

State Representative
CHRISTINE KILDUFF

28TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600

2016 Legislative Report



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Simplifying Doing Business

One thing I've heard over and over is how government gets in the way of doing business. If you're a small business owner, there can be major hurdles when it comes to collecting and paying taxes. I am very happy to work with fellow lawmakers on both sides of the aisle who recognize the need to make things simpler for our small businesses.

This year I voted for **House Bill 2565**, sponsored by one of my republican colleagues. It reduces the burdens on small businesses by changing the number of times local city and county governments can change their sales and use taxes from four to three times per year. It's a simple but common-sense change to make sure businesses are spending their time selling goods, not constantly updating their computer systems.

I also supported is **House Bill 2959** which was brought forward by a democratic colleague who wanted to make it easier for Washington businesses to file their Business & Operation taxes. This legislation will lay the groundwork for an online portal for businesses to file and pay their taxes all in one place instead of in each town and city they operate in, as is currently the case.



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Dear Neighbors,

Every legislative session is a chance for lawmakers to improve the lives of Washington's 7 million residents. We can either do nothing or we can do something—I am proud that we chose to do something to address many of the emergent needs in our state, and prioritized transparency and accountability to taxpayers. Some of the work we did includes:

- Improving teacher recruitment and retention through investments in mentoring programs for new educators (BEST program) and increased training for paraeducators.
- Increasing accountability and investments in mental health services, including additional state hospital staff at Western State Hospital, mobile crisis teams, and crisis triage beds.
- Addressing the growing homelessness crisis in Washington state by investing in more emergency residential services and beds throughout the state, and providing resources to local governments to help homeless people transition into permanent housing.

While this budget isn't everything we wanted, it is a path forward. And while we'll have challenges next session in adopting a solution to fully fund education, if we embrace bi-partisanship, we can and we must find a compromise that works for all of Washington.

One thing we were able to compromise on was the need to keep tolls down on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Through an amendment I co-sponsored, the state is paying down the debt service on the bonding for the bridge, which will avoid the need for a harmful toll increase this year.

It is an honor to represent this district and serve you as your elected representative in Olympia.

Sincerely,



Stay Connected

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Committees

- Judiciary (Vice Chair)
- Capital Budget
- Education
- Early Learning & Human Services
- Joint Committee on Veterans' & Military Affairs
- Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee

Representative Christine Kilduff

Standing Up for Veterans



Our district is home to the bravest men and women who fight for our freedom every day. The service members and veterans in Washington state deserve to be taken care of, just like they took care of us by defending our country. I am extremely proud to have offered several bills that address needs of our men and women in uniform. I will keep working hard to ensure all my military-based bills make it through the Senate and on to the governor's desk.

- **Assistance for veterans in small towns and rural areas:** All across the state you'll find veterans and it's not always easy for them to drive halfway across the state to get the services they've earned, especially those in small towns and farm country. That's why I sponsored **House Bill 2534** to create a pilot program to reach out to veterans to get access to services and benefits like health care, employment, education, mental health care, transportation, vocational training, or substance abuse services. No matter where a veteran lives, they deserve our respect and support and this pilot program could easily be expanded all across the state.

- **Pro-bono legal help for our veterans:** Military families have to be flexible—but that comes with extra challenges. When you're deployed overseas, you can't just head home to hire a lawyer. That's why I worked with the Attorney General's office on **House Bill 2496** to create an Office of Military and Veteran Legal Assistance to help get free legal services for military service members, veterans, and their families.
- **Consumer protections for active duty service members:** We all know that when you have to terminate certain types of service contracts, like a gym membership for example, you get hit with fees and penalties. But for our service members who are deployed overseas, they have no choice but to cancel those contracts. I don't believe it's fair to nickel and dime those who are called to duty and submitted **House Bill 2718** to help protect our service members.



Representing Our Families

It's an unfortunate reality that many in our community have disabilities that will affect them their entire lives. Whether a disability from injury due to service to their country, or a developmental disability since birth, families have no choice but to face these extra challenges. But tax policy shouldn't be one of those challenges.

That's why this year I passed the ABE Act which allows tax-free savings accounts similar to college savings plans. Before, people with disabilities and their families could be penalized for having more than \$2,000 in savings—hurting their eligibility for Medicaid or Supplemental Security Income, both of which can be a necessity when living with a disability. Now, the ABE Act allows families of all income levels to save up to \$14,000 a year and \$300,000 total for housing, transportation, education, healthcare and other related expenses for persons with disabilities. Everyone deserves a chance at a good education and a good life, and this law is another tool for families to make sure their loved ones have that chance.



28th Legislative District

Working to Improve Our Schools

In the last few years we've made historic improvements to education in our state. Between lowering college tuition for the first time in Washington history, investing \$3.2 billion in school funding, including all-day kindergarten, and increasing scholarships and grants, we're working hard to prepare our children to find jobs in the 21st century economy. But more work remains. We made some progress this year, including:

- Developing a plan to **fully fund education** by next year with bi-partisan support;
- **Addressing the teacher shortage** by allowing more retired teachers to become substitutes; and
- **Closing the opportunity gap** so all students have the chance to succeed academically.

One thing I'm especially concerned about is absences from class. Too many kids are missing class and schools need more effective mechanisms to address this issue. This year, I voted for legislation which establishes community truancy boards to address the barriers to school attendance and assesses student needs. This legislation will support at-risk youth and their families and connect them with services they need to intervene when a student is heading in the wrong direction.

Another major issue is the constitutionality of charter schools. Last fall, the state Supreme Court ruled that charter



schools were unconstitutional. They operate by unelected boards but receive public funding—thus no elected official is accountable for taxpayer dollars. Several of us worked on proposals that would fix problems with charter schools, but in the end the Senate Republicans passed a bill that would take money from the public lottery to fund charter schools. Because this legislation creates a separate and unequal system of schools and does not provide the state's Chief School Officer the authority to oversee them, as the Constitution requires, I believe that, like the initiative, this law will be struck down.

While I did vote no on the bill, I was glad the House and Senate agreed to an amendment I sponsored that requires all charter schools to tell current and potential students and parents about any ongoing legal disputes that might result in the closure of charter schools.

Supporting local projects

There are many pressing needs in our community that we were able to address through the supplemental capital budget. From fixing problems at Western State to replacing the Ponders Wellfield water treatment plant in Lakewood, we have to make sure we're maintaining the infrastructure that the public uses every day.

In addition to the new water treatment plant and Western State upgrades, we're also protecting emergency management IT equipment at Camp Murray from power outages, paving the parking lot at Fort Steilacoom Park, and providing funding for the Child Study & Treatment Center.

Local infrastructure, mental health facilities, and public works were major investments I am happy to have supported this year.

