



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE TINA ORWALL

Deputy Speaker Pro-Tempore

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## Report to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Legislative District

Spring 2018

Dear Neighbors,

It is such an honor to represent our community and work on complex issues that affect our district. We finished our short 60-day session in March, on time and with a balanced budget that invests in education, mental health, and public safety.

In this newsletter, you'll find some session highlights including legislation that helps those most in need, additional support for working families and resources to address critical issues facing our community.

Like many of you, I was shocked by the enormous increase in property taxes, which harms working families and those with fixed incomes. We were especially hard-hit in King County from multiple sources (McCleary, local levies, Sound Transit-ST3, and Vets and Human Services levy). As a first step to bring relief, we passed a one-time **\$391 million property tax cut** for 2019, but we need to do more.

Many of you may have heard about the public records disclosure bill that flew through both chambers and landed on the governor's desk. I voted against it and, thankfully, Gov. Inslee vetoed it. Now we can work on a better policy to address this issue and, this time, ensure that it goes through the comprehensive and transparent legislative process.

It is important for me to hear from you; I am grateful for your letters, emails and calls. Now that I am back in district, if you'd like to meet, please contact my office.

Thank you for allowing me to represent you in Olympia,

Tina

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE TINA ORWALL

## K12 EDUCATION/ MCCLEARY

Our most significant investment in 2018 was **\$1 billion additional dollars for public schools** to fully fund teacher salaries by the 2018-19 school



year as ordered by the Supreme Court. I believe these funds will finally resolve the McCleary litigation. Our education bill ([ESSB 6362](#)) also includes:

- \$100 million for special education
- \$51 million to recruit and retain talented educators
- 4 percent increase in state salary for highly qualified teachers beginning in 2019-20
- Creating greater stability in high poverty districts by using a three-year average to determine eligibility for extra funding
- Providing more transparency about how public education dollars are spent

## MENTAL HEALTH

This session's major investment of nearly **\$300 million for behavioral health services** will help address two of the primary drivers of our current homelessness crisis: untreated substance abuse and mental health issues. The money will support patients in our state hospitals and provide more community support for those who are facing a crisis and often feel they have nowhere to turn.

Another achievement was passage of [HB 1047](#), the **Secure Drug Take Back Act**, which creates the nation's first statewide drug take-back program. In 2016, over 400 opioid overdose deaths in our state were due to prescription opioids. I believe a safe way to dispose of unused medication will help protect our families and communities.



## EQUAL PAY OPPORTUNITY ACT

Women make up almost half of the workforce yet, in Washington, over the course of 40 years of work the average woman will earn almost half a million less than her male counterpart. After receiving Democratic support over the last few years, [HB 1506](#), finally made it to the governor's desk. This new law updates, for the first time since 1943, the Washington State Equal Pay Act by:

- Prohibiting pay secrecy policies
- Allowing discussion of wages
- Preventing discrimination by gender in providing opportunities
- Banning retaliation against workers who file complaints, discuss wages or seek advancement opportunities
- Ensuring workers are entitled to remedies in the event of violations



## SUICIDE PREVENTION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

After three years of participating in stakeholder meetings, chaired by Forefront, with higher education institutions, suicide prevention experts, veterans' organizations, and survivors, I am so pleased that Gov. Inslee signed [SB 6514](#), concerning suicide prevention and behavioral health in higher education, with enhanced services to student veterans.

# LEGISLATIVE REPORT TO THE 33RD DISTRICT

## PROTECTING SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE



Domestic violence is too common in our society. One of the keys to getting out of these situations is economic stability. But existing law did not explicitly prohibit an employer from firing a survivor once the employer finds out about the abuse. [HB 2661](#) ensures workers can't be fired or denied employment because they are victims of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT KITS UPDATE

There's great news to share! First, as a result of a bill we passed three years ago to address the backlog, the State Patrol began rolling out **Washington's online rape kit tracking system** in April. Now, instead of feeling like their cases fell into a black hole to never be seen again, survivors will be able to track their kits from hospital to lab.

Also, this session's budget includes **\$1.5 million** over the next three years to fund three additional State Patrol lab technicians to address new rape kit backlog, for a total of 10 staff dedicated to testing sexual assault kits.

There's more: the SAFE Best Practices Task Force will continue one more year, the seven lab technicians we funded in 2015 will test sexual assault kits exclusively, and the Attorney General will direct **\$3 million** from a federal grant toward testing old kits.

## ADDRESSING STUDENT LOANS

Nearly 800,000 Washingtonians are paying off their college education. According to a report by the Attorney General, each of them, on average, has a student loan of around \$24,000. We passed three measures to help borrowers who are struggling to keep up with their payments and current students who may not fully understand the extent of their loans until it's time to start paying them back.

### STUDENT OPPORTUNITY, ASSISTANCE, AND RELIEF ACT

When people default on their loan payments, the state can revoke their professional licenses, or garnish 25 percent of their paychecks. These actions make it even more difficult to pay back the loan. I sponsored [HB 1169](#) to repeal provisions allowing professional license suspension due to student loan default, lower the interest for unpaid private student loan debt, and increase bank account and wage garnishment exemptions.

### STUDENT LOAN TRANSPARENCY ACT

[SB 5022](#) protects student borrowers who, in many cases, struggle with confusing information and often



end up taken advantage of by scammers. The new law requires institutions of higher education to notify students of their loan balances and estimated monthly payments each time a financial aid package that includes a new or revised student loan is offered.

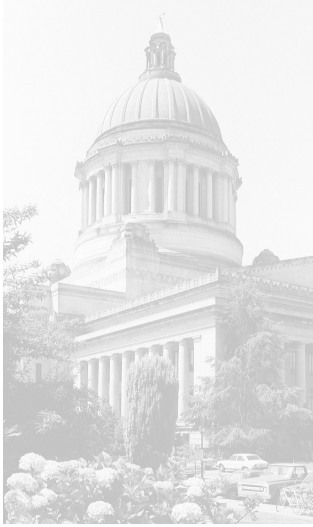
### STUDENT LOAN BILL OF RIGHTS

[SB 6029](#) establishes a range of provisions designed to protect Washingtonians from deceptive or predatory practices and requires student loan servicers to obtain licenses to operate in the state. It also establishes a Student Education Loan Advocate to aid borrowers, compile data, provide information on student loans, and receive, review, and take action on complaints from borrowers.

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# LEGISLATIVE REPORT TO THE 33<sup>RD</sup> DISTRICT

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## STATE REPRESENTATIVE **TINA ORWALL**

### ADDRESSING ABANDONED PROPERTIES

I am grateful that the governor signed my legislation ([HB 2057](#)) to create new protections for low-income consumers, senior homeowners, and communities facing foreclosure while also addressing blight by giving tools to cities and counties to clean up abandoned properties in mid-foreclosure.



### AIRPORT IMPACT STUDY

Last session we got funding for the University of Washington to carry out an air quality study on ultra-fine particles. This year we secured an **additional \$300,000** (to be matched by local funds) to conduct a larger study on the impacts of airport operations on noise, public health, traffic congestion, and parking in residential areas. The study will also cover the effects on property values and economic development opportunities; benefits derived due to proximity to the airport including wages, taxes, and improved access to transit; and recommendations for mitigating negative impacts, or bolstering potential benefits.



Deputy Speaker Pro-Tempore  
Tina Orwall presiding over  
the House floor.