

State Representative  
**CHRISTINE KILDUFF**  
28<sup>th</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



## 2018 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

I'm pleased to share this legislative report on the 2018 session in Olympia, where I focused on putting people first by supporting military and working families, improving laws that keep families safe from crime and injustice, and ensuring government is accountable and transparent to the citizens it serves. This busy 60-day session included:

- **Cutting property taxes by \$390 million in 2019** in addition to future planned property tax cuts;
- **Fully funding public education** with increased new teacher salaries and freezing state college tuition rates;
- **Addressing sexual harassment** and unfair wage practices; and
- Securing millions in state funding for **local projects important to our region.**

For those on fixed incomes, particularly seniors and working families, high property taxes and car tab taxes, plus rising costs for health services, are a very real concern. I'll continue working with fellow lawmakers to lower those taxes and address the high cost of health care.

There's a lot more to do and I'm excited and committed to continue working on behalf of our communities when we return next year. If you have any questions, please contact my office and I would be happy to speak with you. It is an honor to serve as your Representative.

Sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature of Christine Kilduff.



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### COMMITTEES

- **Judiciary (Vice Chair)**
- **Early Learning & Human Services**
- **Education**
- **Joint Committee for Veterans' and Military Affairs**
- **Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee**

# REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE KILDUFF

## REDUCING PROPERTY TAXES

Last year, the Legislature addressed a fundamental problem in our school funding system. Homeowners in property-rich districts, like Mercer Island, weren't paying their fair share in property taxes while homeowners in our community paid a disproportionate amount. Lawmakers passed a plan that improves state funding for schools by addressing that longstanding inequity that overburdened Pierce County. Starting in 2019, your share of property taxes that funds our schools go down in four out of the five school districts in our area (HB 2242). However, property taxes are still too high, which is **why I voted to reduce property taxes** in 2019 by an additional \$390 million across the state.

## OPPOSING UNFAIR SOUND TRANSIT CAR TAB TAXES

Car tab taxes are too high. **I voted NO on Sound Transit's ST3 plan** in the Legislature because it had an unfair valuation for car tabs, the \$6 billion-dollar gas tax that accompanied it was too costly, and there is too little benefit for our district. The last two years, I voted for the only ST3 relief bill to pass out of the House. That bipartisan plan fixes the car tab valuation system by replacing it with one similar to Kelley Blue Book values. In that plan, a 2011 Ford F-250 could see a 28% decrease in ST3 car tab taxes. Much to my disappointment, this compromise passed out of the House, but failed to get support in the Senate.

## AN ON TIME BALANCED BUDGET

This year, the Legislature concluded its work **on time and on budget**. Two areas of interest to our district include fully funding education and improving investments in mental health, specifically Western State Hospital.

### FULLY FUNDING EDUCATION

The Legislature needed to fully fund education by September 2018 in order to satisfy the requirements of the McCleary Supreme Court ruling. Last year, we secured nine out of ten items on the list to fulfill that goal and this year, lawmakers addressed the final item: teacher compensation. New teacher salaries have fallen behind and the state is losing great teachers who can find jobs in other states, or leave the field completely for better salaries. With the new budget, schools can now offer a significantly increased starting salary for new teachers and flexibility for teachers in the middle of their careers.

### ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Washington state's commitment to improving the mental health system continues to be a top priority. This year's budget includes \$306 million to improve state hospitals, increase staff, improve salaries to keep qualified doctors and nurses, and address bed space shortages.

The capital budget includes \$20 million in construction funds toward Western State improvements. This is a huge win for our local communities that want to see patients treated fairly and compassionately while maintaining the safety and security of patients, workers, and local residents.

Lawmakers passed a new law to establish partnerships between mental health professionals and law enforcement officers. It will expand the ability of police to respond to



mental health crises they often confront in the field and help people get treatment they need (HB 2892).

Finally, for our city, county, and state corrections employees in high-risk occupations and those who provide nursing care or work at Western State Hospital or Department of Veterans Affairs, I wrote a new law to ensure they can enter into the Public Safety Employees' Retirement System. This is important because it allows those employees in dangerous jobs to retire at age 60 (HB 1558).

### TACKLING THE OPIOID CRISIS

Too many families in Washington have seen a loved one suffer from opioid addiction. The Legislature made significant contributions to programs across the state, including:

- A **statewide Drug Take-Back program** to encourage individuals to return unused prescription drugs at a safe disposal site;
- Increased funding for opioid use disorder treatment, staffing for the **Prescription Monitoring Program** that tracks opioid prescriptions, and outpatient mental health treatments; and
- Funds for Narcan/Naloxone, a drug that can **reverse overdoses**.

# 28<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

## STANDING UP FOR MILITARY FAMILIES



My key legislative priority provides extra safeguards for soldiers and their families who stand ready to defend our freedoms. Military families, who need to move and terminate a service contract, like a gym membership, need extra flexibility. Under this new law, they will no longer incur fines and penalties when called to serve in a new role (HB 1056).

Military spouses make tremendous sacrifices to ensure their husband or wife can serve our country. That sacrifice should not stop them from finding employment if they so choose. I proposed legislation to allow our state to take the lead in educating employers about the valuable skills and abilities of military spouses. While this bill did not pass this year, I'm continuing to work on ensuring military spouses have greater access to employment (HB 2456).

For veterans and servicemembers with disabilities who need to modify or retrofit their vehicle to get out in the community, the sales and use tax exemption for adaptive equipment provides some needed affordability. That tax exemption was set to expire this year, which is why I wrote and passed a law to extend the tax exemption for another ten years (HB 2269).



*Bill signing for HB 2269 – Veterans and Service Member Automotive Equipment Tax Relief*

## MAKING COLLEGE AFFORDABLE FOR EVERYONE

Every student who would like to pursue a college education should have that opportunity. However, the reality today is that college is incredibly expensive. In recent years, the Legislature has reduced the cost of tuition by five percent and frozen the price of tuition. This year's new budget funding reduces the waitlist for the State Need Grant, an important source of college funds for students in need. That grant is now on track to be fully funded in the next four years.

## TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN GOVERNMENT

Lawmakers need to be transparent about the work they do for their constituents. That's why **I voted NO on a bill this year that would have made the Legislature much less transparent** than other areas of government. The governor's office, state agencies, and local governments all follow the Public Records Act. The Legislature should as well. Thankfully, lawmakers realized that the bill they passed was a bad idea and asked for a veto from the governor, which he provided (SB 6617).

The Legislature did approve a sunshine law I co-sponsored that improves transparency in election contributions this year. The DISCLOSE Act requires certain non-profit organizations to disclose their donors when those organizations contribute over \$25,000 to state and local campaigns. A loophole allowed them to keep that money hidden. This new law shines a light on special interests spending money on elections, ensuring your right to know who is behind campaigns (SB 5991).



## SEXUAL HARASSMENT & EQUAL PAY

After 75 years, the Legislature finally updated the Equal Pay Act to help close the wage gap between women and men, where women earn 79 percent of a man's wages. The new law eliminates pay secrecy, prohibits retaliation for asking for equal pay, and precludes employees from receiving fewer career advancement opportunities based on gender (HB 1506).

National discussions about sexual harassment in the workplace spawned a trio of bills that improve policies and strengthen protections in the workplace. Companies can no longer use non-disclosure agreements to hide sexual harassment or other improper conduct from employees or require employees to sign such agreements (SB 5996, SB 6471, and SB 6068).

## PROTECTING YOUR PRIVATE FINANCIAL INFORMATION

When credit agencies expose your private financial information to the public due to an inadvertent data breach, your family's future is in jeopardy. The best tool to protect that future is a credit freeze, which stops anyone from opening new accounts in your name. Legislators passed a new law that protects you from unfair fees charged by financial institutions, so you can freeze and unfreeze your credit accounts when there is a breach (SB 6018).

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**CHRISTINE KILDUFF**

**28<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT**

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**2018 Legislative Report**



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**FINDING COMMON GROUND  
ON GUN SAFETY**

While preserving Second Amendment rights, lawmakers reached across the aisle to pass several new laws that improve public safety.

- Banning bump stocks, a device that can be misused to fire a semi-automatic rifle much faster than intended. This is the same type of device that killed 58 and injured hundreds in the Las Vegas shooting last October. There is a buyback program for current bump stock owners (SB 5991).
- Prohibiting firearm possession when convicted of domestic violence harassment of a family member. Almost half of women killed last year were murdered by a family member and having a gun in the house increases the probability of being murdered. This change aligns with similar laws prohibiting firearm possession (SB 6298).
- Allowing individuals to put themselves on a voluntary no-buy list—a helpful tool for those who suffer from suicidal thoughts and fear they may make a life-threatening decision. Individuals may also easily remove themselves from this list (SB 5553).

**SUPPORTING LOCAL PROJECTS**

The capital budget funds many pressing needs in our community. This year, the state invested \$1 billion in new school construction. I am happy to have advocated for over \$300 million in funding for Pierce County. Projects in our district include:

- \$2 million for the JBLM North Clear Zone;
- \$1 million for the Intrepid Spirit Traumatic Brain Injury Center at JBLM;
- Over \$20 million for Western State Hospital improvements, maintenance, and repairs;
- Nearly \$4 million for the Military Department;
- \$3.4 million for renovations at Pierce College Fort Steilacoom’s Cascade Building;
- \$1.8 million to complete the Ponders Water Treatment Plant for the Lakewood Water District;
- \$976,000 for the Harry Todd Waterfront for aquatic lands enhancement;
- \$750,000 for the Fircrest Community Center Pool;
- \$60,000 to upgrade the Lakewood Playhouse lighting replacement and upgrades;
- \$53,000 for DuPont Historical Museum renovations;
- \$31,000 for the Steilacoom Historical Museum Association Storage Building; and
- \$26,000 for the Anderson Island Historical Society Archival Building.