

# 43RD DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE REPORT

REPRESENTATIVE FRANK CHOPP

PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



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

# 43RD DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE REPORT

## 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Dear Neighbors,

Last year in the State Legislature, we made real progress on many priorities of the people of Washington State. Please see inside this newsletter for a review of the 2015 legislative sessions.

Much work still needs to be done. This January, in my opening day speech to the House of Representatives, I reminded legislators that we don't have a lot of time in this year's 60 day session. We should make the most of it, by finding practical solutions, taking specific actions, and moving Washington forward. Our work this year should lead to more progress in next year's legislature and should focus on the basics:

### ■ BASIC EDUCATION

We should increase funding for our public schools... not because the State Supreme Court says so, but because it's our job! This includes working to reform the school employee compensation system, increasing teacher pay, and addressing the shortage of teachers. And we must build the school classrooms to carry out the decision we already made to reduce class sizes in our public schools.

All of these actions will provide hope for a better future through education.

### ■ BASIC HEALTH

We should continue our progress towards the simple notion that health care is a fundamental human right. Who among us would deny care to a child? Who among us would turn our backs on those who are ill, or old, or disabled? There is no doubt that we have made major progress in expanding health care to hundreds of thousands of people. But we have so much more to do. For example, even though we enacted mental health parity years ago, we need to stop separating the brain from the body in our funding formulas and health coverage.

And it is imperative that we improve mental health care, which suffered during the Great Recession. We need accountability and more resources. A top priority is to help fix the problems at our state mental health hospitals with the staff and the tools to care for those we are committed to help.

### ■ BASIC EMERGENCIES

We must help the local communities devastated in 2015 by some of the worst fires in state history, by using our "rainy day" fund to cover the costs of the drought and work to prevent these disasters.

But there are other emergencies as well. There are many fires we face. In particular, tens of thousands of young people across Washington State are homeless. That is an emergency, and a moral tragedy.

We cannot look away from the fact that many young people are dying from suicide, abuse, and other tragedies. Solving youth homelessness is basic: we need to get them off the streets and into a safe home. The same is true for people with mental illness. We can prescribe drugs and treatment, but that is for naught if the person leaves the clinic and is left to spend the night on the street.

There are many specific ideas that we are pursuing to address the housing crisis. We are fortunate that there are community coalitions, non-profit organizations, and local governments that are working with us to make real progress on these and many other concerns.

Please contact my office to find out how we can work together to move Washington State forward.

#### OLYMPIA OFFICE:

PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
(360) 786-7920

#### EMAIL:

Frank.Chopp@leg.wa.gov

#### WEBSITE:

Housedemocrats.wa.gov/Chopp

THIS IS ALL ABOUT  
HAVING HOPE, HEALTH,  
AND A HOME.

*Frank Chopp*



# 43RD DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Last year in the 2015 legislative sessions... much was accomplished (please see inside).

However, on several key issues, the Washington State House of Representatives approved many progressive legislative actions with strong public support, only to have the State Senate refuse:

ISSUE	HOUSE	SENATE
Raising the State Minimum Wage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Requiring Paid Sick and Safe Leave from Work	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Enacting the State Voting Rights Act	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Promoting Equal Pay for Women	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Closing the Opportunity Gap for Students of Color	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO
Banning Toxic Chemicals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO

# 43RD DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Last year in the 2015 legislative sessions... we made major progress:

## PREPARING OUR KIDS TO LEARN

- ✓ Approved the largest expansion of early childhood education in state history, (\$160 million).
- ✓ Enacted the Early Start Act to improve the quality of early learning and child care centers.

## MAKING BASIC EDUCATION THE PATH TO A BETTER LIFE

- ✓ Invested over \$1.3 billion in new funding for K-12 schools, expanding full-day kindergarten, reducing class sizes in Kindergarten through 3rd grade, and staying on track to fund the state's "paramount duty."
- ✓ Provided teachers and public school workers with a wage increase above the cost of living.

## HELPING STUDENTS AFFORD OPPORTUNITY

- ✓ Increased College Bound Scholarships, an entitlement for low-income students to stay on track in high school and attend a public college or university tuition free.
- ✓ Expanded funding for Opportunity Scholarships for middle and low-income students to earn degrees in high-demand fields of health care and high tech.
- ✓ Cut tuition for students attending all state universities and community colleges.

## ENSURING HEALTH CARE FOR ALL

- ✓ Expanded Washington Apple Health, to now provide 1.6 million low-income people, including 800,000 kids, with free health care.
- ✓ Invested over \$100 million to improve mental health care, providing community-based treatment, more inpatient beds, and better crisis intervention across the state.
- ✓ Enacted mental health reforms, including "Joel's Law," which empowers families when a loved one is in crisis.
- ✓ Protected the State Health Care Exchange, continuing our national leadership role in helping the uninsured to access health care under the federal Affordable Care Act.

## PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- ✓ Invested over \$75 million in our Housing Trust Fund, to build thousands of homes for the homeless and other people in need.
- ✓ Mandated affordable housing in "transit-oriented development," requiring Sound Transit to ensure that 65 percent of surplus land and air rights be transferred to public or non-profit agencies to own, develop, and operate housing at or near transit stations — the most progressive law of its kind in the nation.
- ✓ Approved \$50 million for work force housing, directing King County to build or preserve affordable housing so workers can live close to work.

## STRENGTHENING THE SAFETY NET

- ✓ Adopted a new contract for Home Care for the elderly and people with disabilities, including the first-in-the-nation retirement benefit for home care workers.
- ✓ Expanded programs for homeless youth to get the shelter, care and services needed to survive.
- ✓ Restored funding for Assistance for Needy Families and the State's Food Assistance Program.
- ✓ Expanded services and support for foster care.

## CREATING JOBS THROUGH PUBLIC WORKS

- ✓ Enacted the largest investment package in public works in state history, to fix aging transportation infrastructure, increase public transit, and create tens of thousands of jobs over the next decade.
- ✓ Approved the largest capital budget in state history, substantially increasing funding for school construction and building community projects across the state.

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE FRANK CHOPP

## GETTING THINGS DONE TO BUILD OUR COMMUNITY

### Examples of projects in the public interest:

#### Pacific Tower:

We created a new Community Health College and Innovation Center at Pacific Tower, a historic icon located on Beacon Hill. Starting this January, hundreds of Seattle College students will receive the training, degrees, and certificates to get good-paying jobs in the growing workforce of health care, including nurses, dental technicians, and many more. Diverse non-profit organizations, including NeighborCare Health, Fare Start, SEIU 775 Home Care, Building Changes, Cross Cultural Health Care, and many others, will also be located there.



#### New tools for Affordable Housing:

Housing Trust Fund: We invested \$75 million to create homes for those most in need, including people with mental illness and homeless families and youth.

Transit housing: We passed legislation requiring Sound Transit to make available surplus land and "air rights" above transit stations for local non-profit organizations to build housing for people with low and moderate incomes. For example, the Capitol Hill Housing Public Development Authority will be constructing 86 homes above Sound Transit's Light Rail Station on Broadway.

Housing bonds: We provided King County with \$50 million in bonds to create affordable housing for low-wage workers, using proceeds from the local hotel/motel tax.

Local revenue option: We granted local counties a new revenue option to provide housing and services for people in need, with an emphasis on treatment for people with mental illness.

#### Homes at Sand Point:

We provided funds to create 148 units of workforce housing in Building 9 at Sand Point, mainly for families making 30-60% of median income. This project helps address the housing crisis, preserves a historic landmark, and keeps the property in public purpose with the non-profit organization, Mercy Housing.

