

# 27<sup>th</sup> Legislative District • 2024 Session Review



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

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Dear neighbors,

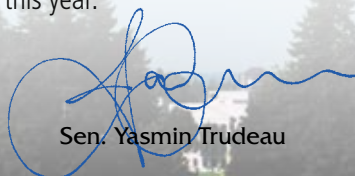
In even-numbered years, the legislative session is just 60 days long and is referred to as a "short session." This year's session was short, but it was also highly productive and we're excited to share the results with you in this newsletter.

Our state's continued high rankings were a strong foundation going into session: we were once again named the best economy in the nation by WalletHub, as well as the best state to find a job. A recent study of Labor Statistics data shows we are the second-most productive state. Washington is also ranked in the top five states for working parents, partly due to our paid family and medical leave law, and because of our strong public schools. In fact, we were recently singled out for having the safest schools in the nation.\*

But those high rankings don't tell the whole story or speak for everyone in our state. That's why the focus this session was on areas where families and communities are facing challenges. This includes housing, child care, behavioral health, and community safety – issues we've heard about from you in town halls and in your emails. We also continued advancing our efforts to fight climate change and transition to a clean energy economy. Additional investments this year from the state's supplemental operating, transportation, and capital construction budgets are going towards building and strengthening our communities, and keeping projects moving forward.

As your state legislative delegation, the three of us work together to serve you and represent our 27th Legislative District community. Each of our individual leadership and committee roles ensures the 27th District has a strong voice whenever policy and budget decisions are being made. Rep. Fey chairs the House Transportation Committee and serves on the Environment & Energy Committee. Sen. Trudeau is vice chair of the Senate Law & Justice Committee, serves on both the Housing and the Environment, Energy & Technology committees and negotiates the final capital budget. Speaker Jenkins chairs the House Rules Committee, which decides which bills make it to the floor calendar, and holds the top leadership position in the House.

If you have any questions or comments about the information in this newsletter, please reach out to us. It's an honor to represent you, and we hope to see you around in the community this year.



Sen. Yasmin Trudeau



Speaker Laurie Jenkins



Rep. Jake Fey

\*According to study published October 2023 by Scholaroo

### A TRANSPORTATION BUDGET THAT PRIORITIZES PUBLIC SAFETY, ROADS AND BRIDGES, AND FERRIES

The 2024 supplemental transportation budget (HB 2134) is a \$14.6 billion plan to prioritize the state's public safety, investments in the ferry system and highway preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure (**\$100 million additional funds for the balance of the current two-year budget cycle**). An additional \$30.8 million is invested in traffic safety measures, including \$7.2 million for the Washington State Patrol (WSP), \$2.5 million to combat impaired driving and \$9.8 million to help curtail speeding. An additional \$150 million is added for additional fish barrier removal to help grow the salmon population and restore river ecosystems, a federal mandate for Washington.

One key focus of the supplemental budget is investment in the **ferry system**. An additional \$196 million goes directly toward five new hybrid-electric vessels and the associated charging infrastructure and projects related to strengthening Washington's existing fleet. This budget shows the state's commitment to maintaining promises to major transportation projects in the **Connecting Washington** and **Move Ahead Washington** transportation packages that cover the entire state of Washington. It allows for megaprojects across the state to move forward, including the **Puget Sound Gateway Project** right here in Pierce County. Additionally, the supplemental transportation budget includes more than \$300 million in funding from the **Climate Commitment Act**, which helps fund a variety of items, including electric school buses, EV charging infrastructure, public transit, pedestrian safety infrastructure (sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes), and more.



### KEY TRANSPORTATION POLICY WINS

These bills had broad bipartisan support and are crucial for advancing the state's transportation needs.

- **Speed safety cameras on state highways (SB 6115):** Sadly, 2023 saw 800 people losing their lives on Washington roads, the highest number the state has seen since 1990. This bill concerns the use of speed safety cameras within construction zones on Washington's state highways. This will help crack down on speeding, which is the second-most common risk factor in fatal crashes in Washington.
- **Washington State Patrol trooper retention (HB 2357):** Rep. Fey sponsored legislation in 2023 (HB 1638) to recruit more people to work for the Washington State Patrol by providing incentives for new recruits and to encourage transfers from state and local agencies. This year's bill, also sponsored by Rep. Fey, aims to retain those already with the agency—especially those close to retirement—with monetary incentives (\$15,000, paid in quarterly increments, for those with 26 or more years of service).
- **Local speed safety cameras (HB 2384):** Expands the ability of cities and counties to establish traffic camera programs through local ordinances, while maintaining privacy protections and allowing city and county governments to reinvest revenues from traffic camera fines into safety improvements. Studies show that fixed camera sites can reduce injury by up to 25 percent and fatalities by up to 32 percent. People aware of where speed cameras are, also are less likely to drive recklessly.



#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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## **IMPORTANT TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS IN THE 27TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT**

While the state's transportation budget is an investment for Washingtonians in every corner of the state, it shows its commitment on a local level, too. The infrastructure project of most importance to the Pierce County economy is the Puget Sound Gateway Program. Completion of SR 167 and SR 509 is essentially two projects in one—SR 509 connects SeaTac to the Kent Valley and SR 167 connects the Port of Tacoma to Sumner and Puyallup. In this biennium (2023-2024), \$873 million has been dedicated towards this project. An element of this project will allow for a tolled expressway from I-5 to the Port of Tacoma. In total, this project will cost \$2.2 billion.

Once complete, it will accelerate the movement of goods to the Port of Tacoma. This project also funds a shared use trail for pedestrian and bicycle travel from Puyallup to Tacoma.

### **Climate Commitment Act Local Projects**

- **\$982,000 – Communities for a Healthy Bay electric-powered patrol boat**
- **\$1.7 million – Tacoma Public Utilities' Zero-Emission Vehicle Pilot Program**
- **\$20 million – Puyallup Tribe Port Electrification**



## **CAPITAL CONSTRUCTION BUDGET**

With a total allocation of \$1.3 billion, this year's supplemental capital budget represents a significant investment in crucial areas such as school construction, behavioral health facilities, and affordable housing, aimed at fostering the well-being and prosperity of Washingtonians statewide. The budget makes historic investments in school construction, increasing state support in the School Construction Assistance Program from \$271 to \$375 per square foot – a total increase of \$79 million in support for school construction. The budget also includes \$82.7 million for community capacity grants, including \$7.7 million for opioid addiction treatment care and \$47 million for treatment facilities in partnership with tribal governments. Washington's affordable housing challenge is still large, and this proposal continues the historic progress the Legislature made last year. It allocates \$128.6 million in total housing funding, including \$127 million for the Housing Trust Fund. We've also ensured dedicated funding for projects vital to our community's growth and well-being:

- \$515,000 for the Cora Whitley Family Center in Tacoma
- \$286,000 for asbestos abatement for the Asia Pacific Cultural Center
- \$185,000 for the Foss Waterway Seaport Esplanade Connector
- \$400,000 for the People's Community Center
- \$360,000 for Ruston Community Center repairs & ADA improvements

Additionally, \$100,000 has been allocated for the Sheffield Trail project, and \$750,000 for the Tacoma Fleet Maintenance Building Decarbonization effort. These investments show our commitment to improving local infrastructure and ensuring the prosperity of our community members in the 27th Legislative District.

### ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY POLICY WINS

The effects of climate change have far-reaching consequences for Washingtonians and our quality of life. Without proactive measures, these impacts will cause devastating economic, social, and environmental damage. By implementing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change, the state can ensure a more resilient future for current and future generations. The following bills are vital investments for Washington's goals toward a greener world.

- **Zero-Emission School Buses (HB 1369):** Advances the adoption of zero-emission school buses throughout Washington, prioritizing districts in communities disproportionately affected by pollution. By replacing diesel buses with electric alternatives, it aims to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution, offering children a healthier ride to and from school. The move also aligns with broader state goals for environmental sustainability and public health improvement.



- **PSE Decarbonization (HB 1589):** With a goal to accelerate the energy transition, this bill facilitates Puget Sound Energy's shift from natural gas to cleaner energy sources and prevents possible spikes in the cost of natural gas down the road. This strategic pivot not only benefits the environment but also bolsters the state's leadership in clean energy innovation and climate action.
- **Linking Washington's carbon market with California and Quebec (SB 6058):** A groundbreaking initiative, this bill facilitates the linkage of Washington's carbon market with those of California and Quebec, enhancing the effectiveness and reach of carbon pricing mechanisms. By clearing the way for these markets to be integrated, it amplifies the impact of carbon pricing on reducing emissions, fostering a more robust and resilient clean energy economy. This collaborative approach to climate action highlights Washington's commitment to innovative solutions and regional cooperation in the fight against climate change.
- **Restitution for Environmental Crimes (SB 5884):** This bill, sponsored by Sen. Trudeau, underscores Washington's dedication to preserving its natural resources and holding offenders accountable for their actions. It empowers courts to demand restitution in cases of environmental crimes, and clarifies legal provisions to ensure violators compensate for the harm caused to the natural environment, reinforcing the principle that environmental protection is a shared responsibility.

### CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING WINS

In 2021, the Legislature passed the Fair Start for Kids Act to make child care more affordable for families, stabilize and expand the child care workforce, and support the expansion of child care. Since that time, we've been able to increase the amount of state funding for Fair Start for Kids by \$200 million thanks to our state's capital gains excise tax. We're well on our way to providing child care for 100% of families who qualify for Washington's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)!

- Our supplemental budget **invests an additional \$115 million** in early learning and high-quality child care, a win for both working families and employers.
- A portion of this funding will go to **boost pay for child care workers**, including providers who care for infants, as well as for ECEAP providers who care for three- and four-year-olds enrolled in the state's pre-kindergarten program. It will also fund bonuses for providers who offer child care outside of regular 9-to-5 hours.
- Additional funding is also going to **expand infant and early childhood mental health consultation and support**, which often has a waitlist.
- We also passed legislation (HB 2195) providing a dedicated revenue source to help **build more high-quality early learning facilities** across our state, like the Cora Whitley Family Center right here in Tacoma (see Capital Construction Budget section).
- We **streamlined eligibility** for subsidized child care and early childhood education programs for families receiving food assistance.

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY, BEHAVIORAL HEALTH, AND RESPONDING TO THE OPIOID/FENTANYL CRISIS**

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their neighborhood and community. As your state legislators, we live here too and care deeply about community safety. Our state's gun safety laws are one reason our schools are considered the safest in the nation. This session we passed legislation to further increase safety and help prevent gun violence.

- HB 1903 helps ensure stolen firearms are promptly reported to law enforcement before they can be sold illegally or used in violent crimes.
- HB 2118 helps prevent gun theft by requiring gun stores to secure their inventory.
- SB 5444 expands common-sense safeguards already in place to locations frequented by families and children, such as zoos, aquariums, and libraries. These should be welcoming places of recreation and leisure, not spaces where people fear for their safety.

In 2022, the Legislature passed a bill to address the explosive rise in catalytic converter thefts, and it is working exactly as it should. In fact, catalytic converter thefts are down 77% since the bill was passed. To build on this success, we passed HB 2153 this year, which controls the buying and selling of catalytic converters, further clamping down on illegal activities in this trade.

We recognize that making our communities safer takes more than adding more laws and harsher penalties. We need to both enforce just laws and protect people. Law enforcement needs to build trust with the communities they serve. This session we:

- Added funding for more training of law enforcement classes, so officers are well-prepared to do their jobs safely and respectfully.

- Increased funding for law enforcement training academies across the state, so that those who wish to serve their communities can access training closer to home.

We also recognize that our criminal justice system has a long history of causing harm to Black, Indigenous, and people of color, as well as indigent communities. This session we:

- Passed Sen. Trudeau's bill banning hog-tying by law enforcement, an inhumane and dangerous practice that the Department of Justice has recommended eliminating since 1995.
- Passed legislation updating the information-sharing processes at the Office of Independent Investigations, which investigates deadly uses of force by law enforcement.

Addressing the opioid and fentanyl crisis is a critical community safety piece. These drugs are harming our communities; everyone from people experiencing homelessness to children and youth in our schools are impacted, but the harm falls most on those experiencing the pain of substance use disorder. This session we:

- Funded expansion of treatment, education, awareness, outreach, and prevention with \$215 million in new funding specifically for the opioid and fentanyl crisis.
- Passed the Post-Inpatient Housing Program to provide transitional housing and support to youth when they are discharged from behavioral health treatment, so they do not end up homeless.

From protecting youth in our K-12 schools and higher ed institutions through education and awareness, to expanding our behavioral health workforce, to getting critical triaging care for people living with untreated addiction, we are serious about ending the cycle of harm for families and communities.



**Sen. Yasmin Trudeau**  
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**Sen. Yasmin Trudeau**



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**HOUSING**

Washington state faces a severe housing crisis that demands our attention. During the 2024 legislative session, we took decisive steps to address the persistent housing shortage in our state. Here are some of the bills we passed:

- SB 5792 streamlines construction processes for small condominium buildings.
- HB 2071 modifies building codes for smaller housing units, showing our commitment to making housing more affordable and accessible statewide.
- HB 1998 requires cities and counties to allow co-living housing by 2025, with minimal restrictions on room sizes and parking unless safety concerns are proven.
- SB 6175, sponsored by Sen. Trudeau, provides tax deferrals for turning empty office buildings into affordable homes.

Additionally, in recognition of the immediate need to support vulnerable populations, we secured critical funding in the operating budget to maintain essential shelter services.

Specifically, we allocated \$3 million to the City of Tacoma to prevent the closure of 307 temporary and emergency shelter beds. This funding ensures that hundreds of individuals have a safe place during these challenging times. Tacoma plays an important role in providing shelter services for Pierce County, offering approximately 80% of the shelter beds available in the region. This underscores the significance of our investment in preserving and expanding shelter capacity in Tacoma to address homelessness not only within the city but also across our district.

Although this year we fell short by failing to pass a law to stabilize rent increases, we recognize the urgency of this matter. We've heard our communities and will continue to work to bring the housing stability our communities need and deserve.

