

27TH DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



Senator

**Jeannie
Darneille**

Olympia Office:

227 John A. Cherberg Bldg.
P.O. Box 40427
Olympia, WA 98504-0427
(360) 786-7652
Jeannie.Darneille@leg.wa.gov



Representative

**Laurie
Jenkins**

Olympia Office:

311 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7930
Laurie.Jenkins@leg.wa.gov

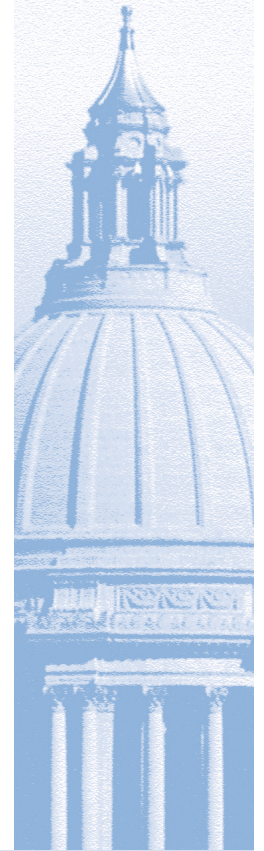


Representative

**Jake
Fey**

Olympia Office:

330 John L. O'Brien Bldg.
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
(360) 786-7974
Jake.Fey@leg.wa.gov



Dear friends,

With the 2014 legislative session concluded, we would like to note what an honor and privilege it is to represent all of you in the 27th Legislative District. In spite of a difficult political climate, we are proud to say that we worked together to reach an agreement on a supplemental operating and transportation budget, pass important policy bills, and adjourn on time.

Although there were some disappointments for us all, we believe it was a productive and positive session. There were many accomplishments across the board, including: not raising tuition for students at public universities, increasing support for foster children and homeless families, passing the DREAM Act, and cracking down on perpetrators of sex trafficking and impaired driving.

We look forward to meeting and speaking with you throughout this interim and returning to Olympia next year to continue the fight for revenue reform, education funding and a comprehensive transportation package. We thank you for the continued opportunity to serve!

Our best wishes,

Sen. Jeannie Darneille

Rep. Laurie Jenkins

Rep. Jake Fey

Report from Sen. Jeannie Darneille



Many wins for our state's Juvenile Justice System

Despite being a short Legislative session, we were able to pass significant legislation to improve our state's juvenile justice system.

House Bill 1651 – Sealing Juvenile Records.

The court may seal juvenile records if the crime committed is not a most serious offense, a sex offense, or a felony drug offense and the respondent has completed terms and conditions set by the court. This will affect about 6,000 to 7,000 adolescents each year in our state. It will help these young people get a foothold in society when they are able to get a job, an apartment, and go to school without their past looming over them.

Senate Bill 5064 – Reducing Juvenile Life Without Parole Sentences. The United States Supreme Court recently ruled that minors are not to be sentenced and treated the same as adults in our judicial system, citing recent studies in brain development that prove that juveniles have more capacity for rehabilitation than adult offenders.

With the passage of this bill, our state has updated our juvenile sentencing guidelines to align with the U.S. Supreme Court's findings. As a member of the new Juvenile Sentencing Reform Task Force, I will continue to study the issue of sending youth to adult courts and examine ways to change juvenile incarceration practices, save state resources, and improve the lives of youthful offenders.

Mental health as a legislative priority

Increased awareness about the role undiagnosed and untreated mental illness and/or substance abuse plays in the health of individuals, families, and community safety has resulted in a planned integration of mental health and chemical dependency treatment services. I was

proud to be the prime sponsor of Senate Bill 6312 at the request of Gov. Jay Inslee; it is likely to lead toward full integration with primary medical care by 2020.

Combining these treatment systems into behavioral health care will allow physicians and counselors to coordinate treatment and provide patients more efficient service. As a member of the Adult Behavioral Task Force, I will review the best ways to remodel our system to address critical behavioral health needs in communities across the state.

Homelessness housing funding resource debate reheats

Senate Republicans and Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance co-chair Sen. Jan Angel singlehandedly produced unnecessary anxiety and fear among many homelessness program advocates and families when she killed a bill that had bipartisan, bicameral cooperation and an agreement to extend the document filing fee that funds homelessness programs across the state.

As a result of intense pressure from the public, advocates, the media and members of both parties and chambers, we were able to pass a compromise that will keep critical funding intact for another four years.

I have been in the Legislature for 14 years and every year, I am amazed that we have to defend our most vulnerable citizens against unnecessary raids against programs designed to help give them a hand up.

Women and children are the prime targets of heinous crimes

I sponsored legislation that would require the collection of DNA upon certain felony arrests. Science proves that DNA when collected upon felony arrest and not examined until probable cause has been established by a judge can help exonerate the innocent, solve cold cases and help prevent new crimes. This bill, which now has the support of Attorney General Bob Ferguson and Washington State Patrol Chief John Baptiste, did not pass this year, but is one that I will sponsor again in 2015.

Report from Rep. Jake Fey



As Vice-Chair of the Transportation Committee, much my efforts this year were focused on negotiating a transportation revenue package that will fund the future of our state while upholding our core values of environmental and worker protections. Unfortunately, we again were unable to reach an agreement with the

intransigent Senate Majority.

A robust transportation system – which a revenue package would have created – is critically important to Washington State. Businesses rely on a strong system of highway and port infrastructure to bring in the goods they need and ship their products to market. Commuters who travel to and from work or school every day rely on roads, bridges, buses and ferries to get where they need to be.

Nowhere is this more evident than here in Pierce County, where the proposed transportation revenue package included funding for the completion of State Route 167. Speed is a critical factor in the highly competitive shipping industry and we should be doing everything that we can to improve the Port of Tacoma's competitiveness.

The state has enough money to finish the projects we started, but this year's inaction is a major blow to our recovering economy and to

our future economic competitiveness.

While I am disappointed that we were unable to pass a transportation revenue package, I am proud of the bipartisan supplemental transportation budget that we were able to pass. It continues construction of the projects that were promised in the 2003 and 2005 transportation packages and protects the 47,000-plus jobs that are tied to those projects over the biennium.

The budget continues funding for important projects across our state, including a number of improvements to Interstate 5 and State Route 16. To the north, it fixes the cost overruns issue with the 520 bridge project by refinancing toll revenues and redirecting savings found in other projects. This means that none of the projects in our region have been delayed or cancelled.

I also worked personally to include an important proviso in the supplemental transportation budget that will improve our oil spill monitoring and prevention systems. This will help protect our communities and neighborhoods from dangerous and damaging catastrophes that we have seen recently across the country.

Finally, thanks to legislation sponsored by myself and several colleagues, the Tacoma tide flats will be home to Washington's first natural gas liquefaction plant. The facility will serve several shipping companies in the Port of Tacoma that are converting their vessels to run on liquid natural gas rather than dirty fossil fuels. I am proud that our state will be leading the way in switching from coal and oil to cleaner, alternative fuels.

Report from Rep. Laurie Jinkins



Increasing our investments in mental health

Washington has a broken mental care health system. We do not have the tools, the resources or the facilities needed to treat Washingtonians with mental health issues in a respectful and effective manner. One of our biggest problems is that we do not have enough inpatient beds. Because of this, there is a backlog of patients waiting to get into treatment facilities. Many of these patients are left in hospitals, or worse yet, jails, handcuffed to beds, because we lack the resources to keep them safe in any other way. We know, however, that mental health is a chronic, treatable disease that people can recover from.

This session, we started down a new path towards fixing our broken system. We invested \$32.5 million in our mental health services, including hospitals, children's mental health treatment and community solutions. This new money will help give our mental health professionals the tools they need to treat mental illness. We still have a lot of work to do to fully fund our mental health system. But, this is a big step forward for our state.

Safe and sick leave for all

No father should have to choose between paying for groceries at the end of the week or taking care for a sick child. No mother should have to choose between going to court to take out a protection order against a domestic violence abuser, or making rent. But, for 1 million Washingtonians without any paid sick or safe leave, this is their reality. And no restaurant patron should have to worry about getting the flu from a server who comes to work sick rather than lose a day of pay. Sick and safe leave should not be a luxury for a few, but a right for all. It's good not just for the workers, but for all of us.

I was proud to be the prime sponsor of a bill that would have brought universal paid sick and safe leave to all Washingtonians. This bill was a smart, nuanced proposal that allowed all workers to build up some sick and safe leave, while respecting cost impacts for small businesses. The House passed this bill. Unfortunately, the Republican majority in the Senate did not even take up the bill for a vote. I'm committed to work on this issue until we achieve basic fairness and protections for all Washingtonians.

Focusing on gun safety is the responsible thing to do

This session was my first as the Chair of the House Judiciary Committee that oversees all firearm legislation. As a mother, a legislator and a public health expert I see the harm that guns do in our communities every day. I know we must reform our state's laws to ensure the injuries and deaths we see from gun violence do not continue. Guns are dangerous, deadly weapons. We need meaningful reform to make sure they stay out of the hands of children, criminals and the dangerously mentally ill.

One of the best examples of meaningful gun safety reform that we passed this session was House Bill 1840, protecting victims of domestic violence. Almost forty percent of women murdered in this country are killed at the hands of an intimate partner. Over half of those killers committed murder with a gun. In a domestic violence situation, the violence often peaks when the victim leaves the offender, and then again when the victim takes out a protection order.

It doesn't make sense for a violent offender who is making death threats to have access to guns. HB 1840 is a reasonable, effective solution to this problem. The bill temporarily takes firearms away from domestic violence offenders for the duration of the protection order against them. If the protection order is lifted, or the offender acquitted, the firearm can be returned.

Every right we have as Americans, like the right to bear arms, comes with responsibilities. It's time for us to balance those rights with appropriate responsibilities. HB 1840 does that.

Investing in high-quality education

Every child in our state deserves a quality education. While there are several schools in the 27th district doing outstanding work, many of our educators simply do not have the resources they need to be successful. The Legislature made progress this year by investing \$58 million into K-12 supplies, books and technology. We also held firm against new tax loopholes which would have taken another \$85 million out of the budget over the next three years.

Unfortunately we are still a long way from meeting our constitutional obligation to fully fund our public education system. House and Senate Democrats proposed several measures that would have increased funding for K-12, including closing special interest tax loopholes to fund cost of living adjustments for teachers and using some of our state's lottery money to build hundreds of new schools across the state. The Senate Republican majority refused to allow any of these major investments to come to a vote.

With at least \$2 billion in new funding needed in the next biennium and the state Supreme Court monitoring the situation carefully, it is imperative that both parties get serious about education funding next session.



The legislature also made several important policy changes to our education system this session that will improve education outcomes and expand educational opportunities for Washington students.

The job market is increasingly competitive and globally focused.

In order to make sure that our students are prepared for success when they graduate, the legislature moved this year to adopt a 24-credit graduation framework starting with the class of 2019. Students will receive additional education in science, arts and world languages and will have greater access to guidance counselors to help choose the path that's right for them. This change will ensure that every high school diploma provides students who graduate the opportunity to transition to college or a career.

One of the most significant bills signed into law this session was the Washington State DREAM Act. Every hard-working student who calls Washington home should have the opportunity to better themselves and their community through access to higher education. With bipartisan support, the legislature approved this bill that will allow those who were brought to this state as children to apply for state financial aid programs. Washington is now closer than ever to allowing every kid in our state pursue a college degree and realize their own American Dream.



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Conversation hours

As we have done in the past during the Legislative interim, we invite you to attend our conversation hours in the district. These conversations allow us to meet with you and talk with you about how we can make our community, our district and our state a better place to live. See you there.

NE Tacoma Police Substation

Thursday, May 29th, 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm
4731 Norpoint Way NE
Tacoma, WA 98422

International Place

Tuesday, June 24th, 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm
1701 E 44th St
Tacoma, WA 98404

Wheelock Library

Saturday, July 19th, 11:00am - 1:00 pm
3722 North 26th Street
Tacoma, WA 98407

Sherman Elementary Cafeteria

Thursday, August 28, 6:00pm – 7:30pm
4415 N 38th St
Tacoma, WA 98407

Grace R. Moore Library

Saturday, Sept. 20, 11:00am - 1:00 pm
215 South 56th Street
Tacoma, WA 98408

Main Tacoma Library

Wednesday, October 15, 5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
1102 Tacoma Avenue South
Tacoma, WA 98402

Heartwood Extended Health Care

Saturday, November 15th, 10:00 am - 11:30 am
1649 East 72nd Street
Tacoma, WA 98404

