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# Representative Steve Kirby

## 29th District

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Spring 2016



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**Committees:**

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(Chair)  
Commerce & Gaming  
Judiciary



Greetings from Olympia. After a brief special session, we were able to finish the Supplemental Operating, Transportation and Capital Budgets addressing shortcomings in our mental health system, paying the costs of record breaking wildfires last year, addressing State Patrol recruitment & retention and funding for additional classrooms and other school construction – and of course, we re-passed all the bills the governor vetoed.

Contrary to what the media would have you believe, a “special session” doesn’t mean legislators sit around doing nothing while budget negotiators finalize an agreement. In fact, almost all of us go home during a special session and it doesn’t cost a pile of extra money. In reality, a special session is pretty much a formality to allow work to continue until it’s ready to be considered by the entire legislature. Then – **and only then** – do we reassemble to finalize whatever needs to be done – which is exactly what we did.

Fully funding K-12 education continues to be our highest priority, but it’s not the only thing we are required to do. We passed 279 important bills concerning everything from tracking rape kits to protecting kids from toxic chemicals, and I spent the bulk of my time working on important consumer protection legislation that went through the House Business and Financial Services Committee that I chair.

We also established a plan to reform the school levy process next year, and explored ways to save the current programs in our existing charter schools in a way that won’t be found unconstitutional again – or interfere with our efforts to fully fund basic education. Last fall the Supreme Court found that our charter schools are essentially private schools funded with public money, and declared them to be unconstitutional.

Unfortunately, the bill that was supposed to fix the problem passed without any significant change in the way they’re governed or funded – and failed to address the constitutional issues. My hope was that we could find a *legal* way to save those programs, but I ended up voting against the bill because I’m concerned the law we passed will just be overturned again. Ultimately, our goal should be to give all 1 million of our Washington students the same advantages currently enjoyed by the 800 charter school students – so that **everyone** gets the education they deserve.

So that’s it in a nutshell. As usual, there was wide agreement that certain things needed to be done, but it took a little extra time to agree on HOW to do them. Now it’s back to civilian life for me – which means returning to my family and my regular, full-time job as a Community Relations Representative for my 29<sup>th</sup> district-based employer – so I won’t be far. **Stay tuned!**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Kirby".



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**Representative  
Steve Kirby  
29th District**

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