

Christopher  
**HURST**

31st District  
Representative

Representative Dahlquist and I fought hard to keep as much of our district together as possible. Unfortunately, we will be losing some folks to the north and east Enumclaw, north of 416<sup>th</sup>. They will be replaced by some other folks in north Auburn and south of South Prairie and Sumner.

If you would like to see what the new district boundaries are, contact my office and we can get you a copy of the map showing the new and old district lines. I look forward to meeting all of the new folks in our legislative district, of whom there will be about 14,000, this coming summer.

### In Conclusion

Nationwide we're finally seeing a very significant uptick in American manufacturing for the first time in quite a while. There are two main reasons. First, consumers and businesses that held off making major purchases during the recession are now catching up by buying everything from major appliances and cars to manufacturing tools. The second is that production costs in China have been steadily increasing, and Americans are finally getting fed up with poor quality and seeing their friends and family members jobs outsourced to foreign countries. This resurgence and pride in American manufacturing jobs is great news!

In the end, our long term economic recovery and prosperity will be closely tied to our willingness as a state and as a nation to abandon the failed policy of buying poor quality inferior products from third world countries just to save a few dollars, while laying off and outsourcing the jobs of millions of Americans. This new momentum in buying American made products and supporting American jobs is just a part of the spirit that will bring us back together as a country, and help heal our divided nation. We will succeed as Americans when we look for the things that unite us, rather than the ones that divide us.

### Contact Me!

I like hearing from you. If there is an issue that is important to you please feel free to contact me and share it. If you have an idea that you think would help make your government run better, let me know. If you have a problem or need help with a state agency, I am here to help. You can contact either me or my legislative assistant, Caitlin Lopez at (360) 786-7866 or my district office in Enumclaw at (360) 825-4941.

When we are not in Olympia you can generally find us at our district office and you are more than welcome to stop by and meet with us. If you want to make an appointment ahead of time just give Caitlin a call.

Unlike most legislators and other elected officials, I am also happy to provide you my home phone number of (360) 663-2608 and you are more than welcome to call me there if you need to get in touch with me. Listening to you is the most important part of my job.

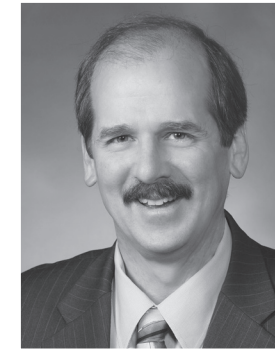
PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
OLYMPIA WA  
PERMIT NO 92

MAY 2012  
SESSION REPORT

31st District  
Representative

Christopher  
**HURST**

PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



Christopher  
**HURST**

31<sup>st</sup> District Representative

MAY 2012  
SESSION REPORT

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

If it seems like it's been awhile since I wrote to you, it has. One of the budget cutting measures state government faced was a 60 percent reduction in my mailing budget for legislative updates. You used to get four newsletters every two years but now I'm only sending one direct mail update and using the balance of my communication budget to run updates in the weekly newspapers. I hope you have had an opportunity to see these and appreciate that our tough economic times have resulted in fewer newsletters.

I went to Olympia this year understanding that families are struggling with underemployment, rising healthcare costs and deep uncertainty about our economy. The economic turmoil from the last several years has hit everyone hard. After a steady stream of news stories concerning the global economic meltdown and job losses, it's been difficult for folks to be optimistic.

Yet as Americans, it is our nature to persevere through adversity, and that perseverance is now paying off. Many of our unemployed friends and family members are starting to see new opportunities for employment. Manufacturing jobs, the life blood of the American economy, are now showing the most significant growth in many years. Unemployment is dropping. Financial markets and consumer confidence are finally starting to rise.

As always, it's an honor and a privilege to serve you, even through the last several difficult years when the challenges have been most significant. Today, there is reason for optimism.

Sincerely,



**31<sup>st</sup> District Representative Christopher Hurst**  
PO Box 40600 • Olympia, WA 98504-0600

#### Committees:

- Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness (*Chair*)
- Business & Financial Services
- State Government & Tribal Affairs

**Olympia office:** (360) 786-7866 **District office:** (360) 825-4941

**Hotline:** 1-800-562-6000

**Hearing-impaired line:** 1-800-635-9993

**E-mail:** Christopher.Hurst@leg.wa.gov



Christopher  
**HURST**

31st District  
Representative

## MAY 2012 SESSION REPORT

### Jobs, the Economy, and the Budget

The last two years in the legislature have been like no other in recent memory. The Great Recession, which began in 2007, ravaged our economy, in ways not seen since The Great Depression. Unlike normal recessionary cycles, which economists are able to predict with a certain degree of regularity, this global economic meltdown had impacts that were, before now, unimaginable.

Economists agree that the recovery has begun. The most important task before the legislature has been to create a competitive climate for job growth in Washington, and to reform our state budget so that it is sustainable in the years to come.

Finally, it's important that we learn the lessons of the damage that was created by reckless investment firms who took crazy risks with our money. Years of negligent federal oversight of our financial markets created an opportunity for crooks to nearly bankrupt our country. Although safeguards have been put in place to keep this from happening in the future, we as Americans must realize that the accumulation of too much debt, both public and private, put us on this unhealthy path.

Today, Americans are decreasing their personal debt and saving more for the future. It is past time for our national and state governments to do the same.

Finally, it's important that we learn the lessons of the damage that was created by reckless investment firms who took crazy risks with our money. Years of negligent federal oversight of our financial markets created an opportunity for crooks to nearly bankrupt our country. Although safeguards have been put in place to keep this from happening in the future, we as Americans must realize that the accumulation of too much debt, both public and private, put us on this unhealthy path.

### Supporting Small Businesses = Local Jobs

We all want Washington to be a business friendly state because strong successful businesses bring increased revenue for the state, jobs and help strengthen our economic recovery. In order to make Washington a place where people want to bring their businesses we need to keep the cost of doing business down. Two major costs for companies are unemployment insurance and workers compensation premiums. Last session I, along with several other moderate Democrats, looked at these issues and found a bipartisan solution to saving businesses and the state money. We made major reforms to these programs that not only benefit the employers but also the employees.

The Unemployment Insurance Reform bill did a few things. First, the State Auditor had told us that the state's worker compensation program would become insolvent if major changes weren't made. We solved the insolvency issue and in the short term this led to a reduction in rates for 90 percent of all employers last year. At the same time, it also leveraged federal money and extended benefits for unemployed workers. Employers saw their rates drop, and future dramatic rate fluctuations will be avoided.

The Worker's Compensation Reform legislation was also ground-breaking in that it changed what had been an unpredictable system where massive rate

changes were common-place, to one where employers will have certainty about what the rates will be. Additionally, workers got an important new choice and more control over what happens to them after a work place injury.

Once this policy is fully implemented, certain injured and disabled workers that are eligible for a full pension will have the ability to choose a structured, lump-sum settlement, rather than a long-term pension. This will allow them to receive compensation for their injury, guaranteed lifetime medical for that injury, and still have the ability to work down the road if they are able and wish to do so.

### Response to Citizens Survey

As your State Representative it is important to know how you feel about current issues. This past year I placed a survey in the local paper. I was pleased with the number of responses. The survey gave people an opportunity to answer questions, and also allowed them to share their own ideas as well.

The overall goal of the survey was to judge how the people felt during these difficult economic times. Many of the survey questions focused on people's opinions on raising revenue, the size of state government, and the economy. The survey echoed my belief that before we could look at increasing revenue for the state, we needed to first look at reforms that would improve government efficiencies. Taxpayers needed to feel confident that their money was being spent wisely and not wasted.

I also asked for suggestions from people regarding how they want their government run. Many people commented that the state should balance its budget, and I couldn't agree more. We actually pass a balanced budget every two years, which means that we only have a deficit if revenues come in less than what they were projected to be.

This year we passed a constitutional amendment that not only creates a balanced budget, but has a requirement that a budget may not create a deficit in the following two years. As a strong fiscal conservative I felt that this was one of the most important pieces of legislation that we passed in a long time.

### Bipartisan Budget and Reform Measures

Prior to the start of the special session in November we had a budget shortfall of \$1.4 billion dollars. We solved \$480 million dollars of that shortfall during the December special session. Then in February when the caseload and revenue forecasts came out, it showed a decrease in the number of people relying on state services and an increase in projected revenue.

The revenue forecast also projected that in the next biennium we will see a 6.6 percent increase in our economy. This is a dramatic improvement over the last several years when our economy was actually contracting. Nonetheless, we still had a budget shortfall that we need to address.

During the second special session in March and April we agreed upon a bipartisan solution between the House and Senate. On April 11th we concluded the 2012 Legislative Session by passing this budget, along with some very important fiscal reforms. This final budget made no cuts to funding

for K-12 and higher education.

This is the year when reforms will allow us to have sustainable budgets in the future. Some of the key reform measures are pension reform for state employees, parity and transparency for K-12 teacher health care, a four year balanced budget constitutional amendment, and a conversion of initiative 728 (class size initiative from many years ago) into a new policy that will meet the mandate of a Supreme Court ruling that the legislature fully fund education. These reforms are important steps to ensuring that the state of Washington has a sustainable budget in the years to come.

### Public Safety

As the Chair of the Public Safety Committee I also worked on important legislation that will keep citizens safe. After spending 25 years as a police officer myself, I enjoy chairing this committee as I get to use my background and actual experiences in the criminal justice world to help craft solutions that actually work on the street and in the court room.

There wasn't a lot of money to spend so we focused on making our criminal justice system more efficient, and implementing science-based practices that make sure that we are being smart on crime. The one area where we did increase sentencing was when drunk drivers kill citizens. Those offenders will see their sentences dramatically increased, and the money to pay for that will come through new revenue approved by the voters when they privatized liquor sales in Washington State through I-1183. Sen. Roach, Rep. Dahlquist and I were all either prime sponsors or co-sponsors of key pieces of criminal justice legislation during this session.

### Rainier School

I am happy to report that even with the budget shortfall, we were once again able to maintain funding for the Rainier School. Not only did we keep the Rainier School open, but also got 3 million dollars from the Capital Budget to fund an important renovation project. Keeping the Rainier School up and running is vital to protecting our states and our community's most vulnerable citizens. Investments in upgrades and renovations will not only help the Rainier School today, but also shows that the state is committed to this facility for the long term.

I am a strong supporter of the Rainier School and when budget negotiations come up, Sen. Roach, Rep. Dahlquist and I work together to keep funding for the Rainier School. This is an important issue to our community and I will continue to fight for it in the future.

### Redistricting

Every ten years, after the national census, redistricting is done by a citizen's commission that equals out the number of people in each legislative district. As a result, a lot of folks are moved from one legislative district to another due to growth in some areas and static populations in others. In the final plan we were able to maintain about 90 percent of our current legislative district.

*(continued on back page)*