

Schools

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reformed comparability provisions. But compliance for those districts is not as costly as some might think – fixing it would cost only 1 percent to 4 percent of their total school-level expenditures on average.

As many as 28 percent of Title I districts would be out of compliance with reformed comparability provisions

— The benefit to low-spending Title I schools would be significant, as their expenditures would increase by 4 percent to 15 percent. And the low-spending schools

Experts say closing the comparability loophole is within reach and would provide meaningful help to low-income schools.

that would benefit have much higher poverty rates than other schools in their districts.

Budget

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carrying signs reading “Save our Services,” “Protect Our People” and “People of Washington are United.” A large banner read “Tax the 1% not the 99%.” A number of groups also planned to hold a candlelight vigil at the Capitol Monday night.

A small group of protesters in the House gallery unfurled a banner over the chamber and shouted for lawmakers to tax the rich and fund schools. They chanted that the plan to further cut education will hurt families, children and teachers.

“It is immoral. It is illegal,” they shouted. A few lawmakers watched the protesters while others ignored them. Troopers managed to quiet the crowd and escort them out

Lock-up

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A sexual psychopath unit operated for years at Western State. The Legislature repealed that program before creating new civil commitment powers in 1990, along with a secure, prison-like commitment center instead of a hospital setting. After a stint in Monroe, the center ended up at McNeil Island.

The facility currently houses about 285 offenders, or those deemed so dangerous the courts have confined them even though their prison sentences are over.

With the kind of austerity measures being contemplated to bridge a \$1.4 billion budget shortfall, Hunter told the newspaper he’s beyond the point of making political calculations about which cut will be popular. Every cut is hard now.

The remote island location adds \$6.6 million a year to the center’s costs, according to a consultant’s study released this month – or nearly \$23,000 per resident, the News

of the chamber.

Outside of the building, Albert Postema, of Snohomish, was wearing a rope noose tie to signify what he said was a “collective

economic noose around us.”

Postema, a produce and nursery stock

farmer, said that he went to his first Occupy protest in New York in September. He said he considers himself a conservative but is concerned about “economic and political

corruption.”

“The poor and underprivileged have been

Tribune reported.

Because of that potential savings, the Legislature could borrow some of the money it needs to fill the budget gap, then pay back the debt using the future savings from leaving the island.

Under one scenario, the financing scheme would allow lawmakers to capture \$44 million in this budget period, according to legislative staff calculations.

Lawmakers might have to subtract from

that the money needed to replicate the center elsewhere. The Department of Social and Health Services says that kind of renovation might cost \$48 million at Maple Lane, so the Legislature would have to skip some of those upgrades to achieve any sav-

ings.

Security would have to be increased, Special Commitment Center CEO Kelly Cunningham said.

Other costs would fall away. It’s expen-

taking the brunt,” he said. “How do you make cuts when others have been so greedy?”

Karen Washington, a Spokane home care worker, said she’s worried about how cuts could affect her clients’ ability to pay for medication, as well as their impact on her as a worker. Washington said that while the state needs to raise revenue, the sales tax increase proposed by the governor would hurt low-income workers like herself.

Washington said she hopes lawmakers consider other taxes, including removing tax exemptions for some businesses.

“It’s not an either or situation,” she said. “It’s not sales tax or cuts. It’s not education or health care. They have other options.”

sive to run an island, with its ferries and tug boats, separate power and water systems, and 4,400 acres to be patrolled.

Officials say they need 23 more workers next year – mostly security officers to patrol the island and boat operators to bring people and equipment on and off.

DSHS has been able to make some cuts. Ferries and barges run less frequently.

The agency was awaiting this month’s report on what the center could do to hold down costs, but consultants saw little beyond what had already been done.

They did suggest about \$500,000 a year could be saved by contracting out more of the food service budget, which has nothing to do with the island location.

The alternative to the new costs is finding a new site. DSHS officials say they wouldn’t do it without collecting public input.

Obamas’ Thanksgiving



President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, daughters Malia and Sasha, and Marian Robinson greet people as they fill care packages with food for Thanksgiving at the Capital Area Foodbank in Washington, D.C., Nov. 23.

OFFICIAL WHITE HOUSE PHOTO BY PETE SOUZA