



Letter-to-the-Editor Guide: Balance Our Tax Code

First Steps

1. Determine your target outlet – what paper do you want to write to? Think local, the *Bellevue Reporter* is often a better place for letters than *The Seattle Times*.
2. Find out the outlet-specific requirements by visiting their website or doing a web search for the letter to the editor requirements.
 - Word limit — most papers have a 200-250 limit.
 - Contact email or address — find out where and to whom you send the letter. Some newspapers have an email address where you send letters and some have an online submission form.
3. Write your letter using the writing guide below!

Writing Guide

Write from your own perspective.

The best letters use the unique perspective of the writer. Who are you? Where are you from? What is your involvement in the community? How long have you lived there? What's our state's most important funding priority for you? Are you one of the less than one percent of Washingtonians who would pay a capital gains tax? Find your own viewpoint on this issue.

Why are you writing this letter?

Why have you decided to write this letter now? The answer to this question, coupled with your unique perspective above, can form the framework for your entire letter.

End with a Call to Action

As space allows, it's great to end your letter with a call to action. This can be anything from urging readers to contact your local state representatives and state senator, to encouraging readers to learn more by following Balance Our Tax Code on Facebook and Twitter, to signing our petition to the legislature asking them to balance our tax code (which can be found at balanceourtaxcode.com)!

Suggested Talking Points

Note: People often think of revenue and spending as two separate issues, but it's important to link our tax code with our ability to invest in priorities like education and health care. Talk about both fixing our tax code and making the investments we need to make to have thriving communities in your letter.

- Washington has the most upside-down tax code in the nation, where our lowest-income families pay six times more of their income in taxes than the wealthiest households.
- For too long, powerful special interests have rigged and manipulated our tax code to carve out exemptions and insert loopholes that benefit themselves while working families pay more and more.
- Washington can lead the nation when we invest in priorities like education and health care.
- But not only is our tax code the most unfair in the nation, it also prevents us from being able to make investments in needed priorities like education and mental health care that we know lead to thriving communities.
- In addition to having the most unfair tax code in the nation, Washington is also one of only nine states that don't have a capital gains tax on profits from the sales of stocks, bonds, and other assets.
- According to research from the Washington Budget and Policy Center, the majority of capital gains profits in Washington are claimed by people with an income of \$1,000,000 or more a year.
- A capital gains tax in Washington would impact less than one percent of Washington taxpayers like me.
- This isn't about increasing taxes, it's about fixing our upside-down tax code and ensuring we have the resources we need to invest in our shared priorities without doubling-down on a broken, unfair system.
- By creating a capital gains tax that exempts retirement accounts and the sale of homes, we can both begin to balance Washington's upside-down tax code and have more resources to invest in the foundations of thriving communities.

Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to help educate your friends and neighbors on Washington's upside-down tax code, and the work you're doing to fix it!

If you have any questions, comments, or would like more material, please feel free to reach out to us:

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