

**Rep. Patty Kuderer**

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## 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

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I-405 express toll lanes in Kirkland. Photo credit: WSDOT

### I-405 Improvements

I-405 was another major issue on the legislative radar this year. I co-sponsored legislation to enact changes to the express toll lanes. Although the legislation didn't pass, we successfully convinced WSDOT to use its emergency rule-making authority to open up the toll lanes on nights, weekends, and major holidays, and to add more entry/exit points along the corridor so drivers can more safely and easily merge into the HOT lanes – two components of the proposed legislation.

While these changes have helped some, congestion remains a problem for many daily commuters and that also needs to be fixed. I am committed to staying on top of this issue on your behalf and will send you updates as new developments emerge. You can check out my previous statements on I-405 on my website at: [housedemocrats.wa.gov/kuderer](http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/kuderer).

## Update on education funding, affordable housing, and capital investments coming to our community!

## 48th Legislative District



# State Representative **Patty Kuderer**

## 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Dear neighbor,

The 60-day regular session for 2016 came to a close without a budget agreement, requiring a two-week special session. While special sessions are never ideal, they are sometimes necessary to ensure we continue investing in our schools, expanding access to safe and affordable housing, and providing adequate care for those suffering from mental illnesses.

During the special session, the Legislature approved a supplemental operating budget that invests additional funds in education, mental health, and youth homelessness. We also approved capital expenditures to fund the Bellevue Boys and Girls Club's new facility that will allow the nonprofit to offer pre-K classes and much-needed daycare for working families, and funding for eastside homeless shelters.

And, we successfully fought back the powerful communications industry that had pressured lawmakers for special tax treatment. These are the primary reasons I voted yes for the budget. And while I appreciate that we must compromise to move the needle, I was extremely frustrated that lifting the levy lid for school districts was not approved.

My first session as your lawmaker is over and I have returned to practicing law. However, I am your state representative year-round; I continue to meet with constituents, attend official functions, and work on legislation for next year. And as I said at the beginning, I want to know what matters to you, so please feel free to contact me with your questions, concerns, or ideas for legislation.

Your voice in Olympia,

Patty Kuderer  
State Representative  
48th Legislative District

### Keeping in touch

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**My bills**

This being a short 60-day session, and my first session, I am proud that I was successful in getting several policies through the Legislature and sent to the governor for his signature:

- HB 2371 makes our judicial system more efficient by making it optional that certain legal documents be printed and filed. The information will still be available to anyone that wants it, but there's no reason to spend thousands of hours printing and filing reams of paper that no one requested or needed.
- HB 2425 updates our state laws to reflect language that's consistent around the nation and within the field of massage therapy.
- HB 2604 helps protect sensitive government law enforcement data and personal information of private cloud security employees that contract with state and local governments. (The senate version of this bill was ultimately passed by the Legislature and was signed by the governor.)
- HB 2471 is mostly a technical fix to update state law, which hadn't been updated in nearly 50 years, relating to fiscal agents.

Two other issues I worked on this year, better health protections for first responders and protecting communities when someone suffering from a mental illness poses a serious threat to themselves or others, did not make it through the legislative process. However, I'm committed to working on these and many other issues this interim in hopes of introducing these ideas again next session.



**Body Cam bill**

The policy debate on police body cameras has intensified as a growing number of law enforcement agencies are using, or are considering using, body cams. In general, I support the use of tools that help law enforcement agencies, prosecutors, and families uncover the truth after an altercation with police. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then video is often worth much more.

Under the assumption that the use of body cams will increase, the Legislature passed a bill to establish some parameters. The bill has three primary elements:

- Puts reasonable restrictions on Public Records Act requests for body cam footage to protect sensitive and private information, such as the identity of minors, images of sexual assault victims, and the interior of someone's home;
- Requires law enforcement agencies that use body cams to establish policies on their use, and;
- Creates a task force made up of a variety of stakeholders to study the implementation of body cams.

This bill lays the foundation for the development of fair and reasonable guidelines and safeguards for use of this new and important technology, and I was pleased to support this bill in committee and on the House floor where it passed with strong bipartisan support.

**Affordable Housing**

The number of homeless students in Washington state increased to over 35,000 children this year, and some of those kids are right here in the 48th legislative district. That's unacceptable. We can do better for these kids. A step in the right direction this year, we approved HB 1682 – a bill that will reduce student homelessness by providing a competitive grant program for school districts to connect homeless students to stable housing and educational resources.

The Legislature also took action this session to open up more doors to employment and housing by allowing individuals who have paid their debts to society a chance to reintegrate into society. In too many cases, structural barriers within our legal system prevent people from getting a job and housing after they complete their sentences. With the passage of HB 1553, those who have served their time will receive a Certificate of Restoration of Opportunity giving them better access to housing and work.

The House originally pushed for an additional \$60 million in new funding for homeless assistance. After negotiations with the Senate, the Legislature allocated an additional \$17 million for homeless services. This is an important step in the right direction, but is not nearly enough to adequately address the problem in our state.



**Education funding & solving the McCleary challenge**

The Legislature has added \$4.8 billion in new investments for K-12 schools since 2011. These new investments are vital to ensuring our schools are fully funded, but there's still work to do.

The last major challenge will be to solve the problem of school districts relying on local levies to pay teacher salaries. The exact dollar amount required to fix this problem is unknown, but estimates are as high as \$4 billion.

The Legislature passed a bipartisan bill (SB 6195) that creates a task force to study this problem in depth over the next several months and to make detailed recommendations for revenue sources, teacher compensation and levy reform. But more important, the bill commits the Legislature to fixing this problem by the end of the 2017 session.

This session, the Legislature also expanded investments in our K-12 schools, including \$3.5 million to expand the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program to help with teacher requirement and retention, \$1.8 million to support professional development for classroom para-educators, and \$1.2 million to close the educational opportunity gap.

**Charter schools**

Just as the 2015-16 school year began, the state Supreme Court issued a ruling declaring the state's charter school law unconstitutional, effectively throwing the educational futures of about 800 students into turmoil.

I'm a supporter of school choice so long as transparency and accountability are incorporated within any educational institution that uses public funds. But I did not support SB 6194, the Senate bill to save and expand charter schools, because I believe the Supreme Court will rule this law unconstitutional as well. You can read more about my vote on charter schools on my website at: [housedemocrats.wa.gov/kuderer](http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/kuderer).

**Great education policy rejected by the Senate**

The unfortunate reality of a bicameral legislature and a short session is that there is sometimes insufficient time for many good, worthwhile policies to make it through to the governor's desk. That was the case again this year when bills like Breakfast After the Bell, increased starting salaries for new teachers, high school assessment reform, and mental health prioritization for school counselors failed to make it out of the Senate.

Another of those worthwhile policies was HB 2698, a bill that would allow necessary levy funding to continue to go to school districts while the state continues working on a fix to fully fund education. By not adopting this measure, which passed the House with strong bipartisan support 91-7, local school districts could lose \$90 million in funding.

The state must end its reliance on local levies to fund basic education by the 2018-19 school year. If the Legislature has not

reached agreement on how to fund education before April 1 2017, they must introduce legislation lifting the lid by April 30. This language was described to me by a Republican colleague as the closest thing we'd get to a guarantee from any state legislature.

While I understand the argument that it is premature to include \$90 million in the budget for a contingency, I also think extending the levy lid another year was the right policy. Unfortunately I was not on the winning side of that battle – this year. Cutting school funding is a step backwards and I'm disappointed HB 2698 did not make it out of the Senate. I do not intend to wait until April 1 to see if the state will fulfill its constitutional duty to fund basic education. Instead, I will introduce legislation at the first opportunity before next session begins to lift the levy lid to ensure sufficient time to pass the bill, should it be needed, and to avoid a special session on this issue.

**Capital investments in our community**

The Legislature approved much-needed capital appropriations that will be used to reduce K-3 class sizes, improve our struggling mental health system, and provide safe and secure affordable housing for more families.

Our community will also see a few capital investments including \$1.65 million for homeless shelters in Bellevue and Kirkland, and \$200,000 for the Bellevue Boys & Girls Club pre-k classes.

Projects funded by the 2016 CAPITAL BUDGET

Kirkland Homeless Shelter	\$350,000	
Bellevue Homeless Shelter	\$1,300,000	
Bellevue Boys and Girls Club	\$200,000	