



Representative

Hans Dunshee

2014
SESSION
WRAP

44TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Committees:

- Capital Budget (Chair)
- Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Appropriations
- Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Information Technology

Dear neighbors,

Now that lawmakers have finished work, it's good to be back home in Snohomish and able to report back on what happened this session in Olympia.

The good news is we finished on time and passed a balanced budget with no new taxes, and no new tax loopholes for wealthy special interests. After \$10 billion in budget cuts, this is welcome news. Our economy is healthy again and jobs are being created.

The bad news is lawmakers left town with a lot of unfinished business for next year. The House of Representatives – Republicans and Democrats – were more ambitious and wanted to do more for schools, teachers, transportation and construction workers, but the Senate didn't want to act on those issues.

That's unfortunate. I've been impressed by how well House Republicans have worked with us to solve challenges that face all of our citizens, especially basics like education and transportation. We need more cooperation from the Senate to get things done for the people of our state. You can't move forward when the gear shift is stuck in Park.

Inside this newsletter, you'll find details about the major issues we tackled and possible next steps.

There's also a short survey I hope you fill out, because hearing directly from you is important to me.

Thanks for taking the time to read this. It's an honor and a privilege to serve as your representative, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Rep. Hans Dunshee (D-Snohomish)
44th District



Balanced budget

Lawmakers finished work on time and passed a balanced budget with no new taxes.

For the first time anyone can remember, we also finished work with no new tax loopholes for special interests. This is important because every time a wealthy special interest gets another loophole, it takes money from our public schools and raises the tax burden on you and me.

What's next: It won't be so easy in 2015, because the budget passed in Olympia didn't do enough to meet the Supreme Court's order to fully fund public schools.

To meet the court order on schedule, we'll have to put about \$5 billion into our public schools next budget. It would have been smart to make a down payment this year, which we could have done not by raising taxes on citizens, but by closing a single loophole for giant oil companies.



Here is a picture of me getting a bill signed that will save millions for taxpayers. When state building and schools are constructed, now the focus will be on how the building is going to perform. Over the life of a building, only 30 percent of the cost is the initial construction while 70 percent is on the operating costs like electricity and heating. This change in the law focuses on those operating costs. It means less money spent on energy and operations. This seems like a little change, but it could save taxpayers big money, year after year.

Senate kills construction budget

The capital budget funds construction projects around the state. It passed with strong Democrat and Republican support in the House. But the Senate majority pretty much refused to negotiate. Instead, they voted down the capital budget.

That's unfortunate for our state, for the construction workers who'll be out of a job and for future generations. The capital budget constructs schools, colleges and parks. It also funds things like local water projects in small towns.

What's next: We can't afford to give up on building a better Washington for our kids and grandkids. There's a need to build elementary schools, high schools, college science labs and parks in every corner of our state. In 2015, there can be no excuses for not passing a construction budget.



Building classrooms for kids

The Supreme Court ordered lawmakers to do something about overcrowding, especially in the earliest years, kindergarten through third grade, when science shows one-on-one time with teachers is crucial for a child's success in school and life.

In the House, Democrats and Republicans united behind a creative way to reduce overcrowding in K-3 classrooms while creating 7,000 construction jobs around the state by dedicating lottery revenue to building schools.

House Bill 2797 would build classrooms in every corner of Washington and it passed with strong bipartisan support, 90-7.

Republican lawmakers co-sponsored the bill and pushed hard for it, but the Senate wouldn't allow a vote on the idea.

What's next: This issue is too important for our kids. We need to keep working to build classrooms and give every child a chance at a great education, not simply because the Supreme Court has ordered us to do it – but because it's the right thing to do.



Paying our teachers a fair wage

Another issue pointed out by the Supreme Court is the poor pay for teachers in this state. The justices ruled that part of our constitutional duty to fully fund education has to be paying teachers a decent wage.

Teachers have lost 16 percent of their wage value over the last six years. The state can't say education is important and cut the wage of those people doing the real teaching. Too many great teachers can't afford to stay in the profession.

This proposal was funded in the budget passed by the House, but the Senate refused to include it in the compromise budget.

What's next: The issue of fair pay for our teachers isn't going away. Our state used to be better than the national average for education spending. After \$10 billion in budget cuts, now we're worse than Alabama.

It doesn't have to be this way. We have to do better for our kids.

Coal trains and oil trains

Everyday people are right to worry about coal trains coating our neighborhoods with black dust and oil trains derailing – or exploding and wiping out small towns, as these trains packing Bakken crude have done recently.

I voted for common-sense legislation to deal with oil safety, and the bill passed the House only to die in the Senate.

What's next: These trains, and their safety problems, aren't going away. We need to work together with local first responders, safety experts and the folks who clean up spills on the best way to protect our communities from these threats.



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WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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What do you think?

I'd like to hear your comments and ideas. You can send this survey back by mail – or send an email with your thoughts to hans.dunshee@leg.wa.gov

How do you think I'm doing? Give me a grade. I can take it.

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

How is Washington doing compared to other states?

☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ F

Why do you think Washington state is doing well (or badly) compared to other states?

What's the biggest problem facing Washington state?

- ☐ Jobs
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Traffic gridlock
- ☐ High price of college

- ☐ Threats to clean air and water
- ☐ Crime
- ☐ Taxes and red tape
- ☐ Illegal immigrants

How would you solve this problem?

Mail your ideas to:

Rep. Hans Dunshee

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