

33rd Legislative District 2020 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



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Speaker pro tempore

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33rd LD



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Dear friends and neighbors,

We are living in unprecedented times. It has been stressful on our entire community. My heart breaks for families who have been deeply impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. These challenging times will require extraordinary efforts to support families and small businesses. Please know that I will coordinate closely with state, federal and local partners to explore all options that will assist you in this time of need.

In this newsletter you will find COVID-19 resources and information from our last legislative session, which ended in early March as the pandemic first began to spread into our community. I am especially proud of the bipartisan work the Legislature did to pass over \$200 million in COVID-19 emergency response funds to increase capacity in hospitals, of our health care workforce, and of testing. It will also support impacted small businesses and families, including those struggling to pay residential rents and mortgages.

We made major investments into the Housing Trust Fund to help solve our homelessness and housing affordability crisis and to finally end the backlog of untested rape kits.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have questions or concerns, or to let me know what the Legislature should be prioritizing in 2021.

In Service,

Combating the COVID-19 pandemic

The recent COVID-19 pandemic is unlike any public health emergency we have seen in over a century. To help fix this crisis, our Legislature passed several policies and invested over \$200 million in critical emergency response funding. This investment should increase capacity in hospitals, of our health care workforce, and of testing. It will also support impacted small businesses and families, including those struggling to pay residential rents and mortgages.

The information related to COVID-19 is changing rapidly. Use the official Washington state COVID-19 website to stay up to date: coronavirus.wa.gov/



Washington State
Coronavirus Response (COVID-19)

Keeping communities safe and secure

Over the past several years, I have led successful efforts to clear Washington's backlog of over 10,000 untested rape kits. We secured funds to clear the entire backlog, improve criminal investigatory practices – including trauma-informed trainings for law enforcement to engage with survivors – and to create a state-of-the-art crime lab to test and track sexual assault kits. This includes an online program for survivors to check testing status of a kit.

Since beginning testing, Washington State Patrol has identified multiple serial rapists and violent offenders, which is why we are investing an additional \$3 million support law enforcement in their investigations to hold violent predators accountable and keep our communities safe.

Sadly, South King County has one of the highest rates of child trafficking in the country. For several years, I have worked closely with stakeholders to address this crisis. This includes this year's passage of Safe Harbor legislation, which lays the foundation for a therapeutic treatment pilot program for sexually exploited youth picked up by law enforcement. Instead of detention, youth are provided with a safe and supportive place to heal.

Healing our bodies and minds

The recent COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated why everyone needs access to health care that is affordable and reliable. Over the past two years, our Legislature passed two first-in-the-nation health care policies. Cascade Care is the nation's first public health care option and is available to any Washingtonians not covered under an employer sponsored health plan. The Long-Term Care Trust Act set up the first ever statewide long-term care public health insurance benefit to help cover costs.

We focused on making critical improvements to our behavioral health system. We made investments to prevent suicide in youth, college students and veterans, and funded the building of a brand-new behavioral health innovation and integration campus within the University of Washington's School of Medicine to help address the shortage of behavioral health professionals needed by our communities.

Cleaning up our air and climate

Our planet has limited resources, and climate change will continue to test our ability to respond to natural disasters and extreme weather. Over the past two years, our Legislature passed historic policies that puts Washington on the path toward 100-percent clean energy from renewable and zero-emission sources, like wind, hydro and solar power. This includes legislation to electrify our transportation infrastructure, create incentives to build new, energy efficient buildings and ban products containing super-pollutants and single use plastic bags.

Sea-Tac International Airport is one of the fastest growing airports in the nation and it's had a strong impact on our South King County community. Over the past several years, I have successfully sponsored a package of bills to research indoor and outdoor air quality, mitigate increased air traffic and flight pathways in South King County, search for new locations for commercial airports outside King County, and repair and/or replace special noise reduction equipment for people living in impacted areas.

How to access Washington's debt free college program

In 2019, the Legislature passed the Washington Workforce Investment Act which provided free or reduced tuition for higher education and apprenticeship programs for low- and middle-income families in Washington.

Funding amounts for the Washington College Grant (formerly the State Need Grant) vary based on income, household size and school and/or program. For example, eligible students

from a household of four with an income of \$50,000 or less/annually would receive full tuition coverage. Partial grants will be available for families making up to \$97,000/annually.

To find out more information, or apply for the Washington College Grant (formerly the State Need Grant), visit: <https://wsac.wa.gov/apply>.