

# 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative District Updates



**Rep. Jake Fey • Sen. Yasmin Trudeau • Speaker Laurie Jinkins**

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Dear neighbors,

This is our first newsletter together, with Sen. Trudeau as the newest 27th District seatmate. The three of us work collaboratively to be your voice in the state legislature, each of us bringing different perspectives to our roles. Your 27th District delegation includes Washington's first woman and first lesbian Speaker of the House (Speaker Jinkins), the Chair of the House Transportation Committee (Rep. Fey), and the district's first woman of color to serve as Senator (Sen. Trudeau). It's our honor to serve you.

In a short, 60 day session it's pretty hard to top the enormously productive work that happened in 2021. But the 2022 session was both historic and productive, going far beyond what is normally expected in a supplemental budget year.

We are excited to share the significant legislation and major investments of the session in this newsletter. In fact, there were so many that you'll receive a separate mailing from us highlighting just our transportation investments. From Day One, we worked to bring EVERYONE forward as we come out of this pandemic. We didn't want the status quo. We wanted a better future for our community and our state.

We've built a better future by prioritizing those most at-risk of being left behind: our working families, our small and Main Street businesses, our communities of color and low-income communities, and our most vulnerable neighbors and community members.

This session was also about being nimble and responding swiftly to changing conditions. Because of omicron, we shifted from hybrid to remote work right before session, but shifted again in March as COVID numbers declined rapidly. We ended the session with more legislators in person on the capitol campus since 2020.

It was good to see things getting back to normal, and it sent a message of hope and perseverance to the people of this state that we are indeed coming out this pandemic together.

Sen. Yasmin Trudeau

Speaker Laurie Jinkins

Rep. Jake Fey



## 27th Legislative District Updates

### A STRONG SAFETY NET WHEN WE NEED IT MOST



The 2022 session was about bringing everyone along as we come out of the pandemic – EVERYONE. We have seen historically that when our state goes through hard times, the folks who were doing well heading into it tend to still come out OK. But those who were really struggling going into it often come out much worse. That makes for an uneven and inequitable recovery.

You deserve a safety net that protects you and your family when things get really tough. The COVID-19 pandemic slammed us all, but it slammed some harder than others. That's why this year's supplemental budget funds safety net supports for our neighbors and community members who have fallen on the hardest of times:

- \$160 million in funds for utility assistance (energy, water, garbage, broadband), so families can pay their bills for the most basic household needs
- \$94 million in additional funds for food assistance, so no family goes hungry
- Increasing assistance to those who qualify for the state's Aged, Blind and Disabled Program, more than doubling the grant from \$197 to \$417 per month. This will make a big difference for seniors and those with disabilities who have low incomes and simply cannot absorb increased costs.
- \$1.2 billion in additional investments for the care and assistance of our neighbors who need long term care services and supports, and those with developmental disabilities.

### SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Last year, the state made record investments in pandemic-related relief for small businesses and those sectors hit particularly hard. This year, we focused on the long term to foster economic development among our most historically underserved communities. We championed policies and investments to help businesses keep their doors open and employees on the payroll, while creating opportunities in our communities:

- \$100 million to support hospitality-related businesses, one of our state's hardest-hit sectors
- \$34.5 million for the state Department of Commerce to award competitive grants to non-profit organizations with relationships with small businesses. This "Small Business Innovation & Competitiveness Fund" will help spur inclusive small business recovery and build stronger small business support ecosystems, prioritizing underserved/low-income areas and Black, Indigenous, and people of color-owned small businesses and communities.
- B&O tax credits for small businesses that will mean 125,000 businesses will see lower taxes or not have to file at all
- Cutting liquor license fees in half to help our bars, restaurants, distilleries, tasting rooms, and other specific liquor retailers still recovering from pandemic-related closures and supply chain struggles
- \$25 million for small business assistance for arts, heritage and cultural organizations
- Legislation reducing the impact of the pandemic on unemployment insurance premiums for businesses, keeping the cap at last year's rate and lowering it for 2023. This will particularly help our restaurants and other small businesses that often did the right thing by keeping workers on payroll even during pandemic restrictions.





## LOWERING HEALTH CARE COSTS, PROTECTING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS, AND INVESTING IN READINESS

It's hard enough to plan for expected medical bills, but unexpected bills can completely derail a family's budget and even lead to bankruptcy. We passed additional policies this year to bring down costs and tackle surprise medical bills. We invested state and remaining federal recovery dollars to make sure we're prepared for the next health crisis to hit our state. And we made sure that attacks on abortion rights happening in other states won't happen here in Washington.

- **House Bill 1688** gives patients and families peace of mind that they won't get hit with a surprise bill after an emergency room visit. It aligns state and federal balanced billing policies, and ensures that mental health emergencies are protected from surprise bills just like other emergencies.
- **House Bill 1616** standardizes eligibility requirements for hospital charity care across the state, and expands access to this care, so that everyone can access the same high-quality care no matter where they live.
- **House Bill 1851** expands abortion access by making it clear that providers like nurse practitioners – who already have the training and experience to provide abortion care – can do so under state law. It also prohibits the state from penalizing a pregnant individual or a medical provider for an authorized abortion.
- **Senate Bill 5546** caps the cost of insulin at \$35/month, down from the previous \$100/month cap.
- Additional public health investments on top of last year's investments: \$125 million for COVID response and vaccination, \$20 million for public health information systems, \$25 million for community health centers

## STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SAFETY

Last year, the Legislature took decisive action to build a public safety system with accountability, transparency, and equal justice. Since our landmark package of police reform legislation was signed a year ago, deaths by law enforcement have decreased by 60 percent.

In 2022, we've built on that foundation to continue keeping Washington safe.

We began with legislation ensuring that last year's police reform package can be effectively implemented. Our top priority was ensuring law enforcement has the necessary tools to investigate and stop crime, while also ensuring accountability measures are in place.

**House Bill 1719** eliminates ambiguity in statute so police officers have the tools they need to do their jobs protecting us. Similarly, **House Bills 2037** and **1735** clarify use of force policy, giving officers the certainty they need to perform investigations and respond to behavioral health calls. These new laws maintain people's right to protection from unreasonable searches and seizures without compromising the safety of the public or law enforcement. Additionally, the Legislature invested \$7.44 million for 13 new classes at the Basic Law Enforcement Academy to help train new officers.

Other wins in public safety policy include a measure to diversify the Washington State Patrol (WSP) workforce (**House Bill 2057**), ensuring the WSP reflects the diversity of our state.

To address the crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women, **House Bill 1725** establishes a new statewide alert for missing Indigenous people.

**House Bill 1815** addresses the rapid increase in catalytic converter thefts. The bill tackles this issue from a number of angles, including regulating metal purchases and requiring verification of vehicle ownership, along with establishing funding for law enforcement to focus on preventing metal theft.

The Legislature also passed measures protecting Washington communities from gun violence. **Senate Bill 5078** restricts the sale, purchase, and manufacture of high-capacity magazines, which are involved in the majority of mass shootings.

Additionally, we banned untraceable, homemade "ghost guns" that leave no paper trail (**House Bill 1705**) and prohibited weapons at school board meetings, ballot counting locations, and city and county council meetings (**House Bill 1630**).

## 27th Legislative District Updates

### TACKLING OUR HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS CRISIS; MAKING WASHINGTON A BETTER HOME FOR ALL OF US



There's a reason Washington continues to be the best place in the nation to live, learn, work, and raise a family. But as more and more people call Washington home, we face a decrease in affordable housing options and a rise in homelessness. The Legislature continued to prioritize the housing needs of working Washingtonians this year by funding affordable housing resources and broadening pathways to build more homes and bring good-paying development jobs to our communities.

Some housing investment highlights:

- **\$114 million** for the Housing Trust Fund to invest in and build more affordable housing
- **\$240 million** for rapid acquisition of buildings to house Washingtonians experiencing homelessness
- **\$45 million** for rental assistance to keep at-risk families in their homes
- **\$3 million** to support both tenants and landlords, including funding for dispute resolution services and legal assistance
- **\$45 million** to help transition people camping on certain public roads and highways into emergency and permanent housing
- **\$4 million** for an emergency adolescent housing pilot, providing a supportive housing option for our young neighbors aged 16 and up

We also passed policies that will be important tools in our work to tackle Washington's housing crisis, like:

- **SB 5749** – requiring landlords to accept both electronic and non-electronic forms of rent payment, reducing barriers for both tenants and landlords (sponsored by Sen. Trudeau!)
- **SB 5755** – authorizing cities to establish a sales and use tax incentive on construction materials for surface parking lots that are converted to affordable housing units (sponsored by Sen. Trudeau!)
- **SB 5566** – expanding Independent Youth Housing Program eligibility and program length for youth in foster care
- **SB 5713** – providing a property tax exemption for limited equity cooperative housing, a low-income home ownership model
- **HB 1593** – expanding the landlord mitigation program to allow landlord claims for damages to property when a tenant-victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, unlawful harassment or stalking terminates the tenancy
- **HB 1643** – exempting sales of property to a nonprofit, co-op housing association, housing authority or similar housing provider of Real Estate Excise Taxes (REET) if the property will house people who are low-income
- **HB 1717** – creating a process for local governments to collaborate with federally recognized Indian tribes for participation in the Growth Management Act planning process
- **HB 1738** – increasing the Housing Finance Commission's debt limit from \$8 billion to \$14 billion, allowing them to finance more state projects
- **HB 2064** – authorizing landlords to offer a fee in lieu of deposit, with tenant disclosure and protections



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## BUILDING A STRONG COMMUNITY

2022 has proved to be an historic year for investments in Washington communities—not just for the funding directed into communities, but also for the new, feasible ways those investments have been created.

The Legislature passed three deeply intertwined state budgets to address the interconnected issues facing our state. This level of collaboration between the operating, transportation, and capital budgets is both unprecedented and necessary to sustainably move forward. Through these budgets, we have funded projects, priorities, and all communities in ways that have not been possible before.

Each of our budgets emphasizes a strong statewide recovery from the pandemic while planning for a brighter future. We're particularly excited about investments from the state capital budget coming directly to our community.

The capital budget funds critical construction projects throughout Washington. This year's **\$1.5 billion** capital budget was made possible by a one-time transfer from the operating budget and an influx of federal infrastructure funds.

Here are highlights from the capital budget that are helping build a stronger 27th District community.

**\$500,000** to acquire a new site for the Tacoma Recovery Café, an organization that serves people impacted by substance disorders, homelessness, and mental health challenges.

**\$418,000** for early work on improvements to the Dash Point Pier, including replacement of the deck, to maintain critical public access to the Puget Sound.

**\$400,000** to begin design and permitting for a new bike and pedestrian bridge at Swan Creek Park, offering a healthy, active option for recreation in Tacoma's historically underserved Eastside neighborhood.

**\$258,000** to remodel public restrooms at the Foss Waterway Seaport, which will modernize existing facilities and better accommodate large school groups.

**\$250,000** to help purchase a new Tacoma-based building for the Children's Therapy Center, establishing one centrally located site for families to access a wide range of pediatric services.



## PUTTING OUR K-12 STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS FIRST

This year, like every year, Washington's young learners and educators in our K-12 education system continued to be top of mind. This session we responded to the impact of the pandemic on our school system with legislation that increases the number of counselors and nurses in every school district; provides funding stability for schools despite temporary enrollment declines; enables greater food security for all students; and helps create more responsive and supportive learning environments for some of our most at-risk students. Other highlights include:

- **HB 1153** – providing families with language access barriers greater ability to engage with schools as partners in their students' education
- **HB 1590** – providing funding stability to districts that experienced enrollment declines due to COVID-19
- **HB 1664** – recognizing the growing mental and behavioral health needs many students require and amending the basic education funding formula to increase funding for physical, social and emotional support staff in our schools
- **HB 1834** – acknowledging the reality that many of our students struggle with mental and behavioral health issues and creating more flexibility for excused student absences due to mental health reasons
- **HB 1878** – providing greater food security for more Washington students by increasing the number of schools providing universal free meals
- **SB 5252** – ensuring school district personnel have the necessary training to engage in meaningful consultation with local tribes to better support Native students
- **SB 5376** – providing families with better access to the tools available to help them navigate the education system
- **SB 5720** – providing students with a more robust financial literacy education and integrating financial literacy education into professional development for staff



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