



Representative Larry Seaquist 26th District 2012 Session Review



Dear Neighbors,

WITH THE BUDGET REBALANCED, WHAT'S AHEAD?

We just wrapped up the legislature after a series of intense, budget-balancing sessions. Starting last November we sliced several more deep layers out of state spending. Almost nothing remains at pre-crash funding levels. I believe it is important for all of us, especially government policy makers, to understand that there is no going back. We must adapt to the new realities of a struggling economy. That means we have to permanently downsize state government. We must insist that every agency get even more efficient. And speaking as a legislator, we must also insist that the legislature itself adapt.

Why? Because many of our citizens and our businesses are still in a deep hole. We see friends and family out of work in every neighborhood, businesses running at slow speed in every town. We need to realign state government permanently to these new realities.

There is another reality. Unemployment and business slowdown is only half our state's story. The other half: many hundreds of high-tech manufacturing companies and export farmers are booming. The only thing holding them back is the lack of skilled workers. The future of these businesses and the futures of tens of thousands of our unemployed and under-employed citizens depend on our ability to expand our state's education system. Every Washingtonian should have the opportunity to step into a better job and a more satisfying career.

So my "must do now" worklist has two big items: realign state government with the fiscal facts of the new economy. And realign our higher ed system with the emerging opportunities of our new economy.

What's on your work list? I would very much value your ideas. Please e-mail, call or write — or let's get together to talk. It is a privilege to serve; I look forward to the work ahead.

Larry Seaquist

MY AGENDA: REALIGN AND SCALE DOWN STATE GOVERNMENT

Wall Street nearly wrecked our economy in the Fall of 2008. Five years of state budget crises followed. Safety net costs climbed as citizens lost jobs; revenue dropped as business sales slowed.

The legislature cut deeply to rebalance and then re-rebalance the budgets. We consolidated some state agencies, we cut state employee levels by several thousand. That job is not done. We still have a mish mash of agencies; we still have excess layers of senior managers and supervisors. One example: bypassing the crews' safety concerns, our ferry system recently thinned the crew on some of the boats. But on the same day the ferry headquarters ordered the cuts in sea-going workers they hired two more senior managers for desk jobs ashore. We have to do better. Here's what I'm doing:

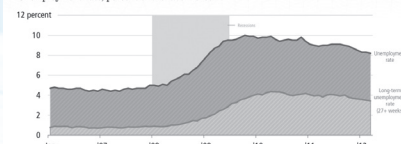
STREAMLINE OUR AGENCIES

Overhauling our state government is a big job — 45,000 employees in dozens of agencies. I'm working with other legislators on two big steps:

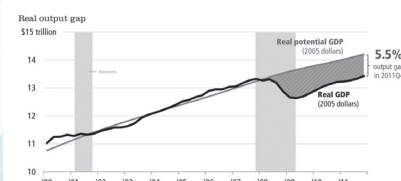
- Do what the military does to realign bases: charter a non-partisan commission of citizen experts. This independent board will also streamline the connections to local governments.
- Overhaul our top-heavy executive ranks. We have thousands of "senior" managers. Fewer can do the job, especially if we create a stronger climate of professional training.

16 The economy still has far to go to fully recover from the financial crisis

Unemployment rate, percent of the labor force



► Unemployment has fallen, but it still remains high.



► Economic output remains well below its potential.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Congressional Budget Office.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

UPDATE OUR BUDGET MAKING

For years we've relied on last minute deals to solve one budget crisis after another. I'm working with other legislators make the budgeting process more public in two big steps:

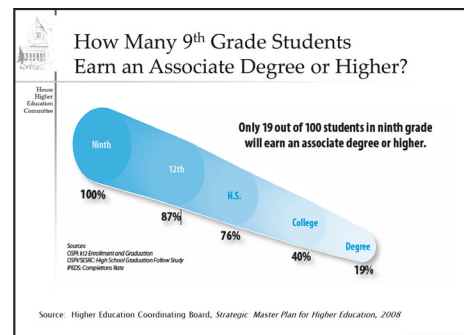
- Restructure our budget process to bring in much more public participation and get away from short term "fixes" for special interests with the biggest lobbying clout.
- Require the governor to deliver 5 year budget programs so both the legislature and the public can see that today's decisions lead to efficient, affordable programs tomorrow.

MY AGENDA: REALIGN AND SCALE UP HIGHER EDUCATION

The legislature's decisions on education link directly to the health of our economy. As our business leaders keep telling us, our decisions about the size and shape of our system of colleges and universities link directly to the success of our hundreds of high-tech manufacturing and services companies. Most of them are hungry to hire more people that we're able to produce. After several years of crisis budget cuts it is time to rebuild.

Our six outstanding universities and thirty-four excellent community and technical colleges are maxed out. We must reverse years of budget cuts so more people can earn more degrees and certificates. And we have to boost student aid so that everyone has the opportunity to turn his or her talents into a satisfying, productive career without running deep into debt.

The answer is not just more money. If we're serious about keeping Washingtonians at the well-paid front end of the global economy we're going to have to get a lot more creative. Here's what I'm working on:



A MILLION MORE DEGREES

Around a million Washingtonians have part of a Bachelor's degree or need to refresh their degree with a couple of courses. I'm working with educators and other legislators to create new ways for large numbers of working people to polish their academic skills and put them on a path to better jobs:

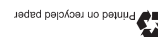
- I'm asking for a lot more innovation on our campuses. We need many more graduates; students need to get through faster at lower cost.
- I'm also asking our universities to deliver more courses in the work place – to bring the class to the working student.

A MILLION MORE STUDENTS

Way more than a million Washingtonians know they need at least some college to get a better job. But they are caught without the basic math, reading, or study skills needed in the classroom. I'm working with educators and other legislators to create new ways to deliver these starter courses to very large numbers of people

- I'm asking for the rapid expansion of low-cost, high-impact use of on-line teaching resources.
- I'm also asking our high schools and colleges to build better "on ramps" so more people can get into college faster.

“I want to hear from you! What are your ideas to scale down state government and scale up higher education? Call me toll-free anytime with your ideas at 1-800-562-6000.”



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