

Reviewing the 2012 Washington State Legislature

Scriber Creek Bridge: Key project will assist in restoring important part of region's infrastructure

This is a project that will go a long way in helping repair a significant piece of the infrastructure in the growing community of Brier. I worked to secure \$800,000 in the supplemental capital budget to assist the City of Brier with replacing the Scriber Creek Pedestrian Bridge. This bridge was badly damaged during flooding in December 2007.

Those devastating flood waters not only exposed the pilings supporting the bridge, they also eroded the creek bank and placed a sewer line in jeopardy. A recent sewer line break in Everett which dumped raw sewage into Bothell's North Creek is a stark reminder about the importance of the infrastructure that supports our communities, so I am glad to see this problem getting fixed instead of getting worse. Rebuilding this bridge will protect salmon-bearing waters, critical infrastructure, a pedestrian pathway, and public health.

UW Bothell construction money

The capital budget also includes important funding for the University of Washington Bothell. Using a combination of funds from the state, UW, and private donors, UW Bothell will build a new 74,000 square foot science building. This will expand capacity at UW Bothell for a thousand new students, with particular emphasis on science and engineering. The new building will include classrooms, a lecture hall, and 11 science labs.

This significant investment in our community will have impacts for decades to come. We are providing more opportunities for our kids to get a college education – a vital investment in their future. Expansion of higher education also provides a long term benefit to our business climate and helps generate good jobs in science and technology. In the short term, the construction jobs from this project will also provide an economic boost.

UW Bothell offers undergraduate and graduate-level programs available in day and evening classes. Almost 200 full-time and part-time faculty members are working with more than 3,300 undergraduate and graduate students.

Construction on the new UW Bothell science building will break ground this summer.

Discover Pass update

Last year we created the Discover Pass to help support our state parks. Based on public feedback, we passed HB 2373 to make some needed changes to the Discover Pass program. The changes include allowing the pass to be transferable between two vehicles, implementing a \$50 "family pass" to cover all vehicles in a household, and waiving the pass requirement for individuals if they are part of a group that has already paid a rental fee for use of a park facility.

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1st Legislative District

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May 2012

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's a terrific honor representing the neighborhoods in our Snohomish County and King County communities. Thank you very much for taking time to review my newsletter today. My report here features highlights from the budget and other legislative action from the recent session.

I believe it is important for the Legislature to reflect our shared Washington values and priorities. Please get in touch with me to share your opinions or concerns about our state government. I always look forward to hearing from you.

Thanks again. Best wishes to you and yours,

Derek Stanford
State Representative
1st Legislative District



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Committee assignments:

- Agriculture & Natural Resources, *Vice Chair*
- Business & Financial Services
- Education Appropriations & Oversight

Supplemental budgets: Protecting education and kids in a sustainable state budget

This year we spent an extra 31 days in special session, and ended up with a budget with strong bipartisan support. I am pleased to report that we avoided any new cuts to education, and we prioritized critical safety net programs like Basic Health and Disability Lifeline. We also now have the toughest requirements in the country for long range budget planning, and our state has an excellent credit rating.



The slowly improving economy helped the budget, but our public education system is still reeling from billions in cuts over the past several years. Our state constitution specifies that public education is our

“paramount duty,” and the Washington State Supreme Court recently ruled that the state is not living up to this obligation. As we move forward in rebuilding our public education system, we must focus on the basics that work: early learning, smaller class sizes, and prioritizing kids in our safety net programs so that they are ready to learn.



In our capital budget, also known as the “Jobs Now Act,” we make crucial investments in infrastructure all over the state. From sewers to schools, these are the public structures that our communities and businesses depend on to grow and thrive. With interest rates low and high unemployment in the construction sector, right now is a good time to make these investments. We get thousands of jobs now

to help spur economic recovery, and we get permanent assets that will pay off for years.

More budget details can be found online at <http://fiscal.wa.gov>.



Key health-care reform: Assuring basic medical coverage, consumer protection for every citizen

The federal **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** mandates a number of changes to our health care system, focused on increasing access to affordable coverage for all Americans. This year we passed a new state law (HB 2319) to prepare for the changes required by the ACA; this represents a big step forward for accountability, efficiency, and consumer protection in health insurance.



Do you have kids in college or just starting out in their adult life? Now you will have the option of keeping them on your policy until they are 26 years old. This new law will also make sure:

- Your policy won’t have annual or lifetime limits on the dollar value of coverage.
- Carriers won’t deny coverage for children based on pre-existing conditions.
- Preventive medicine, including immunizations for children, will be covered.

A major part of our state’s new health care law is the Health Benefits Exchange, which is a marketplace for health insurance for people who have not been able to get affordable coverage through Medicare, Medicaid, or employer-sponsored health coverage. Many of these people will be able to get tax credits to help pay for health care coverage. The Exchange:

- Protects consumers by making it easier both to shop for health plans and to compare prices and quality of care.
- Provides coverage for people with chronic health problems like diabetes or asthma.
- Builds sensible principles for consumer protection and provider selection.
- Ensures that Exchange-sold health plans include essential basic benefits, such as hospital and physician care, and coverage for prescription drugs, as well as services and treatment involving rehabilitation, mental health and chemical dependency.

Our state will see significant savings as the Affordable Care Act comes into effect by 2014. With better preventive care, many expensive problems will simply be avoided. As more uninsured people – especially kids – get

coverage and access to routine care, there will be fewer unnecessary and expensive emergency room visits. As Medicaid expands to cover more people, fewer families will face bankruptcy from medical costs. Best of all is the improved quality of life and peace of mind when everyone has access to essential health care.

Safer streets: Washington increases accountability with updates to our drunken driving laws

The legislature spent some time this session focused on our drunk driving laws. Several proposals were considered for more efficient enforcement and to make sure drunk drivers are held accountable for their actions – even if it is a first offense. Too many families in our state have suffered because of drunk driving tragedies, and we need to make sure that people who place others in danger get the message that drunk driving is not acceptable. I was proud to co-sponsor and vote for several measures to improve our drunk driving laws.

- HB 2443 strengthens Washington’s nation-leading ignition-interlock program by adding cameras to the devices—at no cost to the state—to prevent offenders from gaming the system. Other reforms in the bill increase offender liability for emergency-response costs, prevent felony DUI offenses from being vacated by courts, and add “huffing” chemical vapors to the conditions that fall under DUI laws. This law takes effect August 1, 2012.
- HB 2302 increases financial penalties for drunk driving offenses when a child under age 16 is in the car—and triples the amount of time an ignition interlock device must be on the offender’s vehicles, from 60 days to six months. This law takes effect June 7, 2012.
- HB 1556 would triple the mandatory minimum sentence for a first-time DUI offense from one day to three days in jail and require the offender to pay for the cost of incarceration. This bill was passed by the House, but did not make it through the Senate. It will be reintroduced again next session.

