



State Representative • D – 48th Legislative District

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INVESTING IN OUR INFRASTRUCTURE

We hit the ground running this session by passing a two-year capital budget. This budget provides thousands of jobs and pays for construction projects and infrastructure investments across the state, including school buildings, mental health facilities, state park improvements, and other infrastructure that keeps

Washington a great place to live, work and raise a family. We also passed the supplemental capital budget, which makes further changes in response to emerging needs throughout the state. These budgets invest more than \$4 billion in critical construction and infrastructure projects, including over \$1 billion for public school construction.

This includes over \$14 million invested in the 48th District in various projects:

- \$1.5 million to preserve affordable housing at Highland Village;
- \$1.5 million to replace the Pacific Northwest Ballet School at the Francia Russell Center;
- \$26,000 for upgrading Youth Eastside Services facilities;
- \$500,000 to modernize and enhance the Kirkland Performance Center; and
- \$200,000 to acquire the TXL Lake Hills Clubhouse for the Boys & Girls Club.

Transportation

The Legislature also passed a supplemental transportation budget, which funds transportation infrastructure that helps us get around and keeps our economy moving. Investments in the 48th include highway corridor improvements on I-90, I-405, and SR-520, projects to increase pedestrian safety, and expanding the King County Metro bike share program. In total, we will see more than \$130 million for projects solely in the 48th district, and will benefit from more than \$9 billion invested statewide. The transportation budget also continues to fund a pilot project I spearheaded last session to provide youth easier access to public transportation. The program offers free summer ORCA cards to low-income high school students in the Lake Washington and Highline school districts.



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- Committees:
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- Science, Innovation and Technology Caucus (Founder & Co-Chair)
 - Members of Color Caucus



State Representative • D–48th Legislative District

Vandana Slatter



Your voice for working families, healthy communities, and education opportunities for all kids.

Dear friends,

A little more than four months ago, I arrived in Olympia for my second legislative session as State Representative in the 48th district. With over 2000 bills introduced, 308 of which passed the Legislature, it felt to this freshman legislator, that we had accomplished a great deal in a mere 60 days — even ending on time!

I am pleased to report that we passed three supplemental budgets (operating, capital, and transportation), as well as several landmark pieces of legislation.

Inside this newsletter, you’ll find more detail about this session’s legislative victories, including updates on legislation I was able to work on and sponsor this year. With so many bills passed, here are a few highlights. If you are interested in something that is not included here, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

In passing the operating budget, we invested in our youth by including significant funding for education, while also providing some property tax relief. This balanced budget also includes investments to improve our behavioral health system, expand access to higher education, increase opportunities for jobs and economic development in rural communities, and strengthen the safety net for struggling families and vulnerable Washingtonians.

We protected our friends and neighbors from federal actions by passing legislation to ensure students with DACA status don’t lose their financial aid or college affordability benefits. We also passed legislation to promote safety and equality in our workplace and communities, and legislation that strengthens our democracy.

Thank you for taking the time to read this update and for reaching out to me during the session. It is clear to me that our path forward lies in building partnerships, not rivalry. I am spurred on by the difficulties we face and am lifted by the bright hope and engagement of those who reached out and educated me on issues that mattered to them. I remain committed to the idea that government’s role is to provide options, so that everyone has a chance to contribute and to succeed in our communities. As always, I look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas—and to seeing you back in district!

Sincerely,

Vandana Slatter

Rep. Vandana Slatter

For more information on specific legislation, or to sign up to receive my e-newsletters, visit housedemocrats.wa.gov/slatter!



LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

A bill moving through the Legislature is somewhat like a salmon swimming upstream to its spawning ground. Only the bills with strongest policy, great advocacy, and good timing can avoid pitfalls along the way! This session saw the culmination of that journey for many hard-earned pieces of legislation, and I feel fortunate to have worked on several and to have voted to pass all of these important new laws.

Promoting equality in the workplace

It was such a pleasure to vote for and to speak in support of the **Equal Pay Opportunity Act**, which lifts the veil of secrecy around wages, empowering women with the information they need to advocate for equal pay and opportunities.

Other victories for women in the workplace were the multiple bills we passed to **strengthen protections against sexual harassment** in the workplace.

Access to Democracy

Our democracy is strengthened by every vote. Voter turnout is decreasing and only 37% voted in the last general election. In order to maximize the voice of the people and strengthen our democracy, we passed a package of bills:

- The **DISCLOSE Act** exposes hidden money in elections;
- **Same-day voter registration** removes a significant barrier for eligible voters;
- **Automatic voter registration** makes the process simpler and easier;
- **Youth voter pre-registration** allows high school students to exercise their right to vote the day they turn 18; and
- The **Washington Voting Rights Act** ensures fair and accurate representation.

Supporting our Youth

We invested nearly **\$1 billion in new funding for K-12 education**, bringing the state into compliance with our constitutional obligation to fund our public schools. These new funds will mostly go toward teacher and staff salaries, in addition to other targeted investments.

I helped craft a bill to provide kindergarten through second grade **teachers with the tools to recognize indicators of dyslexia**, and provide every student with the instructional support they need to succeed.



We passed legislation to ensure **students with DACA status will be able to keep their College Bound state financial aid** and qualify for the College Bound Scholarship.

Nearly half of Washington’s 1.1 million students qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. Two new laws will help ensure students receive healthy, nutritious meals throughout the school day, regardless of their ability to pay:

Breakfast After the Bell and the **Hunger-Free Students’ Bill of Rights**.

Protecting Consumers

Washington became the first state in the nation to pass **net neutrality** to protect your access and freedom on the internet. We also passed legislation to help consumers **protect against identity theft** by removing unfair credit freeze fees, and the **Student Loan Bill of Rights**, which protects student loan borrowers from fraudulent and predatory practices.

REDUCING PROPERTY TAXES

I heard from so many of you this session about the burden of the increased property tax and was determined to keep this issue at a high priority. Ultimately, we voted to provide \$390 million to lower property taxes in 2019. While it is certainly a step in the right direction, it is not nearly enough. We need to do more to help young families and seniors who are struggling, and I stand ready to continue working to bring further relief.



ADDRESSING THE HOUSING CRISIS

After years of steady improvement, homelessness in Washington has been on the rise since 2013, increasing to more than 20,000 people in 2016. This crisis is fueled by rent increases and a lack of available housing options. In an effort to address this critical lack of affordable housing here in Washington and across the nation, Senator Maria Cantwell worked to include an increase to the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) in the recently passed federal spending bill. Without changes to our state laws, however, housing providers would have lost the ability to take advantage of the increase. With the hard work by many stakeholders, my bill (**HB 2444**) was able to make this needed change. It codified into law the current practice of exempting affordable housing projects from the real estate excise tax, ensuring the continuation of these projects.

The Legislature also made permanent and increased the local homeless housing and assistance surcharge (aka “document recording fee”) from \$40 to \$62, preserving critical funds for the state, counties, and cities.

Passage of my bill (**HB 1630**) will allow unaccompanied minors experiencing homelessness to choose to share their information. This will help ensure we can connect these youth to the programs and services they need.

Finally, we took steps to help families who are struggling to find a place to live by enacting a ban on income discrimination, keeping landlords from automatically turning away those who receive housing subsidies.



STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE

When it comes to promoting the health and well-being of Washingtonians, our focus is on expanding access, improving the quality of care, and addressing affordability.

Overdoses are now the most common cause of accidental death in Washington, outnumbering car accidents. This session, we took steps to address the opioid epidemic by enacting a first-in-the-nation drug take-back program, more funding for opioid use disorder treatment, staffing increases for the Prescription Monitoring Program, and greater access to the overdose-reversal drug Naloxone. Despite this progress, we will need to continue to advocate for a wide variety of policies and well-funded services to turn the tide against this epidemic.

The **Reproductive Parity Act** that we passed protects a woman’s right to make her own health care decisions and requires insurance plans to offer full coverage for reproductive health. Finding appropriate mental health services, especially for children, pregnant women and new mothers is often difficult

for families. To address this need, we passed a Senate bill to expand the Partnership Access Line (PAL) program to help connect these families to the services they need. I was proud to have sponsored this policy in the House (**HB 2451**).

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Unfortunately, we were not able to pass significant climate legislation this session. A solid number of bills were introduced, however, and lawmakers were engaged on both sides of the aisle. I look forward to continuing this work and making progress in the future.

In the House, we passed legislation to set emissions reduction targets for greenhouse gases in 2020, 2035, and 2050 and strengthen these targets based on the latest climate science. The bill, which eventually stalled in the Senate, incorporated language from legislation I proposed (**HB 2294**) that would align our state’s emission goals with the Paris climate agreement.

Another bill I sponsored that would benefit our environment was the Link Air Act (**HB 2295**). Although the bill stalled in the Senate, I was able to help secure funding in the Transportation budget for a working group that will look to make Washington an innovator in electric regional air travel by mitigating impacts of air transportation on climate change, reducing traffic on roads, and rejuvenating our rural economies.

PREVENTING GUN VIOLENCE

It has been inspiring to see our young people stand up for meaningful change and dialogue around gun violence. These passionate and engaged students are our future and I am pleased that we passed legislation to make voting easier for these young leaders as they come of age.



There is no doubt we need to continue doing critical work on gun legislation, such as enhancing background checks and increasing the minimum age to 21 for buying semi-automatic rifles, but we took small, significant steps this session to protect our communities.

We banned the manufacture and sale of bump-fire stocks, the trigger modifications that allow a semi-automatic firearm to replicate a fully automatic one. We enacted a law to make it more difficult for domestic violence abusers to buy firearms, and it will now be possible for anyone struggling with mental illness to voluntarily place themselves on a firearms do-not-purchase list.

Legislative Photos: Reps. Senn, Ortiz-Self, Ryu, and Slatter embrace after equal pay bill passes; Rep. Slatter speaks at an affordable housing rally; Rep. Slatter joins legislators and stakeholders to look on as Governor Inslee signs bump stock ban.