



## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Washington Coalition for Open Government

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### **WASHINGTON COALITION FOR OPEN GOVERNMENT ADDS NEW BOARD MEMBERS**

**Seattle** – The Washington Coalition for Open Government has recently added four new members to its governing board.

Board members include individuals and representatives of organizations and professions that share a commitment to transparency in government at all levels in Washington state. The watchdog group offers educational programs, training materials and forums as well as recognition for others who promote access.

The newest board members are:

**Rachel Alexander** has been a reporter for the Spokane Spokesman-Review since 2014 and previously worked for the Walla Walla Union Bulletin as a reporter and as assistant web editor. She earned a degree in politics and environmental studies from Whitman College, where she also spent a semester studying in Ecuador and was editor-in-chief of

the Whitman Pioneer student newspaper. She is also a volunteer Spanish-language translator (Spanish) for SOS Health Services, Kiva.org and Mexico Voices; a Day Manager for the STEP Women's Shelter; and senior editor of Watsi, a nonprofit that builds technology to crowdfund health care globally. Alexander is also a member of the Online News Association and Investigative Editors and Reporters.

**Casey M. Bruner** is an attorney at the law firm of Witherspoon Kelley in Spokane, where he represents clients in civil matters at all levels of government. He has represented individuals, small and large businesses, and municipalities in varied areas, including professional and medical negligence, premises liability, contract disputes, construction defect and injury, and employment matters. Bruner also has robust practice in representing individuals, media companies and private businesses in Public Records Act litigation. A Yakima native, his mother and stepfather met when they both worked for the Yakima Herald Republic, and Bruner's time in the newsroom reinforced his support for people holding their government accountable through freely accessible information. He received a B.A. in economics and political science from the University of Washington and a J.D. from Seattle University School of Law.

**Stephanie Olson** is a litigation associate at Klinedinst Seattle, and formerly served as litigation counsel at the Freedom Foundation. She has a strong interest in open government and has litigated numerous Public Records Act cases at both the trial and appellate levels. She has worked on cases that led to published opinions in favor of open government, including issues pertaining to the intersection of labor statutes and the PRA, the PRA and records related to public employment, and state and federal constitutional concerns with records disclosure. Olson earned bachelor's degrees from the University of Illinois and from Wheaton College, and her JD from the University of Washington. Olson has already assisted on WCOG briefs in open government cases, in her ongoing efforts to ensure strong open government policies in Washington state.

**Dale Phelps** is executive editor of The News Tribune in Tacoma. A Kansas City native, he graduated from William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri and worked as a reporter

and editor at the Kansas City Star, including sports reporting. He moved to Tacoma in 1998 to become a senior editor at The News Tribune and later edited the business section. He is a longtime member of the Associated Press Sports Editors and served a term as the Northwest Region chair, and is also a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

WCOG was founded in 2002 by a group of individuals representing organizations with a broad spectrum of opinions and interests but all dedicated to the principles of strengthening the state's open government laws and protecting the public's access to government at all levels.

WCOG stands for the principle that transparency and public participation are essential building blocks of good government.

Membership is open to the public. For more information, contact Washington Coalition for Open Government, 6351 Seaview Avenue NW, Seattle, WA 98107-2664 or on the web at [www.washingtoncog.org](http://www.washingtoncog.org) or call (206) 782-0393.