

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I'd love to hear your ideas and comments. Please take a moment to fill out this short survey. It's also available on my website:  
[www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/roster/rep-Steve-Bergquist/](http://www.housedemocrats.wa.gov/roster/rep-Steve-Bergquist/)

If you could only tackle one issue, what would your top priority be?

- Education
- Jobs
- Transportation
- Crime
- Tax reform
- Environment
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

How should we find the billions needed to fully fund public schools?

- Close tax loopholes for giant corporations
- Cut everything else in the budget
- Raise general taxes
- Ignore the Supreme Court order and call the court's bluff
- Put a capital gains tax on investment income

Do you support a transportation package to tackle traffic gridlock and safety on our roads?

- Yes – it's a growing problem
- Maybe, depending on the details
- No, I don't currently support a ten-cent gas tax
- No, transportation needs to be more efficient with what they have

What ideas do you have to make WA a better place to live, work and raise a family?

You can send your comments by email ([steve.bergquist@leg.wa.gov](mailto:steve.bergquist@leg.wa.gov)) or mail it to me at:  
Rep. Steve Bergquist, PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
STEVE BERGQUIST

11TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Dear neighbors,

Now that the legislative session is over, it's great to be back home in the 11th District.

What happened in Olympia this year, and what's it mean for our schools and communities?

This newsletter is my chance to give you a few answers. It's also my chance to hear from you. At the end of this newsletter, there's a short survey with space for you to share your comments, questions and ideas.

I hope you find this newsletter informative and I look forward to getting in touch. Thank you!

Sincerely,  
  
Rep. Steve Bergquist (D-Renton)

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Education  
Transportation

Opportunity for all

We all want the best for our kids. Those aren't simply words. As the father of a newborn, and a teacher in our public schools, I know every mom and dad fights to give their sons and daughters the best possible chance in school and life. Nothing is a higher priority. Here are a few highlights. First, two bills that I sponsored.

Para-educators and long-term substitute teachers

In every public school, para-educators play an important role in educating our children.

These people work hard in the classroom, helping teachers give our kids the best possible education they can.

Yet it's hard for a lot of para-educators to get training and a career ladder toward becoming a teacher, which is what many of them hope to become.

I worked with para-educators, parents, teachers and senators to craft legislation that (a) gives para-educators access to more training, (b) makes the job more professional and (c) creates a better career ladder so those who want to can become teachers.

I'm happy to report the senate version of my bill passed and will become law.



I was proud to have my wife, Avanti and our daughter, Anjali, on the floor of the House of Representatives for Children's Day.



Gov. Jay Inslee signing my legislation (House Bill 2575) to improve education in our local schools.

Long-term substitute teachers are in a similar spot. My first job was as a tenth-grade English teacher, even though my teaching endorsement was in social studies. After a month of this, the school found a full-time English teacher and a spot for me to teach social studies.

But it doesn't always work out so neatly. There are thousands of substitute teachers in our state and hundreds of school districts. It's a bit chaotic. The legislation we passed (House Bill 2575) will track long-term substitute teachers so we can cut back on that option and instead help school districts plan ahead and hire those teachers for full-time jobs in the subjects they're meant to teach.

This is good news for substitute teachers looking for permanent work and great news for students who'll get a year-round teacher instead of a series of temporary instructors.

Building schools for our youngest kids

I supported legislation (House Bill 2797) that would have put up to \$700 million in lottery revenue to building classrooms for our youngest learners in kindergarten through third grade, when science says less-crowded classes and one-on-one time with teachers is critical. Despite strong bipartisan support in the House with a 90-7 vote, Senate Republicans wouldn't give House Bill 2797 a vote. We have to try again next year, because it takes time to build the classrooms kids need.

New money for schools

The budget passed by the House and Senate did manage to put \$58 million in new funds for textbooks, technology and local operating costs. It also added \$2 million to mentor new teachers.

Higher education

The cost of a college education has skyrocketed in recent years. It used to be you could work a summer job and save enough money for tuition, books and living expenses. These days, you can't work a full-time job at minimum wage and make enough to pay for a year at UW or Western.

While it's good news that we stopped tuition from going up last year and again this year, we need to do better. Too many middle class kids are graduating with massive student loan debt or dropping out not because of grades, but because they can't afford to finish their degree.

I've been working with lawmakers, students and stakeholders on creative ideas to make the dream of college a reality. One piece of legislation I introduced, Pay It Forward, would let students go to college now without worrying about tuition, books and living expenses until after they graduate. Then they'd repay based on a percentage of their income.

This issue is important to students studying hard to get a better life and for parents struggling to pay crazy college bills. It's also important for our state, because Washington's economy is now based on brainpower.

If you're a student, parent or business owner interested in making college more affordable for all, I'd like to hear your stories, comments and ideas.

A stronger democracy

Voting for the first time is the first big step you can take, as a citizen, to participate in our democracy. Maybe the most important step.

We know that a young adult who votes for the first time tends to be a voter for the rest of their life-- while somebody who skips that first election tends not to vote, year after year.

Last year, I fought for money in the budget to make it easier for high school students to register to vote. Now every Jan. 16 on Temperance and Good Citizenship Day—or the Friday preceding—the state's superintendent of public instruction will include material on providing an opportunity for eligible students to register to vote at school.

The next step would be making it easier for students to register to vote by letting them do it through Motor Voter the first time they get their permit or driver's license. I introduced legislation (House Bill 1279) to do just that, and it passed the House this year. Though it didn't make it into law, I am hopeful that we can get this done and keep our American democracy strong for generations to come.

Transportation

While we passed a small transportation budget this year, the Senate wouldn't vote on a bigger transportation package to tackle the tough issues in our state.

Anybody who drives in King County knows that traffic gridlock is tough and only getting tougher.

Under new Transportation Secretary Lynn Peterson, our state transportation system has become more efficient and accountable.



Working on the House floor, discussing issues with the chair of the Education Committee, Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos.

But we have to do more, because our population is growing while transportation revenues are flat.

I voted for a real transportation package last year in the House and will continue to work for solutions that help people get around, whether they prefer the highway, a van-pool, the train, a bus or a bicycle.