

SB 5049 - DIGEST

Finds that Washington has a unique tax structure that relies heavily on property and sales taxes to fund a host of services for its citizens. Education, health care, transportation projects, the criminal justice system, state parks, and social programs are paid for by state taxes. Many citizens do not fully understand how the budget process works, how all moneys are raised, and why there never seems to be enough revenue. Creating opportunities for citizens to participate in the process can counter negative public perceptions about the budget process.

Declares an intent to establish a committee, made up of ordinary citizens, to study the state's fiscal resources, structure, and needs.

Directs the Washington state institute for public policy to facilitate and staff a group of Washington citizens to become the committee on Washington's finances.

Directs the staff of the office of financial management, the department of revenue, the house of representatives, and the senate to assist the committee on Washington's finances as the committee deems desirable.

Requires the committee to hold meetings in at least four areas outside the central Puget Sound region to receive information and feedback from Washington's citizens. These meetings must be facilitated by the Washington state institute for public policy.

Declares that the purpose of the study is to determine the best ways to identify and fund the necessary services for Washington's citizens.

Requires the committee to present a final report of the findings of the study and the alternatives developed by the committee to the ways and means committee in the senate and the finance committee in the house of representatives by November 30, 2010. Additionally, the findings of the study must be announced to the public via press release and also be made available to the public via the internet.

Expires November 30, 2010.