

2020 GSBA Legislative Agenda

Washington State Legislative Session



ISSUE

SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Strengthen the voice of LGBTQ-owned small business

- Demand government recognition, inclusion, and utilization of the LGBTBE certification in affirmative action programs and public contracting opportunities

Improve economic inclusion of the LGBTQ community

- Demand the counting of the LGBTQ community in public studies and demographic collection, including disparity studies
- Ensure LGBTQ representation on minority business roundtables

End discrimination against and actively promote full inclusion of the LGBTQ people in all arenas, especially transgender people.

- Support efforts to reform WA Healthcare Authority rules to better reflect medically necessary care
- Support update of the Mental Health Parity Act to remove trans-related exclusions
- Ban panic defenses
- Oppose broad religious exemptions laws used as a pretext for discrimination

Strengthen voice of small business in policymaking process at all levels

- Demand small business be given a seat at the table before decisions are made
- Support the Small Business Bill of Rights
- Insist that impact studies on small business be included in regulatory legislation

Increase funding and support of LGBTQ populations who are particularly underserved, including seniors, those experiencing homelessness, and people with HIV.

- Fund dedicated LGBTQ senior housing
- LGBTQ-specific homeless services funding
- Support the HIV modernization bill and decriminalization efforts as determined by community leaders

Defend the right of all people to have control over their own bodies, including the right to reproductive choice.

- Support comprehensive and inclusive sex education in public schools

Support access to public education for LGBTQ students and students from other underrepresented communities.

- Support LGBTQ curriculum inclusion efforts

Support public mass transit

- Support funding for comprehensive, regional mass transit

Support comprehensive immigration reform at all levels

- Support paths to citizenship for all immigrants

Make our region a more affordable place to live for both residents and small businesses

- Support commercial affordability reforms, such as zoning requirements for small commercial footprints
- Support housing-first approaches
- Support broad-based funding for building additional low-income housing

Ensure that workplaces are free of violence, harassment, and intimidation

Enact systemic, progressive tax reform to address chronic underfunding of critical services, including a reform of the B&O tax on gross receipts

Ensure that workplaces are free of violence, harassment, and intimidation

Support gun control efforts at all scales

Increase state support for tourism, particularly for LGBTQ tourism

2020 GSBA Guiding Principles



As a chamber of commerce by and for the LGBTQ community and its allies, the policy work of GSBA is centered around two main areas: **Civil Rights** and **Economic Prosperity**. With the GSBA Scholarship Fund, **Education** is another important policy area for the organization. GSBA remains a leader in the LGBTQ community as well as in the business community, providing an important and unique voice and perspective.

GSBA's top priorities will always be the areas where LGBTQ civil rights and economic development intersect, where our expertise is the strongest. Due to the diverse needs of a broad membership organization and participation in a variety of coalitions, many other related issues will arise. GSBA's first priority will always be those issues with a particular impact on the LGBTQ community, and will next prioritize based on where our voice is unique, our expertise is relevant, or our affinity is particularly strong. GSBA often works in coalition with allied organizations and communities, and will often sign on in support of their efforts where others are leading the policy fight.

Proud of our role as a convener and as a nonpartisan constructive voice, GSBA will strive to be present at any negotiating table that our capacity allows. GSBA's goals always include the creation of good policy over politics.

GSBA's advocacy work as the progressive business voice in Washington is guided by the following principles:

- Be the progressive business voice in Washington
- Demand economic prosperity, safety, and health for the LGBTQ community
- Expand, protect, and promote LGBTQ civil rights
- Promote the vitality and development of small businesses
- Demand equal access and opportunity for all underserved communities
- Foster active and informed civic engagement

CIVIL RIGHTS

GSBA's first advocacy work was around civil rights for the LGBTQ community, which continues to be a major focus. GSBA supports any efforts to protect or expand the civil rights of the LGBTQ community, in any arena. First and foremost, GSBA supports equality and access under the law for all persons.

GSBA will pay particular attention to underserved segments of the LGBTQ community, including the transgender and gender nonconforming communities, LGBTQ communities of color, LGBTQ homeless youth, and LGBTQ seniors. Advocacy efforts for these communities must center the lives, experiences, and words of members of those communities.

LGBTQ people face a lack of recognition in private and public projects, even with strong anti-discrimination laws at the state and local levels. GSBA will prioritize efforts at counting the LGBTQ community wherever possible, including but not limited to: in the decennial US Census, in corporate and government contracting, in public data and statistics, and in disparity studies.

As all LGBTQ rights are based on the right to bodily autonomy, GSBA will continue to strongly support protecting and expanding the rights of access to appropriate reproductive healthcare – including abortion. LGBTQ rights are inherently based on the right to bodily autonomy and therefore supporting pro-choice efforts is inherently an LGBTQ concern.

GSBA has long maintained that gun control is an issue for both the LGBTQ and small business communities. GSBA will continue to support gun control efforts at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as related efforts that seek to decrease violence in our communities.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Our vision is a vibrant economy strengthened through the full participation and collaboration of diverse local communities. Small businesses are the focus of GSBA's economic development advocacy. This represents a needed voice in the policy arena and serves the overwhelming majority of GSBA members. GSBA's advocacy on the business community will prioritize first the needs of small businesses who lack other means of organized advocacy.

GSBA supports a more equitable system of taxation in Washington. Historically, GSBA has supported a state income tax and a capital gains tax, so long as they are written sensibly and with proper consideration of the burdens already placed on small businesses. GSBA supports truly progressive taxation that is based on income – not revenue – and the ability to pay. GSBA opposes the imposition of regressive taxes, which may include flat taxes, taxes on revenue, and jobs taxes.

GSBA understands the need of local governments to enact regulations and fees. GSBA prefers that regulation and taxation happen at the largest scale possible and cover a broad base of the population. Positions on specific issues of local taxation and regulation are made in consultation with GSBA members in those particular areas. GSBA works to ensure that small businesses are actively included and listened to in discussions involving their day-to-day operations.

With the Travel Out Seattle initiative, tourism promotion is a priority for the organization. Washington lags behind every other state in the country in funding tourism promotion, a critical and uncontroversial source of additional tax revenue that does not burden residents. GSBA supports the efforts of the Washington Tourism Alliance to increase publicly funded tourism promotion efforts. Particular attention should be paid to bringing tourist dollars to small local businesses and areas beyond the city of Seattle.

GSBA supports efforts to increase public contracting for all underrepresented communities, including the LGBTQ community. GSBA will support other minority and underrepresented communities in advocating for increased funding of economic development efforts to those communities in need of it most.

GSBA has a long history of signing on in support of public mass transportation. In a fast-growing region, mass transit is critical for getting employees to work, ensuring the efficient transportation of goods and services, and for addressing issues of affordability. With many other business and community voices on this topic, GSBA is supportive but not a lead on this issue.

Affordability is a major concern across the region. With many voices in a contentious arena, GSBA should take care to focus on areas where we have special expertise or a unique voice. GSBA should focus our advocacy with existing coalitions we participate in, such as the Center City Initiative.

Efforts to regulate specific GSBA members or smaller segments of GSBA's membership are addressed on a case-by-case basis by the Policy Council. The principles in this document should be applied as necessary. Issues that impact multiple members have higher priority than issues that impact single members.

EDUCATION

GSBA supports LGBTQ curriculum inclusion and efforts to make schools safer for LGBTQ students.

GSBA supports the various iterations of the DREAM Act, DACA, and extending student aid to DREAMers.

In the interest of a more vibrant economy that fully serves a wider variety of people, GSBA strongly supports increased funding for certificate, credential, and post-secondary degree programs.