



REPRESENTATIVE
**Frank
Chopp**



SENATOR
**Jamie
Pedersen**



REPRESENTATIVE
**Brady
Walkinshaw**

43rd District Legislative Report



May 2014

Dear neighbors,

This year's 60-day legislative session, in spite of intense debate on the supplemental budgets and other important issues, adjourned on time last month. Now that we're done with deliberations in Olympia for another year, we want to give you a quick update.

The session got off to a fast start in January: the House of Representatives passed the "Dream Act" less than an hour after we convened! The Senate followed suit some weeks later, and we are all very proud that some of our most-deserving, high-achieving students can now pursue their dreams of attending college!

The Dream Act is just one of the highlights of the 2014 session. Short though it was, we did have many successes for the people in our district – and in our state. For example:

- Maintaining the Homeless Housing Assistance surcharge so counties can count on a steady source of funding for programs to house people who are homeless.
- Increasing much-needed additional funding for mental health treatment – something we heard from local governments and non-profits was desperately needed to address the lack of capacity in our communities.
- Adding \$58 million in flexible funding to our public schools for books, technology and supplies.
- Providing 5000 new slots for services to our developmentally disabled community, taking a big bite out of the list of families waiting for our help.
- Protecting victims of domestic violence by insisting persons with restraining orders against them give up their guns until the order is lifted.

This update provides you information on these issues and many others. But if you have questions about any things we missed, please don't hesitate to contact us!

It's an honor and a privilege to serve as your representatives.

Sincerely,

Rep. Frank Chopp

Sen. Jamie Pedersen

Rep. Brady Walkinshaw

Supplemental budget provides progress in several areas

The state economy is turning the corner and, for the first time in many years, we did not have to make big cuts in the operating budget because of dropping revenues. Instead, we were able to make progress in targeted areas such as:

- An additional \$58 million to schools for supplies, books and technology – a modest step toward fulfilling our paramount duty.
- 5000 new slots for services to those with developmental disabilities and their families.
- \$5 million more for the State Need Grant – offering more students, regardless of their immigration status, an opportunity to access

college scholarships.

- \$23 million for increased payments for child care providers.
- Significant steps to increase mental health beds and services at the community level.

We are very disappointed that we couldn't reach agreement with the Senate majority to provide teachers with a much-needed cost-of-living adjustment – the sixth year in a row our teachers have not received their voter-approved salary increases. We'll continue working to close costly and unnecessary tax loopholes and instead direct those resources to our students and schools.

Helping people without homes find safety and security

Despite the state's ongoing economic recovery from the Great Recession, far too many people in our communities still don't have a place to call home. These people are our neighbors who have fallen on hard times, military veterans with no support, people with untreated mental illnesses, families displaced by rising rent costs. This year, there are more than 30,000 homeless children in our state's public schools.

More than half of the money spent to address homelessness across the state comes from the

Homeless Housing and Assistance Surcharge – a \$40 portion of the \$72 document recording fee on deeds, mortgages, leases and other real-estate documents filed with county auditors. This fund saves lives by:

- Funding emergency shelters for people escaping domestic violence.
- Giving rental assistance for families on the edge of losing their homes.
- Ensuring people with mental illnesses and those with disabilities can get housing assistance.
- Creating youth shelters.
- Providing case management for people experiencing chronic homelessness so they have a safe home and a path to stability.

Because of this fund alone, homelessness has decreased in our state by nearly 30% since 2006. But the surcharge was due to be cut by 25% next year and by 50% in 2017, causing uncertainty for programs fighting homelessness.

We want to make the surcharge permanent, but on the last day of session agreed to extend it through 2019. We will fight again next year to remove the expiration date on this vital funding source. People in should not have to worry about where they will sleep at night.



Rep. Frank Chopp

DREAM Act becomes a reality

America is the land of opportunity and we believe that opportunity should be open to all. With that in mind, the House passed the DREAM Act on the very first day of the 2014 session. This will let students brought here as children compete with other students for college financial aid, opening the door of opportunity to kids who have grown up here, gone to school here and whose families have contributed to our economy. Washington is their home and they deserve the chance to go to college and realize their dreams.

Mental health

Mental illness can affect any family. Washington has long led the nation when it comes to mental health care: last year we expanded Medicaid to include mental illness, and years before that we enacted mental health parity for medical coverage.

Last year, we sped up some important changes to our involuntary treatment laws – funding the



Speaker Chopp urging passage of the Dream Act on first day of session.

reforms two years ahead of schedule and allowing input from family members and friends to be considered when making the decision to commit. This year's budget dedicates nearly \$32 million dollars toward improving our communities' capacity to treat mentally illness, mental health treatment for high-needs children, and making critical improvements to our state hospitals.

Rep. Brady Walkinshaw



In December 2013, I was appointed to represent you in the State House of Representatives. I was raised in rural Whatcom County, where my mom - who immigrated to the United States from Cuba - teaches in the

public schools, and my dad - a Seattle native - is an agricultural educator.

Before coming to the legislature, I worked on youth leadership as a Fulbright Scholar in Honduras, and spent the past five years at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. I live on Capitol Hill with my partner, Micah Horwith, a marine biologist. In Olympia, I serve on the Higher Education, Judiciary, and Transportation committees.

Restoring Opportunity

In 2014, I introduced a bill (HB 2399) to help citizens with criminal histories achieve employment. As many as 90 career paths may be closed to people reentering society. HB 2399 would help those who have served their sentence provide for their families and stay out of prison.

Protecting Wages

I co-sponsored a package of "wage theft" bills to prevent employer exploitation. These bills (HB 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334) would help working people recover unpaid wages, and protect them from employer retaliation.

Technology and public safety

I worked on bipartisan legislation (HB 2789) to regulate the use of drone surveillance by public agencies and law enforcement. As a result of HB 2789, the Governor issued a moratorium on the purchase of drones by the state. I will work over the interim to refine the bill for passage in 2015.

Sen. Jamie Pedersen

New license plate for Seattle University

Seattle University will soon have its own specialty license plate. HB 2100, the bill to create the plate, was the last piece of legislation I introduced as a state representative in the House before joining the Senate late last year. The new license plate will provide revenue for Seattle University’s scholarship programs, including its Fostering Scholars program for youth that have been in foster care. The license plates will be available for purchase early next year.

Protecting on-water dwellings

We passed SB 6540 to address threats to our district’s houseboat community on Lake Union this session. The bill was carefully negotiated with environmental regulators. It will protect both the environment and existing liveaboard vessels that serve as residences for people in this historic community within our district.



Streamlining business conversion

I also sponsored a measure that will make it easier and less expensive for Washington businesses to change their entity form (e.g., from limited partnership to corporation.) SB 5999 will be an important tool for business that restructure to meet changing conditions. It modernizes our business law to make it consistent with that of most other states.

Health care coverage for all

The federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) presented our state with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to expand access to quality and affordable health care.

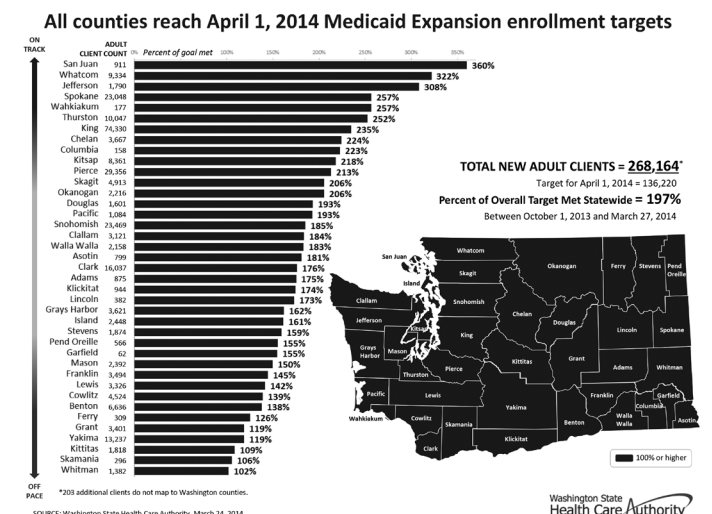
One of the most important provisions of the ACA is the expansion of the Medicaid program. When the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the ACA generally, it allowed state legislatures to choose whether to accept federal funding for the expansion of Medicaid.

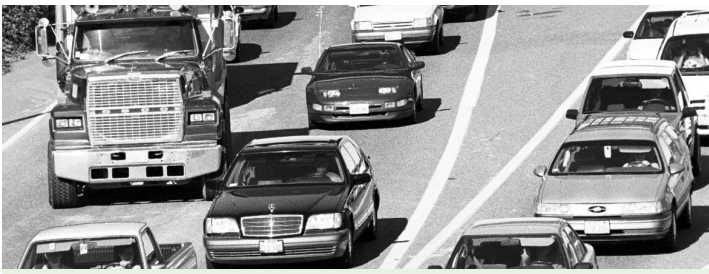
One of last legislative session’s major accomplishments was opting-in to Medicaid Expansion. For the first time, folks making less than 138% of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible for health care coverage. These working families had previously slipped through the cracks, unable to afford rising premiums even with subsidies.

Since October 1, 2013, nearly one million Washingtonians have enrolled in new or continuing coverage. Every single county in the state, from San Juan to Skamania, has exceeded its Medicaid enrollment goals.

This bump in enrollment benefits us all. Washingtonians with health coverage pay about \$1 billion/year in higher premiums to cover the costs of the uninsured showing up in emergency rooms – the most expensive place to receive care.

If you or someone you know may be eligible for Medicaid, or if you’re interested in learning more about low-cost insurance options, visit www.wahealthplanfinder.org.





Transportation

Another year without a revenue package

For the second straight year, the Legislature failed to pass a transportation revenue package. We approved a bare-bones supplemental transportation budget that funds no new projects and simply maintains funding for projects already underway. In the 2013 session, after the House passed a transportation package, Senate Democrats tried to force the package to the Senate floor. Senate Republicans blocked that effort.

It was disappointing in 2014 to leave Olympia again without a revenue package that is so desperately needed here in the 43rd Legislative District and in communities across our state. Projects to make streets safer for kids, reduce pollution, and give people convenient alternatives to sitting in traffic will now be delayed. Adequate funding for transit projects is crucial to creating a 21st century transportation system in our region.

Work begins on 'West Approach Bridge North'

Work will begin this summer on a section of the State Route 520 bridge that connects Montlake Boulevard to the floating bridge over Lake Washington. Unfortunately, the failure to pass a transportation revenue package has placed the Seattle portion of the 520 project in limbo. Construction of the westbound lanes, known as the West Approach Bridge North, will start as planned in July and is expected to be completed by the fall of 2016. However, construction of the eastbound lanes will be delayed without additional funding. We attempted to delay the start of the project until all of the work could be funded, but we simply ran out of options. The portion of the new 520 closest to Capitol Hill that spans Portage Bay and connects to I-5 also still needs major design work. We added an item in this year's budget to require the state Department of Transportation and the city to continue working on those plans.

Safety for survivors of domestic violence

A crucial bill to prevent gun violence against survivors of domestic violence passed the Legislature this session. HB 1840 was a response in part to murders committed by individuals with records of domestic abuse. The bill prevents someone with a restraining, protection or no-contact order from acquiring or possessing a gun until that order is removed.

It is estimated that one in three women who are murdered in the U.S. are killed by an intimate partner, and federal and state legislation that is similar to HB 1840 has proved effective at reducing the rate of homicide amongst victims of domestic violence. The bill was voted out of both the House and Senate unanimously.

Unfinished business

Many very important bills representing Washington values and improving people's lives passed the House this year, only to be stopped by the Senate Republicans. Some of these would have:

- Strengthened involuntary commitment guidelines for people suffering from mental illnesses, allowing families to get needed treatment for loved ones before it's too late. (HB 2725)
- Provided at least a few days of paid sick leave so employees aren't forced to go work when they're sick, threatening the health of others. (HB 1313)
- Allowed equal voting opportunity in political subdivisions where communities of color have historically been disenfranchised. (Voting Rights Act, HB 1413)
- Banned the use of several dangerous chemicals in children's products and furniture. (Toxic-Free Kids Act, HB 1294)
- Ensured that the reproductive health of Washington's women would be covered by insurance companies that already cover maternity care. (Reproductive Parity Act, HB 2148)
- Enhanced safety standards for oil transported in Washington waters. (HB 2347)
- Improved early learning opportunities for all children. (HB 2377)
- Created 7000 jobs and built hundreds of classrooms needed across the state in order to reduce the number of students in K-3 classes. (HB 2797)

We will continue to fight for these issues next session.

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