



27th District

2012

Legislative Wrap-up



Rep. Jeannie Darneille

Rep. Laurie Jinkins

April 2012

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2012 COMMITTEES:

- Ways & Means (*Vice Chair*)
- State Government & Tribal Affairs
- Caseload Forecast Council

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2012 COMMITTEES:

- Health Care & Wellness (*Vice Chair*)
- Capital Budget
- Environment
- Transportation

TOLL FREE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE:

1-800-562-6000

HEARING IMPAIRED HOTLINE:

1-800-635-9993

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Thank you so much for your emails, hotline messages, phone calls, joining us at Town Hall meetings and visiting us in Olympia. Your input has been important in guiding our deliberations.

We're sending this Legislative Update jointly to save printing and postage costs. The budget has dominated the agenda as the state recovers from the global economic crash. Since the fall of 2008, the Legislature has cut \$10 billion from the state operating budget. Through these difficult economic times, the Legislature has always passed balanced budgets.

The budget challenges increased after the state Supreme Court ruled that the state has not met its constitutional duty to fund K-12 education. This ruling establishes a process for new funding for schools – but without new revenue, this will be at the expense of higher education, health care, and services to seniors, kids, and the disabled.

We all know that our budget represents real people. These are our friends and neighbors: the one million children who rely on us to provide them with basic education, young women whose lives have been saved through chemical dependency recovery programs, students relying on Work Study to pursue their education, workers looking for jobs, and single mothers who are able to work only because of state child care support. The impacts of the recession have been felt by everyone in our community; your bravery in the face of adversity is both heartbreaking and inspiring.

On our individual pages that follow, we talk more about our roles in the House and the projects we've been working on. You may notice we serve on different committees: Laurie is vice chair of Health Care and Wellness and serves on Transportation, the Environment, and the Capital Budget committees, while Jeannie serves as the vice chair of the Ways and Means Committee, and on State Government and Tribal Affairs. This is not an accident. We try to spread our assignments out so that the voice of the 27th District is heard across a wide spectrum of policy discussions.

Hearing from you is important. You can reach us by mail, email, the toll-free Hotline or our direct numbers.

It is a great honor to serve the constituents of the 27th Legislative District.

Sincerely,


Rep. Jeannie Darneille


Rep. Laurie Jinkins



Report from Rep. Jeannie Darneille 27th District



In 2011-12, my primary legislative responsibility has been the state budget. I've served for those two years as vice chair of the budget-writing Ways and Means Committee, in a time of large deficits and repeated spending cuts.

I'm especially concerned about the effect of the recession on children, including homelessness, lack of medical care, parental unemployment, inadequate nutrition, truancy, school failure, child abuse and neglect, running away, increased involvement in crime and decreased lifelong earning potential. Today, 284,000 Washington children live in poverty, an increase of more than 54,000 since the recession began.

In November, I co-sponsored a community forum on the effects of the recession on families. Children told their stories of not getting enough to eat, being anxious over a place to live, not being able to play sports, or missing relatives whom they cannot visit because gas is too expensive. Those children's faces were with me every day as I worked on the budget.

The most important contribution I've made to our state and our community during these last two years are my "fingerprints" on the state budget. With decades of experience in community organizations, I know what works in social services, and I understand the real impact of budget cuts. That enabled me to advocate effectively for preserving our social safety net.

The 2012 budget avoids cuts to education and maintains the safety net, including the Basic Health Plan, Apple Health for Children, the Disability Lifeline medical program and the Housing and Essential Needs program. We've continued to fund programs such as family planning and aid to parents transitioning from welfare to work.

I ALSO WORKED ON OTHER BILLS TO BETTER OUR STATE:

JUVENILE RECORDS – Juvenile records for arrests and convictions become part of consumer credit ratings, and low credit scores can be a barrier to young former offenders seeking housing, education, jobs and training. Even though the crimes were committed long ago, the records can interfere with their ability to get a fresh start. We've implemented a process for sealing those records so they are not barriers to success as an adult.

PROTECTING THE SAFETY NET – When the Legislature convened in 2011, Disability Lifeline assistance had already been reduced substantially and the future of the entire program was in jeopardy. I championed the creation of the new Medical Services and Housing and Essential Needs Support programs. These programs eliminate cash grants and instead provide limited support for health care, housing and essential needs.

HELPING OUR CITY HELP THE MENTALLY ILL – Legislation passed in 2005 allowed counties to raise sales taxes 0.1% (10 cents on a \$100 purchase) to fund treatment programs for mental health and chemical dependency. Every urban county has done that – except Pierce County. I sponsored a bill to allow the cities of Tacoma, Lakewood and Puyallup to do the same. Tacoma has now adopted the tax to expand its therapy programs.

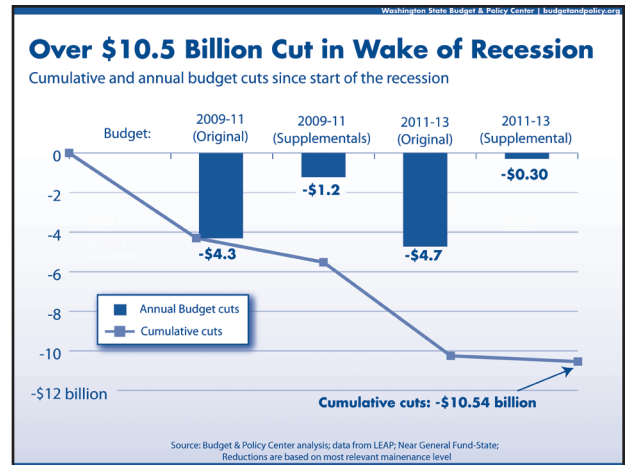
ELIMINATING OBSOLETE BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS – We've worked to save money and streamline government by getting rid of various state boards and commissions that really aren't needed. I was the prime sponsor of a bill eliminating or restricting 26 boards and commissions, bringing to 70 the total eliminated in the last three years.

MAINTAINING PUBLIC SAFETY – I sponsored and the Legislature passed several bills dealing with public safety. One reduces the publically funded cost of defense for sexually violent predators, and another assures "swift and sure" sanctions for offenders who violate the terms of their release from prison. Another protects the privacy of your personal information when using a transit pass.

Other issues I worked on did not pass into law, but I will continue my efforts:

PROTECTING YOUNG PEOPLE FROM CANCER – I introduced a bill to ban children under 18 from tanning salons, unless they have a doctor's prescription.

PROTECTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM VIOLENT CRIME – I sponsored a bill to have Washington join 26 other states to require DNA sampling when a person is arrested for any serious felony. This could stop serial criminals early in their crime careers.



HOPE AND WORRY



As I finish my first term as a legislator, I'm in a reflective mood about what I've learned, what we've accomplished and what is left to do.

What I've learned.

Lawmakers actually agree on most things – to create jobs, improve health care and give our kids a better education. The disagreement comes on how to get there.

Relationships make all the difference. In politics,

your enemy today is your friend tomorrow. You must build trust and never burn bridges.

What we've accomplished. We passed a budget that (a) did not cut public schools and universities and (b) protects the safety net.

Jobs Now – We also passed the Jobs Act, which builds the schools and infrastructure we need for the next 50 years while creating 20,000 jobs in every corner of the state. This is a huge win for people who work in construction, where unemployment is about 30 percent.

Marriage equality – Washington became the seventh state to pass marriage equality. If we've learned nothing else through the great recession, we have learned that we should do all we can to make sure every Washington family is as strong as it can be. Marriage equality takes us another step forward toward that goal.

What's left to do? How can we give our kids a better life than we've had? As the mother of a grade-school son, I know what it's like to worry about the future for our kids. We all want the best for our loved ones. It's time to have the conversation about our state's future.

Will our children and grandchildren get a good education so they can compete for the best jobs in the world?

There are two basic paths forward: (1) try to win by having no minimum wage, the lowest taxes and the least regulations on worker safety and the environment or (2) try to win by having the best schools and universities, the best health care and a transportation system that gets goods to market and people where they need to go.

We can balance a bit between the two paths, but anybody who tells you we can do both isn't being honest. You can't have great schools, universities and highways for free.

A race with China, India and Brazil for the lowest wages is a race we can't win, and the prize isn't worth it. I don't want my son, or your sons and daughters, to work for pennies on the hour without benefits.

Giving our kids and grandkids a chance for a better life will take creativity. It will mean tax reform, to take the burden off working families and the middle class so we can fully fund our public schools and universities.

THAT'S WHY I SUPPORT REFORMS LIKE:

- Closing loopholes that don't work – House Bill 2762 would automatically look at the billions of dollars in tax loopholes, with each loophole reviewed to see whether it really creates jobs. If it doesn't, we're wasting your money.
- Start with loopholes that do nothing for us – On the last day of session we closed a loophole that gives tens of millions of dollars in tax breaks to Wall Street banks. We also tried to end the tax break we give to out-of-state shoppers. I support putting that money into our classrooms instead.
- Passing real tax reform – Our tax system is obsolete and unfair. I believe we should shift our state away from the sales tax, which hurts average families most, and toward a capital gains tax, affecting only the wealthiest 3 percent of households.

Passing these kinds of reforms won't be easy. But nothing worth doing is easy. And I believe our kids and grandkids are worth it.

LEGISLATION THAT AFFECTS OUR FAMILIES BACK HOME

HEALTH CARE REFORM (HOUSE BILL 2319)

Most people work for small businesses, which struggle to offer health coverage. This reform helps those workers and businesses get health coverage through a new market that makes it simple to compare health insurance plans by price and benefits. Extra funding from the federal government will help with health insurance costs.

OPEN, HONEST INFORMATION ABOUT NON-PROFIT HOSPITALS (HOUSE BILLS 2229 AND 2341)

Non-profit hospitals are huge employers in many cities, including Tacoma, yet information about non-profit hospitals is hard to get. House Bill 2229 shines a light on CEO salaries and benefits at non-profit hospitals. House Bill 2341 requires nonprofit hospitals to tell citizens important information about their hospital and offering community, including any health needs assessments the hospital has done and its strategy for community benefits.

CLEAN, HEALTHY AIR FOR ALL (HOUSE BILL 2326)

Air pollution leads to health problems like asthma, especially for children, seniors and people who are ill. Washington's only county in violation of national clean air standards is Pierce – and we can do better. I worked with stakeholders to fix this problem. Half of the pollution comes from woodstoves, especially during winter. This legislation helps find a solution without hurting people who rely on woodstoves for heat. If that's your only source of heat, you're exempt. And that should let everyone breathe easier.

Rep. Jeannie Darneille
Rep. Laurie Jinkins

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Rep. Laurie Jinkins

IMPORTANT LOCAL PROJECTS

CONSTRUCTION BUDGET AND JOBS NOW

\$3 million	Pacific Avenue streetscape improvements
\$39.1 million	Tacoma Community College Health Careers Center
\$5 million	Railroad improvements to the Port of Tacoma related to import/export jobs
\$750,000	Foss Waterway seaport
\$1.5 million	Tacoma Hilltop Health Clinic
\$203,000	Broadway Center for the Performing Arts
\$7.2 million	Point Ruston shoreline restoration and stabilization
\$482,000	Affordable housing, Stewart Court
\$326,000	Tacoma Narrows airport pavement removal
\$3.5 million	Housing for the homeless
\$1 million	Cheney Stadium stormwater retrofit
\$3.6 million	Clean water projects at UW-Tacoma
\$7 million	Puyallup River bridge replacement at Tacoma
\$829,000	Clarks / Rody Creek stormwater project
\$5 million	UW-Tacoma campus development

MAJOR TRANSPORTATION WORK

\$254 million	I-5 Tacoma HOV lanes
\$5 million	Tacoma light rail platform and Lakewood commuter rail expansion
\$1 million	Point Defiance ferry terminal improvements
\$51 million	Railroad improvements (passenger and freight)

JOIN US FOR COFFEE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

- May 22, 10 a.m. to noon
Native Quest
2534 Jefferson Ave.
- June 5, 10 a.m. to noon
Fergie's on the Ave
3504 McKinley Ave.
- June 19, 10 a.m. to noon
Amocat Café
625 St. Helens
- July 17, 10 a.m. to noon
Mandolin Café
3923 S 12th St.
- Aug. 7, 10 a.m. to noon
Browns Point Diner
6620 East Side Dr. NE
- Aug. 21, 10 a.m. to noon
Antique Sandwich Co.
5102 N. Pearl
- Sept. 18, 10 a.m. to noon
Cavanaugh's Coffee House
3928 N. Cheyenne St. #B
- Oct. 2, 10 a.m. to noon
Blue Beard Coffee Roasters
2201 6th Avenue

