

# 24<sup>th</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT REPORT - 2016

## Report from Rep. Steve Tharinger (cont.)

### HEALTH CARE

**The CARE Act**—More and more, Washingtonians are experiencing long waits in our hospitals. They aren't waiting to receive treatment or recovering—they are waiting to go home. In some cases, current law requires that a patient be discharged to a member of their immediate family or a professional caregiver. Understanding that every situation is different, a new law (SB 6327) lets a patient designate a "lay caregiver" and get them back home as soon as possible.

**Continuing Care Retirement Communities**—Seniors and their families have a right to know what they will pay when entering a continuing care retirement community. We have 26 communities where seniors get continuing care. Now, those seniors have consumer protections with the passage of HB 2726. This new law makes fees and costs transparent to seniors and their families. This is a big step toward making sure seniors' investments in care will meet their needs.

## Report from Rep. Kevin Van De Wege (cont.)

### A BETTER LIFE EXPERIENCE (ABLE) ACT

Saving for college and other expenses is important for everyone, but can be difficult for individuals with disabilities who rely on Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income because, if they have more than \$2,000 in savings, they could lose access to those programs. The ABLE Act (**HB 2323**) will allow families to invest up to \$14,000 a year in a separate account, and withdrawals wouldn't be taxed as long as it's spent on needs such as housing, education, transportation, health care, and other related expenses.

### 3 FREE HUNTING LICENSES FOR GUARD MEMBERS

**HB 1351**, sponsored by Rep. Blake, is a powerful statement that recognizes our service members by requiring the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to issue small game hunting licenses, supplemental migratory bird permits, and big game hunting licenses to resident active full-time members of the Washington State Guard or the National Guard at no charge.

Rep. Kevin Van De Wege  
Rep. Steve Tharinger

24<sup>th</sup> Legislative District  
**2016 Legislative Report**

PO Box 40600  
Olympia, Wa 98504-0600



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We want to take a moment to thank our retiring seatmate, Sen. Jim Hargrove, for his lifetime of public service and for all he's done for the people 24th District—and the state of Washington.



Representative  
**KEVIN VAN DE WEGE**

434A Legislative Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504  
360-786-7916

64 Village Lane  
Sequim 98382  
360-582-9830

kevin.vandewege@leg.wa.gov

House Majority Whip  
Agriculture & Natural Resources  
Commerce & Gaming  
Health Care & Wellness  
Rules



Representative  
**STEVE THARINGER**

314 John L. O'Brien Building  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504

360-786-7904

steve.tharinger@leg.wa.gov

Capital Budget (Chair)  
Appropriations  
Health Care & Wellness

# 2016 24<sup>th</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT REPORT

Dear neighbors,

During this short session of the legislature, we pushed hard to make progress on health care, education, public safety and jobs.

Now that lawmakers have finished work for the year, this newsletter is our chance to tell you about issues that will affect families and communities in the 24<sup>th</sup> District.

Inside, you'll find updates about:

- the new state operating budget;
- reforms to improve public safety and health care;
- the new state construction budget, including local projects; and
- laws that protect and improve our environment.

There isn't enough room to talk about all of the hundreds of pieces of legislation considered by the House and Senate this year. If you're interested in a specific issue or bill, please contact our offices and we'll find the answers.

This newsletter is also a chance to hear from you—your questions, comments and ideas are important. Please feel free to get in touch by phone, email or regular mail.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter, and thank you for the honor and a privilege as serving as your representatives in Olympia.

Sincerely,

Rep. Kevin Van De Wege

Rep. Steve Tharinger

**TOLL-FREE LEGISLATIVE HOTLINE**  
(800) 562-6000

**TTY**  
(800) 635-9993

**WASHINGTON LEGISLATURE WEBSITE**  
[www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)





## Representative Steve Tharinger

Website: [housedemocrats.wa.gov/tharinger](http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/tharinger)

### Report from Rep. Steve Tharinger

want thank all the community leaders, business owners and citizens who helped win this effort.

**Mental health**—We are fighting hard to find solutions for our state's mental health system. Mental health issues can happen to any family. The data is clear: mental health treatment is more effective for families when it's provided in the communities where patients live. In the construction budget, we invest \$8.5 million for the Crisis Triage Center Grant Program; \$7.5 million for Mental Health Supportive Housing; \$7.9 million for critical repairs and upgrades at state mental health facilities and hospitals; and \$5 million Community Behavioral Health Grant Program.

Locally, the new construction budget also includes \$847,000 to fund a crisis triage center at the Clallam County Respite Center.

**Homeless kids and affordable housing**—\$2.5 million toward the Homeless Youth Grant Program, with an estimated 35,000 homeless students in our public schools; \$2.25 million for Supportive Housing and Emergency Shelters; and \$8 million in new funding for the Housing Trust Fund.

#### Westport Marina Dredge funding

—Westport Marina is our state's largest commercial seafood landing port in value and volume. It requires dredging to handle hundreds of commercial fishing vessels and thousands of pleasure boaters each year, but it hasn't been dredged in more than 35 years. The capital budget includes \$200,000 to get a start on removing accumulated sediment and restore safe passage for all through the marina.



**Aberdeen Gateway Center**—The entrance to downtown Aberdeen will get a huge boost with the construction of the Aberdeen Gateway Center, which will serve four purposes: as one-stop shopping for businesses looking to start up or move to Grays Harbor, as a community center, as a central location for tourist information and as a showcase building for cross-laminated timber.

**Coastal Resiliency for Ocean Shores**—Erosion is a constant danger to our small towns along the ocean, with eroding shorelines threatening homes, businesses and public roads. The new construction budget includes \$200,000 for a coastal resiliency project in Ocean Shores.

**Olympic Discovery Trail**—Outdoor recreation is a major reason people choose to live and work in the 24th District and tourism is a growing part of our economy. The new budget includes \$1 million to expand the Olympic Discovery Trail in Jefferson County.



#### BUILDING A BETTER WASHINGTON

The state's capital budget puts people to work, in every corner of our state, to build schools, colleges, parks and infrastructure that benefits taxpayers for generations.

It's been my honor to serve as chair of the House Capital Budget Committee and work with lawmakers from the House and Senate on a construction budget that will create jobs while building a better Washington for our kids and grandkids.

**Building schools and colleges**—The new budget includes \$34.5 million for K-3 class size reduction grants, \$34.7 million for the School Construction Assistance Program and \$70 million in student housing and other projects at state community and technical colleges.



**Jobs that stick**—There's a new, innovative way of using timber in construction projects that could be a huge win for timber country in our state. Cross-laminated timber is a proven technology that can put long, strong panels of timber to use for long-term school construction.

I fought for \$5.5 million in pilot project funds to build classrooms around our state with cross-laminated timber because it's a triple winner for our small towns. Washington state grows some of the best timber in the world, and this is a new technology that can create a new market and new jobs.

Since cross-laminated timber uses small-dimensional lumber, it also makes thinning profitable. After a record-breaking fire season in 2015 that cost homeowners and taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars—and three firefighters their lives—thinning our forests is essential. I hope 2016 is the beginning of big things for cross-laminated timber in our state and



## Representative Kevin Van De Wege MAJORITY WHIP

Website: [housedemocrats.wa.gov/vandewege](http://housedemocrats.wa.gov/vandewege)

### Report from Rep. Kevin Van De Wege

Banning these chemicals shouldn't be a knock-down political fight. It's unacceptable that we let corporate interests and bad science get in the way of protecting our kids. Thankfully, we were able to come to an agreement that five chemicals were bad enough to ban and we have taken a step forward.

Getting that regulatory authority to our state agencies is important and I'm going to keep working hard to get the laws changed so we can ensure the public is safe from dangerous chemicals. Partisan politics seems to be the mainstay in Washington these days—but the health of our families should never be a partisan issue.

#### PROTECTING SMALL BUSINESSES

Last year I heard from dozens of owners of bars, restaurants, breweries, night clubs, dance halls, and other establishments who were being harassed and strong-armed by so-called music licensing agencies. Organizations like the American Society of Computers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) and Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), hire individuals to stake out locations that play live or recorded music and then, as soon as a song is played that these organizations have the rights to, they demand royalty fees.

These agents are claiming copyright infringement and can crush a business owner with legal documents when proof is requested to verify the copyright. It forces business owners into submission, and can result in thousands of dollars in fees. With so little information available to businesses to help guide their decisions on what music to play, some businesses stopped playing music altogether. It's a racket and that's why I introduced legislation to regulate the music licensing agencies in Washington state.

The goal isn't to stop them from collecting fees they are legally due. My law simply requires they register with the state and additional information and protection for small business proprietors. It's a simple, straight forward way to protect our small businesses.

#### TAKING TOXIC CHEMICALS OUT OF EVERYDAY PRODUCTS

Public health is important to me, which is why I chose to serve my community as a firefighter. Keeping families safe is my job as a firefighter and as a state legislator. That's why for years I have been fighting to ban toxic chemicals from our household furniture and children's products.

Products manufactured and sold as "flame retardants" can be incredibly dangerous, especially to children. These toxic chemicals can lead to cancer, ADD/ADHD, learning deficits, and infertility. These chemicals can wind up in household dust, where babies and young children play on the floor and come into contact with them.

I sponsored a bill that would ban five of these toxic chemicals, and give the Department of Health regulatory authority to proactively review and ban other chemicals that are bad for our families' health. Unfortunately, Senate Republicans wouldn't agree to this commonsense approach to keeping our children safe.

#### COMMONSENSE CHANGES TO HELP BUSINESSES



Sometimes laws need a little tweaking, especially when businesses are being hamstrung by laws that are too broad or don't provide flexibility when needed. That was the case when a company approached me about wanting to use medium-speed, electric vehicles as a taxi service in Port Townsend. The route they wanted to use is an active tourist area and can be quite crowded during the busy summer season.

This type of service is being used in other cities, like Portland, and can be a great, ecologically-friendly way to get people around small distances. It's very straight-forward, safe, and has been embraced by local transit and the community.

But there was a problem: The route they need to use has a small portion on a state highway, and it's illegal for these vehicles to use highways. Many cars, including electric vehicles, bicycles, and even joggers use the same road to go from the east to downtown Port Townsend. We needed to change the law.

I sponsored a reasonable bill that permitted these medium-speed and neighborhood electric vehicles on state highways, as long as the speed limit was 30 mph or less. This is just a simple example of how we can make a small change to the laws but a major difference to businesses and communities for the better.