November 4, 2026 | Publication edition

Whidbey Island Legislative Report

November 4, 2026 | Election-week edition

From Where I Stand

Hey everyone,

I went to sleep last night encouraged by the early election returns. Waking up this morning, I am still taking them in. I am excited by what I perceive as an opportunity for the political middle to speak up and for people with different political identities to find common ground.

Having lived in Montana and Washington, and on both coasts, I have seen how differently communities describe their priorities - and how often the concerns beneath those differences overlap. Economic security, the cost of everyday life, liberty, opportunity and a government that can get things done matter across party lines.

I hope the emerging results are a sign of democracy working as I believe it should: people participating, holding leaders accountable and making room for disagreement without losing sight of one another. That is my interpretation and my hope, not a claim that every voter shared the same motivation. Results remain unofficial, and national patterns must be evaluated against complete results and credible voter research.

Accountability for past decisions matters, but I hope it can proceed alongside - rather than overshadow - work on the economy and everyday household costs. I am not an economist. My perspective comes from behavioral health, public service, and lived experience with many of the challenges I advocate addressing, including homelessness, inequality, and dignity.

Here at home, I am particularly interested in Washington's proposals involving taxes on high incomes. As those proposals develop, this report will follow the public money: what is proposed, what is enacted, what is collected, where it goes, and what outcomes can actually be documented.

Thank you for taking the time to read this November edition. I hope you find it helpful, and I welcome your questions, perspectives, and respectful disagreements.

What are you seeing in the results, and what would you most like elected officials to address next? Respectful disagreement and specific questions are welcome.

Reporting context: The reflection above is personal opinion. The ballot includes IP26-645, a proposal to repeal a high-income tax; county returns alone do not establish the statewide outcome. The policy reporting below distinguishes existing law, proposals and implementation.

Download earlier editions and the source appendix from the PDF archive [1].

A little closer to home

Election night gives us an early picture of the decisions voters have made, but not the final count. Economic concerns - household costs, wages, housing affordability and financial security - are an important part of the national election conversation. The precise influence of those concerns on voting choices should be supported by survey evidence, not assumed from returns alone. Meanwhile, the work of preparing Washington's 2027 legislative session continues. This edition follows both tracks: what we know, what is still developing, and what decisions could mean for people and organizations on Whidbey Island.

Whidbey's History Corner | A county larger than today's map

On April 4, 1853, Island County's first commissioners met at Coveland on Penn Cove. The county then covered territory that later became San Juan, Whatcom, Skagit and Snohomish counties. One of the commissioners' earliest actions concerned a proposed road from Ebey's Landing to Coveland. From the beginning, local government faced a question we still ask today: how do communities connect, and who is responsible for building and maintaining those connections?

As boundaries changed, responsibility for roads, public services and local revenue was divided among new jurisdictions. Today's overlapping governments did not emerge all at once. Their history helps explain why a service that feels regional may have several separate decision-makers and funding sources.

Connection to today: When a behavioral-health service, ferry connection or housing program serves residents across jurisdictional boundaries, which government has legal authority, which has the money, and who is accountable for results?

Sources: Island County commissioners' history [2] and Oregon State Archives [3].

At a glance

• Island County's first unofficial count reported 26,136 ballots counted out of 66,082 registered voters (39.55%, calculated). These are unofficial returns.

• Washington's 2027 legislative session begins January 11; bill prefiling begins December 7.

• State Commerce is accepting comments through November 13 on draft STEP housing guidance.

First unofficial November 3 count. Results are not certified. Check current official county results [4].

2026 General Election: November 3 first unofficial count

Island County election-night returns, checked November 4, 2026. Unofficial 26,136-ballot snapshot checked November 4, 2026; not certified outcomes. Check the official results portal for later counts. All totals below are Island County returns, not districtwide or statewide totals. Candidate percentages use official contest totals including write-ins; write-in rows are omitted here. Rounding and omitted write-ins mean displayed percentages may not total 100%. The PUD contest also crosses county boundaries.

Ballots counted 26,136	Registered voters 66,082	Turnout 39.55%

Congressional and legislative races (Island County returns only)

U.S. House District 2

Rick Larsen	17,048 votes · 65.97%
Edwin H. Feller	8,746 votes · 33.84%

LD10 House Position 1

Clyde Shavers	16,386 votes · 63.52%
Robert (Chili) Hicks	9,384 votes · 36.38%

LD10 House Position 2

Dave Paul	16,783 votes · 65.14%
Tim Hazelo	8,957 votes · 34.76%

County and PUD offices

Assessor

Doug Stults	14,283 votes · 56.83%
Kelly Todd Mauck	10,812 votes · 43.02%

Auditor

Sheilah Crider	12,333 votes · 49.15%
Barbara Fuller	12,711 votes · 50.66%

Clerk

Dierdre Butler	15,563 votes · 61.04%
Maria Hazelo	9,916 votes · 38.89%

Commissioner District 3

Matthew Van Pelt	9,873 votes · 38.67%
Grant Shaw	15,620 votes · 61.19%

Prosecutor

Greg Banks	14,501 votes · 58.24%
Andrew F. Scott	10,331 votes · 41.49%

Sheriff

Rick Felici	13,216 votes · 51.96%
Tavier Wasser	12,185 votes · 47.91%

PUD Commissioner District 1

Sid Logan	3,087 votes · 51.54%
Janet St Clair	2,893 votes · 48.30%

Judicial races (Island County returns only)

Supreme Court Position 1

Colleen Melody	14,958 votes · 62.12%
Scott Edwards	9,076 votes · 37.69%

Supreme Court Position 3

David Stevens	9,530 votes · 39.74%
Jaime Michelle Hawk	14,402 votes · 60.06%

Supreme Court Position 4

Ian Birk	11,891 votes · 50.06%
Sean O’Donnell	11,809 votes · 49.72%

Supreme Court Position 5

Theo Angelis	13,423 votes · 56.03%
Dave Larson	10,487 votes · 43.77%

Supreme Court Position 7

Debra L. Stephens	15,807 votes · 66.21%
Todd A. Bloom	8,018 votes · 33.58%

Statewide initiatives (Island County returns only)

IL26-001 - parental rights in schools

Yes	11,457 votes · 45.83%
No	13,543 votes · 54.17%

IL26-638 - K-12 athletics eligibility

Yes	14,521 votes · 56.76%
No	11,064 votes · 43.24%

IP26-645 - income-tax repeal

Yes	10,534 votes · 40.68%
No	15,362 votes · 59.32%

Local ballot measures

Langley services and technology levy

Approved	382 votes · 63.35%
Rejected	221 votes · 36.65%

Port of South Whidbey facilities levy

Yes	4,162 votes · 58.31%
No	2,976 votes · 41.69%

Unincorporated county fireworks advisory

Yes	13,356 votes · 64.25%
No	7,433 votes · 35.75%

Races with one named candidate

Coroner - Shantel Porter: 19,481 votes; Treasurer - Tony Lam: 19,025 votes; District Court Judge - Ronald A. Costeck: 17,365 votes. Write-in votes are not included in these named-candidate totals; no two-candidate comparison is implied.

What this means for Whidbey

Barbara Fuller leads the county auditor race by 378 votes. Ian Birk leads Supreme Court Position 4 by 82 votes among Island County ballots. These margins can change as remaining ballots are counted. The fireworks question is advisory and applies only to unincorporated Island County; Langley and South Whidbey Port measures apply only to their respective voting jurisdictions.

Sources: Island County Elections [5] · Washington results [6] · Whidbey Elections Dashboard [7]. County certification scheduled November 24; state certification December 3.

Following the Money | What does Island County spend on human services?

Records review, not an independent audit. Island County's 2025 Human Services Report identifies $10,089,197 in funding: $6,006,635 from state sources and $4,082,562 from local sources. The report says $5,656,687 financially supported 27 community partners, and describes 36 supported staff positions across its programs. These are reported program-wide funding and support figures, not a complete expenditure ledger or independently verified service outcomes. County Human Services Report, p. 3 [8].

2025 Human Services Funding: Where the Money Came From

Island County reports **$10,089,197** in total 2025 Human Services funding: **$6,006,635** in state revenue (59.5%) and **$4,082,562** in local revenue (40.5%).

State: $6,006,635 (59.5%) Local: $4,082,562 (40.5%)

Community partner support: $5,656,687 across 27 partners. The county reports this separately. It is **not a third revenue source**, so it must not be added to the state/local chart. A verified recipient-by-recipient payment breakdown is not established by the records reviewed for this edition.

Source: Island County Human Services Report, 2025 funding summary [8]. Percentages calculated from the report's dollar figures.



Budgeted spending is not actual spending

A May 13 county financial exhibit compares actual expenditures in 2025 with adopted spending budgets for 2026. These are different accounting measures, not proof that spending increased or decreased in 2026. Dollar figures below are rounded for readability.

Fund	2025 actual	2026 adopted budget
Mental Health (113)	$2.42M	$2.26M
Mental Health/Therapeutic Courts Sales Tax (126)	$1.36M	$2.11M
Homeless Housing Surcharge (106)	$2.34M	$2.20M
Human Services (129)	$416K	$522K

Source: Island County commissioners' May 13, 2026 packet, p. 34 [9]. These funds are only a subset of relevant county finances and must not be summed as if they represented all human-services spending. Transfers and overlapping reporting scopes require reconciliation.

Tracing the money: first contract-level records

The county's 2025 Human Services Report reports $5,656,687 in financial support to 27 community partners, but that summary alone does not provide a reconciled recipient-by-recipient ledger. The following official commissioner agenda identifies examples of contracts and funding actions. **These examples include funding agreements and service contracts and are not presented as a breakdown of the $5.66 million**, because the dates, funding sources and accounting treatment have not yet been reconciled.

Record / recipient	Documented purpose	Amount / status
North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization / Island County funding agreement	Recovery Navigator funding, July-December 2025	$264,427.50 allotment listed; not established as a county payment to a community partner
North Sound Behavioral Health Administrative Services Organization / Island County funding agreement	Jail transition, opioid outreach, Trueblood, HARPS, co-responder and other programs, July-December 2025	$369,160.65 allotment listed; not established as a county payment to a community partner
Washington Department of Commerce to Island County	Consolidated Homeless Grant for coordinated entry, rental assistance, shelter and motel vouchers, July 2025-June 2027	$3,958,316 grant contract listed; incoming county funding, not a payment to a community partner
Service Alternatives, Sherwood Community Services, Steps and WA Vocational Services	Developmental-disability employment, inclusion, school-to-work and/or child-development services	Contracts listed; dollar amounts not established by the agenda excerpt

Primary source: July 22, 2025 Island County commissioners' agenda, Human Services items 4-11 [10]. An agenda identifies proposed consent or business items; signed contracts, meeting actions and payment records are needed to confirm execution and expenditures.

What we need to reconcile next

Obtain the county's complete 2025 partner-disbursement schedule, signed agreements and amendments, payment totals, funding-source coding and program performance reports. Then distinguish **authorized contract ceilings**, **money actually paid**, **service outputs** and **measured outcomes**. No allegation of missing or misused funds is made by the differences shown here.

Questions the records raise - and how we will follow up

1. Which agencies and programs received the reported $5.66 million, and under what contracts?

2. What explains the difference between 2025 actual expenditures and 2026 budgeted expenditures in each fund?

3. Which balances are restricted, committed or available for future use?

4. What outputs and outcomes do recipients report, and are those measures comparable?

Follow-up commitment: We will carry these questions into subsequent editions. When official records establish an answer, we will publish a concise response with a source link and reference to the original question. Until then, the status remains open - records needed.

What we can say now: The county reports significant state and local support for human services. **What we cannot yet say:** That a budget difference proves a cut, an increase in services, an unspent grant or a failure to deliver outcomes. That requires the underlying contract, transaction and performance records.

Public comment opportunities: housing and land use

In addition to its STEP guidance comment period, Commerce is accepting feedback on proposed Growth Management Act administrative-rule updates addressing housing, permitting and land-use requirements. Written comments are due by **5 p.m. Pacific on November 13**. This is a rulemaking feedback stage, not a locally adopted ordinance. Commerce rulemaking notices [11].

2027 legislative session: the road ahead

Washington lawmakers may begin prefiling bills December 7, 2026. The regular session convenes January 11, 2027 and is scheduled for 105 days. The published cutoff calendar remains a planning draft until formally adopted. Washington Legislature session documents [12].

Your policy navigation guide

Fourteen standing topics organize the policy watch. A category without a newly verified development remains on watch rather than being presented as new legislation.

- WA-01 | Budget and revenue
- WA-02 | Health care and Medicaid
- WA-03 | Behavioral health and crisis response
- WA-04 | Housing and homelessness

- WA-05 | Local government
- WA-06 | Public safety, corrections and reentry
- WA-07 | Youth, juvenile justice and developmental disabilities
- WA-08 | Human services and food assistance
- WA-09 | Kratom and 7-OH
- WA-10 | Labor and workforce
- WA-11 | Transportation and ferries
- WA-12 | Technology, AI and privacy
- WA-13 | Veterans and military families
- WA-14 | Energy and resilience

WA-01 | Budget and revenue

Statewide housing infrastructure demand is exceeding available program funding. Commerce reports 83 applications seeking approximately $88 million in its latest Connecting Housing to Infrastructure Program (CHIP) round, compared with approximately $31 million available. Applications are under review and awards are expected in January 2027. **These are statewide application totals, not Island County awards.** Commerce October 2026 planning newsletter [13].

The 2027-29 state budget development process remains on watch. This edition does not report a newly verified Island County appropriation.

WA-02 | Health care and Medicaid

Preparing for 2027: HCA says Apple Health for Adults will move to six-month renewals beginning January 1, 2027, alongside new work or community-engagement requirements with exemptions. These rules do not apply identically to every Apple Health program. Residents should keep contact information current and follow their own renewal notices; community organizations can help people connect with enrollment assistance. HCA changes and client resources [14].

WA-03 | Behavioral health and crisis response

New funding opportunity: Washington Commerce opened its Behavioral Health Facilities Closure Prevention Program on October 23. Up to $9.7 million is available for qualifying repairs and upgrades that keep existing, licensed behavioral-health facilities operating. Applications are first-come, first-served, with a June 30, 2027 deadline or earlier if funds are exhausted. The program does **not** fund expansion or construction of a new facility. A general applicant webinar is scheduled for November 5. Commerce funding notice [15].

HCA lists the next Crisis Response Improvement Strategy Lived Experience Collaborative meeting for November 9, 1-3 p.m., with a focus on H.R. 1 and the Involuntary Treatment Act. No new Island County award or program implementation is asserted. HCA meeting schedule [16].

WA-04 | Housing and homelessness

Washington Commerce's October 13 notice requests feedback on updated guidance for shelters, transitional housing, emergency housing and permanent supportive housing (STEP) by November 13. The update reflects HB 2266 (2026); jurisdictions must update applicable regulations by their next periodic update or June 11, 2028, whichever comes first. Official Commerce notice [17].

WA-05 | Local government

Local governments will need to assess the STEP planning changes against their own codes and urban growth areas. This is a statewide requirement; no specific Oak Harbor or Island County ordinance change is asserted here. Commerce STEP planning guidance [18].

Island County's October 27 commissioners' regular-session and department-head roundtable agendas are posted. The existence of an agenda is not evidence of a vote, appropriation or adopted policy; action records must be checked before making those claims. Island County Agenda Center [19].

WA-06 | Public safety, corrections and reentry

Records follow-up: The July 22, 2025 county agenda lists funding for jail transition, co-responder and related behavioral-health programs. That establishes an item for review, not current service capacity or documented outcomes. The next reporting task is to connect signed agreements and payment records with service activity and reentry outcomes. County agenda, p. 2, item 9 [10].

WA-07 | Youth, juvenile justice and developmental disabilities

Local services in the records: The same county agenda lists employment, community inclusion, school-to-work and child-development contracts. Those programs matter to families navigating transitions into adulthood. No new November award or juvenile-justice policy change is established here; contract performance and access remain follow-up questions. County agenda, p. 2, items 4-7 [10].

WA-08 | Human services and food assistance

Food-assistance access: DSHS maintains an updated H.R. 1 information page explaining federal SNAP changes and affected groups. Eligibility depends on household circumstances; older shutdown-related notices should not be mistaken for a November 2026 benefit announcement. Residents can use the current Basic Food application and assistance resources, and organizations should check current agency guidance before advising clients. DSHS federal changes [20] · Basic Food access [21].

WA-09 | Kratom and 7-OH

A distinction that matters: Washington DOH reports that three related compounds were temporarily federally scheduled on August 26: mitragynine pseudoindoxyl, MGM-15 and MGM-16. Its October 27 update distinguishes those substances from 7-OH, which it reports remained unscheduled at that date. This edition does not claim a blanket ban on kratom or all 7-OH products. Product contents and regulatory status require careful verification. DOH kratom information and dated regulatory summary [22].

WA-10 | Labor and workforce

January wage change: Washington L&I announced a statewide minimum wage of $17.73 per hour for most workers beginning January 1, 2027, up from $17.13 in 2026. Employers, including nonprofits, should incorporate the announced rate into staffing budgets and check the separate overtime-exemption rules for salaried positions. This is a scheduled statewide adjustment, not a new local ordinance. L&I September 30 announcement [23].

WA-11 | Transportation and ferries

Coming up: Washington State Ferries postponed its winter vehicle-reservation release to November 10 at 10 a.m. to account for planned terminal work, including Coupeville. WSDOT also reported that the SR 536 Skagit River/Division Street Bridge would close beginning November 1, with an I-5/SR 20 detour affecting access toward Anacortes. WSF October 29 weekly update [24].

Longer-term investment: The Clinton terminal overhead passenger-loading project is funded at $40 million with pre-design work targeted for early 2027. This is an existing project, not a newly announced appropriation. WSDOT project page [25].

WA-12 | Technology, AI and privacy

On watch: This edition establishes no new AI or privacy enactment. The reporting priority for the next session is to distinguish proposed bills from enacted requirements and identify who is covered, when obligations begin, and how enforcement works. A proposal or agency announcement alone will not be reported as a law in effect. Legislature session documents [12].

WA-13 | Veterans and military families

Benefits navigation: Washington’s Attorney General provides a veterans-rights guide covering benefits and related protections. As Veterans Day approaches, access to benefits, housing and employment remains a standing local concern. This edition establishes no new NAS Whidbey funding decision or benefit expansion. Individual eligibility questions should go to an accredited benefits representative. Washington veterans-rights guide [26].

WA-14 | Energy and resilience

Weatherization implementation: Commerce is developing rules for community-scale weatherization following HB 2338 (2026). The approach supports improvements across multiple homes in a neighborhood or area. It is a program-development update, not a verified Whidbey grant award or an announcement that local applications are open. Commerce weatherization program [27].

What this means for Whidbey

The immediate questions are practical: which agencies must implement new requirements, how costs and responsibilities will be shared, and where residents can participate before decisions are final. For STEP housing and proposed Growth Management Act rules, the November 13 public-comment deadlines provide near-term opportunities for local input. Statewide CHIP application demand also illustrates competition for housing-related infrastructure funding; local awards must be checked separately.

What we're watching next

- November 4: check the official election portal for the next count and updated returns
- November 5: behavioral-health facility closure-prevention funding webinar
- November 9: HCA Lived Experience Collaborative meeting
- November 10: WSF winter vehicle-reservation release at 10 a.m.
- November 13: STEP draft guidance and GMA rulemaking comments due
- November 24: Island County general-election certification
- December 3: statewide certification deadline
- December 7: 2027 legislative bill prefiling begins
- January 11: regular legislative session convenes

Independently prepared by Christopher John Wiegenstein, M.S. Election totals and legislative claims are attributed to official sources; analysis and opinion are separately labeled.

Sources and public links

Sources checked November 4, 2026. Numbered links correspond to references in the text. Election returns are a dated snapshot; follow official sources for subsequent counts.

[1] https://cradlestonellc.com/whidbey-legislative-report-2/

[2] https://islandcountywa.gov/226/Board-of-Island-County-Commissioners

[3] https://sos.oregon.gov/archives/provisional-guide/pages/island.aspx

[4] https://www.islandcountywa.gov/569/Election-Results

[5] https://app.enhancedvoting.com/results/public/island-county-wa/elections/20261103

[6] https://results.vote.wa.gov/

[7] https://cradlestonellc.com/elections/2026-general/

[8] https://www.islandcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/14089/Human-Services-Report-2026_web-002?bidId=

[9] https://www.islandcountywa.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_05132026-1170

[10] https://www.islandcountywa.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_07222025-996

[11] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about/legislative/rulemaking/

[12] https://leg.wa.gov/bills-meetings-and-session/session/session-documents/latest-session-documents/

[13] https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WADOC/bulletins/42ee8f7

[14] https://www.hca.wa.gov/free-or-low-cost-health-care/changes-apple-health-medicaid

[15] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/funding/the-behavioral-health-facilities-bhf-closure-prevention-program-is-now-accepting-applications-for-capital-projects-to-preserve-behavioral-health-facilities-through-critical-repairs-or-upgrades-nece/

[16] https://www.hca.wa.gov/about-hca/programs-and-initiatives/behavioral-health-and-recovery/crisis-response-improvement-strategy-cris-committees

[17] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/step-guidance-update-comment-by-nov-13/

[18] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/growth-management/housing-planning/step-planning/

[19] https://www.islandcountywa.gov/AgendaCenter

[20] https://dshs.wa.gov/family-food-and-housing-services/dshs-benefits-and-hr-1

[21] https://www.dshs.wa.gov/family-food-and-housing-services/food-assistance/basic-food-benefits-snap

[22] https://doh.wa.gov/community-and-environment/opioids/kratom

[23] https://www.lni.wa.gov/news-events/article/26-17/

[24] https://apps.wsdot.wa.gov/travel/washington-state-ferries/about-us/weekly-update

[25] https://wsdot.wa.gov/construction-planning/search-projects/clinton-terminal-passenger-overhead-loading-improvement

[26] https://www.atg.wa.gov/veterans-rights-wa

[27] https://www.commerce.wa.gov/weatherization/