



**Representative  
Fred Finn**



**Representative  
Kathy Haigh**

# 35th District Legislative Report 2012

**SERVING ALL OF MASON COUNTY, AND PARTS OF KITSAP,  
GRAYS HARBOR, & THURSTON COUNTIES**

**Committees:**

- Community & Economic Development & Housing - Vice Chair
- Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Education
- Transportation

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Dear friends,

The Washington State Legislature wrapped up the legislative session a few weeks ago. Most legislative sessions prove to be quite challenging and this one was no different. But as difficult as this session was at times, we continue to be honored to represent you in Olympia.

With tough economic times still facing the state, the Legislature convened in January facing a projected \$1 billion deficit to our state's operating budget. We've cut over \$10.5 billion in state spending since 2009 and by most accounts, we were looking at significant cuts again this year.

The early budget proposals included several cuts that would have hurt rural communities all across the state. Things like:

- Cutting Medicaid payments to critical access hospitals that provide 24-hour emergency care in rural communities. These cuts would have likely shut down Mark Reed Hospital in McCleary and threatened services at Mason General.
- Deeply reducing funds to small high schools like our very own Oakville High School and Mary M. Knight Junior/Senior High School.
- Chopping state funding for county fairs.

Needless to say, these proposed cuts would have had a devastating impact right here in the 35th Legislative District and we both fought very hard to make sure they didn't happen. Ultimately, we prevailed and none of these cuts are included in the final budget.

We decided to send you a joint newsletter this year. Sending one newsletter instead of two saves money on printing and postage costs. We invite you to read through the rest of this newsletter to learn about other issues we addressed this session like:

- Creating family-wage jobs across the state.
- Funding education, the state's paramount duty.
- Bringing more transparency to campaign financing.
- Improving opportunities for our kids to get the education they need to claim the jobs of the future.
- Fighting back against the disproportionate impacts our budget has had on the women of our state.

Again, we are extremely honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve you in the Washington State Legislature. We look forward to hearing from you, so please contact us any time with your questions or comments.

Sincerely yours

*Kathy Haigh*  
Kathy Haigh

*Fred Finn*  
Fred Finn

**Toll-free Legislative Hotline:** 800-562-6000

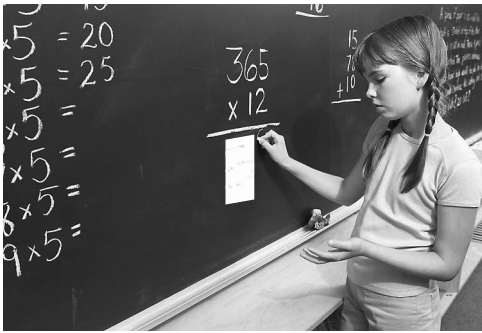
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### Education is my top legislative priority

We know that a good education is the surest path to a successful future. That's why my primary focus this session – and throughout my time as your representative – was on increasing and improving the educational opportunities for students around the state.

Long-term student success begins with quality early learning. And early learning is the right investment for our kids *and* our state — for every dollar invested in high-quality preschool programs, taxpayers save up to \$8 in future education costs.



We also want our kids to gain the skills they need to qualify for the jobs of tomorrow instead of losing out to employees imported from around the world. And, importantly for those of us in rural communities, we must ensure that all students, regardless of where they live or how much their family earns, get a good education and have a chance to go to college if they choose to.

This session, we took steps toward these goals by:

- Speeding up the implementation schedule for the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) to make sure each kindergartener enters school ready to learn.
- Creating a competitive grant program in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- Allowing schools to use open-source courseware, aligned with the new Common Core education standards, that is available on-line for little or no cost. We spend about \$65 million a year in textbooks for our K-12 classrooms that very quickly become outdated.
- Protecting funding for small rural high schools.
- Maintaining the state need grants for deserving students from lower-income families.

### Finding the funding for our paramount duty

As chair of the House Education Appropriations & Oversight Committee, I am all too aware of how the budget cuts of the last three years have affected our schools. Larger class sizes, fewer resources, and other cutbacks have made it more difficult for teachers to teach and students to learn. The state is simply not fulfilling its constitutional obligation to fully fund basic education.

This isn't just my opinion. The state Supreme Court came to the same conclusion in January's McCleary decision.

But the news isn't all bad. Three years ago, I was part of a team that developed measures which redefined basic education and replaced a broken, outdated education funding system. These measures were recognized by the court in the McCleary ruling as the right path to meeting our constitutional obligations.

So we have the right plan in place, but we need to find the money. This session, we established a Joint Task Force on Education Funding that will develop a proposal for a reliable and dependable funding source to support basic education. I will keep you posted on that work as we move forward.

### Protecting women from devastating budget cuts

It's true — in the past four years, we've had to cut more than \$10.5 billion from state services, and those cuts have fallen disproportionately on the women in our state. I worked very hard this session to make sure that we didn't continue this trend and, in the end, we were able to protect:

- Working Connections – child-care assistance for women transitioning from state assistance to work.
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – life-saving emergency grants for more than 60,000 low-income families, most of which are headed by single moms.
- Family planning grants – low-cost access to a multitude of important women's health issues.
- State food assistance – a way for low-income moms to provide their children a more nutritious diet.

## Why I voted “No” on the original House budget, but “Yes” on the final negotiated budget

Many have asked me why I broke with the majority of my party and voted against the original House budget.

I was deeply concerned about proposed cuts to K-12 education, public safety funding, and critical access hospitals. These cuts would have disproportionately hurt rural communities like the ones that make up the majority of our district. For example, the proposed Medicaid reimbursement cuts to critical access hospitals would have been a \$3.5 million hit per year for Mason County Public Hospital District 1. The hospital district has no place to shift these costs.



After much negotiation, including give-and-take from all sides, the final compromise budget protects rural school districts, hospitals and local public safety programs – addressing all my initial concerns – while also establishing some important structural reforms that will help better balance future state budgets. This budget was one I could support, and I voted yes on it.

## Paying for what we want

Being fiscally responsible means curbing unfunded mandates that require the state to spend money it doesn't actually have.

Across the country, state budgets have been hurt by the effects of the Great Recession. Here in Washington, our budget challenges have been made worse by the passage of voter-approved initiatives that did not include any funding mechanism to pay for them. For example, while I support class size reduction in our public schools, Initiative 732 would have cost over \$1 billion in the current budget cycle.

That's why this year I sponsored a constitutional amendment to require any initiative that costs the state or local government over \$5 million to specifically identify what new source of revenue will pay for it. The measure had bipartisan support, and both the Kitsap Sun and the Seattle Times editorialized in favor of it. However, the idea was also opposed by some interesting bedfellows who lobbied against it! Although it did not pass, it helped foster much-needed discussion about the realities of paying for what we want.

## Truth in initiative advertising

Robust public disclosure laws provide voters with better transparency about who is funding campaigns. I was proud to co-sponsor a bill requiring disclosure of the top five financial contributors to initiative campaigns in most advertising. This disclosure is already required for other types of campaigns in our state. The bill passed with strong bipartisan support.

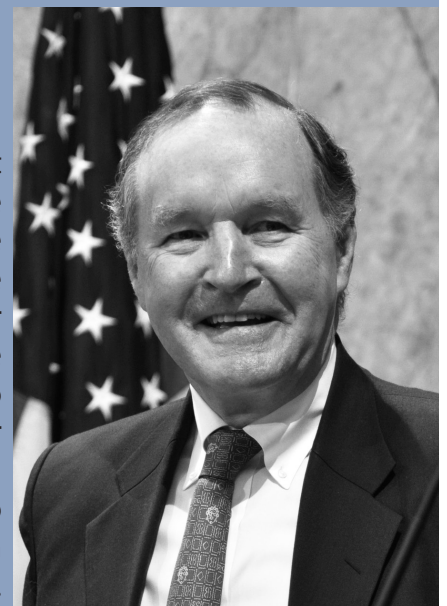
## The rights of military students

For two years, I've been trying to fix a gap in state law that hurts members of our military pursuing higher education degrees. Service members called up for deployments of **less than 30 days** can't withdraw from a course without penalty at this time.

I think it's important we give these men and women the same higher education protections the law already grants to service members who deploy for more than 30 days. My bill passed the House unanimously this year, but unfortunately got caught up in an 11th hour procedural motion in the Senate and did not make it to the floor in that chamber.



It's been a great honor to serve as your state representative for the past four years. I have decided not to seek another term, but will continue to remain active in our community.



# 35th District Legislative Report

## Investing in our communities Creating local jobs

We're pleased to report that funding from the state construction and transportation budgets will help support local projects right here in the 35th legislative district. These projects will improve our infrastructure, get people back to work in our communities, and boost the local economy.

Some projects that will move forward with this funding include:

- Pavement widening of SR 3 in Belfair
- New 12-inch water mains to replace 40-year-old 8-inch ones along newly-widened SR 3
- Housing projects for seniors and disabled citizens in Mason and Thurston counties
- A sewer line extension project for the Satsop Business Park, which will help create 150 immediate jobs and secure hundreds of jobs at the park in the future

- Improvements to the Hoodspout, Eells Springs, Bingham and Coulter Hatcheries
- A second, 144-car ferry for our state's fleet

## Job creation was a top priority this year

Statewide, our transportation budget supports over 43,000 jobs. We also passed a \$1 billion jobs package that creates 18,000 construction jobs immediately. With interest rates at historic lows and lingering unemployment in the construction sector, there's never been a better time to invest in our state's infrastructure.



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