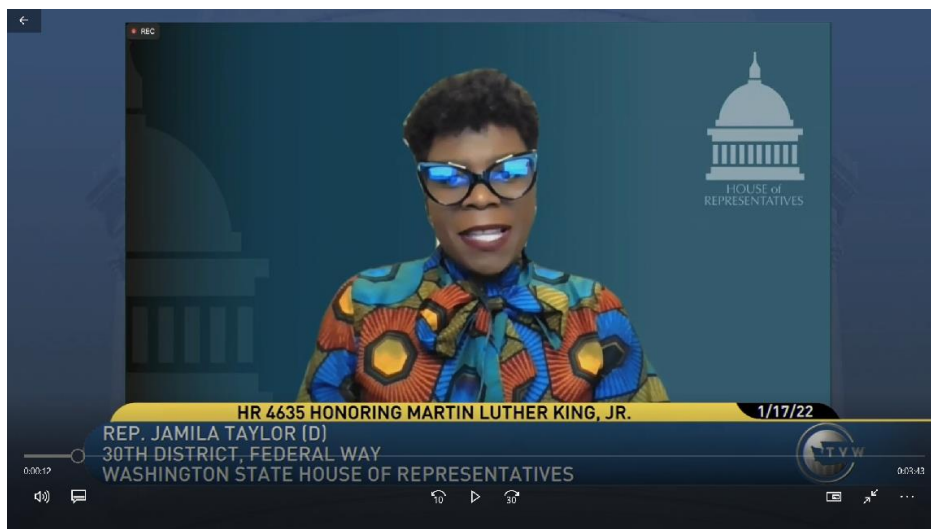


Friends and neighbors,

In case you missed it, [I spoke on the House floor](#) last week about the importance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy and answering the challenge of this moment in history. Here's an excerpt from my remarks:

As Dr. King said, “change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability, but comes through continuous struggle.” Those words remind me of how important this place and time is for every lawmaker in this chamber — and to the families we serve back home...I hope the decisions we make in this chamber do honor to the legacy of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. by turning that heavy wheel towards meaningful change, and to make real the movement towards serving every Washingtonian better.



We have a new name: the Legislative Black Caucus

We're excited to announce that we changed our name from the Black Members Caucus to the **Washington State Legislative Black Caucus**, or LBC. We made this change to help clarify that the LBC has both House and Senate legislators, similar to the Congressional Black Caucus at the federal level. We also updated our mission, vision and values:



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS

MISSION

The LBC ensures the experience, needs and solutions of Black people throughout Washington state are represented, prioritized and made real in our legislative process and policies.

VISION

We envision a state where Black individuals, families and communities no longer face anti-blackness, and know they have the access, opportunity and resources they need to have true equity and thrive.

VALUES

The LBC values and centers integrity, equity and justice in our work. We advocate collectively with our neighbors for policy change that is firmly rooted in our diverse Black history and culture of resilience.

Speaking of changes, **former Rep. John Lovick** was appointed to the state Senate and **Rep. Brandy Donaghy** was appointed to replace him in the state House. A founding legislator of the BMC and the first Black speaker of the House, Sen. Lovick has helped break barriers and inspire a generation of leaders. He'll be deeply missed in the House.

Welcome to the Legislature Rep. Donaghy! Rep. Donaghy's [historic appointment to the House](#) marks the first time in history that the 44th Legislative District has been represented by a delegation of three Black lawmakers. It's an honor to be part of a growing LBC!

We are
proud to
welcome

REPRESENTATIVE

**BRANDY
DONAGHY**

WA HOUSE DEMOCRATS



Looking back on our work in 2021

Before we get into the LBC's priorities for the 2022 Legislative Session, here's a recap of some of the bills we helped get over the finish line last year:

–**Improve policing in Washington state** with a package of bills that work together to establish clear expectations for officer behavior; set a baseline for the acceptable use of force, tactics and equipment; and put systems of accountability and transparency in place

–**Make sure school staff have access to anti-racism and diversity, equity and inclusion training**, to help dismantle institutional racism, better support every student and improve relationships between schools and families

–**Expand access to the College Bound Scholarship** by getting rid of the requirement that students sign a pledge to be eligible for the program

–**Get rid of school lunch co-pays**. No kid should go hungry or struggle to learn on an empty stomach. This bill helps feed hungry students in every school district.

–**Expand the Working Families Tax Credit** to put dollars back in the pockets of those who need it most. This expansion means greater financial stability for hundreds of thousands of families. One in four kids are in a family that will benefit from this policy.

–**Provide rent assistance and renter protections**. Everyone deserves safe, stable housing. We passed a budget that provided funds to pay back rent and utility assistance, and bills that provide free attorneys for low-income renters and require landlords to give tenants a legitimate reason for ending their tenancy and more time to make new living arrangements.

–**Make childcare more affordable and accessible**. We urgently need to support child care and early learning programs, and ensure livable wages for child care providers.

And so much more! Keep reading for more on our work this session.

The LBC's 2022 legislative priorities

Health Care Wellness, Access and Equity

- [SR 8632](#): Calls attention to Sickle Cell Awareness Week (sponsored by Sen. Lovick)
- [SB 5838](#): Provides a monthly diaper subsidy for parents or other caregivers in need (sponsored by Sen. Nobles)
- [HB 1893](#): Allows emergency medical technicians to provide medical evaluation, testing and vaccines outside of an emergency in response to a public health agency request (sponsored by Rep. Donaghy)

- [HB 1881](#): Creates a new health profession for birth doulas (sponsored by Rep. Harris-Talley)
- Budget request: \$4.5 million for the Tubman Health Center, a Black community-owned and led health institution (sponsored by Rep. Harris-Talley)
- Budget request: \$1.2 million to establish the African American Health Board (sponsored by Rep. Harris-Talley)
- Budget request: \$150,000 for a plant-based school meal pilot program (sponsored by Rep. Berg)

COVID-19 and Economic Recovery

- [HB 1827](#): Creates a community reinvestment account and community reinvestment program (sponsored by Rep. Morgan)
- [HB 2023](#): Streamlines enforcement of tenant protections (sponsored by Rep. Hackney)
- [HB 1494](#): Creates a property tax exemption and establishes a tax justice and equity fund (sponsored by Rep. Harris-Talley)
- [HB 2022](#): Addresses social equity in the cannabis industry (co-sponsored by Reps. Johnson and Taylor)
- Budget request: \$500,000 to review the state's response to COVID-19, including how BIPOC, Black, Indigenous and People of Color, communities have been impacted (sponsored by Sen. Lovick)
- Budget request: \$500,000 to help with fees for Black-owned start-up businesses (sponsored by Rep. Johnson)
- Budget request: \$180,000 to create a BIPOC farming task force (sponsored by Rep. Berg)

Public Safety and Criminal Justice Reform

- [SB 5575](#): Increases the number of Snohomish County Superior Court judges to help address the backlog of cases and ensure equitable access to an individual's right to speedy trial (sponsored by Sen. Lovick)
- [SB 5824](#): Provides youth in foster care with financial education and support (sponsored by Sen. Nobles)
- [HB 1507](#): Establishes a mechanism for independent prosecutions of criminal conduct arising from police use of force (sponsored by Rep. Entenman)
- [HB 1956](#): Protects the sensitive information of current and formerly incarcerated individuals from public records requests (sponsored by Rep. Hackney)
- [HB 1413](#): Juvenile points and second chances for juvenile offenders (sponsored by Rep. Hackney)
- Budget request: \$2.8 million for Youth Violence Prevention Demonstration project and planning grants for Pierce County, Yakima and Vancouver (sponsored by Rep. Taylor)
- Budget request: \$200,000 for juvenile re-entry navigators for young people from Federal Way at Green Hill School and Naselle Youth Camp (sponsored by Rep. Johnson)

Racial Justice and Equity

- **HB 1723**: Helps close the digital divide by increasing the accessibility and affordability of telecom services, devices and training (co-sponsored by Reps. Hackney, Harris-Talley, Johnson and Taylor)
- **HB 1829**: Creates a specialty endorsement program in African American studies for educators (sponsored by Rep. Johnson)
- Budget request: \$48,000 for the statewide Black heritage study (sponsored by Rep. Donaghy)



LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS



Honoring the legacies of former lawmakers

The LBC stands on the shoulders of the incredible Black legislators who came before us. I hope you'll join me in pausing to honor three former lawmakers who passed:

-Former state Sen. and Rep. **George Fleming**, who represented the 37th Legislative District from 1969-1990. The second Black senator elected in Washington state and the first to chair the Senate Democratic Caucus, he created the Office of Minority and Women's Business Enterprises and the Housing Finance Commission, which still serve Washingtonians.

-Former state Sen. and Rep. **Bill Smitherman**, the first Black legislator to represent the 26th Legislative District, from 1983-1990. As chair of the Senate Higher Education Committee, he championed legislation that created the University of Washington Tacoma.

-Former state Rep. **Vivian L. Caver**, who represented the 37th Legislative District from 1994-95. From racially integrating the workforce of Seattle department stores, to making housing more inclusive in historically white neighborhoods, to pushing for and then leading the Seattle Human Rights Commission, she blazed trails of equity and belonging.

The LBC's condolences go out to their families. We'll carry each of their legacies forward as we work to create a better state where everyone can thrive.

Save the date: African American Legislative Day

LBC members will be speaking at African American Legislative Day next month on Feb. 21. Stay tuned for more information about how to sign up to join us!



Stay well,

State Rep. Jamila Taylor
Chair, Legislative Black Caucus

State Rep. Kirsten Harris-Talley
Vice-Chair, Legislative Black Caucus

