



2012 Final Legislative Report

17th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
Spring 2012

Keeping in Touch

Email:

Tim.Probst@leg.wa.gov

Web page:

[www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/
roster/rep-tim-probst](http://www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/roster/rep-tim-probst)

District office:

108 SE 124th Ave., Suite 8
Vancouver, WA 98684
360-260-6375

Olympia office:

PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
360-786-7994

Toll-free Hotline:

1-800-562-6000

TTY (hearing impaired):

1-800-635-9993

Committees:

- Economic Development & International Relations
- Education Appropriations & Oversight, *Vice Chair*
- Education
- Higher Education
- Rules



WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Dear Neighbors,

Thank you for the privilege of serving you in the Legislature! To me, this job is about service to others, and getting real results. It's about an ethic of public service, respect for all people and points of view, and the competence to get things done.

On the economy, that means listening, learning and taking action. People are tired of short-term thinking. Most people see "stimulating" the economy – by pouring more debt-financed dollars into it – as a partial and temporary solution at best.

So I focus on real, long-term, structural reforms. Washington's economy must be built on a firm foundation. Cash stimulus alone is a foundation of sand.

The American people themselves are the true bedrock of our economy.

People all across Clark County told me we need to focus on our work ethic, our job skills, and our education. You told me Washington State should set itself apart from the rest of the world, by being the place where the best companies in the world create the best jobs in the world, because we have the best people in the world. And I listened.

For the last three years, I focused on the work ethic, job skills, small businesses, and education as the best way to serve the people's long-term economic interests. I call it the Washington Way.

As it turns out, it's not only a great way to build a thriving economy, but also saves the taxpayers money and strengthens our society as a whole.

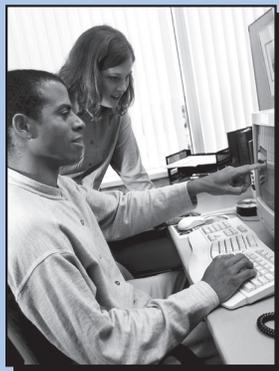
Inside this newsletter, you'll find information about jobs, education and balancing the state budget. I hope you find it useful, and I look forward to hearing your comments and ideas.

Sincerely yours,

Tim Probst

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What is the Washington Way?



It's an economy and an entire society based on each person's talent, education, and work ethic.

Washington is an extraordinary place. When we set out to build a thriving society with a stable and resilient economy, we do it the Washington Way.

1) Put people first.

The economy exists for the people, not the other way around. Private sector middle class job creation is our main economic goal.

2) Teach the work ethic.

Coupling education with direct job experience creates well-rounded students. Our kids will be ready for the workplace, and well-educated citizens of a healthy democracy.

3) Educate for the full richness of our economy.

There is dignity in all work. Each person defines success in his or her own way. The economy needs skills across the full spectrum: from technical training, via college and university degrees, through scientific research, in the skilled trades, and in art, music and other creative fields. A diverse economy needs them all. A vibrant society cultivates them all.

4) Reap the rewards.

A society based on people's talent, education, and work ethic will constantly surprise us with positive spin-off effects. Fewer people will need social services. Public safety may increase. The next world-leading company might be born right here in our own backyard.

Let's put the right forces in motion, and watch Washington lead the world.

Leading the Fight for Local Schools



Having the best people in the world -- and the best jobs -- means we need outstanding schools and universities. But in 2007, our nation's economy crashed, and nearly collapsed entirely. Now, we the people must decide how best to

handle this, so we can minimize the ongoing damage to our people, our students and our economy. Through this budget crisis, the biggest fear of local schools was a huge proposed cut to a fund called "levy equalization." That would have cut tens of millions of dollars for all of Clark County's schools, while preserving funding for many of the wealthiest school districts in the state. At our local schools' urging, I organized a bipartisan team of more than 60 legislators in 2011 to fight against this inequitable and unfair cut. We stood our ground again this year, and have once again defeated proposals to shift tens of millions of dollars away from Clark County schools and into wealthier districts in the Puget Sound region.



Long-Term Economic Restructuring

Our economy needs real reform—not just "stimulus." That means job skills, education, small business, and the work ethic! With a fantastic team of constituents and allies, here's what I've gotten done so far:

2009-10 Legislative Session

Passed the Opportunity Internships Act, providing hundreds of internships for high school students at local businesses, and enabling them to earn assistance with the costs of college or apprenticeship.

Passed the Opportunity Express Act, helping over 4,000 laid-off workers get retrained for new jobs in high-demand fields.

Passed two laws cutting red tape and fees for small businesses. Small businesses are the biggest job creators in our economy.

Passed the Evergreen Jobs Act, training more than 5,000 people for new jobs.

Got the WSU Vancouver Engineering Building built.

2011 Legislative Session

Passed the largest dropout prevention reform in over a decade, the PASS Act—saving taxpayers more than \$10,000 per year for each student prevented from dropping out.

Passed the Opportunity Scholarships Act, to provide college scholarships for thousands of middle class families this year, using a public-private partnership to reduce costs to taxpayers.

Passed a bipartisan law extending the grace period for small businesses to help

reduce state penalties and fees.

Required education institutions and state agencies to focus on expanding and strengthening the middle class and report progress each year to the Legislature.

2012 Legislative Session

Supported the YMCA Community Center renovation, bolstering community programs that teach personal responsibility and help our youths succeed.

Supported a successful four-year balanced budget requirement, the strongest of any state in the nation.

Helped small businesses by making state regulators more transparent and accountable for their actions.

Victories for You, During a Tough Year

The 2012 legislative session was about finding real budget solutions while protecting our priorities as a community. Though this was a tough session filled with difficult decisions, we were able to carve out some significant victories for students, small businesses and our economy. These victories are the result of several years of teamwork among many local constituents and allies across the state. As with most successes, the credit goes to an entire team of creative problem solvers.

Opportunity Scholarships

The G.I. Bill sent my Uncle Bob to college. He was the first in our family to go, and that decision has impacted generations of my family after him. Last year, I was hoping to find a way to protect the middle class from the looming increases in college tuition, by providing scholarships. But in the midst of the biggest state budget crisis in 70 years, I didn't think there was a very good chance of that.

In the end, though, Washington's private sector stepped forward with a possible solution, and over months of negotiation we designed the biggest new scholarship program in decades, funded up-front by voluntary donations from private donors. In March of 2012, thousands of new Opportunity Scholarships were made available for low-income and middle-income families. This scholarship reaches far into the middle class—more than any other similar program in the state's history. Families up to 125% of the average state income are eligible. For a family of four, that is about \$102,000 per year.

The state put in \$5 million in seed money to start the ball rolling for private-sector fundraising. Since then, private companies have voluntarily committed \$50 million to this effort over the next five years.

Even more companies will be contributing in the future, so more students can get Opportunity Scholarships, earn their degrees, get good jobs and boost the economy of our town and our state.

The first round of applications were made available this spring, so we will see the first of these scholarships distributed for the Fall 2012 semester or quarter. Please be sure to visit www.collegesuccessfoundation.org for more information about this program, including information about how to apply for future rounds.

Opportunity Scholarships will serve thousands this year. Personally, I believe it will serve hundreds of thousands of people over time — just like the G.I. Bill helped my Uncle Bob, and our whole family.

PASS Act

Getting our high school graduation rate to go up — fast — is non-negotiable. We have to make it happen.

The PASS Act, approved in 2011, builds a systemic statewide dropout prevention system. "I've been in the education business for 43 years," says John Deeder, superintendent of the Evergreen School District, "and this is the biggest dropout prevention reform I've ever seen."

Everybody talks about fixing the high school dropout rate. Now Washington state is doing something about it. This is all about the

kids. But it must also be observed that when our kids succeed, our economy succeeds, and our society as a whole is better off.

For every student prevented from dropping out, taxpayers save an average of \$10,500 per year. Local stakeholders and statewide education leaders joined me in advocating for this major reform, and together we have made a big improvement for Washington's students, economy and fiscal responsibility.

Career Pathways (House Bill 2170)

Addressing what you have said are two of your top priorities — jobs and education — I introduced the Career Pathways Act this session. The bill makes two fundamental changes to the education system. First, it requires that high school graduation requirements include a clearly articulated career and technical education pathway, in addition to the clear college prep pathway that already exists. Second, the bill requires that students and parents be given information about promising careers—including non-baccalaureate careers as well as baccalaureate careers—and the educational pathways that lead to them.

In addition to these two fundamental requirements, the bill establishes voluntary mechanisms to strengthen the connection between schools and local businesses, and to coordinate internship programs and other workplace experience opportunities. The graduation requirements and student-parent career information, combined with the encouragement to connect and coordinate with local businesses, strike the right balance to create lasting cultural change, so our students, parents and schools value the dignity of all skilled careers and the marketplace demand for them.

The bill passed the House with a resounding bipartisan vote of 88-7, and moved through the Senate Education Committee with an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 8-2. But, in the end, it did not pass the Senate. I will continue to work with you to make this reform next year, to ensure that all of our kids have the opportunity to succeed in school and move on to important and rewarding careers.

Small Business Regulatory Relief

In an effort to improve the climate for small businesses in our community, I worked this session to include language in the budget that allows small businesses to report anonymously on the professionalism of their state regulators, and that requires each state agency to designate neutral liaisons that small businesses can call if they have difficulties with their regulators.

Anonymous reporting is very important, because a business can be reluctant to report problems with its regulator, due to fear of getting in hot water with a person who has significant power over the livelihoods of the businesspeople. This is an area where government has too little transparency, and too few checks and balances.

Small businesses are the biggest job creators in the state, and they deserve the best possible business environment so they can grow and achieve their dreams.

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Keeping Kids Safe – Thanks to an Alert Constituent



A local constituent who works to keep our kids safe from sex offenders called me one day, concerned that the budget cuts included plans to reduce enforcement and supervision for sex offenders. Even in tough financial times like these, that is no way to balance the budget. I wrote an amendment to the budget bill and got that fixed. Protections for our kids against sex offenders were not weakened or removed.

offenders were not weakened or removed.

Save Money on Your Taxes!



Many seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities can save thousands on their property taxes. And many college students, and families with a child in college, can save \$2,500 on their federal income tax. Even if you don't pay federal income tax, the IRS will reimburse you for \$1,000 of your college costs. This extends to people with earnings far into the upper middle class.

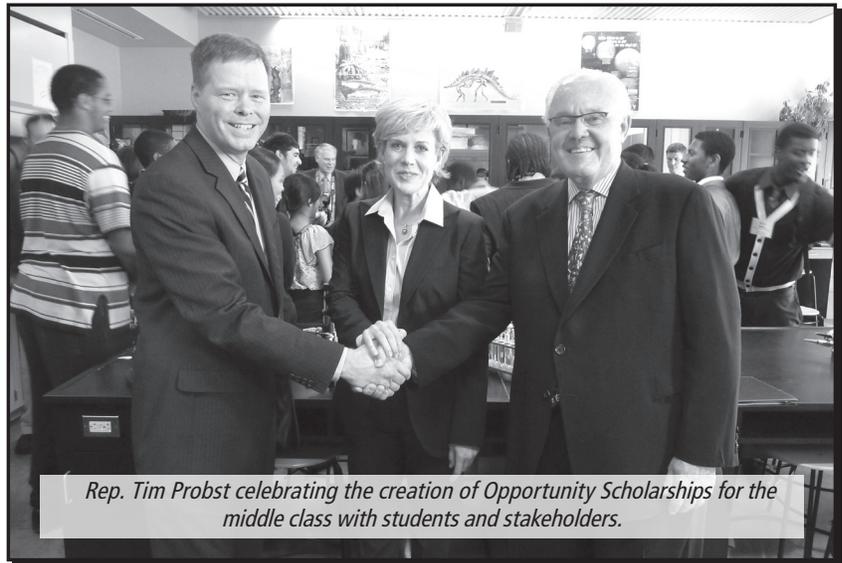
For important information on higher education tax credits, property tax exemptions, and other useful resources, please visit my webpage at www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/roster/rep-tim-probst and click on the "Constituent Resources" link on the right.



Town Hall Meeting 10 a.m. Sat., June 2

C-Tran Transit Center,
3510 SE 164th Avenue,
Vancouver, WA 98683

Please join me to talk about any questions or concerns that you may have. I would love to hear from you!



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PO Box 40600

Rep. Tim Probst

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