

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 1885



Spring 2014

Dear neighbors,

My first session as a legislator has come to a close and I am very pleased to have hit the ground running in Olympia. I believe I utilized the relationships that I've cultivated for years to help advance the values that we in the 21st Legislative District hold dear. I personally championed two key pieces of legislation regarding public education and privacy concerns, and I also co-sponsored a wide range of bills that made it to the governor's desk.

In particular, this year marked the passage of the Dream Act, which ensures that every Washingtonian has an equal opportunity for a college education. We also continued to put the brakes on the ever-rising cost of college by capping tuition at current levels. And, in our adjustments to the K-12 budget, we dedicated an additional \$58 million for our public schools for books, technology, and supplies.

This session we also maintained our strong commitment to strengthening Washington's safety net to protect our most vulnerable citizens. We made landmark investments in mental health, addressed long-term funding to provide safe and secure shelter for the homeless, and made critical improvements to our foster care system.

I am keenly aware that many of our state's biggest challenges remain in need of solutions. This session a few of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle let their extremist ideology stand in the way of core functions of state government. Our state is desperately in need of crucial investments in infrastructure and we would all benefit from the thousands of jobs we could create by building improvements to our roads, our ports, and our schools.

I am committed to working with every member of the legislature to address these challenges, and look forward to the opportunity to find innovative approaches that work for Washington. From fully funding education and reducing class size in our schools, to supporting our teachers with a long-overdue cost of living adjustment, I am confident that we will find collaborative ways to move forward.

In this newsletter I have included some greater detail about the bills I supported, and about some of the key victories from this legislative session. I am privileged to serve you in Olympia, and thankful that you've taken the time to read this message. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your concerns or ideas and I look forward to being of whatever assistance that I can.

All the best,

Lillian Ortiz-Self



Rep. Lillian Ortiz-Self on the House Floor with her desk-mate, Rep. Judy Clibborn.

Stay in touch!

330 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Phone: (360) 786-7972

Email: Lillian.Ortiz-Self@leg.wa.gov

Committee Assignments:

- Early Learning & Human Services
- Environment
- Transportation

Mark your calendar:

Sen. Marko Lias and I will host a telephone town hall on Thursday, May 8th at 6 pm. We'll call many households in the district at random. If you don't get a call but want to participate, the toll-free call-in number is 877-229-8493 with ID code 18646. Hope you will join us!

Protecting our most vulnerable



More than half of the money spent to address homelessness across the state comes from a \$40 fee on deeds, mortgages, leases and other real-estate documents filed with county auditors. This fee was scheduled to be reduced by 75% in three years, threatening to leave more than 30,000 people without shelter. Senate Bill 5875 extends the fee to 2019, ensuring that over \$200 million in funding are provided for emergency shelters, transitional housing, rental assistance, and other homeless assistance funding.

Sometimes, the last minute counts. House Bill 2335, which extends foster care services to former foster children who work part-time jobs for at least 80 hours per month, was the last piece of legislation passed right before adjourning for the year. This bill was sponsored by my seatmate, Rep. Mary Helen Roberts, who has announced she is retiring after ten years of service. She has been a true champion for children in our state and will be sorely missed. I feel very fortunate that I had a chance to work with her this session, and intend to carry on her legacy as a champion for children and families in our state.



My bills

My student success measure, **HB 2739** requires a geographic analysis to identify communities where the effects of employment, health, safety and stability correlate with academic and behavioral indicators of student success. We need this information to target strategic interventions where they are needed the most. This is particularly timely, as it will help us build our education platform for next year to ensure we make the appropriate investments to help students with multiple needs and barriers succeed in school.

My other bill, **HB 2724**, will protect the locations of tribal burial grounds and other archaeological sites. The goal of this legislation is to prevent sites from being accidentally disturbed during development, which is only possible if local governments and state agencies know where these sites are located. Sadly, we also continue to have reports of grave-robbing – almost unthinkable in this day and age. But this bill will go a long way toward protecting this critical part of our state’s history.

Giving everyone a chance at college

There’s good news on the higher education front. For starters, the state budget froze college tuition for the second year in a row, after years and years of big increases during the global recession.

Also, the legislature finally approved the Dream Act (**SB 6523**), long-sought here in Washington (and already on the books in many other states), which levels the playing field to give all hardworking young people who qualify for college a chance to apply for financial aid.

We’re talking about students who were brought as little kids to the United States. They’ve worked hard, they’ve finished high school, and they understandably embrace the dream of earning a higher education. Now, at last, this new state law allows them the same rights as their peers to apply for a state grant. This is a true victory for fairness and for our future.



Where we stand on fully funding public education

The consensus for this year is that the budget we passed in Olympia didn’t go far enough to meet the Supreme Court’s mandate to fully fund public education. To meet the court order on schedule, we’ll have to put about \$5 billion into our public schools in the next budget. Time and again we offered several ways to make a down payment on that investment this year, but were blocked by a small faction of Tea Party legislators.

We proposed a bi-partisan option to raise funds for schools by closing a single tax loophole for giant oil companies. But the Tea Party said no. We also united behind a creative bi-partisan measure (**HB 2797**) to reduce overcrowding in the earliest years, kindergarten through third grade, when science shows one-on-one time with teachers is crucial for a child’s success in school and life. The legislation would have created 7,000 construction jobs around the state by leveraging lottery revenue to build more classrooms. While this bill passed in the House on a 90-7 vote, Tea Party leaders found a way to kill it in the Senate.

We need these kinds of solutions to move forward next session, so I will work with legislators on both sides of the aisle to ensure that we aren’t failing in the paramount duty of our state to appropriately fund basic education for every child in Washington.



Operating Budget highlights

The budget is modest, granted, but it does make a few significant investments that will improve the lives of many in our communities, such as:

- We provided \$58 million in extra money for K-12 schools for books, technology and supplies.
- We secured \$11.7 million in additional, very essential funding for children and adults in need of mental-health treatment. Many local communities and non-profit groups told us that such extra funding is desperately needed because they are at capacity right now.
- Stronger funding is provided to make services available for 5,000 more people with developmental disabilities.
- In 1990, 30 percent of adult Washingtonians identified as smokers. By 2011, the figure had **fallen to 16 percent**. Our programs are clearly helping, which is why this year the budget included \$1.5 million for tobacco prevention.

