

EARLY LEARNING EFFORTS PAY OFF

Access to quality early learning is one of the best investments we can make in the long-term success of children. My first piece of legislation focused on just that.

HB 2519 will **help kids in our child welfare system** access quality early learning programs like the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), home visiting nurse services and Headstart. This legislation is an important investment in those who need it most.

My advocacy for quality early learning will continue. During the interim I will be serving as an Early Learning Fellow and meeting with other legislators from around the country to develop model legislation to make sure children have access to quality early learning programs nationwide.



Governor Inslee signs
Rep. Senn's first bill HB 2519

Rep. Tana Senn 2014 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 41st LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
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MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Paid sick & safe leave

A parent shouldn't have to choose between putting food on the table and staying home with a sick child. When you force workers to come in sick, they can get everybody else sick - and productivity suffers. Paid sick and safe leave can also literally be a life line for those who are working their way out of abusive relationships. Getting time off from work, without losing pay, is crucial in helping many victims of domestic abuse maintain safety and stability for themselves and their children. This is good economic policy. Healthy, loyal workers are more productive and help reduce costly turnover. I will continue to champion this measure.

Protecting a woman's right

to make her own health care choices

The Reproductive Parity Act simply says that any insurance plan in Washington State that covers maternity care services must also offer comparable abortion services. The bottom line is that a woman, not politicians or their employers, should make the informed decisions when it comes to her own pregnancy. This is a position the voters in Washington have affirmed many times over the years. As in previous sessions, it passed off the House floor, but received no vote in the Senate.



State Representative • 41st Legislative District

Tana Senn

2014
LEGISLATIVE
UPDATE



Dear Friends & Neighbors,

It is great to be home after this year's short, 60-day session. I am happy to share this update with you on some notable accomplishments—and missed opportunities—of the 2014 legislative session.

While there was no agreement on larger revenue-related issues such as a new transportation package or capital budget, we did pass several important pieces of policy-related legislation that will better the lives of thousands of people across our district and state.

In the House, bi-partisan collaboration was the key to advancing many great legislative proposals. Unfortunately, due to obstruction in the Senate, many important bills including construction funds for new classrooms, paid sick and safe leave and the Reproductive Parity Act were left on the table.

Of course, big challenges await us in 2015, most notably the need to dramatically increase our investment in K-12 education to comply with the Supreme Court's *McCleary* decision. It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provisions for the education of all children and bold action must be taken.

It has been an honor and a privilege to represent you and serve as your voice in Olympia this session, but our work has just begun. I look forward to meeting with you in my office, at community events, or just out and about.

See you around the district,

A handwritten signature of Tana Senn in blue ink.

Tana Senn

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EDUCATION

What got done!

From early learning to higher education, we had some key successes for our education system this year.

- The **DREAM Act** grants undocumented students the opportunity to attend institutes of higher education by providing access to the State Need Grant. The Dreamers who have graduated with a high school diploma (or its equivalent) and who have lived in Washington State for the previous three years may now compete for funds from this program which received an additional \$5 million investment this session.
- Starting in 2019, high school students must **graduate with 24 credits**, but are allowed a 2-credit waiver in certain circumstances. This measure will help to ensure Washington's competitiveness for decades to come by providing our students with the skills necessary to succeed following graduation.
- We added \$58 million in K-12 supplies, books and technology in the supplemental budget. These funds represent an important step toward meeting our *McCleary* obligations to fully fund education.

- Aerospace technology is one of our state's greatest industries. To ensure Washington remains a leader in this field, we provided the **Central Sound Aerospace Training Center** in Renton with an additional \$5 million.

What's left to do!

Although the achievements above represent a great step forward for education in Washington, there's much work still to be done.

- **Fully-funding basic education** will no doubt be the main task of the 2015 session and my first priority. It is not only required by the *McCleary* court decision, but the right thing to do.
- **Teacher cost of living adjustments (COLA)** - Paying teachers an adequate wage is the state's responsibility. We were not able to reach an agreement with the Senate on teacher COLAs, but we'll be back next session with this issue as a top priority.
- **Classrooms for kids** - Kids need classrooms. Part of the *McCleary* ruling on fully funding our public schools included addressing overcrowding in kindergarten through third grade classrooms. **HB 2797**, which passed the House with strong bipartisan support, would have bonded state lottery funds and distributed \$700 million state-wide for classroom construction. Although the Senate failed to act this time around, I look forward to making this bill a reality next session.

PROTECTING OUR HEALTH AND SAFETY

Domestic violence & firearms

For years, advocates for victims of domestic violence have called for laws to **remove firearms from domestic violence offenders**. More than half of the homicide victims in this country are women killed at the hands of their intimate partners, usually with a firearm. HB 1840 keeps families safe by preventing people subject to a protection order from possessing a firearm. Against all odds, HB 1840 passed both chambers with unanimous support.

Oil transportation across our state

Our families have a right to know what dangers are traveling through their communities. As Vice-Chair of the Environment Committee, I strongly supported the **Oil Transportation Safety Act**. This bill would have required the disclosure of information about the dramatic increase in oil shipments by water and rail in our state, as well as included incentives for safer oil movement. While the larger bill did not pass, we did secure funding for a study to better understand the dangers that increasing oil shipments through our state present.



JOBS

Small business support

I was proud to sponsor a measure aimed at **helping small, family-owned businesses and start-ups**. By raising the revenue threshold at which small businesses would be required to file B&O taxes, small companies could use precious dollars to hire more workers, expand operations, and return greater value to our communities. While the measure did not pass, I will continue to work to bolster small businesses and support the entrepreneurial spirit in our community.

Shovel-ready jobs left idle

Unfortunately, the Senate failed to pass several important **job creation bills** including a bipartisan transportation package and a capital budget. Both of these measures would have funded shovel-ready jobs across our state - jobs that would have improved congestion on our crowded highways, made infrastructural investments in our schools and colleges, assisted in environmental clean-up and more. As we move forward, I will continue to work to pass these important bills.



TRANSPORTATION

Despite the ten listening sessions the Senate conducted around the state late last year, they were unable to act on the clear message they received from the public – **we need a transportation package now**. With the Senate's inaction, many important local projects in our district remain unfunded. I will continue to push for a transportation package that includes responsible cost-saving reforms along with critical infrastructure investments – while keeping I-90 toll-free – to ensure we spend more time with our families and less time stuck in traffic.



REMOVING BARRIERS FOR KIDS AND FAMILIES

I am committed to finding new ways to remove obstacles to success for our kids and our families. Here are a few highlights from this session which move us toward that goal.

- **Recognizing faith practices** – A diverse coalition of faith partners celebrated passage of important legislation (SB 5173) granting schoolchildren and state employees two unpaid days off a year for reason of faith or conscience. Now, parents will have the option to excuse their children from school without penalty to observe faith holidays.
- **Foster care improvements** – Foster care children will now have access to legal representation; we also extended care to 21 years of age to insure healthy transitions out of the foster care system; and lastly we made it easier for foster parents to make prudent choices on a child's behalf - like approving play dates or field trips.
- **Juvenile records sealing** – Children make mistakes, and these mistakes shouldn't prevent them from achieving their full potential. Recognizing this, we passed a measure that would consider sealing juvenile court records for non-serious and non-violent offenses.

