

## OneAmerica 2017 Legislative Agenda

On Monday, January 9<sup>th</sup>, the Washington State legislature resumes its work in Olympia for the 2017 Legislative Session. 2017 promises to be a contentious year. Razor-thin margins in both the House and the Senate will make it harder for both chambers to agree on a budget that fully funds public education and mental health services without unfairly increasing the tax burden on low-income Washingtonians.

Nationally and locally, our communities are under attack. The November election ushered in a wave of hate crimes and federal policy changes are likely to harm immigrant communities. We need strong leadership from our allies in State government to defend the rights of immigrants and refugees. OneAmerica's advocacy team will work tirelessly on several priority bills, but we need your voice too. Please [join our email list](#) for information about opportunities to speak directly to your legislators about issues that affect you.

We will update this page when bill numbers are available so that you can track their progress throughout session:

### Expand Access to Citizenship

Each year, the **Washington New Americans Program** brings free naturalization services to thousands of the more than 263,000 legal permanent residents in the state who are eligible to naturalize but face economic barriers to doing so. Without this program, many legal permanent residents would have to pay steep attorneys' fees to apply for citizenship – an obstacle that effectively deters many from ever becoming full members of our democracy. **Fund the Washington New Americans Program at \$1,000,000 per year (\$2m/biennium).**

### Expand Dual Language Education

Dual Language education is transforming our schools and improving outcomes for students in Washington State. With the number of dual language classrooms growing each school year, the demand for dual language programs outpaces the number of seats available. Research shows that dual language programs are the best way to increase student achievement for English language learners, while also improving education outcomes for their peers who speak only English. **Pass Dual Language Funding to invest in expanding dual language programming to close the opportunity gap and grow our bilingual workforce.**

### Protect Every Vote

Every Washingtonian should have the opportunity to have their voice heard in local democracy, but in too many cities and school districts across Washington this right isn't being protected. The **Washington Voting Rights Act** (WVRA) improves our local elections process and promotes justice and freedom by giving every voter a fair chance to elect leaders of their choice. At the same time, the WVRA empowers local governments to avoid costly litigation under the federal Voting Rights Act by creating a collaborative process to ensure every vote is protected and that every community is fairly represented. **Pass the Washington Voting Rights Act to protect every vote in Washington State.**

### Take Equitable Action on Climate Change

Climate change threatens Washington State's communities, our economy, and our natural resources, and State leadership is more important now than ever. Low-income communities of color often bear the brunt

of pollution that contributes to a changing climate and disproportionately suffer from negative health outcomes as a result. Washington State has the opportunity to put a price on pollution and reinvest the proceeds in solutions that work for everyone, an equitable transition for workers, and cost relief for low-income earners. **Pass a climate bill to act equitably on climate change.**

### Raise Progressive Revenue

OneAmerica supports reforming our revenue system to ensure the state meets the needs of its communities. No other state in the country puts more of the responsibility for funding basic services on the backs of low- and moderate-income residents than Washington State, with our lowest income taxpayers paying six times the percentage of their income in taxes as our wealthiest residents. OneAmerica supports a fair, progressive revenue package that requires our wealthiest citizens to pay their fair share and reduces the burden on low- and moderate-income Washingtonians.

#### ONEAMERICA ALSO SUPPORTS:

- Reducing avoidable exposure to pesticides
- Reforming Legal Financial Obligations
- Maintaining protections against predatory lending
- Translating emergency notifications

If you're interested in receiving updates throughout legislative session, [join our email list](#).