballot initiatives	2%	14%	38%	25%	17%	4%	0%
b.	The candidates	2%	7%	37%	32%	19%	3%	1%
c.	The candidate's positions on the issues	2%	7%	37%	31%	20%	2%	<.5%

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about health care coverage.

Q9. Which of the following best describes your health care coverage situation? [READ STATEMENTS A THROUGH E. ACCEPT MULTIPLE ANSWERS]

9%	I do not have health care coverage at this time
54%	I have health care coverage through my current or previous employer or my spouse's current or previous employer
11%	I have health care coverage through a plan I bought myself, not through an employer
7%	I have health care coverage through Medicare only
15%	[ASK ONLY IF RESPONDENT HAS MEDICARE COVERAGE] I have health care coverage through Medicare plus a private Medicare supplemental policy
4%	I have health insurance coverage through some other way [DO NOT READ]
1%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
2%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q10. How important is it to you to have access to affordable health care coverage? Would you say it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

66%	Extremely important
22%	Very important
8%	Somewhat important
2%	Not very important
1%	Not at all important
1%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
<.5%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q11. Have you or someone you know lost health care coverage in the last 12 months?

43%	Yes
55%	No
2%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
0%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

Q12. The state of Washington is establishing a health care insurance exchange as part of the new health care reform law. This exchange will be a one stop shopping market place where individuals and small businesses can go to purchase health care insurance and easily compare the cost and benefits of different policies. There will be help available for those individuals who cannot afford to buy health care insurance through the exchange.

How strongly do you support or oppose the creation of a health insurance exchange that will help Washington state residents have access to affordable health care coverage? Do you strongly support, somewhat support, neither support nor oppose, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose?

44%	Strongly support
21%	Somewhat support
13%	Neither support nor oppose
4%	Somewhat oppose
12%	Strongly oppose
6%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

[ASK QUESTION 13 ONLY OF RESPONDENTS AGE 45 AND OLDER] Now I would like to ask you a question about Medicare.

Q13. Thinking about Medicare fraud, would you say that Medicare fraud [INSERT, READ AND RANDOMIZE STATEMENTS A THROUGH C]?

64%	Is a major problem that adds substantially to the cost of the program
21%	Is a minor problem that adds only a little to the cost of the program
3%	Is not a problem
13%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

[ASK ALL RESPONDENTS]

Now I would like to ask you a few questions about Social Security.

Q14. How important is it to you that Social Security is there for future generations? Would you say it is extremely important, very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important?

58%	Extremely important
25%	Very important
9%	Somewhat important
3%	Not very important
3%	Not at all important
2%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
<.5%	Refused [DO NOT READ]



Q15. Social Security is projected to run a funding imbalance in the future. Closing this imbalance means raising taxes, cutting benefits, or a combination of the two. Most likely, people in or near retirement would be excluded from benefit cuts. Which of the following statements best represents your opinion on how the Federal Government should preserve Social Security for future generations? [READ AND ROTATE STATEMENTS A AND B. ACCEPT ONLY ONE ANSWER. ALWAYS READ STATEMENT C LAST.]

13%	The Federal Government should reduce benefits to future Social Security recipients
21%	The Federal Government should increase taxes
29%	The Federal Government needs to do both, reduce Social Security benefits for future recipients and increase taxes [ALWAYS READ LAST]
18%	None of the above/Do not like any of these options [DO NOT READ]
3%	Leave things as they are [DO NOT READ]
7%	Other [DO NOT READ]
8%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
2%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

### Demographics

The following questions are for classification purposes only and will be kept entirely confidential.

D1. RECORD RESPONDENT'S GENDER. ASK ONLY IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY: "To ensure it is recorded accurately, could you please state your gender?"

47%	Male
53%	Female

D2. What is your age as of your last birthday? [IN YEARS]

49%	18-49
35%	50-64
16%	65 or older

D3. What is your current marital status? Are you.....[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

60%	Married
7%	Not married, living with your partner or significant other
1%	Separated
9%	Divorced
7%	Widowed
15%	Or are you currently single <u>and</u> never married
<.5%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D4. [IF S1=age 50 or older and D2=1, ASK “Are you or your spouse currently a member of A-A-R-P?” IF S1=age 50 or older and D2=2, ASK “Are you or your partner currently a member of A-A-R-P?” IF S1=age 50 or older and D2=something else, ASK “Are you currently a member of A-A-R-P?”

49%	Yes
49%	No
1%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D5. What is the highest level of education that you completed? [READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]

4%	0 to 12 <sup>th</sup> grade, but with no diploma
20%	High school graduate or equivalent
17%	Post high school education, but with no degree
16%	2 year degree
23%	4 year degree
7%	Post graduate study, but with no degree
13%	Graduate or professional degree
0%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D6. Which of the following best describes your current employment status? [READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]

7%	Self-employed full-time
4%	Self-employed part-time
32%	Employed full-time
12%	Employed part-time
23%	Retired and not working at all
8%	Unemployed and looking for work
13%	Or are you not in the labor force for other reasons
0%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D7. Are you of Hispanic, Spanish, or Latino origin or descent?

5%	Yes
93%	No
<.5%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D8. What is your race? Are you....[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

86%	White or Caucasian
3%	Black or African American
1%	Native American or Alaskan Native
3%	Asian
<.5%	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
5%	Or are you some other race? [Please Specify: _____]
1%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
2%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D9. Thinking about your state elections for Washington Governor and Legislators in the last 10 years, which of the following best describes your voting behavior? Would you say you vote always, most of the time, about half of the time, seldom, or would you say you never vote [READ ONLY FOR RESPONDENTS AGES 18 to 22] or were you not eligible to vote in the last election?

67%	Always
21%	Most of the time
5%	About half of the time
4%	Seldom
2%	Never
0%	Not eligible to vote in the last election [READ ONLY FOR RESPONDENTS AGES 18 to 22]
<.5%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D10. [ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO WERE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN QUESTION D8] Some people intend to vote, but then something comes up and they can't. Did you vote in the November 2010 election?

89%	Yes
10%	No
<.5%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
1%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D11. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

27%	Democrat
20%	Republican
33%	Independent
12%	Other
3%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
5%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

D12. What is your 5-digit zip code? \_\_\_\_ \_ \_\_\_\_ \_ \_\_\_\_ \_

D13. We realize income is a private matter and so rather than ask you anything specific about your income, I'd like to ask you to please stop me when I get to the category that your includes your household's income before taxes in 2009. Was it...[READ EACH ANSWER CATEGORY]?

6%	Less than \$10,000
8%	\$10,000 to less than \$20,000
11%	\$20,000 to less than \$35,000
12%	\$35,000 to less than \$50,000
7%	\$50,000 to less than \$60,000
11%	\$60,000 to less than \$75,000
13%	\$75,000 to less than \$100,000
16%	\$100,000 or more
4%	Don't know [DO NOT READ]
12%	Refused [DO NOT READ]

## Methodology

AARP Washington commissioned a research study to explore the opinions of 18+ registered voters in the state about state services, balancing the state budget, affordable health care coverage, Medicare Fraud and Social Security solvency. Woelfel Research Inc. conducted this telephone survey between November 19, 2010 and December 3, 2010, and a total of 803 interviews were completed. A sample of this size has a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percent at a 95 percent confidence level. Survey responses were weighted to reflect the actual distribution of age and gender of 18+ registered voters in Washington. Interviewing was completed with a final response rate of 42 percent, cooperation rate of 91 percent, and refusal rate of 7 percent. The response, cooperation, and refusal rates were calculated according to AAPOR standards RR3, CCOP3, REF3.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice, and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce *AARP The Magazine*, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.7 million readers; *AARP Bulletin*, the go-to news source for AARP's millions of members and Americans 50+; *AARP VIVA*, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

State Research brings the right knowledge at the right time to our state and national partners in support of their efforts to improve the lives of people age 50+. State Research consultants provide strategic insights and actionable research to attain measurable state and national outcomes.

The views expressed herein are for information, debate, and discussion, and do not necessarily represent official policies of AARP.



**AARP**

**Research and Strategic Analysis**

**For more information, please contact Joanne Binette at:**

**202.434.6303 or e-mail [jbinette@aarp.org](mailto:jbinette@aarp.org)**