

Homelessness & Housing Advocacy - State Level

Some Rules of the Road

1. If you are working or are part of a volunteer organization, **know your agency/ organization's advocacy rules.** A nonprofit can advocate for policy but cannot endorse a candidate. You might be required to use your own time, your own phone, your own email.

2. **Know your elected officials and have their contact details in your phone and email.** You can reach anyone in the State Legislature at 1-800-562-6000.

3. **Join the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance and other coalitions and organizations working the issues you care most about and follow their lead, their emails/facebook/twitter posts, bill trackers, their calls to action:**

The Washington Low Income Housing Alliance

www.wliha.org

4. **If you disagree with a position** of the alliance/coalition/organization you have joined, **talk with them about how to handle your dissent** before you make it public. Legislators **do not want to get caught** in a “family fight.”

5. **If you can do so, go to Olympia.** Meet with your legislators and their staff. Observe or testify at a hearing. Tell the truth. Remember - these legislators work for us, these buildings are ours. If you cannot go in person, you can follow on-line and with TVW.

6. Sign up for **Committee meeting notices, read the agendas, review the materials.** Notify your advocacy contacts if you see something important or if you have questions.

7. Know that bills change and sometimes in the last minutes - **trust your policy people and your lobbyists** to understand the process, the players, and make as many gains as possible for your issues.

8. Zoom in to watch an Affordable Housing Briefing for lawmakers

[Tuesday, January 21, 5:45 - 7:00 pm](#)

Join a panel of experts from a range of communities who will provide lawmakers with a comprehensive overview of key issues in affordable housing and solutions to the crisis. We will stream this event via Zoom. **[Register to attend via phone or computer here.](#)**

9. Stay updated! Biweekly Legislative Briefings on Affordable Housing & Homelessness for Advocates - continued on next page -

[Fridays, biweekly starting January 17, 12:30 - 1:30 pm](#)

Join Housing Alliance staff every other Friday throughout the 2020 session for live-from-Olympia updates on key bills, budget requests and state legislative related matters.

Advocacy opportunities will be highlighted on each call. [Register for the whole series of Zoom calls here](#) to participate via phone or computer.

10. From the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance

January 8, 2020

Greetings,

We know that some of our members and allies are being contacted and invited to sign on to a newly formed group called Partnership for Affordable Housing. The group is primarily made up of realtors, landlord lobby groups, bankers, business groups, and several construction unions.

They are describing themselves as an affordable housing coalition and incorporating language supporting things we all know are needed like rental subsidies and funding for the Housing Trust Fund. While we welcome support for these efforts, the real point of this coalition is to oppose any legislative efforts aimed at stabilizing rents.

The Housing Alliance encourages you to decline any invitation to join this coalition. By being a part of the Housing Alliance and/or your local housing consortium, you are already part of a powerful affordable housing coalition grounded in the values of expanding opportunity to affordable homes and ending homelessness. Even if this group shared these values, new groups like this don't generally add value, but they do confuse and dilute our message.

The Housing Alliance believes that we should look to what Oregon and California have passed recently and consider legislation in Washington that places reasonable limits on rent increases. And we believe this should be combined with investments in housing that is affordable to low income people and eliminating barriers to housing production.

Partnership for Affordable Housing is fundamentally an anti-rent control lobbying and communications effort, not a welcome or needed partner.

For some thoughtful discussions on rent stabilization / rent control see:

Crosscut:

[Who's Afraid of Rent Control](#)

The Stranger:

[The Need for Rent Control](#)

[The Case Against Rent Control](#)

[What Washington Can Learn From Rent Control Victories in Oregon and California](#)

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Jan. 17, 2020