



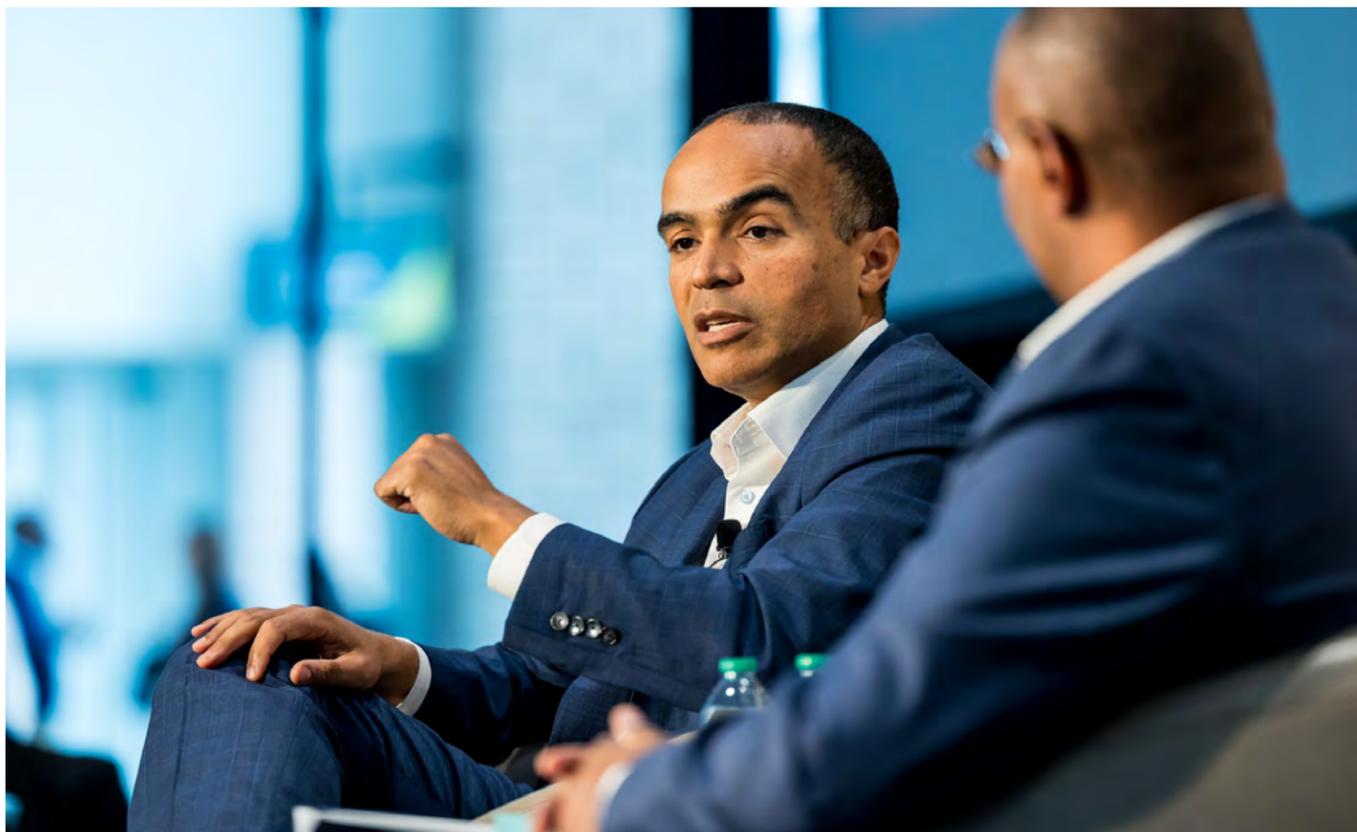
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Real News ⚡
Real Impact

EXCLUSIVE: AG Nick Brown, 'Fight the good fight!'



Washington State Attorney General Nick Brown. Source: Office of Washington State Attorney General.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

SEATTLE — When Nick Brown was sworn in as Washington's attorney general in January 2025, he not only etched his name in history as the state's first Black attorney general — he brought a reservoir of experiences in public service, civil rights advocacy and a profound conviction that government can serve as a catalyst for positive transformation.

"To advance meaningful change in our communities in our state, you need people who are both advocates, represent the community, march and protest and make the voices of the communi-

ty heard," said Brown. "But you also need people in positions to make those changes. I've never thought of myself as an advocate, but I've felt it's important to be the person in the room. Now I'm the person in the room with a pen in my hand signing really important things. There's a lot of different ways a community can have an impact, and we need to think about ways to collaborate and bring all those voices together."

Brown's parents, both public servants, instilled these values early. They met in the U.S. military — his father as an Army lieutenant, his mother as an Army nurse.

"The idea of working for the govern-

ment and the value of public service, and military service, was well ingrained in my experience," said Brown. "Consciously, and subconsciously, I've always wanted to be apart of the government. I viewed the government as a tool to help make people's lives better." In middle school, Brown immersed himself in student government, athletics and ROTC, deriving fulfillment from teamwork.

Brown moved to Atlanta, Georgia — from Washington — after high school to attend undergrad at Moorehouse College. This was an important time for Brown, he said, be-

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Fentanyl exposure shuts down County Courtroom

By MARIO LOTMORE

EVERETT — A courtroom in the Snohomish County Courthouse was evacuated Thursday after fentanyl residue on a scale was exposed during a trial, prompting medical evaluations for about 20 people, authorities said.

The incident occurred at 11:55 a.m. when an evidence envelope containing the scale was handled and opened in a second-floor courtroom, according to a press release from the Everett Fire Department. The residue tested positive for fentanyl, though the exact quantity was unknown and there was no visible plume or sign of significant airborne release.

Out of caution, all occupants were moved to the fourth floor for assessment. Two aid cars, an engine, a medical services officer and a battalion chief responded. No one showed symptoms of exposure, and no hospital transports were needed. Fire and EMS crews cleared the scene by 12:35 p.m.

The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office closed the courtroom temporarily and arranged for a specialized decontamination team to clean it. The department coordinated with Everett Fire throughout the response. Officials did not specify why the envelope was opened or details of the trial.

This latest exposure conveys the pervasive dangers of fentanyl in Snohomish County, where the drug has infiltrated even secure facilities like the county jail, leading to multiple overdoses and deaths.

In May 2023, seven inmates at the Snohomish County Jail were hospitalized for suspected fentanyl overdoses after an incident linked to inmate Justin Michael Sims, 37, of Arlington. Sims was accused of possessing the drug, which caused the exposures. He was found guilty in August 2023 of three counts related to fentanyl possession.

A second incident occurred in July 2023, involving fentanyl exposure to two inmates at the jail.

In January 2024, Brendon E. Tesch, 36 of Lake Stevens was found unresponsive inside his cell at the Snohomish County Jail. The Snohomish County Medical Examiner's Office attributed his death to fentanyl.

The courthouse incident comes amid a broader fentanyl epidemic ravaging Snohomish County and Washington state. In King County, adjacent to Snohomish, fentanyl-related deaths surged from under 200 in 2020 to more

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Super Bowl LX Champions, Seattle Seahawks up for sale

By MARIO LOTMORE

SEATTLE—The estate of late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen announced Wednesday, February 18, it has begun the formal process of selling the Seattle Seahawks, just 10 days after the team won its second Super Bowl title and two days after the Washington State Senate passed a Millionaires' Tax.

Speculation about a potential sale circulated for weeks, however the estate firmly denied the rumor at that time.

The announcement fulfills Allen's directive in his will to eventually sell his sports holdings and direct all proceeds from his estate to philanthropy. Allen, who purchased the Seahawks in 1997 to keep the franchise from relocating, died in 2018 from complications of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. His sister,

Jody Allen, has overseen the team as chair since then.

"The Estate of Paul G. Allen today announced it has commenced a formal sale process for the Seattle Seahawks NFL franchise, consistent with Allen's directive to eventually sell his sports holdings and direct all Estate proceeds to philanthropy," the team said in a statement.

The estate has retained investment bank Allen & Company and law firm Latham & Watkins to manage the sale, which is expected to extend through the 2026 offseason before NFL owners vote to approve any deal.

The Seahawks, valued at roughly \$7 billion before their latest championship, could fetch one of the highest prices in NFL history if sold in that range — surpassing the \$6 billion paid for the Washington Commanders

in 2023.

The team defeated the New England Patriots 29-13 in Super Bowl LX, marking the franchise's first title since 2014 and making this the first instance in the Super Bowl era of a team being placed on the market immediately after a championship game, according to ESPN.

Jody Allen, chair and executor of the Paul G. Allen Trust in 2022 shared that while the team would eventually be sold, estates of this complexity can take 10-20 years to resolve, with no set timeline. A clause requiring 10% of proceeds to Washington state had expired in May 2025, that fueled speculation of the sale.

Currently, no prospective buyers were named, and the estate provided no further details on the process. Poten-

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Amid Trump crackdown, Lynnwood proposes protections for immigrants from ICE agents

By KIENAN BRISCOE

LYNNWOOD—Amid escalating national outrage over fatal shootings and tactics by ICE in sweeping immigration crackdowns — which has deported over 540,000 people since January 2025 — the Lynnwood City Council debated a resolution on Tuesday, February 17, to shield immigrant residents from federal agents and raids. The Lynnwood police warned of legal risks if they are directed by the City Council and Mayor to intervene against federal agents conducting an operation.

Lynnwood ICE Protecting Immigrant Safety Resolution

The Lynnwood City Council held a collaborative discussion Tuesday on a proposed resolution aimed at protecting immigrant and refugee residents from federal immigration enforcement.

Lynnwood City Councilwoman Isabel Mata is spearheading the resolution that would that foster trust, fairness and safety for all residents, particularly marginalized groups, she said.

“This resolution is designed to be aligned with our city’s trust, dignity, and resolution for all residents, especially for communities who feel marginalized or at risk,” said Mata who spearheaded the resolution discussion. “Right now we are in a time where a lot of scary things are happening in the world, particularly as it relates to immigration and customs enforcement — otherwise known as ICE...when there is a lot of fear people aren’t going to show up, they won’t be going to the grocery store or drop their kids off at school.”

The measure seeks to reaffirm constitutional rights, limit the use of city resources for federal immigration efforts and promote “community-oriented policing.”

Councilwoman Mata continued that what makes Lynnwood great is its diversity, which subscribes to its motto, “All Our Welcome.” But it’s more than that, Mata added that residents have to feel safe. She believes Lynnwood should align itself in this direction instead of rejecting it.

“There’s also a lot of fear for people who are opposed to some of the federal enforcement actions that are happening, protesters who are scared to protest,” Mata said. “Scared to speak up, scared to participate fully because of what’s going on.”

The resolution draws on state laws like the Keep Washington Working Act, which restricts local resources



Lynnwood City Council Meeting on February 17, 2026. Source: Snapshot from Lynnwood City Council livestream.

from aiding civil immigration enforcement unless required by law or court order. It also calls for Mayor George Hurst to develop accessible resources, such as webpages and posters on a person’s rights, and urges reviews of police policies on intervening in alleged use of excessive force or unlawful conduct by federal officers.

Police Chief Cole Langdon expressed support for aligning with current state law but raised concerns about provisions in the resolution that could require his officers to intervene against federal agents, warning that directing LPD to intervene in federal operations would expose them to significant risks, including federal criminal liability.

“I’m concerned about anything where we are asking my officers to go out and interfere with federal investigations or federal efforts because how do I know in that moment that they’re engaged in civil immigration work as opposed to preparing to go serve a warrant on somebody who is wanted for human trafficking and they have a warrant?” Langdon stated. “If I get there and I’m like, hey, give me, let me see your copy of your warrant, they’re under no obligation to give me a copy of their warrant.”

He further cautioned that such interventions could lead to officers facing arrest or legal repercussions under federal law, potentially pitting under-resourced local police against armed federal agents.

“We are exposing our officers to potential federal criminal liability. They could be very much committing a federal crime by intervening in a federal operation,” Chief Langdon said. “So

to go up there and to do something, to interfere with an arrest, they see something where they perceive that potential federal criminal liability. So we’re asking our officers to potentially be arrested.”

He added that local police lack authority over federal operations and stressed that remedies for alleged federal overreach should occur through courts or federal policy changes rather than on-the-scene confrontations.

“Anything where we are asked to go out and do something towards federal agents, I have concerns about,” Chief Langdon said. “But in terms of

not supporting it or just staying out of their work, that’s Keep Washington Working right now.”

Both local and federal law enforcement are bound by the same U.S. Constitution (Fourth Amendment’s “objective reasonableness” standard), but they differ significantly in policy, jurisdiction, and accountability. While local departments often have more granular, variable, and restrictive policies, federal agents follow more uniform, agency-specific guidelines. Local laws are geographically restricted, whereas federal agents have nation-

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Telehealth Hub at LETI in Snohomish County

EVERETT—Latino Educational Training Institute (LETI) in Everett recently launched a new telehealth space, at its Everett training center, thanks to a donation from UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Washington (UHC). The space features 25 Wi-Fi-enabled computers and medical equipment such as blood pressure monitors and infrared thermometers, helping residents without reliable internet access or personal devices to get much needed care.

LETI and UHC staff celebrate the opening of the new telehealth space at LETI's Everett training center. Source: UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Washington.

“This new telehealth space helps remove barriers that too often stand between people and the care they need, and with UnitedHealthcare’s support, our community members can access health services in a way that feels accessible, supportive and responsive to their needs,” said Rosario Reyes, Founder & CEO, Latino Educational Training Institute.



LETI and UHC staff celebrate the opening of the new telehealth space at LETI's Everett training center. Source: UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Washington.

Residents may use the donated equipment for telehealth appointments for both physical and behavioral health care, helping individuals and families in the community access care more easily — whether in person or virtually. The initiative supports people in un-

derstood communities and those who struggle to access reliable internet or technology, expanding options for care in a setting that is familiar and trusted.

LETI has been a trusted community partner in Snohomish County

for years, providing education, workforce training and community support services. UnitedHealthcare previously supported the organization’s Latino Expo community event and continues to partner with LETI to address access gaps in care.

“By collaborating with the Latino Educational Training Institute, we’re meeting people where they are and helping improve access to care for community members who face real barriers to getting health services,” said Jason Hauff, community outreach manager, UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Washington.

This support reflects UnitedHealthcare’s commitment to make health care easier to navigate, more accessible and more connected — especially in the community, where local collaborations can remove real-world barriers to care. The telehealth space is located at LETI’s Everett training center and computers are free for everyone to use.

Snohomish County Sports Tourism Generates \$42 Million in Economic Impact for 2025



Photo Credits: 2025 Battle of the Flag and 2025 WSSEA Spring State Championships (William Frankhouser) and 2025 EnduroCross Everett (Snohomish County Sports Commission).

SNOHOMISH COUNTY—The Snohomish County Sports Commission had a stellar year in 2025, supporting more than 150 sports tournaments and welcoming over 230,000 visitors to the area. These events generated approximately \$42 million with nearly 43,000 room nights booked, and there were a record number of 37 different sports played throughout 12 communities.

This was also a record year for Snohomish County, which hosted 14 tournaments. These inaugural events included Quadballfest: Seattle, Ignite Robotics Quantum Spooktacular Competition, Tulalip March Madness Basketball Tournament, Seattle Hand-

ball Cup, Nitro Circus “Off The Rails” World Tour, USA Artistic Swimming Rising Star Camp and Battle of the Flags flag football tournament. Over time, Snohomish County has established itself as a premier sports destination because event organizers are returning to host their event year after year. Some annual sports tournaments include Everett 3on3 presented by Boeing, Harvey Cup, Lake Stevens Pickleball Classic, Fairfest 3on3 basketball, Candyland Gymnastics Invitational, Ice Fest Skating Competition, EnduroCross and Spartan races.

The Snohomish County Sports Commission also works with several

local organizations that host annual sports tournaments and monthly weekend events throughout the year. These partners are Perfect Game Northwest Baseball, USA Softball of Seattle, National Softball Association of Washington, Snohomish Youth Soccer Club, Kayak Point Disc Golf, DieHard RC Family Park and DYSports LLC.

Washington State Scholastic Esports Association’s 2025 Spring State Championships was awarded the Champions of Economic Impact in Sports Tourism award, presented by Sports Destination Management. This high school esports competition was hosted for the first time in Snohom-

ish County at the Lynnwood Event Center, and it featured 32 high school teams that competed in Smash Bros. Ultimate, Rocket League and Valorant games.

Mukilteo welcomes Year of the Fire Horse with record-breaking First Lunar New Year event

By MARIO LOTMORE

MUKILTEO—As the Year of the Snake comes to an end, well over 650 people throughout the evening attended the City of Mukilteo’s first-ever Lunar New Year celebration on Thursday, February 12, to usher in the Year of the Fire Horse—an amplified and intense “double-Yang” fire cycle that occurs every 60 years.

Spanning from February 17, 2026, to February 5, 2027, Year of the Fire Horse is an era of heightened energy, ambition, and transformative action; in contrast to the Year of the Snake, that was a period of strategic reflection, subtle adaptability, and a focus on inner evolution and personal insight.

Hosted by the City’s DEI Commission, the event was its biggest, according to Chair Ilona Van Duser.

“My heart is full. My expectations were met and beyond. Thank you, Mukilteo for coming out,” Van Duser told the Lynnwood Times.

The Pointe Elliott Room of Rosehill Community Center became the focal point where several hundred people enjoyed a Tai Chi demonstration by I-Ching Acupuncture Center, Chinese Traditional Dance by North Seattle Chinese Dance, Korean Dance by Morning Star Korean Cultural Center, and a Taekwondo demonstration by Taekwondo Way.

Cultural displays created by students from every school located within Mukilteo-proper lined the perimeter of the event space along with Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese cuisine provided by Joy Teriyaki, Momo Bento, Pho Café, and Golden House.

“The community support and the turnout, I was quite amazed,” DEI Commissioner Simon Bai told the Lynnwood Times.

Both Van Duser and Bai shared that the commission’s upcoming retreat to develop their strategic plan for 2026, they will discuss making the Lunar New Year event a staple in Mukilteo tradition.

“It’s great to see that when you do something like this that people will come out and support it,” Mayor Joe Marine told the Lynnwood Times. “For me, the favorite were the drummers. I thought those were great. This is by far the DEI Commission’s most successful event.”

Mayor Marine shared that DEI in Mukilteo means bringing people together and celebrating culture; something the residents by their support want.

“A big shout out to Council President Jason Moon, he and Simon Bai have been able to reach the Korean and Asian community like we haven’t before,” added Marine.

The City of Mukilteo, led by the efforts of Moon and former Council Vice President Tom Jordal, have been actively pursuing a sister city relationship with Gwacheon, a city in Gyeonggi Province, South Korea. The partnership is intended to promote culture through events and ceremonies, attract Korean tourists positioning Mukilteo as a base for visits to nearby Seattle, and foster economic opportunities such as business exchanges.

At the October 20, 2025, regular meeting, the council signed a letter of intent to establish the sister city relationship. Following the letter of intent, the next phases involve drafting a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that requires approval from



The Year of the Fire Horse celebration at Rosehill Community Center on February 12, 2026. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

both the Mukilteo City Council and Gwacheon’s city council, after which a ceremonial signing will officially seal the agreement.

Feature organizations with booths at Thursday’s Lunar New Year event were the Korean Service Center, City of Mukilteo, Mukilteo Police Department, Asian Service Center, Korean Association of Seattle, Mukilteo Library, Taiwan Tourism, FineEvent Photo Booth, Snohomish County Human Services, Taekwondo Way, and Washington State Labor & Industries.

Volunteers for the event were the Mukilteo Youth Advisory Committee, Mariner High School Key Club, and Kiwanis Club of Mukilteo. Key donors were Mukilteo Beacon, Lynnwood Times, and UniBank.



Millionaires' Tax Showdown: Fears of Business Exodus vs Calls for Fairness

By MARIO LOTMORE

OLYMPIA—Washington state moved one step closer Monday, February 16, to creating a personal income tax. Majority Democrats in the Senate advanced legislation on a 27-22 vote to tax households earning more than a million dollars. Passage of the bill followed a three-and-a-half hour debate on whether this will make for a fairer tax code or harm the economy and incite an exodus of Washington's wealthy residents.

The hearing on February 6 drew massive public interest, with more than 80,000 people signing in to register positions—roughly 61,000 opposing the bill, 19,000 supporting it. Dozens testified in person and remotely, splitting roughly evenly between pro and con voices, with a handful expressing other concerns like calls for amendments. The committee waived its five-day notice rule in a 15-9 party-line vote to allow the hearing, drawing objections from Republicans who argued the public needed more time to digest the complex 62-page bill.

Committee Chair June Robinson (D-Everett) opened the session by suspending the rule over protests from Ranking Member Chris Gildon (R) and others, who called the rush premature given the bill's introduction just days earlier and a fiscal note released only an hour before the meeting.

Senate Bill 6346—also known as the “Millionaires' Tax”—introduced by Senate Majority Leader Jaime Pedersen (D-Capitol Hill), would start with federal adjusted gross income and make adjustments to arrive at “Washington taxable income.” It excludes long-term capital gains unless already subject to the state's capital gains tax, adds back certain state and local taxes deducted federally, and provides a \$1 million standard deduction per household—adjusted for inflation from 2030—and a \$50,000 charitable deduction. Non-residents of Washington state pay only on Washington-sourced income, apportioned based on activity within the state.

The Millionaires' Tax would take effect January 1, 2028, with first returns due in 2029. It exempts real estate sales, qualified family-owned small businesses, and retirement income from public pensions. Estimated to affect about 30,000 taxpayers—roughly 0.5% of households—it is expected to generate approximately \$3.5 billion annually, with 5% (\$175 million) dedicated to county public defense and the remainder to the general fund for education, health care, and other services. However, these monies are not earmarked for education nor health care and can be used as the legislature sees fit when it is allocated to the state's general fund.

During the hearing, Senator Pedersen revealed that although SB-6346 targets only individuals with at least \$1 million in annual income, no current law can permanently bind future legislatures should a future legislature expand the tax to other income brackets.



Senate Ways and Means Committee hearing on Friday, February 6, 2026, over Senate Bill 6346. Photo Courtesy of Brandy Kruse of unDivided.

“We don't have the ability to bind future legislatures, and I suspect that in the future,” Senator Pedersen (D) replied to Senator Chris Gildon (R) regarding possible expansion of the income tax. “We all want to make sure that our successors will have the flexibility to respond to the challenges that they see in front of them.”

Senate Committee Staffer Jeff Mitchell clarified with lawmakers during the hearing that pass-through entities like partnerships and S-corporations flow income to owners' personal returns, potentially subjecting them to the tax, though credits may offset Business & Occupation (B&O) taxes paid.

Senator Perry Dozier (R) pressed on any potential clause that would shield the bill from public referendums. Currently, the bill does not explicitly mention “referendum” in its text, but it provides for a delayed effective date of January 1, 2028, with first tax returns and payments due in 2029. This effective future date would allow time for a referendum under Washington law, as referendums apply to non-emergency legislation and can suspend laws until a voter approval or rejection.

However, Senator Keith Wagner (R), in his response to the Lynnwood Times, suggested removing or preventing any emergency clause language to ensure the referendum process remains available for Washington state residents.

Senator John Braun (R-Centralia) asked if real estate gains exempted under capital gains rules would remain, which Mitchell confirmed it would.

The bill starts with federal adjusted gross income, excludes all long-term capital gains and losses initially, then adds back only net long-term capital gains subject to Washington's capital gains tax (plus the standard and charitable deductions that reduced the taxable amount). Thus, real estate sales that qualify for exemption under the capital gains rules—such as qualified family-owned small businesses or residential property—remain untaxed, avoiding any undoing of exemptions.

Senator Matt Boehnke (R) had

a question about how this tax bill deals with college athletes, especially when it comes to money made from “name-image-likeness” (NIL) deals. He wanted to know if there are any exemptions or rules for splitting up that income if the athlete doesn't live in Washington full-time.

If a student athlete doesn't live in Washington, the state won't tax all of their NIL income—only the part that's directly tied to activities or work done inside Washington state, Mitchell explained. However, if the athlete is a full-time Washington resident, all of their income (including NIL) could be taxed under the bill's general rules, but with the \$1 million deduction applying first.

Public Testimony on Millionaires' Tax

Public testimony kicked off with Eli Taylor Goss, Executive Director of Washington State Budget and Policy Center, a coalition urging passage to “shift our upside-down tax code more right-side up” and fund health care and education.

Jed Fowler, president of HD Fowler Company, said he would owe the tax but supported it, arguing it fosters “shared prosperity” and is “fundamentally pro-business.” Fowler dismissed voluntary payments when questioned by Sen. Gildon, saying he wants a “progressive revenue base” for all.

Teacher Kelly Diamond from Spokane described overcrowded classes and urged funding to “bridge the divide between extreme wealth” and underfunded schools. King County Executive Girmay Zahilay backed the bill for lowering taxes on working families while funding affordability needs.

Opposition mounted quickly. Brian Heywood, a hedge fund manager and founder of Let's Go WA, warned the tax would hit small businesses hard, sharing that he knows over 50 high-earner couples who are already relocating domiciles outside of Washington state, including investor Billionaire Democrat donor Nick Hanauer, allegedly.

Former Attorney General Rob McKenna argued the bill violates the state constitution's uniformity clause in

Article 7, Section 1, that defined income as property taxable at no more than 1% uniformly, and urged a constitutional amendment instead. In other words, the Millionaires' Tax creates different “classes” of taxpayers as it doesn't apply to everyone uniformly, and that the tax at 9.9% is far over the 1% cap for property taxes.

Jared Walczak, Vice President of the Tax Foundation, a nonpartisan think tank based in Washington, D.C., that focuses on tax policy research and analysis shared that the Millionaires' Tax bill structure contained “unusual” elements compared to typical state income taxes specifically around its charitable cap, Marriage penalty, and effective rate when combined with Seattle payroll taxes, and pass-through entity tax credits.

“So, if this bill should pass, Washington's new 9.9% rate on the highest earners would yield a top rate of more than 18% in Seattle, counting both the employer and the employee side taxes,” Walczak said adding that, “This would happen without any meaningful adjustment to the state's business taxes.”

Walczak pointed out that the bill's \$50,000 cap on charitable deductions is unusually restrictive. In most states with income taxes, taxpayers can deduct a much larger portion of their charitable giving—often without a hard limit or tied to a percentage of income.

The \$1 million standard deduction is capped at \$1 million per household, creating a “penalty” where a married couple combined earnings over \$1 million but less than \$2 million will pay more tax than two unmarried individuals earning over \$1 million.

Walczak also shared the risks to Washington of lower economic growth and Washington-based companies choosing to locate their new hires out of state if Washington chooses to go against the trend of 26 states since 2021 who have cut tax rates.

Brent Frey, founder of Smart-sheet and TerraClear, said the tax would “destroy” incentives for hard work, prompting his company to shift operations out of state. Patrick Connor of the National Federation of Independent Business raised alarms over taxing undistributed earnings in pass-through businesses, potentially crippling cash flow.

Sean Graham of the Washington State Medical Association signed “other,” pushing for dedicated health care funds amid \$100 million annual B&O hikes on providers. Paul Jewell of the Washington State Association of Counties appreciated the 5% public defense allocation—estimated at \$175 million yearly—but sought a fairer distribution formula and more resources.

Candace Bock of the Association of Washington Cities sought city shares of public defense funds, noting they handle half the volume in the state of criminal cases.

Molly Gallagher of the Direct

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from page 1 **NICK BROWN**

cause it was the first time he was in a largely Black populated city and academic setting.

“Other than maybe Norm Rice, I don’t think I ever saw, in my childhood, Black people who were in positions of authority, both in government and business,” said Brown.

Brown continued his education at Harvard Law School and launched his career in law as a U.S. Army JAG Lawyer.

“I really, really enjoyed both the professional and personal experience of being a JAG. It was sort of a continuation of what I had seen in my parents, and something about military experience – working with people all over the country, serving all over the world,” said Brown. “The diverse experience of being a JAG Lawyer was really informative for me. Doing criminal justice work for the first time, which I never expected to be doing, serving in high intensity environments, that year in Baghdad during the way doing jury trials... The training and leadership experience really grounded me”

Despite these achievements, Brown’s aspirations remained anchored in broader public service. From 2007 to 2013, he served as an assistant U.S. attorney with the Justice Department, followed by four years as general counsel to Gov. Jay Inslee until 2017. At the time of his nomination by President Joe Biden on July 26, 2021, to U.S. attorney for the Western District of Washington — confirmed by the Senate on Sept. 30 that year — Brown was practicing at Pacifica Law Group. He was elected as Washington’s 19th attorney general in November 2024.

“Being the first Black AG gives me some unique perspective, just based on my own personal experiences, about the issue that concern communities of color that might be unique,” said Brown. “I also think it gives more people in the state that they have access to government in a way they might not have had before. We are most effective when people feel like they can have a connection with their government and it’s important that we have a connection with the people who are going to be impacted by our work.”

Brown noted his parents’ involvement in the civil rights movement. In their era — shortly after the *Loving v. Virginia* ruling legalized interracial marriage — envisioning him as the state’s preeminent legal officer and law enforcement authority would have seemed inconceivable.

“Through personal experience, and professional experience, I recognize the law can be used as a tool for good, and a tool for harm, especially for communities of color in particular,” said Brown. “As Attorney General, advocating for civil rights cases, environmental cases, I understand the impacts the some of the communities are facing. For me it’s trying to be present, and responsive, in those cases where they’re not easy. It’s easy as an elected person, and a politician, to champion for the things that most people would champion for. It’s much harder to stand up and be an advocate for people who might be less popular, marginalized, or vulnerable.”

This tenet holds particular salience, Brown added, amid an administration that instills insecurity, targeting and fear among immigrant populations.

from page 2 **LYNNWOOD CC**

wide authority.

Other council members, including Nick Coelho and Robert Leutwyler, questioned the necessity of some sections, such as directing staff amid a budget shortfall, and suggested revisions for clarity.

“I generally do not like resolutions. I generally do not like the performative nature of some of what councils have been doing,” President Coelho said. “That being said, I appreciate you have actual actions.”

Mayor Hurst supported enhancing community resources and outreach mentioned in the resolution and shared his plans for committee to work with organizations like LETI, Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest, and Washington West African Center, who have shown interest to address ICE activity in Lynnwood.

“I’m trying to do something even further, which is to have a community group,” Mayor Hurst said. “If someone in our city is detained by ICE, that we would find out more as far as what is the impact on that family, can we provide resources to that family.”

Mata agreed to revise the resolution based on the council’s and LPD feedback, including edits to sections on police intervention and resource development. She is encouraging the public to email her or provide public comments to further improve her revision, and plans to present an updated version at a March 2 work session, with a scheduled vote on March 9.

“I want this to be a really collaborative discussion,” Mata said. “I

don’t want to go through the process of these amendments ... if we can avoid it.”

Cities that have already taken the lead in similar measures include Bothell, Kenmore, Seattle, Mountlake Terrace, Everett, and Edmonds.

“A precedent is being set by some of our neighbors, and I think we should follow in their footsteps,” said Mata.

Currently there are some pending legislation in Olympia aimed to protect privacy, civil liberties, and immigration enforcement — such as a SB-5855 that would prohibit face coverings of law enforcement (passed Senate, now in House), SB-5925 which guardrails for privacy and civil liberties (passed Senate, now in House), HB-2165 that addresses impersonation of police (passed House, now in Senate), and HB-1710, an act relating to compliance with the Washington voting rights act of 2018 (passed House, now in Senate).

Trump’s Immigration Crackdown: How did we get here?

President Donald J Trump’s aggressive immigration enforcement, often labeled draconian by critics, stems from a backlash against policies under his predecessor, Joe Biden, which many Republicans blamed for record migrant encounters at the U.S.-Mexico border.

Biden entered office in 2021 pledging to reverse Trump’s hardline measures. He halted border wall construction, ended the “Remain in Mexico” policy requiring asylum seekers to

In his inaugural year as attorney general, Brown has initiated more than 50 lawsuits against the Trump administration, framing his office as a bulwark against federal encroachments and what he termed “elements of fascism” during a January news conference.

His office has contested measures (and won) it deems unlawful, including the diversion of over \$15 billion in congressionally appropriated federal funds from Washingtonians. These allocations supported education, nutrition programs, health care for vulnerable residents, housing for those exiting homelessness, and safeguards against terrorism and environmental calamities.

“We’ve also protected what it means to be a citizen in the United States of America. We’ve saved public health programs, including Washington’s mobile health clinics that take free services into health care deserts. Federally funded programs for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault will continue, not because of what the administration did but because what we did to oppose their proposed cuts,” Brown during his January presser.

As the state’s paramount advocate for justice, Brown has bolstered law enforcement by assuming over 70 criminal cases from local prosecutors and aiding the Criminal Justice Training Commission in disbursing millions in grants to police and first responders.

Last year, the attorney general’s office probed and, where warranted, pursued litigation against businesses exploiting workers — securing settlements for farm workers victimized by visa abuses that sidelined qual-

ified local hires.

Under Brown’s stewardship, the office targeted underlying drivers of housing unaffordability, such as monopolistic practices and predatory algorithms, while obtaining refunds for overcharged tenants.

In 2025, his team fielded hundreds of inquiries from young people via the HearMeWA program, addressing stressors like anxiety, violent threats and sexual abuse.

Brown attributes his accomplishments to diligence, unwavering commitment, active engagement and a lifelong pursuit of influential roles — a trajectory he encourages youth to emulate, emphasizing that impact stems from seizing opportunities.

“Sometimes you look at people in positions of authority and think they’re special,” Brown said. “We all bring our own talents and skills but I’m just a kid from Steilacoom, Washington, who went to public schools, did well, worked hard, and engaged.”

His email signature features “fight the good fight,” a mantra echoed throughout the office. Another, “We can do hard things,” originated from a post-fire school visit in Vancouver with former Gov. Inslee, where a student told him, “We’ll be okay; we can do hard things.”

As a father, Brown adheres to the precept that kindness incurs no loss, imparting it to his children. His approach emphasizes encouragement, introspection and compassion, he shared.

“I want my kids to be the kids who are nice to the new kid in school,” said Brown. “Being nice, honest, and being [an] individual is all I ask of my kids.”

wait in Mexico for U.S. hearings, and expanded humanitarian temporary parole programs for migrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. These changes, combined with global migration pressures, led to over 10 million encounters at the southern border during Biden’s term, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection data.

Controversies mounted as the Biden administration sued states attempting local enforcement. In 2024, the Biden DOJ challenged Texas’ Senate Bill 4, which empowered state police to arrest suspected illegal border crossers, arguing it violated federal supremacy under the Constitution. Similar lawsuits targeted Texas’ floating buoys in the Rio Grande and other barriers, with courts largely siding against the state.

Biden’s immigration policies also included relocating processed migrants to interior cities of the United States. Through his temporary parole programs such as CHNV, hundreds of thousands flew directly to airports in places like New York, Chicago and even Newark, straining local resources. Republican governors, including Texas’ Greg Abbott, exacerbated tensions by busing over 100,000 migrants to Democratic-led cities, prompting mayors like New York’s Eric Adams to declare emergencies—NYC spent \$7.5 billion and projected to end the year at \$12 billion in total costs for migrant services; Chicago reported \$2.5 billion by end of 2025.

Former ICE Director Tom Homan, now Trump’s Border Czar, shared security risks from Biden-era policies. In congressional testimony, Homan

noted over 2 million “got-aways” — migrants who evaded capture — saying authorities “know nothing about those people and they can be a security risk.”

Trump campaigned on illegal immigration crackdown, promising the “largest deportation operation in American history” and invoking Eisenhower’s 1950s “Operation Wetback.”

Upon returning to office in January 2025, President Trump declared a national emergency at the border, reinstated Remain in Mexico, ended catch-and-release, expanded expedited removal nationwide, and suspended birthright citizenship for children of undocumented parents — a move currently facing legal challenges. Recent enforcement surges have sparked resistance in mainly Democrat-led states.

In Minneapolis, ICE’s “Operation Metro Surge” led to massive protests under the “ICE Out” banner. Tensions escalated with fatal shootings: On Jan. 7, 2026, ICE agent Jonathan Ross killed U.S. citizen Renee Nicole Good, 37, when her vehicle was perceived as a threat and hit one federal officer. Witnesses claimed agents blocked medical aid.

Weeks later, on Jan. 24, Border Patrol agents shot Alex Pretti, 37, an ICU nurse aiding a protester. Videos contradicted official self-defense claims, fueling nationwide outrage and calls to abolish ICE.

As of February 2026, over 540,000 deportations have occurred, but tactics such as administrative war-

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rants and vehicle smashings, have faced further criticism with “Ice Out” protests by local residents have disrupting enforcement operations. Recent polls from Fox News and The New York Times reveal a divided American sentiment on immigration enforcement, with growing concerns over the aggressiveness of ICE tactics even as support for deportations remains split.

A Fox News poll released in February found that 59% of registered voters view ICE as too aggressive in its enforcement actions, marking a 10-point increase since July 2025.

This shift was particularly pronounced among key demographics: up 14 points among white voters without a college degree, 19 points among moderates, and 22 points among independents. Even among Republican-leaning groups, perceptions of excess rose, including 23 points among non-MAGA Republicans and 14 points among Republican women.

Forty-five percent of Republicans in the Fox News Poll believe ICE “almost always” targets illegal immigrants with criminal records, compared to just 17% of Democrats and 15% of independents.

Overall, 36% of voters now support abolishing ICE, double the 18% from 2018, with sharp rises among Democrats (up 34 points), independents (up 22), women (up 21) and white voters (up 20). Among those

deeming ICE too aggressive, 44% cited excessive force, 23% said it targets the wrong people, and 29% pointed to both.

Approval for Trump’s broader handling was mixed: 52% approve of his border security efforts (up 1 point from December 2025), while 45% approve on immigration overall.

A separate New York Times/Siena College poll, conducted Jan. 10-15, 2026, echoed concerns about ICE while showing even splits on policy outcomes. Fifty-eight percent disapprove of Trump’s overall immigration handling, with 40% approving. However, exactly 50% approve of deporting people living illegally in the U.S., with 47% opposing. Half also view Trump’s southern border management favorably.

Disapproval of ICE by respondents was stark: Just 36% approve of how the agency is handling its job, while 63% disapprove, including 70% of independents. Sixty-one percent say ICE has “gone too far” in its tactics, a view shared by nearly one in five Republicans.

Flock Cameras

Lynnwood Police Chief Cole Langdon continued the City’s conversation on flock license plate reader cameras and whether the City should proceed with terminating the contract via resolution or other appropriate legislative action.

Flock, or ALPR cameras, provide officers with real-time information

to identify and locate vehicles involved in crimes. The program was founded through a grant from the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA).

Two days after the first flock system came online in Lynnwood, on July 1, Lynnwood City staff were alerted that law enforcement agencies from across the country appeared to have unauthorized access to the data. According to then-Mayor Christine Frizzell, Lynnwood immediately began working with its vendor, Flock Safety, to determine how this occurred. The City noticed, on July 8, that by enabling a nationwide search feature, designed to allow agencies to query license plate data beyond their state, automatically created reciprocal access for all participating agencies nationwide.

On October 30, 2025, Mayor Frizzell and the City Council paused use of Flock Safety cameras in October 30, 2025 after identifying compliance concerns under Washington’s Keep Washington Working Act.

Councilwoman Isabel Mata announced during Tuesday’s discussion that she will vote to cancel Lynnwood’s flock cameras, to end license plate readers in Lynnwood. Fear of possible use by ICE for enforcement and lack of “trust” of the vendor with the community she said are driving her voting decision.

Lynnwood Police Chief Langdon shared that over the four months Flock cameras were in operation, car theft was down 58.7% and that the tool was successful in apprehending perpetra-

tors tied to identifying theft, robbery, assault with firearm, etc.

“We had over this four months people, 10 stolen vehicles that were recovered, two of which had firearms, and one of those car vehicles was taken in a car jacking in Seattle, they were held up by gun point and head up here to Lynnwood, and we got them using flock trying to steal a computer,” said Langdon, adding that an agency may not disclose, share, or permit access to ALPR data except in judicial proceedings. Technology can be a powerful tool to enhance community safety – but only when used responsibly. I stand by that we use this system responsibly.”

Lynnwood City Councilman Leutwyler alleged that the country is in a mass surveillance state and does not have faith in Flock’s ability to protect the privacy of searches and possible misuse from outside agencies. Lynnwood City Councilwoman Chelsea Wright also had concerns with possible misuse from outside agencies.

“Our vendor let us down,” added Lynnwood City Councilman David Parshall.

Lynnwood City Councilwoman Derica Escamilla thanked Chief Langdon for his presentation and shared she will be making her decision based on the feedback received from community members.

Lynnwood will take a vote on whether to continue or terminate the contract with Flock on Monday, Feb. 23. Lynnwood has a total of 25 flock cameras.

from page 6 **MILLIONAIRES’ TAX**

Cash Coalition praised expansions to the Working Families Tax Credit, eliminating age restrictions for childless adults and adding \$44 million yearly. Personal stories followed: Alina Swart from Asotin County said the credit covers her phone bill, easing family communication; Giovanni Rosario, a recent graduate, noted it would help young adults like him afford basics.

Gwen Goodfellow, an SEIU caregiver, supported the bill to prevent care cuts for vulnerable clients. Teresa Camarena, a Wenatchee childcare provider, backed the Millionaires’ Tax for what she called equitable contributions. Melissa Dingman, a MomsRising member, shared how state health programs saved her son’s life, urging the tax to counter federal cuts.

Suzanne Southerland of the Washington Education Association called it a “fairness tax.”

Critics, however, continued to express their concerns.

Brent Ludeman of the Building Industry Association of Washington highlighted restrictions on loss carry-forwards and income averaging, hurting developers. Michele Willms of the Associated General Contractors said the tax treats business revenue as personal wealth, squeezing contractors’ working capital.

Andrea Ray of the Washington Hospitality Association worried it burdens family-owned restaurants and hotels.

Troy Schmiel, a homebuilder, cited the marriage penalty—capping deductions at \$1 million per household—as effectively a “\$500,000 tax.” Max Martin of the Association of Washington Business echoed small business harms. Tim Eyman described the Millionaires’ Tax as “the jealousy bill,” violating Initiative 2111, an income tax ban in Washington state.

Jeff Pack of Citizens Against Unfair Taxes called it tyrannical, ig-

noring 11 voter rejections. Lori Lane worried about “tax creep.” Jessica Z who testified online opposed the tax, referencing France’s failed “solidarity wealth tax” that she alleged resulted in capital flight.

The Greater Everett Chamber of Commerce, in a statement, opposed the bill due to harms on pass-through businesses, urging members to testify against administrative burdens and double taxation risks.

The Ways and Means Committee is scheduled on Monday, February 9, to vote potentially advancing the bill.

Sens. Pedersen and Wagoner answer our questions on Millionaires’ Tax bill

Sen. Pedersen, sponsor of the Millionaires’ Tax bill, addressed with the Lynnwood Times after Friday’s hearing on two pieces of misinformation about the bill—claims that it hits non-millionaires broadly and a lack of support for measure.

“First, the only time in the last 15 years that Washington voters have weighed in on an income tax (I-2109 in 2024), they approved it by an almost 2/3 margin,” Pedersen wrote in a statement to the Lynnwood Times. “The proponents of the initiative to repeal the capital gains tax consistently called it ‘the capital gains income tax.’ The voters strongly approved it.”

Pedersen pushed back against critics who argued the bill would burden small business owners, stressing that the tax is designed to target individuals with Washington taxable income exceeding \$1 million after deductions.

“Owners of pass-through businesses are entitled to a dollar-for-dollar tax credit for all B&O taxes paid to the state,” Pedersen wrote. “For most business owners, this will significantly reduce (or even eliminate) their tax liability.”

Washington’s B&O tax is a gross receipts tax—0.47% to 1.75% depending on the industry—and Section 506 of the proposed bill allows full

crediting of these payments against the new 9.9% Millionaires tax. However, the credit doesn’t cover losses carried forward from pre-2028 years, which critics see as a gap.

Pedersen added that he supports increasing small business credits and charitable deductions as amendments to his bill.

“This is an opportunity to make our tax system fairer and more sustainable,” Pedersen wrote. “With these resources, we will be able to make investments in K-12 education, health care, human services such as mental health, and higher education.”

Senator Wagoner (R-Sedro Woolley) told the Lynnwood Times that the top 20% of earners already pay 60% of revenues the state collects, which he feels isn’t being reported to residents. Wagoner stressed to the Lynnwood Times that no where in the Millionaires’ tax bill does it earmark monies for “education, food banks, healthcare.”

“The brunt of the revenue would go straight to the General Fund to be spent or squandered (pick your term) by the majority party in whatever way they deem fit,” Sen. Wagoner wrote to the Lynnwood Times calling the bill “anti-marriage” for its treatment of combined income earners.

He warned of diminishing tax revenue returns as a result if the bill passes and alleged it will negatively impact small business owners “disproportionately.”

Wagoner shared that he supports any removal of an Emergency Clause and would like to add “No Supplant language if the legislature has specific intents for use.”

“Currently, Public Defense and the Working Families Tax Credit are specified uses in the bill,” Wagoner wrote. “Maybe that sounds good to some but nothing prevents the legislature from just changing it.”

from page 1 **FENTANYL**

than 1,000 in 2023.

Statewide, drug overdose deaths reached 3,477 in 2023, or about 45 per 100,000 residents, with fentanyl and other synthetic opioids involved in 76% of cases. Preliminary 2024 data show a slight decline to around 3,137 fatalities, marking the first drop since 2013.

Nationally, the crisis shows signs of easing. Drug overdose deaths fell to 79,384 in 2024 from about 107,000 in 2023, a 26.9% decrease, with opioid-related fatalities dropping from 83,140 to 54,743.

from page 1 **SEAHAWKS**

tial suitors, according to Sports Illustrated, include Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$249.9 billion net worth), Oracle’s Larry Ellison (\$211.2 billion), former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer (\$133.7 billion), who owns the Los Angeles Clippers, and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates (\$104.2 billion), all with ties to the Pacific Northwest.

Washington’s proposed “millionaire’s tax” — a 9.9% levy on income over \$1 million, supported by Gov. Bob Ferguson and eyed for 2028 implementation passed the Senate earlier this week on Monday, February 16. Combined with capital gains and payroll taxes, it could create the nation’s highest top rate at over 18% for Seattle high earners.

Critics argue that the Millionaires’ Tax risks driving wealth out, prompting relocation considerations despite the Lumen Field lease through 2033, though NFL approval would be needed.

Supporters like Ferguson and Democratic legislators say the Millionaires’ Tax only affects less than 0.5% of Washington state residents for fairer taxation, but for Seattle Hawks’s new owners, it may influence stadium deals or relocation decisions to tax-friendly states like Texas or Florida.