Governor Chris Gregoire

Listening to You

Spokane ◆ Vancouver ◆ Pasco ◆ Puyallup ◆ Bellevue ◆ Seattle ◆ Everett

This summer Governor Gregoire and her senior staff are visiting several communities across the state, engaging citizens in a meaningful dialogue about state government's priorities, performance and accountability. She is reaching out beyond the lobbyists and special interests who traditionally have had the most access to state government decision makers. As she puts it,

"We can't set the state's priorities alone in Olympia. I am reaching out to hear directly from the citizens, so they can help me set priorities and identify ways to measure whether state government is working better or not."

The citizen engagement process is designed in three tiers to engage citizens in a meaningful dialogue, and to gather information from multiple sources.

1. **Citizen Workshops**: Fifty citizens are selected at random to represent a cross-section of each community. These citizens meet with members of the governor's staff for a three-hour workshop to discuss, design, and prioritize performance measures to track progress in critical services, such as health care, the economy, transportation and education.

2. **Community Leader events**: Community leaders representing a broad spectrum of interests and organizations meet with the governor's senior staff to discuss the priorities developed in the citizen workshops, delving further into the most important issues in that community.

3. **Town Halls**: In an open community forum, Governor Gregoire will ask citizens directly what results they think their state government ought to be accountable for delivering.

Governor Gregoire will use the citizens' ideas to inform state budget development in the fall. She also conducts bi-weekly performance review sessions with agency directors, holding them personally accountable for delivering real results and ensuring that citizens get a good return on their tax dollars.

A final report on the summer's tour will be completed by August 31, 2006.

Spokane Citizen Workshop: Summary Report

Monday, June 26, 2006 at Spokane Falls Community College

Who was at the Spokane Citizens Workshop?

- 55 Citizens, all registered voters who had voted at least once in past 4 elections
- Gender: 50% male, 50% female
- Where from: 35% City of Spokane, 39% other cities, 24% unincorporated Spokane County
- Age Group: 45% were 51-64, 32% were 36-50, 19% were 18-35, and 4% were 65 or older
- Employment: 47% private sector; 17% public sector, 36% not employed or retired

Here's what the citizens in Spokane said they cared most about, in rank order of priority:

1. Economy
2. Health
3. Education
4. Vulnerable children and adults
5. Safety
6. Transportation
7. Natural Resources
8. Culture and Recreation

Overall Comments:

- Show us how we are doing compared to other states. For example, where do we rank on percentage of new businesses that survive?
- Tell us how much you are spending in each area. Also, show us what it costs per prisoner, per student, etc.
- Ask the people who are affected. For example, what do businesses say are the reasons they do (or do not) come to Washington?
- Get agencies to coordinate their interactions with customers. For example, Labor and Industries and Employment Security Department should give small businesses guidelines that match up.
- Thank you for asking our opinion. Surveys often don't ask the right questions – tonight you are asking us, "what are the right questions?"

What *is not* working very well in state government today:

- Unfriendly business climate
- Too much money and attention spent on the west side of the state
- Increased our gas tax, but roads on the east side are worse than ever
- Not fair to make me declare whether I'm a democrat or republican in the primary
- Didn't listen to the will of the people on license tabs – they were $30, now they're over $100 again

What *is* working well in state government today:

- The WASL is increasing school accountability – accountability for teachers, students and parents

Citizens at the forum discussed the six topics on the next page in greater depth, including some ideas for how to measure progress. The table below captures the measures they felt were most important (in bold) as well as some additional measures that they suggested. Measures in *italics* were not brought up by the citizens, but are additional items that we currently track in the state government budget office.

Citizens care about . . .	**We could measure our progress by . . .**
Economy	• **Why do businesses fail or move out of state (top five reasons)?** • **New business survival rate** • **Households above poverty level** • How do we compare to other states? • *Unemployment rate* • *Median hourly wage*
Health	• **Cost of health care to illegal aliens** • **How effective are intervention programs (obesity, smoking)** • **What percentage of the state population is paying for health care?** (compared to how many people receive state subsidized health care) • Emergency room health care – is that the most cost effective? • *Rate of insurance coverage* • *Obesity and tobacco usage rates*

Education	• **Distribution of K-12 education funding** • Graduation rates – from high school and college • Where is the money going in higher education? • How can we evaluate the effectiveness of the WASL? • Percentage of graduates who enter Washington State workforce (vs. leaving the state for better jobs elsewhere) • *Gaps in student achievement between income and ethnic groups* • *Readiness to learn (early childhood learning)* • *Percentage of students prepared to meet workforce needs*
Safety	• **How much are we spending per prisoner, and for what?** • Why does it take so long for emergency response in rural areas? • Monitoring offenders – do they repeat offense after release? • Emphasis on enforcing speed limits; affordability of car insurance • *Property and violent crime rates* • *Traffic fatality and injury rates* • *Readiness to respond to emergencies*
Transportation	• **Distribution of transportation funding (by county, per capita)** • **How much does it cost each citizen for transportation each day?** • Availability and affordability of mass transit • Opportunity to telecommute from rural areas • *Travel times in major corridors* • *Percent of roads and bridges in satisfactory condition*
Natural Resources	• Monitor harvesting and reforestation of our forests • Investment in renewable resources (biofuel, wind and solar power) • Tax incentives for fuel efficient vehicles • Enforce statewide standards for pollution levels across the state • *Percentage of rivers that we can swim and fish in* • *Toxics levels in the environment*

For more information about the Governor's Listening to You Tour, visit
www.governor.wa.gov