



38th Legislative District

May 2012



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Technology, Energy & Communications, *Chair*
Education
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Judiciary, *Vice Chair*
Early Learning & K-12 Education
Human Services & Corrections
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Committee assignments:

Labor & Workforce Development, *Chair*
Education Appropriations & Oversight
Higher Education

Dear neighbor:

As always, it is a privilege to represent the 38th Legislative District. We're honored to serve folks who make their homes in our Everett, Marysville, and Tulalip communities and neighborhoods.

Thank you for your interest in state-government activities. It's our goal in this edition of your newsletter to review several top issues addressed in Olympia these past several months.

You know the economic story. Our state has been slammed by ever-shrinking revenues -- and by ever-swelling demands for services and programs for which those smaller revenues must stretch to pay.

The regular session was gaveled to adjournment on March 8, before we finished answering the budget questions. We went into a special session a few days later and then finally, after a very brief second special session, we found a compromise. Through it all, our cornerstone has been keeping unavoidable cuts as consistent as possible with our values.

The 2011-2013 supplemental operating budget is a very credible proposal in this very incredible economy. We finally convinced enough reluctant GOP legislators to accept a budget that:

- Keeps our earlier budget commitment to education at all levels.
- Maintains a good chunk of the Basic Health Plan for working families.
- Preserves the Disability Lifeline for unemployed workers and people struggling with mental illnesses.
- Funds essential public-health programs and other needed community services that help developmentally disabled folks and other communities in need.

Please don't hesitate to contact our offices with your comments and questions. Truly, your participation is always a great plus.

Take care,

◆ Representative John McCoy ◆



A world-class education: Every student in Washington has every right to good schooling

The education young people receive means everything for their lives ahead.

A topmost education is crucial not just in terms of good, family-wage jobs for individual citizens — but also, when you think about it, for the overall integrity and quality of life for every-

one else in every Washington community. I understand that for every dollar invested in high-quality preschool programs, taxpayers **save** up to **eight** other dollars in future costs.

Yes, every September, 70,000 kids enter Washington kindergartens with different skill levels. Some are fully ready to embark on their school years. Too many others are woefully under-prepared. We continued a preschool-to-kindergarten emphasis this session.

We're also accenting a STEM education: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics. We have strengthened entry-level aerospace-assembly training, and enhanced manufacturing-skills programs for skill centers.

The social safety net: Defending crucial programs for senior citizens, other vulnerable people

The 2012 Legislature preserved a good portion of services and peace of mind for senior citizens and other potentially vulnerable folks.

The **Disability Lifeline** and the **Basic Health Plan**, for example, are protected in the supplemental budget. We did the best we could to preserve:

- Adult day health care, which the governor's original budget proposal eliminated.
- The Senior Citizens Services Act, which the governor's original budget proposal eliminated.
- Agency-provider rates, which the governor's original budget proposal cut by millions of dollars.

Every citizen should have health care. Children and senior citizens, working people (*including small-business owners, who are some of the hardest-working working people*), and returning

veterans. We passed, and the governor signed into law, a new state standard to help implement the federal **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** in Washington.

The **Health Benefits Exchange** is a major component of health-care reform. I see this reform as a more efficient way to deliver health coverage. Individuals and families who don't have Medicare, Medicaid, or employer-sponsored health coverage — and who have an income below 400 percent of the federal poverty level — can apply for tax credits to help pay health-care premiums.

The **Health Benefits Exchange** will:

- Make it easier to shop for coverage and compare prices and quality of care.
- Provide health coverage for people who have chronic health problems or serious illnesses.
- Ensure that health plans sold through the Exchange include such essential benefits as hospital and physician care, coverage for prescription drugs, and rehabilitation and mental-health and chemical-dependency services.

A parent whose child is either in college or just starting in the adult world can get coverage through the parent's policy until the youngster turns 26. The new law also:

- Prohibits health plans from placing lifetime-limits on the dollar value of coverage.
- Restricts annual limits on the dollar-value of coverage, with the annual limits abolished altogether in 2014.

Health plans cannot reject children's coverage based on pre-existing medical conditions or include exclusions for pre-existing-conditions in their coverage. New or renewed health plans must cover preventive medicine, including immunizations.



Drug companies are providing a 50-percent discount on brand-name prescriptions filled in the Medicare Part D coverage gap. There are federal subsidies for generic drugs available through Medicare Part D. Most Americans will receive health coverage by 2014 as a result of:

- Expanded Medicaid programs.
- Tax credits for private coverage in the **Health Benefits Exchange**.
- New rules preventing insurers from denying coverage or charging more for pre-existing conditions.

◆ Senator Nick Harper ◆



Sen. Nick Harper, right, discusses the Senate Democrats' reform agenda during a press conference in January.

As a new dad, I'm constantly amazed by the little changes I see in our daughter June each and every day. They really do grow up fast. Watching June grow makes it clear to me what experts have said for so long, early learning is an absolutely critical part of a child's development.

Our state has long been a national leader on creating and funding early learning programs. As a member of the Senate's Early Learning Committee, I was proud to work closely on legislation that will keep Washington ahead of the national curve when it comes to our littlest learners.

Our state received wonderful news on this front back in December when we were singled out as one of nine states awarded a Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, which will bring up to \$60 million in federal funds to our state over the next four years to help ensure all children start school ready to succeed.

Thirty-five states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico all applied for the grant, which is designed to help states improve early learning and development programs for young children.



WaKIDS

One of our most successful programs is WaKIDS. This kindergarten assessment program is designed to help all kids in our state enter the kindergarten ready to learn. **House Bill 2586** moves the implementation of this program forward by enhancing parent and teacher input, requiring the program be a part of all state-funded full-day kindergarten programs with an eye toward all kindergarten classrooms in the near future.

Along the same lines, I introduced a bill to create a high-quality voluntary preschool system. Had **Senate Bill 6449 passed**, we would have established a voluntary preschool program for all 3- and 4-year-olds in our state that would have been phased in by the 2024-25 school year. While it didn't pass, I pushed for a budget proviso which established the birth-to-3 subcommittee of the Early Learning Advisory Council to develop a birth-to-3 implementation plan. This will lay the groundwork for a preschool system in the future.

Additional aspects of the budget strengthen our early learning system by providing further funding for WaKIDS implementation and supporting safety net programs for less fortunate

families that rely on programs such as Working Connections Child Care.

I'm proud of the work we accomplished for the children in our state. Although I certainly would have liked to have seen more bills pass that strengthened our early learning programs, we did some important work keeping the programs we have in place, and in many cases made them stronger.

Craft distilleries are an industry on the rise

You're probably familiar with the wildly successful wine industry that is currently flourishing in Eastern Washington.

What you may not have known is that this industry currently employs 19,000 people and has contributed \$3 billion to our state economy the last three years.

I believe that the state's burgeoning craft distilleries industry has the opportunity to replicate the success our wine industry enjoys.

Craft distilleries – small businesses which produce and bottle their own spirits – are on the rise, but we must do what we can to help foster their growth. That is why I worked to spare craft distillers from a retail license issuance fee of 17 percent on every bottle they sell from their tasting rooms. These businesses are just starting out, and a tax this high would have put many of them right out of business.

Oregon has already seen the benefits of a strong craft distilleries industry. In 2009 alone, our neighbors to the south saw \$413 million generated from its own craft distillers.

Fostering small business growth, especially during our tentative economic recovery, is a vital function of the Legislature. This industry is on the rise and its ability to thrive and create jobs is in the best interests of all Washingtonians.

A little addition to your home with a big impact

Hundreds of people die accidentally each year from carbon monoxide poisoning. A bill I sponsored will help make carbon monoxide alarms more prevalent in Washington homes.

SB 6472 requires that when a house is sold, the seller disclosure form must include whether or not a home has carbon monoxide alarms installed.

A seller disclosure form is a document which lists pertinent information about a home, things such as the sewer/water system, electrical system, roof, etc. A law passed in 2010 requires that carbon monoxide alarms be included in all homes built or sold after the effective date of the law. But many sellers were unaware of the law. SB 6472 will make sure they are aware of the requirement for carbon monoxide alarms and it comes into effect this June.

You can't see or smell carbon monoxide, but it has the potential to kill a person literally within minutes. Carbon monoxide alarms are just as important as smoke detectors. They are a valuable public safety tool and should be in every home.

◆ Representative Mike Sells ◆



On fighting the good fight

The Senate Republicans' last minute surprise budget maneuvering in the regular session with bills that had not been heard in committee or vetted by the people was not what any of us wanted. The resulting special session

threatened some closely-held values. Many of us were not willing to sacrifice them because of back room deals.

- Was this a good time to cut more support for our public schools or the higher education system? No, it wasn't and, after a long tug of war, we spared both.
- Is it OK to go after employee bargaining rights and earned benefits? No, it isn't, especially after many of them have already taken pay cuts through using the collective bargaining processes that are in place. Employees have made and continue to make sacrifices to help balance the budget.
- Should government invest in creating jobs? Of course! So we used our bonding capacity in the capital budget to put 20,000 people back to work in the construction industry where unemployment has been upward of 30 percent.
- Should we continue letting big banks get away with not paying their fair share? No, and after fighting for three years to eliminate the tax exemption for big, out-of-state banks, this year we finally did.
- And lastly, I think it's important to remember that a compassionate society takes care of its most vulnerable people.

Those were the values at stake during the lengthy budget negotiations; many of us think they're worth fighting for, so we did.

Supplying businesses with a skilled workforce

Boeing is the leading aerospace company in the world and we're lucky to have its largest manufacturing facility here to build the best planes. But there are more than 150 other, smaller aerospace businesses in our area. This huge aerospace industry employs about 44,000 people. In 2011, aerospace created more than 11,000 direct and indirect jobs.

If we want to keep this trend going we must focus on what makes us so competitive: our highly skilled workers, especially those holding degrees in engineering. But many of them, thousands, in fact, are approaching retirement age and not enough students are graduating with engineering degrees. We don't want our aerospace employers hiring out-of-state workers because they can't find the skilled workforce they need here at home.



In 2013 the Boeing Company will decide where to build the 777X, let's make sure we do everything we can to make Washington the obvious choice. This session we took some important steps in that direction:

- The final budget includes funding to expand engineering enrollment and an aerospace lab at WSU Everett to help train engineers.
- Passage of **HB 2156** will get more skilled labor into the aerospace workforce by requiring improved alignment between aerospace industry needs and training programs.
- **SB 5982**, creates the Joint Center for Aerospace Technology Innovation to strengthen the connection between the aerospace industry and higher education.
- We are also extending the Washington Customized Employment Workforce Training Program (**SB 6371**). This economic development tool was created in 2006 to meet the training needs of employers. In the last year, seven companies have participated and trained 300 potential or incumbent workers.
- We're increasing the Innovation Partnership Zones program (**HB 2482**) to continue encouraging the growth of regional industry-clusters. The program prompts economic development by boosting cooperation among the private sector, higher education institutions, and government agencies.

What about reform?

"Reform" means to change for the better. In tough economic times, reform maximizes limited dollars. Here are some of this year's government reforms at the state level:

- **Leading by example** – Several administrative and support functions of the state House and Senate are being consolidated to save money.
- **Less paperwork for businesses** – The state offers more options for online filing of business forms.
- **Cracking down on Medicaid fraud** – New civil penalties for false or fraudulent claims and whistleblower protections for those who report them.
- **21st century courseware** – Say goodbye to pricey, out-of-date paper textbooks as more public school classrooms shift to newer online courseware and digital textbooks.
- **Supporting new businesses and entrepreneurs** – Certain qualified people who are on unemployment can keep receiving it as they work to develop their own start-up business.
- **Less frequent drivers license renewal** – Extending the renewal period for drivers licenses from five to six years saves time and money.
- **Good old-fashioned competition** – New requirements for competition in state procurement ensure the wisest use of taxpayer dollars.
- **Reducing unfunded mandates to local governments** – Less reporting requirements for cities and counties provides regulatory relief.

No legislature in our state's history has cut or reformed more than we have since 2008.

2012 Report to the 38th Legislative District

Big construction and transportation projects that create jobs in our area

One of the biggest wins of this year's legislative session is passage of the **2012 Jobs Now** package which will:

- Put 20,000 people to work on shovel-ready construction projects in every single county.
- Give a boost to our construction workers and contractors who have been hurt by the recession.
- Fix our infrastructure – our schools, public buildings, and water and sewer systems.

\$19 Million in the Capital Budget for these construction projects:

Water Pollution Control Facility Expansion, Phase C	\$10,000,000
Domestic Violence Svcs Snohomish Co-Everyone Deserves to be Safe	\$2,500,000
Housing Authority City of Everett - Pivotal Point Apts	\$1,800,000
Everett Community College: Index Hall Replacement <i>Funds are returned due to lower than expected to complete the replacement of Index Hall</i>	-\$631,000
Everett Community College: Corporate and Cont Ed Ctr Renovation	\$4,000,000
Everett Parks Roofs	\$400,000
Everett Water System Extension to Tulallip	\$1,400,000



\$35 Million in the Transportation Budget for several projects, including:

SR 9/84th St NE (Getchell Road) Improve Intersection	\$2,588,000
I-5/Marysville to Stillaguamish River Vicinity - Median Barrier	\$1,154,000
I-5 Southbound/Snohomish River to Ebey Slough Paving	\$1,804,000
SR 529/Ebey Slough Bridge - Replace Bridge	\$15,639,000
Expanded CVISN-automated Infrared Roadside Screening	\$1,000,000
Community Transit, Swift Bus Rapid Transit Operations	\$2,500,000
Rail - Everett- Storage Track (ARRA)	\$3,563,000
Port of Everett - New Rail Track (FRIB)	\$1,077,000

For more information on the projects in the Capital and Transportation Budgets, please go to:

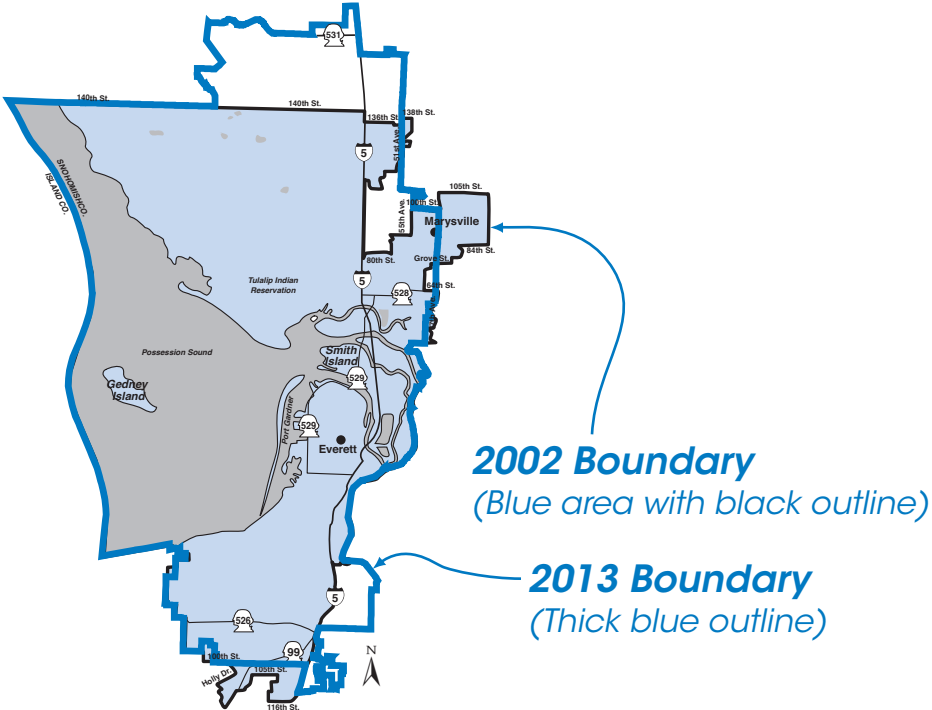
<http://fiscal.wa.gov/Maps.aspx>

Click in this field to see Capital Construction Projects or Transportation Projects by Legislative District or by County

2012 Report to the 38th Legislative District

Redistricting

Every 10 years, with the Census information as a guide, the Redistricting Commission is tasked with adjusting legislative districts so that each one of our 49 districts across the state has the same number of constituents. Here's a map that shows the new boundaries of our 38th Legislative District:



2002 Boundary
(Blue area with black outline)

2013 Boundary
(Thick blue outline)

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