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Governor Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

Please accept the Washington State Budget & Policy Center's letter of support for the **Poverty Reduction Work Group's 10-year Plan for the Future to reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state**. For the past two years, PRWG has worked diligently to develop a plan that, if implemented, will meaningfully and measurably reduce poverty and inequality in Washington state. We are grateful to you for your support of poverty reduction, and look forward to bringing the plan to action.

Reducing poverty and inequality is critically important to the mission of the Washington State Budget & Policy Center and to our collective future as a state. Our organization is committed to using research and analysis to advance the well-being of Washington communities, improve the economic security and social opportunity of every person in our state, and support the essential role of government in promoting a just and prosperous society. We envision a Washington state in which a person's race, ethnicity, or immigration status does not determine their level of income, wealth, or access to opportunity, and where *all* people have the resources they need to lead healthy lives. The full adoption and implementation of the PRWG's *10-year Plan for the Future* is critical to achieving that vision.

We understand that the PRWG co-lead agencies will be conducting a series of community engagement meetings and finalizing the *10-year Plan for the Future* this summer. We look forward to supporting their efforts. In the meantime, we urge your continued support of the strategic plan and taking immediate steps to begin implementing it by:

- Elevating the influence and expertise of people most affected by poverty in the implementation of the plan;
- Directing state agencies to write action plans to fulfill the strategies outlined in the plan;
- Including the PRWG recommendations in your 2021-23 biennial budget proposal.

The Washington State Budget & Policy Center urges your full support of the eight comprehensive strategies and corresponding recommendations outlined in the plan, and we would underscore the particular importance of the following components:

- Taking action to undo the harmful effects of structural racism and historical trauma: We add our full-throated support of the recommendations related to the emerging Office of Equity (recommendations 1a, 1b, 2a), and affirm that direct investment in communities of color is also required to advance racial equity.
- Cleaning up Washington's inequitable state tax code: Washington state's regressive tax structure harms people with low incomes and hamstringing our ability to invest in the key foundations our communities need to thrive. Recommendations 3d and 3h are fundamental to the success of the *10-year Plan for the Future* overall.
- Immediately strengthening state safety net programs to support people experiencing poverty to meet basic needs: Washington state has yet to reinvest in basic assistance for children, families, and adults with disabilities in the wake of dramatic cuts to anti-poverty programs made during the Great Recession. We echo the urgency of recommendations 6d and 6e to safeguard the health and safety of Washingtonians who are furthest from opportunity.

We believe these actions will lay a strong foundation for the full implementation of the plan over the next 10 years, and provide immediate, urgent relief for the 1.8 million Washingtonians currently struggling to make ends meet in communities throughout our state.

Thank you for supporting the Poverty Reduction Work Group and your passion for making Washington state a place where every child, adult, and family can thrive. If we can do anything further to support this effort, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,



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