

27th Legislative District Updates



Sen. Jeannie Darneille • Speaker Laurie Jinkins • Rep. Jake Fey

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Dear neighbors,

As the 2021 legislative session began, our state faced the most challenging times we've seen in a long while. Working families, small businesses, educators, students, front-line health workers and first responders, those most in need, and those affected by systemic racism were all greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your state lawmakers met the challenge of these unprecedented times by focusing our work on four areas: **providing a COVID-19 response, planning for economic recovery, advancing racial equity and justice, and acting on climate issues.**

We put people first by focusing on key policies and budget decisions that promote a sustainable, equitable, and inclusive recovery.

First, we allocated \$2.2 billion in federal funds through our **early action bill**, providing help to those struggling to pay rent, small businesses striving to stay open, school districts working to deliver remote learning, uninsured and underinsured individuals trying to stay healthy, and communities of color disproportionately harmed by the pandemic.

Next, we rolled out the **Washington Recovery Budget**, which uses state and federal funds to center the people and communities most impacted by the pandemic and facing the greatest barriers to recovery. Our values are reflected in every budget line item, from boosting public health and keeping people fed and in their homes, to investing in small businesses and supporting student learning.

We also took important steps toward balancing our state's upside-down, regressive tax system, which disproportionately burdens low- and middle-income households compared to wealthier Washingtonians. **The Working Families Tax Credit** will grant money back to those households, and a **capital gains excise tax** will ensure the very wealthiest Washingtonians share in the responsibility of funding our state's critical needs like childcare, early learning, and our paramount duty of providing an education for every child.

We wrapped up this historic, mostly remote legislative session on time, without any cases of COVID-19 traced to the Legislature among lawmakers, staff, or the public. Additionally, public engagement increased dramatically with new and improved remote testimony options.


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COVID-19 RESPONSE



The 2021 session was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and responding to the issues it raised was a top priority. Here are just a few of the measures we took:

- Investments of \$1.2 billion for **COVID-19 vaccines, contact tracing, and testing**, plus \$149 million for local public health districts.
- **Senate Bill 5115** protects frontline workers infected by COVID-19 by providing workers' compensation benefits and requiring transparency about potential exposure at work during a pandemic.
- **House Bill 1218** strengthens protections for long-term care residents by establishing minimum communication requirements so facilities are responsive to families, a right to visitation, and requiring comprehensive disaster preparedness plans.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Because the pandemic resulted in business closures and job loss at an unprecedented level, careful consideration and investments have been crucial to keeping Washingtonians afloat, protecting our economy so we can build back even stronger than before. Some investments and policies include:

- Investments totaling \$1.6 billion in **rental assistance, homeowner assistance, homelessness response, and permanent housing supports**.
- An increase in **cash assistance grants** by 15 percent for TANF, Pregnant Women's Assistance, and Refugee Cash Assistance programs, plus \$124 million invested in **food assistance**.

- \$700 million in **supports to help small businesses** recover from the pandemic.
- **Senate Bill 5061**, providing \$1.7 billion in relief to all Washington businesses to cover unemployment insurance tax increases resulting from a historically high unemployment rate in 2020.
- **Senate Bill 5237**, the Fair Start for Kids Act, which will make childcare and early learning more accessible and affordable, as well as expand and stabilize the childcare industry so people with young children can get back to work.



ADVANCING RACIAL EQUITY & JUSTICE

The pandemic and other concurrent events laid bare and exacerbated racial disproportionality in a host of issues facing our state's communities of color. In recognition of the systemic nature of this problem, **Senate Bills 5044 and 5227** will require diversity, equity and inclusion training for those who work in K-12 school districts as well as at public institutions of higher learning. **House Bill 1016** made Juneteenth (June 19) an official state holiday in recognition of the atrocity of the institution of slavery and acknowledgment of the continued oppression of Black and African Americans by our government, systems, institutions, and individuals.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

Protests following the murder of George Floyd brought to the forefront the lack of trust in law enforcement from the communities they serve due to structures that perpetuate unfairness and some officers' abuse of power. These problems are right here in our own community, as we saw when Manuel

Ellis was killed in police custody. This session, the Legislature set out to improve policing and rebuild trust in our state, by preventing unnecessary use of force and ensuring justice for individuals and families impacted by abuse of power. To that end, some of the policies we adopted include:

- **House Bill 1267** mandates the independent investigation of serious officer-involved incidents, especially where deadly force is used.
- **Senate Bill 5259** increases police transparency by establishing comprehensive statewide reporting and publication requirements regarding use-of-force incidents.
- **House Bill 1054** bans the use of chokeholds, neck restraints, no-knock warrants, and shooting at moving vehicles, as well as placing restrictions on the acquisition of military equipment, the use of canines, and the use of tear gas.
- **Senate Bill 5066** establishes clear standards about when an officer must intervene and report when a fellow officer uses force unjustly.
- **Senate Bill 5051** will make it easier to remove problem officers from the law enforcement profession.



These systemic problems can't be fixed in one year. We will continue working with communities across Washington and with law enforcement to ensure that public safety is experienced equally by everyone.

JUSTICE SYSTEM REFORM

This session, numerous bills to address problems with our legal system came through the Senate Human Services, Reentry & Rehabilitation Committee, chaired by Sen. Darneille:

Child Welfare

- **House Bill 1227** creates stricter guidelines for removing children from a home and requires continued efforts to place them with relatives.
- **Senate Bill 5151** creates a child-specific license to provide financial supports to kinship caregivers.
- **House Bill 1194** helps maintain a child's parental connection during dependency proceedings by improving parental visitation guidelines.
- **House Bill 1219** will require the appointment of lawyers to represent children age 8 and older in dependency proceedings.



Juvenile Justice

- **House Bill 1140** requires anyone under age 18 who is stopped by law enforcement to be provided access to an attorney for consultation before waiving any constitutional rights.
- **Senate Bill 5118** (sponsored by Sen. Darneille) and House Bill 1186 give youth in juvenile rehabilitation facilities better tools to transition back to their communities.

Corrections & Reentry

- **Senate Bill 5119** (sponsored by Sen. Darneille) improves safety in prisons and jails by requiring a fatality review when someone who is incarcerated dies unexpectedly.
- A new **Jail Standards Task Force** will address concerns about conditions in jails across the state.

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- **Senate Bill 5304** and **House Bill 1348** make sure more folks leaving incarceration have Medicaid coverage upon release.
- **Senate Bill 5121** (sponsored by Sen. Darneille) gives more people tools for successful reentry with intensive supervision and programming in the community.

ACTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE & PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

The climate crisis is now upon us, as in recent years we're seeing more extreme weather here in Washington, which affects everything from the health of our forests to the availability of locally grown food for our tables. We continue to take this very seriously, and this year we saw some significant developments to address climate change and protect our environment.

- **Senate Bill 5126**, the Climate Commitment Act, implements a "cap-and-invest" program that sets a statewide carbon emissions "cap" for the state's largest polluters that will be gradually reducing carbon emissions until it reaches zero in 2050.
- **House Bill 1091** allows Washington to join our west coast neighbors in the US and Canada in adopting a low carbon fuel standard, which will mandate the use of alternative fuels.
- **House Bill 1287** prepares Washington for a zero-emissions transportation future by creating detailed maps of charging station locations and future needs as well as providing clear standards for future actions.
- \$131 million for **increased funding for wildfires, forests, and community support.**
- \$19 million in **increased funding for state parks.**



A SUSTAINABLE & EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

The pandemic had a devastating effect on the state's transportation revenues because everyone who could stay home did stay home. Tolling, ferry and fuel tax revenues were dramatically reduced and will not recover for several years. Dramatic cuts were averted thanks to a one-time billion-dollar appropriation from the federal government for the next two years. Additional transportation investment needs are growing, including replacement of aging infrastructure, the need to increase funding to preserve and maintain our roads and bridges and replace much of our ferry fleet.



The transportation budget continues to support major projects across the state while also making our system more equitable, cleaner, and more sustainable. The new budget includes significantly increased funding for alternatives, including special needs transit (\$68 million), bicycle and pedestrian projects (\$32.6 million), and Safe Routes to School (\$36.7 million). We also doubled our investment to bring on more women and minority workers as apprentices, as workers on transportation projects, and as business owners obtaining state transportation contracts.

Other highlights include:

- \$2.4 million to provide alternative-fuel vehicle use for underserved communities and for low-to-moderate-income members of the workforce.
- \$1.1 million to provide foster youth with driver's licenses, insurance and other support so they can get to school or work.
- \$21.8 million for green transportation capital grants to help transit agencies switch to electric vehicles or other zero-emission options.

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- \$505 million in capital funding for the state's ferry system, with \$25 million to convert up to two Jumbo Mark II vessels to EV propulsion and \$110.4 million in preservation work for the ferry fleet.
- \$487 million for preliminary engineering, right-of-way acquisition, and early construction on the Puget Sound Gateway, SR 167, and SR 509.
- \$101 million for expansion of the I-5 corridor through Joint Base Lewis-McChord.
- Funding for a "Shared Use Trail" connecting Highway 99 with Highway 509 and Taylor Way, as well as the planning of a "Shared Use Trail" along the new Highway 167 Corridor from Puyallup to I-5 in Fife.



INVESTMENTS IN OUR 27TH DISTRICT COMMUNITY

The capital construction budget allows the state to acquire and maintain state buildings, public schools, higher education facilities, public lands, parks and other assets. This year, investments in the 27th district total more than \$67 million and include:

- \$40.7 million for an engineering building on the University of Washington Tacoma campus.
- \$919,000 to acquire the Asberry Historic Home site in order to preserve Black history in Tacoma.
- \$2.1 million for the Shiloh Baptist Housing Development Project.
- \$5 million for affordable housing acquisition by the Tacoma Housing Authority.

- \$250,000 for the Multicultural Child and Family Hope Center.
- \$2 million for the Links to Opportunity Program to provide needed infrastructure improvements that will compliment the extension of light rail to the Hilltop.
- \$1.5 million for affordable housing for the Forterra project on the Hilltop.
- \$1.5 million for the Metro Parks' Tacoma Green Schoolyards pilot program.



BANNING PRIVATE PRISONS

Profiting from prisoners is morally wrong. Every person in our state deserves safety, adequate nutrition, and access to health care. Every person has the right to be treated like a human being.

The Northwest Detention Center (NWDC) in Tacoma is Washington's only private prison, and **House Bill 1090** bans private detention facilities in our state. Under this law, the NWDC must end operations when its contract with Immigration and Customs Enforcement is up in 2025.



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JOIN US FOR CONSTITUENT PARK CHATS THIS AUGUST

Point Defiance Park

Tuesday, August 3rd 3-5 PM

Lincoln Park

Tuesday, August 31st 3-5 PM

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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