



CHRISTINE KILDUFF & MARI LEAVITT

REPRESENTATIVES / 28TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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Dear Neighbors,

We are pleased to share this update on the 2019 Legislative Session in Olympia, where we focused on passing an on-time, transparent, and balanced budget that supports working families, improves public safety, addresses the opioid crisis and mental health, and expands access to health care. In this 105-day session, significant investments include:

- Expansion of the senior citizens and disabled veterans property tax exemption to help more people cope with rising property taxes;
- An increase in special education funding by nearly \$300 million;
- High-quality care for seniors and people with disabilities and greater transparency in health care billing and prescription drug costs; and
- Hundreds of millions in state funding for transportation and construction projects important to our local communities.

This legislative session also focused on strengthening our economy and workforce by investing in our local community and technical college system. Local institutions, like UW Tacoma, Pierce College, Bates Technical College, Clover Park Technical College, and Tacoma Community College, help students pursue 2- and 4-year degrees, apprenticeships, certificates, and other credentials that lead to good-paying jobs. The Legislature expanded degree programs for high-demand fields like nursing, computer science, and engineering, as well as guidance counselors and advisers to help students graduate on time.

In our communications with you, we heard you loud and clear: middle class and working families in Pierce County cannot afford increased taxes. That is why we opposed tax increases that could affect families in our region, like increases to the state gas tax that hurts commuters or increased sales taxes that jeopardize the ability of small businesses to compete with large corporations. To summarize, the session resulted in:

- **NO** increase in the gas tax
- **NO** increase to state property tax rates
- **NO** increase to sales tax rates
- **NO** carbon tax
- **NO** income tax, and
- **NO** capital gains tax.

For future legislative sessions, we will continue working with our colleagues to expand property tax exemptions, further reduce the cost of health care to consumers, and invest in additional infrastructure to ensure that every child has a great education and our economy is growing and creating family-wage jobs.

Between now and the 2020 Legislative Session, we are excited to continue to advocate on your behalf and look forward to hearing from you. It is our honor to serve as your State Representatives.

Sincerely,

REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE KILDUFF

STANDING UP FOR VETERANS, SERVICEMEMBERS, AND MILITARY FAMILIES

Washington is the sixth largest military state and the 28th is the most military-connected community. That is why I sponsored legislation to ease the transition and stress for students of military families moving to a new school district. Under this new law, families can enroll their student in a new district before arriving in their new community (HB 1210). I also co-sponsored Rep. Leavitt's National Guard member pay increase bill (HB 1137), a measure to provide in-state tuition to veterans with disabilities who have not yet met other residency requirements (HB 1688), and new legislation to exempt Gold Star spouses from vehicle license fees (HB 1197).



ADVOCATING FOR BETTER HEALTH CARE

There is a lot of work ahead in health care and this session we made good progress on honoring wishes of patients and protecting consumers. For individuals struggling

with diseases like dementia, allowing extended family members and friends to make health care decisions on their behalf can provide better care. That is why I wrote and passed a new law expanding the list of people who can act on a behalf of an incapacitated patient (HB 1175). I also supported a prohibition on "balanced billing," which unfairly burdens patients following the rules but who still end up in the middle of disputes between insurance companies and medical providers (HB 1065).

PROTECTING CONSUMERS

Washington has struggled with some of the harshest debt collection practices in the country, contributing to families not having the resources they need to be successful. Debt collection is the second most frequent complaint Washingtonians and Americans report to the federal Consumer Financial Protection bureau that protects consumers from unfair, deceptive, and abusive practices.

I sponsored legislation to end an unscrupulous practice called "pocket service," which misleads consumers into believing a complaint served on them is not valid. As a result, they do not show up to court to defend themselves and a judgment hurting their credit, housing or employment chances, is entered against them (HB 1066). I also voted to address high interest rates and wage garnishment limits, interest rates on medical debt, and deceptive practices that extend the ability of a company to collect on an old debt (HB 1602, HB 1531, HB 1730).



PROMOTING PUBLIC SAFETY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Public safety is a top priority for me, from protecting vulnerable roadway users to victims of harassment or assault. I wrote legislation that makes our roadways safer by updating the rules for motor vehicles passing or yielding the right of way to pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and other roadway users (HB 1966/SB 5723). I also passed a new law clarifying that judges can issue protective orders for victims seeking justice against a harasser when a case is transferred from one court to another (HB 1350).

Another important safety reform I co-sponsored this year helps end the cycle of violence and protects victims and families by helping courts make better-informed sentencing and treatment (HB 1517).

The legislature also passed a new law that brings much needed transparency to campaign finance laws by requiring political action committees to list the actual names of people and corporations in political advertisements that are top donors, instead of hiding those donors behind shell campaign committees that subvert transparency (HB 1379). We also reformed how corporations are punished when breaking the law, increasing the fines from \$10,000 for a serious felony to \$1,000,000 (HB 1252), a statute that had not been amended since 1924.



REPRESENTATIVE MARI LEAVITT

PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

Safety is a key job of government and I take my work to keep you and your family safe very seriously. One of the biggest safety concerns in our area is Western State Hospital and the discharge process. I sponsored legislation that would provide law enforcement and prosecutors a stronger voice in the discharge process by ensuring those community partners have information that is more accurate (HB 1826). While that legislation did not pass, I did proudly vote for a new law that involves stakeholders in implementing services for individuals in adult family homes that makes resident safety a priority (SB 5672).

Another bill I sponsored did pass and it addresses workplace violence in health care settings, similar to the kind of violence we have seen at Western State Hospital, by requiring more frequent reviews of incidents and creating violence prevention plans more frequently (HB 1931).



HEALTHY FAMILIES, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Addressing health care costs is difficult but doable in a bipartisan manner. When it comes to prescription drugs, no one should have to make a choice between the medication they need or putting food on the table. Yet, for too many seniors, that is a reality. I proudly voted for a new law to require drug manufacturers and pharmacy groups to report their drug pricing data to the Health Care Authority and provide advance notice before increasing the price of certain drugs (HB 1224). This is a step toward transparency on pharmaceutical drug costs.



PROPERTY TAX REFORM AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Increasing property values combined with high property taxes have strained seniors and veterans in our communities. Too many either do not know or do not qualify for the existing senior citizens and disabled veterans property tax exemption. That is why I co-sponsored legislation to provide real relief for senior citizens and veterans with disabilities, expanding the number of people who qualify for a property tax exemption (HB 1181). That policy proposal was included in the final budget deal (SB 5160).

For families who aspire to own a home, self-help homeownership can make their dream a reality. Self-help homeownership facilitators are non-profits that work with families to be able to afford their own homes through favorable mortgage plans and participating in the construction of the home through "sweat equity." I introduced a bill to provide these self-help homeownership facilitators tax exemptions to help afford to build more housing and the Senate version of that bill passed the Legislature (HB 1168/SB 5025).

STANDING WITH MILITARY FAMILIES

The very first bill I introduced as a state representative addressed a huge disparity in pay between state firefighters and National Guard members who are called into state service for wildland fire response. The law that sets pay for Guard members had not been updated in 30 years and was tied to the federal minimum wage. As Washington state's minimum wage has outpaced the federal wage, Guard members were left behind. When a Guard member fighting wildfires is being paid less than state minimum wage, that is outrageous. I sponsored legislation to fix this problem, requiring the National Guard compensation rate to track with rates set for state firefighters, a much fairer way to pay those who step up when called upon to serve (HB 1137).



SUPPORTING LOCAL PROJECTS

Washington state has budgets for both transportation and construction projects. This year, the state invested \$1.1 billion to build public schools, \$973 million for public colleges and universities, \$309 million in behavioral health needs, and \$585 million for orca, salmon recovery, and water quality projects. In our area, \$414 million was allocated for transportation projects and \$255 million in construction projects.

CONSTRUCTION BUDGET PROJECTS

- \$1 million to assist in rebuilding the **Fircrest Pool**
- Nearly \$1 million for the main street development project in **University Place**
- \$500,000 for the **Bethel Dental Clinic**
- Over \$1 million for **Lakewood's Fort Steilacoom Park** artificial turf installation
- \$500,000 for pier construction and repair at the **Harry Todd park in the Tillicum neighborhood** in Lakewood

- \$709,000 for trail development for **Chambers Creek Canyon** from Kobayashi Park to the Chambers Creek Estuary
- \$72,000 for the **Steilacoom Historical Museum Association**
- \$43,000 for the **University Place Historical Society**
- \$34,000 for the **UP for Arts** – Forever Friends project in the **Curran Apple Orchard**
- \$14,000 for the **Anderson Island Historical Society**
- \$72 million for **Western State Hospital**
- More than \$35 million for **Pierce College Fort Steilacoom**
- \$23 million for **Joint Base Lewis-McChord and Camp Murray**
- Over \$6 million for **Tacoma Community College**
- \$4 million for **University of Washington Tacoma**
- \$1.2 million to help build a new, modern facility for the **Morgan Family YMCA**
- \$1 million for the **Beacon Center** renovation focusing on homeless youth

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

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28TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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2019 Legislative Report



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TRANSPORTATION BUDGET PROJECTS

- \$332 million for I-5/JBLM-area improvements including a **new lane between Thorne Lane and the Mounts Road Interchange**
- A planned \$57.6 million payment to **defer all sales tax payments on the Tacoma Narrows Bridge** to cut down on the need for increased tolls over the next 13 years
- Almost \$8 million for **Tacoma Narrows Bridge maintenance**
- \$4 million for **DuPont-Steilacoom Road lane construction** in both directions
- \$2 million for curb, gutter, sidewalk, and street lighting along **Veterans Drive and Vernon Ave for the Lake City Business District**

- \$1 million for railroad crossing improvements at train noise mitigation at **the 6th avenue/Titlow & South 19th street railroad crossings**

