

**Working for the
people and
communities of
the 37th District**



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Representative Eric Pettigrew



2012 Session Report

Dear Neighbors,

As one of your representatives in the legislature, I work as hard as I can to ensure that our values have a strong voice in state government. Now that the 2012 legislative session has concluded, it's time for me to report back to you on my work in Olympia.

It's no secret that the last few years have been incredibly difficult. We've been forced to cut or eliminate countless programs, many of which I support. The choices we've made are heartbreaking, and the consequences are felt in communities across our state.

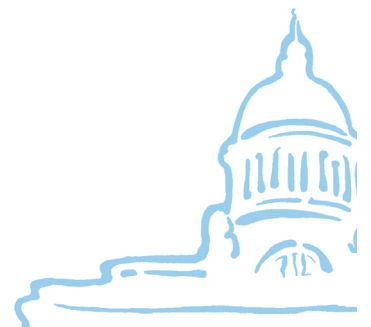
When we returned back in January, we all feared we'd be writing a budget that was much worse than the one we ended up passing. Thanks to some good news in the form of the first positive revenue forecast in four years, as well as some caseload savings, the budget we passed makes no further cuts to education and saves the safety net.

I hope you'll find this newsletter informative, and I welcome any questions or feedback that you may have. Contact information is available on this page, and I have a district office available to you. Please feel free to get ahold of my legislative assistant to make an appointment to meet with me one-on-one.

It's always an honor to represent our district, even in the most challenging of times.

Sincerely,

Eric Pettigrew



A BUDGET THAT PROTECTS OUR VALUES



In the past few years alone, we've cut nearly \$10.5 billion from our budget and the ramifications from these decisions can be felt across the state. They can be the difference between a single mom returning to work, a child getting extra help on their reading homework, or a senior getting the medical attention they deserve. This year we drew a line in the sand to save the safety net, K-12 education, and higher education in our state.

The budget we passed is balanced, responsible, and sustainable. It contains no

cuts to K-12 education or higher education. It protects important safety net services like the Basic Health Plan, Disability Lifeline, and family planning grants. Programs designed to give struggling Washingtonians a hand-up: Working Connections, TANF, and the Housing and Essential Needs program are all funded in this budget.

While the budget does contain about \$300 million of serious cuts that will affect many people, it is still a budget we can be proud of.



WASHINGTON HALL AND EL CENTRO DE LA RAZA TO RECEIVE UPGRADES

One of my primary goals was to pass legislation to fund important infrastructure project and create family-wage jobs. In the last few hours of special session, we approved a jobs package that will dedicate about \$1.6 billion into economic development projects and create more than 27,000 jobs here in Washington.

You'll be able to see these dollars hard at work in our community. The Capital Budget makes important investments right here in the 37th legislative district:

- Additional housing units for low-income families, seniors, and the disabled through Leschi House, Interim CDA, and the Washington Housing Equity Alliance.
- A new roof and interior improvements at Washington Hall.
- The historic El Centro de la Raza buildings will receive life-saving seismic retrofit upgrades.



SOUTH END SCHOOLS GET ADDITIONAL SUPPORT



This year the legislature took crucial steps towards ensuring that every student in Washington gets the education they deserve- regardless of their background, race, or the zip code they live in.

As we all know, nothing influences a student's learning more than his or her teacher and principal. This year we refined a new four-tiered teacher evaluation system that will prove to be much more accurate, and will ensure that there is a quality teacher in every classroom. A few of the changes include:

- Requiring multiple measures of student growth data to be a substantial factor in evaluating teacher and principal performance for at least three of the eight evaluation criteria.

- Defining "not satisfactory" performance for teachers and principals, and revising provisions related to probation for teachers.
- Providing that teachers who receive less than a Level 2 rating in their third year remain in provisional status until they receive a Level 3 rating.

I am very proud we passed legislation that will target our underperforming schools. The bill establishes a pilot program allowing colleges and universities to work with struggling schools to turn around student achievement. Collaboration and innovation are desperately needed in our public schools, and I am hopeful this partnership will have a positive impact on struggling schools across the state.

**"We have to recommit ourselves to making sure every child thrives in school."
–Rep. Eric Pettigrew**

In addition to these important improvements, I was able to secure about \$2 million for school improvement in some of the lowest-performing schools in Seattle. The school district will employ research-based initiatives like professional development, updated curriculum and reduced class-size to turn around student achievement. The information we gather from this pilot program will help guide future decisions in the legislature.

It was difficult to keep that funding in the budget throughout the long negotiations, but to me it was worth fighting for.



*Eric meeting with 37th LD constituents of all ages.
Photo credit: Linda Barnfather.*



MARRIAGE EQUALITY COMES TO WASHINGTON


Throughout our history, we've taken the necessary steps to end discrimination in our laws. The only reason I get the honor of serving on your behalf in the House of Representatives is because brave citizens stood up and said that separate can never really be equal. It may not have been easy or politically expedient, but it was the right thing to do.

Over the past several years, we've worked to end discrimination in our laws one step at a time. Back in 2006, Governor Gregoire approved legislation to end discrimination based on sexual orientation. Three years later, Washington became the first state in America to

vote in favor of same-sex couples when we approved Referendum 71.

These efforts culminated back in January, when Governor Gregoire announced her support for marriage equality. Throughout the legislative process, we heard from families, children, seniors and parents who supported recognizing a loving relationship between two people for what they are: marriages. Ending marriage discrimination is good for the institution of marriage and, more importantly, it's good for families. Children of gay and lesbian parents shouldn't think for one second that there is something wrong or second-class about their parents or their family.

The Senate passed the bill first, followed by the House of Representatives. In mid-February Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law making Washington the seventh state in the nation to legalize same-sex marriage. While the fight for equality may not be over, I am proud to live in a state that values all families regardless of shape, size or color.

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