

Washington State Bowling Proprietors' Association Announces 2026 Legislative Priorities

WSBPA has unveiled its comprehensive legislative agenda for the 2026 session, focusing on strengthening the bowling industry across Washington State.

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Washington State Bowling Proprietors Association \(WSBPA\)](https://www.wsbpa.com/) has unveiled its comprehensive legislative agenda for the 2026 session, focusing on critical initiatives to protect and strengthen the bowling industry across Washington State. Following a 2025 legislative session that introduced significant tax increases and regulatory changes affecting small businesses, the WSBPA enters the upcoming session with renewed determination to advocate for policies supporting the viability and growth of bowling centers statewide.



Tax Relief and Business Viability

The association will prioritize advocating for meaningful tax relief following the passage of HB 2081 (B&O tax increases) and SB 5814 (digital services tax expansion), which created unprecedented tax burdens threatening the sustainability of small entertainment venues. With Washington facing a \$903 million revenue shortfall over four years, proactive small business protection is essential.

"The 2025 session imposed significant new costs on our industry at a time when many bowling centers are still finding their footing after years of pandemic-related challenges," said Chris Nash, President of the WSBPA. "We're committed to working with legislators to secure targeted tax

credits and exemptions that recognize the unique position of entertainment venues in our communities. Our bowling centers are community gathering spaces, not just businesses—they deserve policies that help them thrive."



WSBPA will advocate for targeted tax credits for entertainment venues and small businesses with fewer than 100 employees, work with the Department

of Revenue to ensure fair implementation of SB 5814, and push for tax breaks on investments in new bowling equipment, lane technology, and facility upgrades.

Labor Costs, Workforce Development, and Regulatory Compliance

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*Chris Nash, President of the
WSBPA*

A major focus will be addressing the sweeping labor and employment law changes enacted last session. With Washington's minimum wage increasing to \$17.13 per hour in 2026 and new compliance obligations under the Mini-WARN Act (SB 5525), expanded Paid Family and Medical Leave (HB 1213), and the Enhanced Fair Chance Act (HB 1747), bowling centers face significant operational challenges.

"Our members are committed to being good employers, but the rapid accumulation of labor mandates creates real

strain on family-owned bowling centers," Nash explained. "With unemployment projected to peak at 4.9% in 2027 and employment growth slowing to 0% in 2026, we need policies that help us retain our workforce while managing increased costs. We strongly oppose proposals like SB 5578 and HB 1764 that would increase minimum wage to \$25 per hour—such measures would be devastating for our industry."

The WSBPA will support regionally sensitive approaches to minimum wage increases, encourage state funding for small business technical assistance programs, and advocate for tax credits supporting employee retention and workforce development initiatives.

Post-Pandemic Recovery and Economic Resilience

While the immediate COVID-19 crisis has subsided, bowling centers continue to face long-term recovery challenges after experiencing disproportionate impacts during pandemic closures and

capacity restrictions. Washington utilized \$4.4 billion in Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Funds with expenditures continuing through December 31, 2026, yet bowling centers have received limited direct assistance.

"The pandemic hit our industry particularly hard—we were among the first to close and among the last to fully reopen," Nash noted. "Many of our members are still managing debt incurred during that period. We're advocating for continued access to grant programs and state-backed loans, as well as clear guidelines ensuring equitable treatment for entertainment venues in any future emergency situations."

WSBPA will also support legislation requiring transparency in business interruption insurance policies and explore opportunities through CERB and Commerce Department economic development grants for facility modernization.

Modernization and Expansion of Offerings

The association will work to ensure bowling centers can modernize their facilities and expand service offerings to remain competitive in today's evolving entertainment landscape. The 2025 legislature's passage of HB 1515, authorizing expanded outdoor service through December 2026 and expanded outdoor/indoor service during events through December 2027, represents a meaningful opportunity.

"The entertainment landscape is rapidly evolving, and bowling centers must adapt to meet changing consumer preferences," Nash stated. "We're encouraging the Liquor and Cannabis Board to simplify licensing processes and advocating for zoning flexibility that allows our facilities to serve as multi-purpose community event venues. Tax incentives for investments in advanced scoring systems and energy-efficient equipment will help our members make the upgrades necessary to compete."

Fair Regulation and Treatment

WSBPA remains committed to ensuring bowling centers receive fair and equitable regulatory treatment compared to other entertainment and recreational businesses.

"We will actively engage with legislators to ensure our industry has a seat at the table," Nash emphasized. "This means advocating for formal inclusion of bowling center operators in advisory committees, supporting reasonable implementation timelines for environmental regulations, and opposing any legislative proposals that single out entertainment venues for punitive taxation or regulatory treatment."

Political Engagement and Grassroots Efforts

The 2025 legislative session—which saw many new or increased taxes passed despite business

community concerns—demonstrated that well-organized advocacy is essential to influence policy outcomes. The 2026 regular session begins January 12, 2026, and runs for 60 days, focusing on adjusting the 2025-27 biennial budget.

"We're encouraging all WSBPA members to build relationships with their legislators and organize facility tours showcasing bowling centers as vital community assets," Nash said. "We're strengthening partnerships with other business and industry stakeholders, and we're engaging with both Republican and Democratic legislators who demonstrate understanding of small business challenges."

Through these comprehensive initiatives, WSBPA aims to create a more supportive and sustainable business environment for bowling centers throughout Washington State during what promises to be a challenging but consequential 2026 legislative session.

About the WSBPA

The Washington State Bowling Proprietors Association is a non-profit trade organization representing bowling center owners and operators throughout Washington state. Founded in 1966, the WSBPA works to promote the growth and success of the bowling industry through advocacy, education, and member services.

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