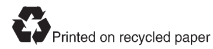


State Representative
CHRISTINE KILDUFF

28TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

PO Box 40600, Olympia, WA 98504-0600

2020 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



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2020 LEGISLATION



COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE FOR RETIREES

House Bill 1390 provides a one-time and long overdue three percent increase to the retirement benefits of former teachers, corrections officers, social workers, and other state retirees in the PERS 1/TRS 1 plans.

PROTECTING PATIENT CARE

House Bill 1608 makes sure health care providers can share information and counsel patients on the full range of treatment options available no matter where care is sought and provides community resources about obtaining care of choice.

INCREASING ACCESS TO FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Senate Bill 6168, our state operating budget, provides \$1.3 million in incentives to farmers markets and grocery stores to feed families participating in the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).

PROTECTING CONSUMERS FROM THE PRACTICE OF DEBT BUYING

House Bill 2476 reforms debt collection practices by requiring more transparency when collection agencies buy consumer debt and file lawsuits.

INTEREST AND PENALTY RELIEF FOR QUALIFIED MOBILE HOMEOWNERS

House Bill 2512 allows the county treasurer to waive outstanding interest and penalties on delinquent taxes due from the title owner on a mobile home or manufactured home if low-income thresholds are met.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
CHRISTINE KILDUFF
28TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

2020 REPORT AND RESOURCE GUIDE

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

So much has changed in our world since the legislative session concluded on March 12. We have had to adjust to a new and difficult reality. Coronavirus is putting an enormous strain on families, the economy, and the health care system. Instead of hopelessness we are seeing people joining together to support our most vulnerable neighbors. By staying home, we have been flattening the curve and saving lives. This virus cannot stop the compassion, ingenuity, and sense of community that make us Washingtonians. There is no shortcut through this pandemic, but if we listen to the best science available and follow the lead of our public health officials, then together we will emerge from this challenge and recover.

The final act of the 2020 legislative session was to transfer \$200 million from the state's Budget Stabilization Account to help respond to the outbreak of COVID-19 by providing health care for those infected and assistance to businesses forced to temporarily lay off employees. We stand ready to ensure that Washington has everything it needs to face this pandemic. With that in mind, this newsletter focuses on federal, state, and local resources and highlights of recent legislative outcomes that I hope you find helpful during this unprecedented moment.

Lastly, it is with some sorrow and immense gratitude that I inform you that I will not be seeking another term in the House of Representatives. I will serve out the remainder of my term until January of 2021. In the meantime, you can still count on me to serve as a resource, address your concerns, and connect you with the rest of our state government. Representing the 28th Legislative District over the last six years has been the highest professional honor, and a privilege that I will long cherish.

Be well, do well, stay well.

Sincerely,



STAY CONNECTED

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COMMITTEES

- Civil Rights & Judiciary (Chair)
- Appropriations
- Human Services & Early Learning



STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL RESOURCES ON COVID-19

GENERAL RESOURCES

- Don't have computer access or see the resource you need? **Dial 211** for connection to basic needs ranging from legal assistance, housing and utilities, food, health care, transportation and more.
- For the state's most comprehensive and up-to-date information on COVID-19 please visit coronavirus.wa.gov or call the **Department of Health** at 1-800-525-0127.
- The **Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department** can help with questions related to the virus, contagion, and response. Visit tpchd.org or 253-798-6500.
- **Pierce County** has established a coronavirus website highlighting alerts and links to local services at piercecountywawa.gov/covid19.

WORKERS, BUSINESSES AND FAMILIES

- The **Internal Revenue Service** has extended its tax filing and payment deadline to July 15. If you have questions about federal taxes, economic impact payment or any other federal coronavirus tax relief, you can learn more at irs.gov/coronavirus.
- The federal **Small Business Administration** is providing small businesses and non-profits low-interest loans of up to \$2 million to help with operating expenses. Visit covid19relief.sba.gov or call 1-800-659-2955.
- Employees and or employers affected by unemployment or paid leave can visit the **Employment Security Department's** website at esd.wa.gov or call 1-800-318-6022.

HEALTH CARE

- If you do not have **health insurance**, see if you qualify for free health coverage at hca.wa.gov or call 1-800-562-3022.
- If you need an individual health plan, you have until May 8 to **sign up for a health plan** by calling the exchange at 1-855-923-4633. After May 8, you must qualify for a special enrollment to get covered.
- If you believe you need to be tested for coronavirus, contact a local medical provider first. Find a **local medical community clinic** at wacommunityhealth.org.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

- If you need assistance feeding yourself or your family, visit the Food Lifeline website at foodlifeline.org/need-food to find a partner **food bank, food pantry, or hot meal** program in your area.
- Local schools are providing meals for students. Consult the map for Pierce County at matterhornwab.co.pierce.wa.us/publicgis or call your school district:
Bethel School District: 253-800-6000
Clover Park School District: 253-583-5000
Steilacoom Historical School District: 253-983-2200
Tacoma Public Schools: 253-571-1000
University Place School District: 253-566-5600

HOUSING AND UTILITIES

- The Utilities and Transportation Commission extended authority to allow utility companies to use existing **energy bill assistance** funds to help customers who are unemployed or working significantly reduced hours as a result of COVID-19. Call your local utility company for more information.
- The federal government has assistance programs to help with energy bills. Please call the **National Energy Assistance** referral line at 1-866-674-6327 or visit ncat.org/low-income-energy-assistance.
- Pierce County postponed the due date for **property tax payments** from April 30 until June 1. For more information contact the Pierce County Assessor-Treasurer at piercecountywawa.gov/atr or 253-798-6111.

VETERANS

- **Pierce County Veterans Assistance Program** has expanded its emergency COVID-19 services. For assistance dial 253-798-7449.
- All Washington Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) and **Veteran Services and Counseling & Wellness Programs** (VSCW) have transitioned to phone or video appointment at 1-800-562-2308 or dva.wa.gov/benefits/counseling.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

- The **Northwest Justice Project** statewide Coordinated Legal Education, Advice and Referral (CLEAR) line is a toll-free legal hotline for people with low incomes. Call 1-888-201-1014 or consult nwjustice.org.
- **Washington Law Help** offers information in multiple languages on an array of legal issues such as debt collection, family and safety, and senior concerns, and features a COVID-19 page. Visit washingtonlawhelp.org.
- Locally, you can connect with **Tacoma-Pierce County's Free Civil Legal Aid Program** at tacomaprobono.org or call 1-888-822-5134.
- The **Unemployment Law Project** provides legal assistance with unemployment claims. View their website at unemploymentlawproject.org or call 1-888-441-9178.

RESOURCES CONTINUED

CONSUMER AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROTECTION

- The Attorney General's Office is investigating complaints of price gouging during the COVID-19 public-health crisis. For questions or to **file a consumer protection complaint**, call 1-800-551-4636 or go to atg.wa.gov/consumer-protection.
- Anyone affected by abuse or needing support call the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** at 1-800-799-7233 or for emergency shelters and legal advocacy visit domesticviolenceinforeferral.org.

STUDENT LOANS, MORTGAGE AND CREDIT CARD DEBT

- If you need **help with student loans**, you may be able to temporarily suspend your payments by applying for a deferment or forbearance from the U.S. Department of Education at studentaid.gov.
- The Washington State Department of Financial Institutions has developed a list of **financial resources** about banks, mortgage assistance and paying credit card bills. Call 1-877-746-4334 or consult dfi.wa.gov.

2020 LEGISLATION

PROTECTING SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

This year I passed **House Bill 2622** to strengthen our protection order system and help ensure that if a judge orders an abuser to surrender a weapon, that actually happens. Firearm surrender orders are one of the most important tools we have for reducing firearm violence. This bill incorporates best practices and closes loopholes to give courts, prosecutors, and law enforcement the ability to enforce these orders. Weapons and domestic violence are a deadly combination. Keeping guns out of the hands of abusers will protect victims of domestic violence and reduce gun violence in our communities.



GUARANTEEING THE RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

In partnership with the developmental disability community and state agencies, I passed **House Bill 1651** which guarantees a key set of rights for people with developmental disabilities. With these rights established in law, people with developmental disabilities can take better advantage of state services without worrying about sacrificing their freedom or autonomy.

PEACE OF MIND FOR FAMILIES OF MENTAL HEALTH PATIENTS

In 2017, I passed House Bill 1477 which allows hospitals and medical providers across our state to provide limited information to family members and loved ones. While this legislation provided many with peace of mind, it did not fully address patients who were being treated as a result of their involvement with the criminal justice system. That is why this year I passed **House Bill 2416** which clarifies the 2017 law and allows our state mental hospitals and facilities like Western State Hospital to share certain information with families of those treated under our incompetency and not guilty by reason of insanity laws.

ENSURING INJURED WORKERS GET TREATMENT AND WAGE BENEFITS

Under Washington's workers' compensation system employers can either administer their own program and "self-insure" or participate in the state fund administered by the Department of Labor and Industries. Employers choosing to self-insure are generally very large companies and have a third-party administrator (TPA) administer their workers' compensation claims. Unfortunately, we have seen a trend of these TPAs not acting in the best interests of injured workers. When a TPA does not act in good faith, it can delay an injured worker's treatment or benefits and cause even greater harm.

To remedy this situation and protect injured workers, I introduced and passed **House Bill 2409** which increases penalties and requires TPAs to be licensed through the Department of Labor and Industries. These changes will hold the bad actors accountable and allow injured workers to get the medical care and compensation they need.

