



REPRESENTATIVE

# Lillian Ortiz-Self

END OF SESSION REPORT TO THE 21ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



## Stay in touch!

**Email:**

[Lillian.Ortiz-Self@leg.wa.gov](mailto:Lillian.Ortiz-Self@leg.wa.gov)

**New district office location:**

18560 1st Avenue, NE  
Suite E-802  
Shoreline, WA 98155

**District phone: (206) 708-6559**

**Olympia office:**

330 John L. O'Brien Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
Phone: (360) 786-7972

**Visit my website:**

<http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/legislators/lillian-ortiz-self>

**Committee assignments:**

- Education (Vice Chair)
- Early Learning & Human Services
- Transportation

Spring 2016

Dear neighbors,

We finally wrapped up the special session on March 29 and I am glad to be back in Mukilteo to continue working on the issues that matter to you.

This newsletter includes highlights on some of the most important things we accomplished in Olympia on major issues that affect our families and businesses back home.

The biggest news, of course, is that we have a supplemental budget that invests in building more classrooms; recruiting more teachers; foster children, mental health, homelessness, and continuing to invest in our infrastructure. These investments will continue to bring jobs into our area and our state.

There is a lot of committee work, legislation to refine, and workgroups to attend during the interim. But I cannot do any of this without your continual input. If you would like to schedule a meeting with me to talk about what's on your mind, please call my office or email me, we'll set something up.

Thank you for keeping in touch and for taking the time to read this report. And thank you for giving me the honor of representing your interests in our state capital.

Sincerely,





## EDUCATION

### *How do we fund our schools?*

The biggest issue this year was the question of how to fund our schools as required by our constitution.

While we all agree that we need to solve this issue, it is difficult to reach a spending agreement when the specific sources of funding are not identified. Therefore, the House and Senate decided to create an Education Funding Task Force ([SB 6195](#)/[HB 2366](#)), which will report back to the Legislature on:

- Hiring and retaining staff.
- Whether to incorporate a local labor market adjustment formula.
- Local maintenance and operations levies and local effort assistance.
- Local school district collective bargaining.
- Funding method for school employee health benefits.
- Sources of state revenue to pay for basic education.

This, of course, means that next year we are out of time. We will have to put the recommendations into place next session in order to meet the Supreme Court decision and our paramount duty of fully funding education.

### *Safe technology use and digital citizenship*

When one of my constituents from the Edmonds School District brought up the issue of safe use of technology in our schools, Senator Marko Liias and I teamed up to sponsor identical bills in the House ([HB 2595](#)) and the Senate ([SB 6273](#), which was signed by the governor) to shed light on the need for safe technology use and digital citizenship. The new law creates a process in which students, parents, school staff and community members engage in an ongoing discussion about safe technology use, digital citizenship and internet safety.

Digital Citizenship is defined as norms of appropriate, responsible, and healthy behavior related to current technology use, including digital and media literacy,

ethics, etiquette, and security. Digital citizenship includes the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, develop, produce, and interpret media.

### *Family engagement coordinators*

We know that children with involved parents have higher academic achievement and a more positive overall outlook on life in general. That's why I sponsored, and the Legislature passed, [HB 1408](#), which will develop a framework of responsibilities for family engagement coordinators. This will assist schools in their outreach to parents, enhancing schools and parent partnerships.



### *Addressing the teacher shortage crisis*

Low pay and high turnover are making it hard for school districts to hire enough qualified teachers. We passed [SB 6455](#), which implements strategies to attract qualified teachers. It

provides financial incentives, streamlining certification for out of state teachers, expanding ability of retired teachers to become substitutes, mentoring for new teachers, and expanding alternative routes to the teaching profession. I was pleased to participate in the task force that came up with these bi-partisan recommendations.

### *Homeless students*

Did you know that about 35,000 kids in our public schools are homeless? This is a moral tragedy that demands action. We passed [HB 1682](#), which improves education outcomes for homeless students through increased in-school guidance supports, housing stability and identification services. It also provides grants to schools with high populations of homeless students to partner with housing agencies. As a school counselor, it breaks my heart to continue to hear how those of my students who are homeless struggle for stability, safety and security. Passing this legislation was a step in the right direction to protect some of our most vulnerable students.



### *Closing the Opportunity Gap*

Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos and I were co-sponsors of [HB 1541](#) aimed at closing the educational opportunity gap. The bill will implement various recommendations of the [Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee](#), which I co-chair, including critical changes to school discipline policies, cultural competence training for school staff, bilingual education endorsement requirements, more deeply disaggregated racial and ethnic data, stronger transitions from early learning to kindergarten, as well as creating an integrated student support system.



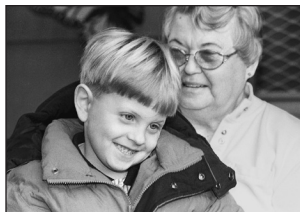
## Pending work

I will continue to work on the growing need of mental health services for students in Washington schools before they become crisis situations. The House passed two of my bills that would have addressed this issue, but they did not receive the support of the Senate:

[HB 1900](#) would have prioritized safe learning environments for all students by allowing school counselors, social workers, and psychologists to focus on student mental health, work with at-risk and marginalized students, perform risk assessments, and collaborate with mental health professionals. My bill would have established the Professional Collaboration Lighthouse Grant Program to assist school districts with early adoption and implementation of mental health professional collaboration time.

[HB 2381](#) would have created a task force to review the projected need of school districts for each category of school counselors, social workers, and psychologists; the current capacity of the state for meeting this need; and alternative routes and preparation programs to continue to address the social and emotional needs of Washington students.

Studies show that students' unmet mental health needs pose barriers to learning, development, and success in school, and that there's a greater need to identify and assist students struggling with emotional and mental health issues. I will continue working to make sure that schools and agencies work in tandem to meet the needs of our children.



## HEALTHY FAMILIES

### *Mental health services for children and youth*

As a member of the Early Learning and Human Services committee, I know how urgently we have to address the mental health needs of children if we're serious about reducing the future demand for treatment. That's why I was pleased that we passed [HB 2439](#), which will establish the Children's Mental Health Work Group, tasked with identifying ways to increase access to mental health services for children and families. All kids deserve a strong developmental foundation; for some, this will require extra support and services. By reaching children and their families early on, we can make a difference in the overall mental health picture for our state.

## Suicide prevention awareness

Suicide is a tragedy that can affect a family at any time. [HB 2793](#) raises public awareness and increases suicide prevention education. We're bringing together stakeholders in government, suicide prevention organizations, fire-

arms advocates and organizations, and individuals who have experienced suicide loss, as well as health professionals, law enforcement, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. Together, these groups will help us create a public awareness campaign, develop trainings on suicide awareness, and increase advocacy efforts and trainings on suicide awareness and prevention education.

## Protecting our children from toxic chemicals

The Toxic Free Kids and Family Act ([HB 2545](#)) allows the Department of Health to restrict the use of toxic flame retardant chemicals in children's products. We know that exposure to these toxic flame retardants can have devastating health consequences – cancer, ADD/ADHD, learning deficits and infertility. This change will provide safety and peace of mind for Washington families.

## STANDING UP FOR WOMEN

### *Testing and tracking every rape kit*

Thousands of rape kits are untested in Washington. To get through the backlog and get justice for victims, last year we passed a law to require that every rape kit be submitted for lab testing within 30 days of collection. This session, the passage of [HB 2530](#) will establish the first statewide sexual assault kit tracking system in the nation. It will enable law enforcement to track every rape kit, which will help with their criminal investigations, but will also allow victims to anonymously track and receive updates on the status of their kits.



**Unfortunately, a handful of important bills that passed out of the House and would have made a significant difference for women across Washington did not get the support of the Senate. I am committed to continue fighting for these issues:**

### *Equal Pay Opportunity Act*

Women are paid less than men for the same jobs. Female doctors earn 71 percent of what their male colleagues make. Minority women in Washington earn 49 cents to every male's dollar. Gender shouldn't define a person's value and worth. But a major problem that perpetuates the wage gap is that workers fear retaliation from their employers if they discuss compensation. [HB 1646](#) would have banned employers from retaliating against their employees for discussing wages and salaries, allowing transparency in hiring and salary practices for everyone.

*(Standing up for women — continued back page)*





## END OF SESSION REPORT TO THE 21ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PO BOX 40600 • OLYMPIA, WA 98506-0600

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

## Rep. Lillian Ortiz-Self



### REPORT TO THE 21ST LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

*(Standing up for women — continued)*

### **12-Month Supply of Contraceptives**

Access to affordable birth control is no longer just an option—it's a requirement. But making women fill their birth control prescription monthly is an unnecessary burden. [HB 2465](#) would have required insurance plans to reimburse for a 12-month supply of contraceptive drugs, instead of forcing twelve separate trips to the pharmacy.

### **Addressing Domestic Violence Recidivism**

One in four women will be a victim of domestic violence in her lifetime. Repeat domestic violence offenders wreak untold damage on their victims, children, and their communities. [HB 1632](#) would have cracked down on those offenders with better accountability and supervision, and would have also increased the punishment for their crimes.

### **Capital Budget**

This is the year of small adjustments and needed response to changes that affect the two-year budget passed last year. The capital budget, which supports bricks and mortar projects for communities across our state, makes important investments such as building more classrooms so that we can offer all-day kindergarten and lower class sizes.

And, specifically in our area, \$77,000 for the Edmonds Veterans Plaza, a community project to create and build memorials to Edmonds' military veterans. These memorials will be located in the current Edmonds Veterans Plaza.

### **Transportation Budget**

Last session our state passed the first transportation package in over a decade. This session we approved an \$8.6 billion Supplemental Transportation Budget that will continue to help fight gridlock, improve mobility, and keep our roadways safe.

In the 21st District we secured \$1.5 million for the US 2 trestle study. Our district also received the TIGER grant for \$10 million that will go toward the new Mukilteo Ferry Terminal, which is scheduled to be completed by 2019. In addition, the transportation budget funds salary increases for the Washington State Patrol, increases long-term funding for fish culverts, and provides additional funds for 405 corridor improvements.