

## Washington Property Tax Updates: Tax Changes Ahead in Washington?

Legal Alert  
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*American Property Tax Counsel*

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Washington's Supreme Court decided in *McCleary v. State* in 2012 that the state falls short of its paramount constitutional duty to fund children's education. The Court requires full funding by 2018 and interim progress reports. This September the Court held the legislature in contempt for inadequate progress. So *McCleary* will overshadow the 2015 legislative session.

Representative Ross Hunter has proposed a partial solution: a complicated reallocation of property tax funds between the state's portion and the local portion (see <http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/roster/rep-ross-hunter/the-levy-swap/>). If adopted, property taxes from wealthier counties would likely increase somewhat; taxes in less wealthy counties would likely decrease. Legislators will keep looking at other ways to raise taxes, too. To help taxpayers accept probable increases, Senator John Braun's latest proposal for tax appeal reform may show more promise of passing. Many tax practitioners see his newest proposal for a judicial-branch system as a considerable improvement over the current system.