

Representative
Sharon Tomiko Santos

P. O. Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600



PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 1885

2022
LEGISLATIVE
REPORT
37TH
LEGISLATIVE
DISTRICT

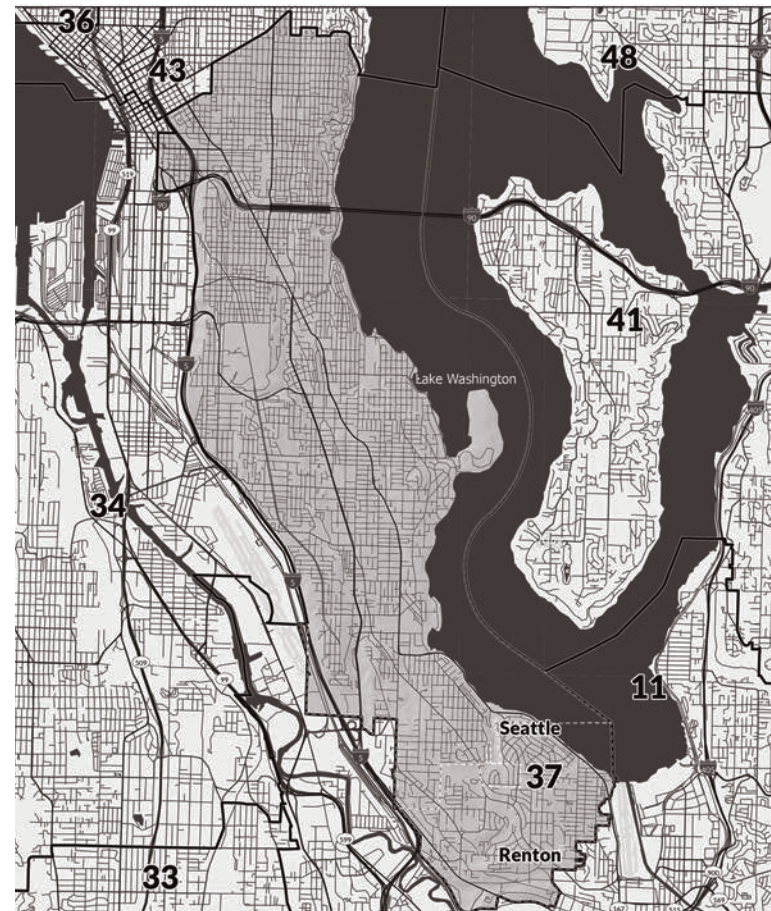
LD37

REDISTRICTING UPDATE

Last year, the Washington Redistricting Commission tackled our decennial duty to rebalance the populations of our legislative and congressional districts. As with every other aspect of our lives, the pandemic upended this work by delaying the transmission of the Census 2020 data needed to inform the process, resulting in a compressed timeframe for the Commission to complete the task.

The final maps agreed upon by the Commissioners encountered controversy and challenges almost immediately, leading to litigation which continues. However, until the lawsuits are resolved, the maps drawn by the Commission will serve as the basis of our representation in the Legislature and in the Congress effective next year.

To see whether you have “moved” into or out of the 37th Legislative District, check out the Interactive Dashboard on the Washington Redistricting Commission website:
<https://www.redistricting.wa.gov/>



State Representative
Sharon Tomiko Santos



Contact me

Please call, write, or schedule an appointment with me. My office staff can help make the arrangements.

Olympia Office:

321 John L. O'Brien Building
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600
SharonTomiko.Santos@leg.wa.gov

Phone: (360) 464-2436

Toll Free Hotline:
1-800-562-6000
1-800-833-6388 (TTY)



LEGISLATIVE REPORT FROM REP. SHARON TOMIKO SANTOS 37th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Dear Friends:

I am pleased to present you with this newsletter which highlights some of the significant accomplishments from the recently concluded 60-day session of the Legislature. In the face of continued uncertainties and challenges related to COVID, I am especially proud to report that we persevered in building upon the solid foundation established last year in advancing racial justice and in shoring up the stability and well-being of our neighbors and communities.

Although 2022 is a supplemental year in the biennium, the Legislature focused on bolstering policy and funding priorities to support healthy families and strong communities in every corner of Washington state. We increased the availability of placements in early learning education programs, and we funded additional school nurses and counselors to support student mental health and social-emotional learning. We improved essential supports for daily living, from investments in affordable housing and rental assistance to expanded funds for COVID public health contact tracing and testing as well as for community-based health centers. And we took decisive action to protect our families and communities from rising gun violence.

We also leveraged federal relief funding to finance programs and projects that will help us shape a more equitable, just, and sustainable economy for the future. We broadened the availability of financial aid for higher education in targeted shortage areas such as nursing, increased funding for Opportunity Scholarships, and created a state-based affordable student loan program. We concentrated efforts to address the needs of small businesses in our communities with tax credit and filing relief, developing disaster response and resilience assistance, and enhancing equitable access to credit for underserved populations. Most important, we finally passed a transformative transportation package which not only creates good jobs but fixes our deteriorated roads and bridges, invests in clean technology, and makes amends to communities harmed by transportation policies of the past.

Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter. I hope you find it informative and interesting. Please keep in touch to share your thoughts about these and other issues that matter to you. I am ever honored to be of service to you and the 37th Legislative District.

Sincerely,

Sharon Tomiko Santos
State Representative
37th Legislative District

EDUCATION

After nearly two full academic years of pandemic teaching and learning, everyone is exhausted and in need of support: students, families, and educators. At the beginning of this Session, I pledged to prioritize student mental health and social-emotional learning as well as to address the shortage of school-based personnel from teachers to bus drivers. I am proud to say that we kept this focus and invested new resources to support our students and their success.

House Bill 1664 brings more counselors, nurses, and social workers into our school buildings. Educators and families worked hard to support our students through this global health crisis, but the pandemic has devastated the mental health of children and youth, leading a coalition of children’s health experts to declare a national emergency. By bringing more trained professionals into schools, our students and their families can access timely services and assistance.

The Legislature supplemented this effort by clarifying in law that a “mental health day” qualifies as an excused absence, no different from a day home with stomach flu. But what makes **House Bill 1834** notable is that two separate groups of students independently brought this idea forward to legislators and, ultimately, joined forces to advocate for this bill and for the right of students to make this personal health care decision.

Mental and emotional distress creates barriers to learning, and so does hunger. **House Bill 1878** takes advantage of federal incentives to expand free school meals to serve an additional 92,000 Washington students. The Legislature also targeted language barriers which hinder effective partnerships between educators and families in support of our students.

House Bill 1153 requires districts to set up culturally responsive language access programs to ensure that schools serve every student and their families, no matter what primary language is spoken at home.



Most important, we adopted a measure to help alleviate the acute staffing challenges stemming from the national teacher shortage and exacerbated by pandemic protocols needed to prevent the spread of COVID in our schools and communities.

House Bill 1699 allows retired professional educators and other essential school staff to step back into our schools and classrooms to lend a hand without sacrificing their own welfare in the process.

STRENGTHENING OUR ECONOMY

The economic landscape and future of work have profoundly changed. While the implications of these transformations are still unfolding, one thing is absolutely clear: our workers and our neighborhood businesses continue to reel from the pandemic and its impacts, from supply-chain logistics to surging inflation.

This session, the Legislature championed policies to better connect workers to employment opportunities. I am especially proud that we are investing in a promising community-based endeavor, the **MLK-Gandhi Empowerment Initiative**, to pave a pathway to high-wage jobs for African Americans and other underrepresented communities in the technology sector. **Senate Bill 5600** modernizes the state apprenticeship program model to emphasize collaboration between existing and newly established apprenticeship programs, to improve apprentice utilization and retention, and to ensure broader entry to apprenticeships by historically excluded populations. **House Bill 1874** helps individuals with a record of previous arrests or convictions qualify for occupational licenses – such as for hair stylists, referees, or taxi drivers - by requiring the licensing authority to consider the nature of the offense and its relation to the ability to perform the job.

We also targeted efforts to help support small businesses struggling to keep their doors open. **Senate Bill 5980** exempts from tax filing those who conduct less than \$125,000 in business sales and increases the small business tax credit for qualified businesses that must file. **Senate Bill 5873** reduces the cap on unemployment insurance premiums while maintaining a healthy fund balance to support unemployed workers. The Legislature finally approved a proposal I first offered in 1999 to create the **Washington Equitable Access to Credit** program (House Bill 1015), which aims to spur greater lending and investment in underserved communities throughout the state.



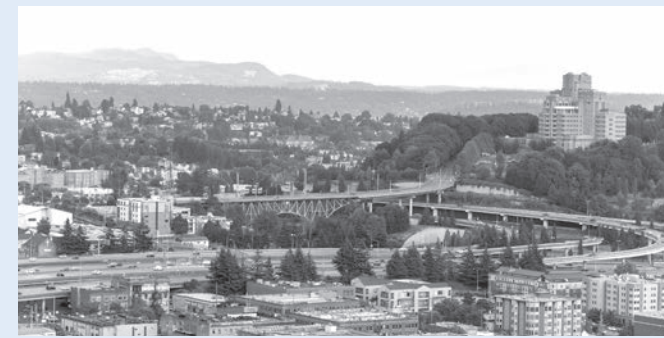
INVESTING IN WASHINGTON STATE

In a remarkable effort, the Legislature passed three closely intertwined state budgets that collaboratively address the interconnected funding issues in general government, in capital infrastructure, and in transportation systems. This level of collaboration is unprecedented but is essential to fund projects, priorities, and communities in meaningful ways.

OPERATING BUDGET

This year, the Legislature passed an operating budget that funds a strong community recovery from the pandemic. Just a few 2022 highlights include:

- **\$837 million** to expand COVID-19 public health response and invest in long-term public health systems
- **\$827 million** for child care, early learning, and foster youth programs
- **\$808 million** for K-12 education, including student mental health and well-being, nutrition services, and school transportation funding
- **\$318 million** to address the housing crisis
- **\$277 million** for behavioral health services, programs, and providers
- **\$215 million** to ensure our public safety and criminal legal systems are fair and accessible, including funding for the Office of Independent Investigations
- **\$74 million** to support newly arriving refugees from Afghanistan and Ukraine



TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

In a significant victory for our state, the Legislature passed **Move Ahead Washington**, a transformative transportation package that builds a sustainable, accessible, and inclusive future for all Washingtonians.

The package represents our commitment to combat climate change with **\$5.4 billion** to reduce our carbon

footprint, including **\$3 billion** for expanding transit services. We invest in everything from zero-emissions ferry technology to electric vehicle charging stations, with an emphasis on expanding non-motorized transportation options to reduce pollution and traffic. We also begin to fulfill our intention to repair the harm caused by past policies and practices by mitigating the displacement, pollution, traffic, and insufficient transportation options created by historic disinvestments in communities of color and poor communities.



This extraordinary expression of our values could not have been created without a **\$2 billion transfer of funds** from the operating budget, given the strict limitations on the uses of transportation revenues.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Washington’s capital budget funds critical construction projects throughout the state, from schools and universities to state parks and forests. We began the year with approximately \$88 million in reserve from the previous year, but the approved **\$1.5 billion** capital budget was made possible by a one-time transfer from the operating budget and an influx of federal infrastructure funds.

Highlights from the 2022 capital budget include:

- **\$439 million** to address the housing shortage
- **\$308 million** to support essential infrastructure
- **\$271 million** to preserve our natural resources and assist in salmon recovery
- **\$111 million** for behavioral health facilities
- **\$100 million** to expand broadband service, especially in underserved areas
- **\$101 million** for clean energy projects

These amounts include funding for important projects in the 37th Legislative District such as:

- **\$3 million** for the Seattle Indian Health Board Thunderbird Treatment Center
- **\$4.5 million** for the Tubman Center for Health and Freedom
- **\$4 million** for the Rainier Valley Early Learning Center
- **\$3 million** for Squire Park Affordable Housing