

Answering the naysayers

SOS's budget proposals may be dismissed by some as unrealistic or unattainable. Here are answers to frequent charges:

People should be prepared for losses, but you're aiming for perfection.

If we don't demand what we need, rather than what politicians will support, we'll end up with nothing – right where we started. Existing laws *can* be changed when enough people come together with strong demands. If lawmakers and business owners don't give in, we will have built a force that can take more drastic measures – like nationalizing the banks!

Won't businesses leave the state if these tax measures are passed?

Not likely. In 45 other states, they'd have to pay a tax on corporate profits.

What about the state's contractual obligations to banks? Legislators make their own choices about what laws and contracts to observe. They didn't mind overriding state employees' ratified contract. They also ignored two voter-passed initiatives on teacher pay raises and class sizes.

Business will just pass the charges on to consumers. They can't charge more than we can or will pay.



Get involved with Sisters Organize for Survival,
a campaign of Radical Women.

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It's time to *Flip the Funding*

Tax the 1% – stop stealing from the needy!

As Costco, Microsoft, and Bank of America bask in their billions of profits, 2,000 single moms in Washington are struggling with how they and their kids will survive if they are kicked off the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program as proposed in the governor's budget. Fifty-five thousand low-income people are worrying about losing health coverage due to elimination of Basic Health and Disability Lifeline.



More than 11,000 people are facing a hungry winter if state food assistance is halted. A thousand families will lose services that allow them to keep loved ones with developmental disabilities at home. Two state hospital wards for people with severe dementia and brain injury will be closed. Cuts in aid that allow women to escape violent home situations may mean some women will die in preventable tragedies. And 4,000 low-income children will lose the childcare subsidies that allow their parents to work.

These ghastly visions are only a few of the cost-cutting measures in Governor Gregoire's horrific budget proposal.

SOS proposes:

**Revoke all B&O tax "business incentive" exemptions
= \$500 million for 1 year**

This amount would preserve and double the budget for all health services on the chopping block, including Basic Health, Disability Lifeline, and medical interpreters.

Why should so many suffer to protect the profits of a few? Yet protecting the wealthy is exactly what our lawmakers – both Democrats and Republicans – are doing while they pile more and more cuts and higher and higher sales taxes on the rest of us.

**SOS proposes:
Cancel interest payments on the
state's debt for one year
= \$1 billion**

This savings is twice as much as is needed to cover all proposed cuts to education at all levels from pre-school through college. Banks caused the crisis. We don't owe them a penny.

another \$2 billion from state programs. These cuts will literally drive the weakest members of society out on the streets. We can't and won't take any more cuts! But we also won't accept putting the burden of taxation on those who are already suffering or just squeaking by.

No sales tax, no gas tax!

Politicians are looking for low-risk solutions – imposing more taxes on those who are already hit hardest. Washington's tax system is the most regressive in the country: forcing the poorest 20% to pay 17.3% of their income in taxes, while the wealthiest 1% pay only 2.6%. Yet this state has some of the world's richest corporations and individuals. The state must tax the rich, not squeeze the poor and workers any more.

Both Democrats and Republicans are hiding behind the passage last year of Initiative 1053, which required a 2/3 legislative majority to raise taxes. Lawmakers have refused to address the fact that ending special tax privileges isn't a tax increase, it is a standardization of existing rates.

**SOS proposes:
Defund all military-related
functions of the Washington
National Guard
= \$20 million for 1 year**

Enough to cover all proposed cuts to chemical dependency programs.

In the last three years, \$10.5 billion has been cut from state services, jobs and education. More and more people are on the edge of destitution. Public workers have been hit with layoffs, reduced hours and chopped benefits. Family members are under unbearable pressure to fill the burden of care.

Now Governor Gregoire and the legislature are preparing to hack

**SOS proposes:
Institute a windfall profits tax
on oil companies
= \$600 million for 1 year**

Revenue is double what is needed to cover all proposed cuts to programs for children, the developmentally disabled, longterm care, and Assistance for Needy Families.

Voters didn't intend to preserve special tax loopholes for the rich. They passed the initiative because they are sick of a system that is founded on the regressive sales tax. Yet various sales tax increases are virtually the only remedies

being considered.

Governor Gregoire's proposed referendum on increasing the sales tax – which would cover a mere quarter of the budget gap – will just diffuse responsibility for atrocious budget cuts. Voters will receive the guilt-laden message that it's their job to pay for the economic meltdown. Meanwhile, the banks and corporations that caused the crisis through their exploitation of workers and risky practices are reaping record profits.

The rich did not get to be where they are because they are superior individuals.

We operate the machines, pave the roads, teach the skills, and feed the workforce that allows them to make their billions. In return they set up a tax system that lets them go scot-free while everyone else subsidizes them. We don't need to be grateful to them for providing jobs – truth is, without workers they wouldn't exist!



Real alternatives can be achieved through united action

The movement to preserve jobs and the social safety net must demand real solutions – not bow to the pressure to accept any bad deal that's offered.

How can we force the legislature to act in the interests of the people instead of protecting their corporate patrons? By making lawmakers feel our pain through massive protests, mobilizations and a real general strike that stops profits at their source – by withholding our labor – until our demands are met.

**SOS proposes:
End U.S. wars and redirect funds
to the states
= \$7.34 billion for WA for 1 year**

This is slightly less than the full amount of lost state revenue since the start of the Great Recession. Need we say more?

What's needed is a strong united front of unions and community groups, led by and acting in the interests of the most oppressed. With our combined strength, we can force the changes needed for a more humane system.

Working and poor people pay taxes – we want the rich to start paying theirs! We do the work – they can't survive without us. But we can live much better if we don't have them free-loading on us!