



# Representative Steve Kirby

## 29th District

Summer 2013

Dear Neighbor,

Welcome to the 29th Legislative District! (I know: You didn't ask to be put into a new district, but the folks who redraw the lines after each census made that decision). I'm Steve Kirby, and I am now one of your state representatives. I want to introduce myself and provide a quick update on the 2013 legislative sessions that just ended.

I'm the senior member from Pierce County in the majority party of the House of Representatives, and my style might be a little different from what you've seen in the past. Some politicians get elected, go to Olympia, vote against everything and then blame everyone else for not getting things done. That's not how I do things.

I've always done my best to put people ahead of partisan politics. The way I see it, I'm not elected to do the work of the political parties. I'm elected to do the work of the people.

When I got back from Olympia, the headline in The News Tribune was **Legislators Pass Budget, Not Much Else**. They must have been covering a legislature on another planet because the one in Olympia was busy.

We passed more than 300 bills. Those bills continue work on important transportation projects under way (maintaining thousands of jobs across the state), give foster children more educational opportunities, improve protections for victims of stalking and increase public safety when it comes to mentally-ill offenders—just to list a few of the things they accomplish.

We knew from the start that agreeing on a state budget for 2013-15 would be tough. Our state is still struggling to come out of the Great Recession. We'd already cut \$12 billion from state services in the last five years, and then the state Supreme Court issued the McCleary school-funding decision in 2012 that added more than \$1 billion to our challenges for the next two-year budget cycle.

In times like these, we need more cooperation—and less confrontation. We need legislators who can reach across the aisle—Democrats and Republicans working side by side to solve problems—because that's what it takes to get things done.

Unfortunately, that's not what we got. Instead, a new Republican-dominated majority took over the state Senate, and they held the budget hostage for months in an attempt to get their unrelated pet bills passed—bills that protect their special-interest friends. Their recklessness brought us to the brink of a catastrophic government shutdown.

The rest of us simply wanted a final budget that reflects the core values of Washington: providing quality education, building our economy, and protecting our children, the elderly and people with disabilities. But the Senate Republicans insisted on preserving and increasing tax breaks and loopholes for big corporations—rigging the system so that the well-connected operators end up paying less than everyone else. That takes money away from schools and colleges and puts an unfair burden on middle-class families.

It shouldn't be that way—but that's something we can continue working on in the next regular session in January. Stay tuned.

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### Committees:

- Business & Financial Services  
– Chair
- Government Accountability & Oversight
- Judiciary





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