

2021 FEDERAL AGENDA



GREATER
SPOKANE
inc.

WORKING TOGETHER

Gathered from leaders and employers in business, education, health care, local and county governments and Fairchild Air Force Base, GSI's 2021 Federal Agenda vocalizes prioritized issues for our region.

Based on feedback from GSI's members, Board of Trustees, GSI's Public Policy Council, our region must focus on a targeted list of priority employer issues that both support our region's economic development priorities and impact our region's ability to sustain a healthy business climate. As a result, GSI categorizes its agenda into three parts: **DRIVE**, **PARTNER**, and **SUPPORT**.

IMPACTS OF COVID-19

2021's federal agenda focuses first and foremost on public health and economic recovery. This year's agenda reflects issues most associated with these two priorities under our **DRIVE** agenda.

GSI understands the need to continue momentum on non-COVID-related policy issues and will **PARTNER** and **SUPPORT** issues that are important to sustain the needs of our community.

Support diversity, equity, and inclusion investment proposals and programming for equitable and inclusive regional recovery to ensure that historically disadvantaged businesses and underserved and underrepresented groups have an equal opportunity to achieve economic recovery and prosperity.

DRIVE

RECOVERY PRIORITIES

DRIVE issues are GSI's top priorities, which means GSI – along with its members and Board of Trustees – will drive lobbying, dialogue, advocacy, tracking, testimony, messaging and a variety of other support, including letter generation, mobilization, calls and in-person meetings with legislators.

COVID PANDEMIC RELIEF & VACCINATIONS

- Support economic recovery and allocate funding on hardest-hit sectors.
- Support more assistance to the healthcare sector, specifically targeting adequate resources for delivery of COVID vaccines to underserved populations.
- Provide limited liability relief for employers from COVID lawsuits, if/when employers protect their employees by following applicable COVID safety protocols.

BROADBAND

- Significantly expand federal assistance to build out reliable and high-speed connectivity targeted to underserved communities, schools (specifically focused on K-12, vocational education, and community colleges), healthcare clinics, and rural communities.
- Support the Broadband Data Improvement Act, which revamps the broadband mapping process so federal agencies and private industry can target enhancements to areas most in need to bridge the digital divide in rural communities.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support a long overdue comprehensive Transportation and Infrastructure bill that upgrades all transportation modes, including roadways, railways, transit, waterways, aviation, and intermodal as well as multimodal with freight mobility in mind.

TRADE & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Relieve tariffs, especially with China, which adversely affect strong trade partnerships with Washington State's agriculture and other industries.
- Support a return to multi-lateral trade agreements, especially with Pacific Rim countries, that open markets for Washington State farmers and manufacturing.
- Expand investments in Opportunity Zones, which encourage economic activity and job creation in low-income/high unemployment areas.

HEALTHCARE & LIFE SCIENCE

- Reform the graduate medical education (GME) program so that there are more GME slots for communities like Spokane. Expand funding for residency programs in the critical areas of primary care, family medicine, and mental health.
- Continue funding GME so it is aligned with support for reauthorization of HRSA funding.
- Invest in undergraduate and graduate research and support programs that allow all students, especially those underrepresented populations, to engage in meaningful and applied research.



PARTNER

PARTNER issues are the issues being driven by other organizations that align directly with GSI's mission and understanding of economic development. We will work with these organizations, providing tracking and messaging for community leaders engaging directly on these topics.

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

- Increase funding for the federal BUILD, INFRA and other grants so that important projects for the Spokane region can move forward, such as:
 - The SR 27 and BNSF Rail freight corridor grade separation and reconstruction of the intersection at SR 27 and SR 290.
 - Support federal funding for Spokane Valley and Spokane County's shared efforts to improve and reconstruct the Bigelow-Sullivan corridor.
 - Improve City of Spokane infrastructure to connect with the future North Spokane Corridor to promote economic development in Northeast Spokane.
 - Secure funding for Spokane Valley River Loop Trail, benefiting Spokane County and the cities of Spokane, Spokane Valley and Liberty Lake with bike-pedestrian connections from Cheney to Liberty Lake.
 - Support the package of eleven transportation and infrastructure projects submitted to Senate by Spokane County.
 - Support funding for the electrification of transit fleets and expand capital investment grant funding for bus rapid transit projects.
- Reform and streamline the federal permitting process for infrastructure projects to balance environmental protections while accelerating project reviews and making the process more cost-effective.
- Support the funding request by Spokane Airports for its Phase 2 terminal renovation and expansion project.
- Provide full funding for the TSA Law Enforcement Officer Reimbursement program.

HOUSING

- Invest in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and additional, innovative incentives for builders and developers to create all types of housing, including specifically low-income, affordable, and workforce housing.

HIGHER ED & WORKFORCE

- Reauthorize and expand the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to strengthen our public workforce system and target youth and those facing significant barriers to sustainable employment.
- Reform the agricultural worker program, such as the H-2A program, to ensure an adequate workforce for our farmers and protection for the workers.
- Reauthorize the Higher Education Act and target programs that invest directly in students (especially those from underserved communities and facing learning challenges), such as Pell Grants, supplemental education opportunity grants, federal work study programs, TRIO and GEAR UP programs, and STEM education.

HEALTHCARE & LIFE SCIENCES

- Long-term extension of funding for the Community Health Center Fund, the Teaching Health Centers Program, and the National Health Service Corps.
- Support significant investment for the National Institute of Health (NIH) and for the National Science Foundation (NSF) in FY2022. Together, these agencies fund critical research and play an important role in improving the health and lives of the public locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally.
- Prioritize investments in mental and behavioral health services, particularly for our underserved and rural populations.
- Support legislative and non-legislative means to further expand access to telehealth, including increasing reimbursement for providing telehealth services.

SUPPORT

SUPPORT issues are broadly defined as community issues or request. We care deeply about these issues and provide messaging and advocacy support when asked, taking direction from community members on needed support.

CHILD CARE & K-12 EDUCATION

- Support expansion and funding for the Child Care for Working Families Act so low and moderate-income families can have access to affordable childcare.
- Support increased funding for Head Start and Early Head Start programs, especially for low-income and underserved communities.
- Increase federal funding and support for K-12 school safety programs and needed capital infrastructure.

WORKFORCE

- Fund and support Career and Technical Education and apprenticeship programs to develop work-based learning opportunities.
- Support new and innovative ways to recruit and retain skilled workers, especially in the transportation, information technology, construction, and manufacturing sectors.

ENERGY

- Support hydropower as a clean, renewable resource and oppose efforts to breach large dams in the Pacific Northwest (such as the lower Snake River dams).
- Investment to modernize the power grid to improve its reliability and resiliency with new technologies and additional transmission capacity.
- Support federal programs, research, resources, and incentives that can accelerate Spokane's transition to clean energy and reduced CO2 emissions, including: the electrification of transportation (auto and buses); improved energy efficiency of buildings and infrastructure; and the optimization of smart building technologies, use of sustainable materials, and grid interaction to engineer zero carbon buildings (such as the South Landing project).

MILITARY AFFAIRS

- Support modernization and recapitalization of facilities through MILCON to include Aircraft parts warehouse expansion and SERE Water Survival Training Facility.
- Provide certification exemptions for professional and military spouses to allow for easier entrance to the workforce when moving around the U.S.
- Support efforts to develop housing near FAFB, to house new FAFB crew moving to the area in support of the newest missions at FAFB.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

GREATER SPOKANE INC. is the Spokane region's business development organization. GSI works year-round with business, civic, and community partners to provide a **GREATER VOICE** on behalf of employers and the community at the local, state, and federal level.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS



Patty Murray
US Senator (D)



Maria Cantwell
US Senator (D)



Suzan DelBene
1st District
US House of
Representatives (D)



Rick Larsen
2nd District
US House of
Representatives (D)



Jaime Herrera Beutler
3rd District
US House of
Representatives (R)



Dan Newhouse
4th District
US House of
Representatives (R)



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
5th District
US House of
Representatives (R)



Derek Kilmer
6th District
US House of
Representatives (D)



Pramila Jayapal
7th District
US House of
Representatives (D)



Kim Schrier
8th District
US House of
Representatives (D)



Adam Smith
9th District
US House of
Representatives (D)



Marilyn Strickland
10th District
US House of
Representatives (D)

