



SENATOR
**Patty
Kuderer**

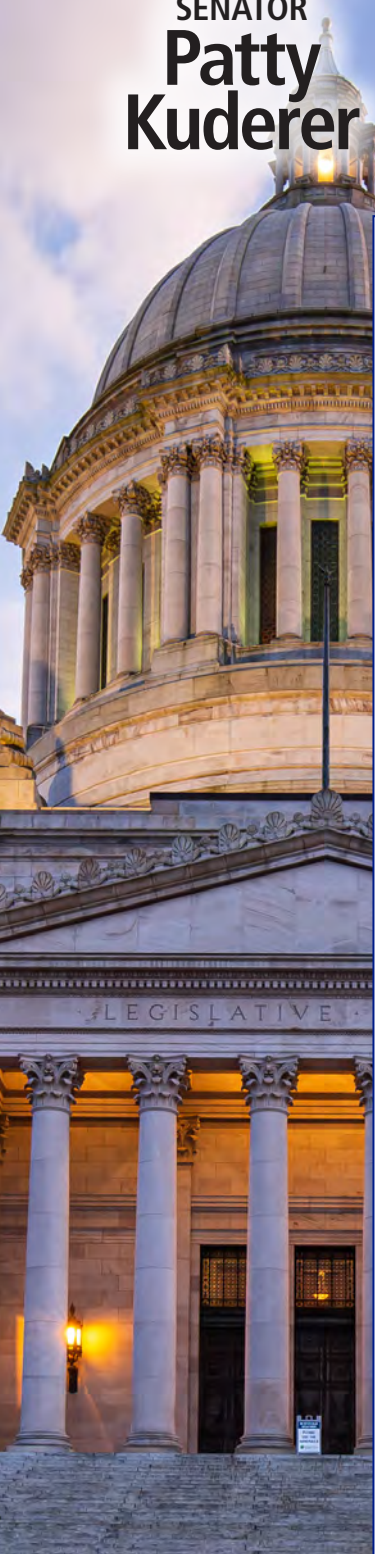


REPRESENTATIVE
**Vandana
Slatter**



REPRESENTATIVE
**Amy
Walen**

48th District Legislative Report



Dear neighbors,

The 2022 legislative session has officially ended, and we are proud to report some tremendous strides for Washingtonians across the state and in our district. This also marks the fifth year in a row we've adjourned on time, a streak that hasn't happened since 1899. When we don't rely on special sessions to get work done, we're providing a steadier, more financially responsible style of governance. It's not a coincidence that this year also marks the 5th year of the Democrats holding the majority in both the House and the Senate.

This respect for the people of our state carries through in all our work – we are here to serve you and to constantly build towards a better future for all of Washington. We worked hard this session to honor the trust you've placed in us, advocating for the issues we've heard about from you in meetings, phone calls, emails, community events, and more.

We know that there's still a lot of uncertainty right now, too. As we continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic we're relying on the science-based decisions that have helped save so many lives in our state. It can be hard to know what you should be doing to keep yourself and your family safe, so please continue to use the Washington State Department of Health and Seattle & King County Public health resources and information to make the best choices for you.

Responding to this pandemic has pushed us all to work together, to consider how our choices will impact others, and to recognize how connected we are as a community. That's impacted the work we did this session, too. We've invested in Washington families by reducing healthcare costs, providing assistance with utility payments, expanding access to nurses and counselors in K-12 schools, and much more. We've also allocated money towards our small businesses, towards the hospitality industry, and towards growing our future workforce. These investments will make a big difference in the everyday lives of many people in our community, and they're also a down payment on the future of our state.

We did more work this session than can fit in a newsletter, but we've each highlighted some of the work we're most proud of in the following pages. You can also read more by visiting the link below or scanning the QR code with your smartphone camera.

While we're proud of the work we were able to accomplish, there's always more to do. The trust you've placed in us is an honor, and we'll keep working hard on your behalf.

Patty Kuderer
Sen. Patty Kuderer

Vandana Slatter
Rep. Vandana Slatter

Amy Walen
Rep. Amy Walen



I hope this newsletter finds you well! Over the past two challenging years, our community in the 48th LD has stepped up to keep each other safe and support our families, workers, and businesses. Thank you.

During this historic legislative session, we passed more than 300 bills to build a path to recovery from the impacts of a global pandemic. This brief overview highlights several key policy areas: expanding access to good paying jobs; improving affordability of post-secondary education and healthcare; and meeting critical transportation infrastructure needs while advancing climate goals.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Investing in our students is life-changing and critical to the future of our state. As chair of the College and Workforce Development Committee, making post-secondary education more affordable is one of my highest priorities – completing an apprenticeship, degree, or credential is one of the surest paths to long-term financial stability.

More students of all ages aspire to achieve a post-secondary credential than in any previous generation. However, 40 percent of Washington students, many who are non-traditional, first-generation, rural or under-represented, are unable to complete their degree or credential because they cannot afford basic expenses beyond tuition. Low-income students are also five times less likely to achieve a degree. By making college more affordable for our residents we can grow a skilled, educated, and future-ready workforce – one that will continue to drive our state's economy and build economic stability for all Washingtonians.

THIS SESSION WE ADDRESSED AFFORDABILITY BY:

- Increasing awareness of Federal (FAFSA) and State (WAFSA) financial aid applications.
- Ensuring more students receive the full Washington College Grant to cover tuition at our public and independent colleges.
- Adding \$500 Bridge Grants to help low-income students afford life expenses like gas, groceries, childcare and rent costs that put post-secondary education just out of reach.
- Establishing a self-sustaining student loan program capped at 1% interest for low-income undergraduates and high-demand graduate degrees.

WE ADDRESSED CRITICAL, HIGH-WAGE WORKFORCE SHORTAGES BY:

- Providing student loan repayment for nurse educators to train the next generation and address critical shortages ([HB 2007](#)).
- Growing STEM programs statewide including cybersecurity training
- Supporting first generation, low-income, and other marginalized students enter STEM fields.
- Increasing apprenticeships and training in trucking and trucking-related supply chain industries.
- Expanding apprenticeships in new fields and recognizing on-the-job training



HEALTH CARE

Affordable health care is a human right. This session we expanded access to free and reduced health care for 2.2 million Washingtonians; protected consumers from surprise billing on emergency room visits; established a board to review and limit prescription drug costs; and capped insulin costs at \$35 per month for all WA health plans. We also passed legislation to connect behavioral health patients with housing prior to discharge so they aren't released into homelessness ([HB 1860](#)) and improve access to community-based treatment ([HB 1773](#)).

TRANSPORTATION & ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

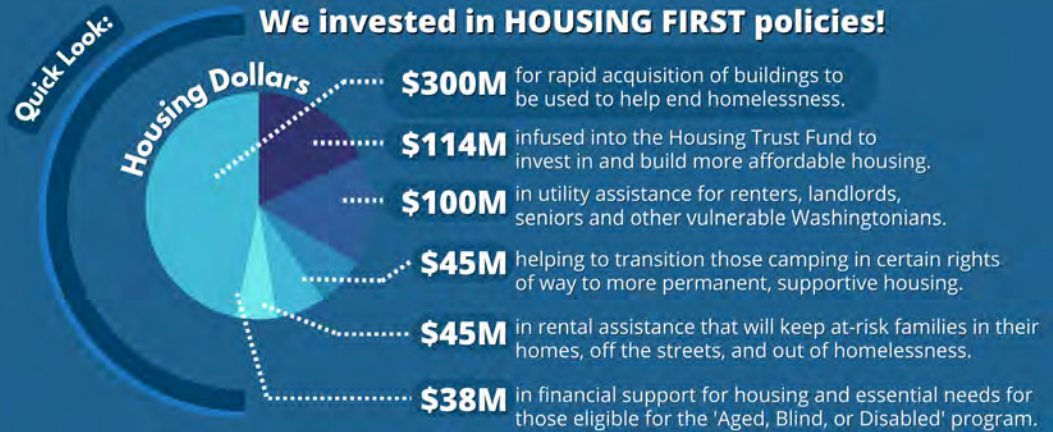
This session, after 2 years of work with communities across the state, we passed a landmark transportation package. This package is cleaner, greener, more equitable, and includes expanded transit, multimodal travel options, and fixes to unsafe bridge and road infrastructure—without an increase in the state's gas tax!

We also strengthened energy codes to help developers build sustainably and ensure new construction is net-zero ready ([HB 1770](#)). We passed legislation to reduce greenhouse gas pollution from existing buildings ([SB 5722](#)) and reduce methane emissions (25 times more potent than CO₂) from landfills ([HB 1663](#)) and organic waste ([HB 1799](#)).

HOUSING & LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As many of you know I serve as Chair of the Senate Committee on Housing and Local Government. This year marks yet another where we prioritized working families and everyday Washingtonians as we bounce back from the pandemic.

Among these great projects, we expanded the Housing Finance Commission's lending capabilities to help get more families into homes without breaking the bank and we broadened affordable workforce housing to expand the use of a local taxing option for economic development to include the building and acquisition of affordable workforce housing.



PUBLIC SAFETY IS COMMUNITY SAFETY

Washingtonians have a right to feel safe in their homes and communities. There are many reasons why crime is up all over the country. In Washington, the statistics vary with most of the state seeing a spike in property crime and a surge in **domestic violence, where 30 percent of homicides were domestic violence victims. Cyberstalking of victims** also increased, requiring a more targeted approach to the problem:

Tackling coercive control, a known precursor to physical violence, by empowering survivors to seek civil protection orders if they were victims of abusers who oppress and instill fear (**HB 1901**).

Reducing cyber harassment and stalking giving survivors an avenue to seek confidential, timely justice (**SB 5628**).

Establishing an alert system for Missing Indigenous People to address a tragedy plaguing our nation (**HB 1725**).

Washington has also seen an increase in **catalytic converter theft**, which is often devastating to the vehicle owner. There is little that police can do unless they catch them in the act. Rather than increasing penalties on the perpetrator who is almost never caught, we put restrictions and penalties on those buying the illegally-obtained converters, as well as creating a task force - including law enforcement - to make additional recommendations to completely eliminate the market for these stolen goods (**HB 1815**).

JUSTICE FOR ALL WASHINGTONIANS

We need to ensure our law enforcement have the tools they need to make us safe and that our system is one that works for everyone. Last year's reforms were the product of long, sometimes difficult, and much needed conversations about police tactics and accountability. It's telling that the number of people who died in police encounters in the first 11 months of 2021 declined more than 60 percent compared to the year before, more than in any other state. As is often the case with broad reforms, a couple implementation issues arose that required fixes.

Modified use of force (HB 1735) — Legislators worked directly with law enforcement to make clear that physical force when detaining someone on an involuntary treatment hold may be used.

Expanded options to use less lethal force (HB 1719) — Empowers our peace officers to help in difficult situations like extended crowd control and rioting.

To retain quality personnel, we increased retirement benefits for first responders (HB 1701) giving more to our firefighters and law enforcement professionals to keep this line of work experienced and seasoned.

Hi-speed chases are down and with that, chase related deaths. To protect public safety, we kept last year's standard of preventing car chases over low-level crimes, allowing police to engage in vehicular pursuits when they have probable cause to believe that a person in it has committed a violent offense.



AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND WORKING FAMILIES

Our district faces an affordable housing crisis, with so many people moving here for our excellent schools and colleges, vibrant downtowns, festivals that celebrate all cultures, and city governments that truly care about every person. Everyone should be able to age in their hometown, so our challenge is to take density where it makes sense, where transit and services exist, and to make these communities beautiful.

I'll continue to advocate for the proposals contained in **HB 2020**, which focused on creating sustainable and affordable housing around existing transit corridors and encouraged energy self-sufficient housing.

We must strive for complete communities where families can get the care they need throughout their lives. The pandemic has impacted our health in many ways. We need behavioral health care available nearby, substance use treatment centers, and a spectrum of options for aging close to those we love. Investments in these values are evident in the transportation, operating and capital budgets adopted in 2022.



SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESSES AND TAX REFORM

Many local business owners kept their dream enterprises alive with credit cards or second mortgages. A true game changer for 70 percent of businesses in our state is a permanent reform to the Business & Occupation tax. This provides real relief both in taxes payable and filing requirements. It was essential that \$100 million in the budget was invested to support recovery of the hospitality industry, who have been on the front lines providing food and services for those who could not stay home safely.

This is a start. We need sweeping tax reform that reduces our reliance on sales, property and B&O taxes. Although these have generated revenue, our system is not predictable for individuals, nor innovators. It does not allow us to build a budget based on our values, instead we budget reactively. We still need a robust economic development strategy and that requires fair, broadly applied taxation that doesn't disproportionately burden working families and innovators.

ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE

Gun violence is on the rise, and we need decisive action to save lives. Keeping communities safe is the primary role of your government. I believe that we should require everyone to do what responsible gun owners already do, and was proud to vote for legislation on the following issues:

Untraceable Guns — Ghost guns are unregistered and untraceable homemade guns. We strengthened our ban on these guns and require that unfinished frames and receivers, which can easily be converted into working firearms, be registered and serialized.

High-Capacity Magazines — We now prohibit the sale, manufacturing, and distribution of high-capacity magazines. The ban focuses on dealers instead of criminalizing the possession of high-capacity magazines.

Public Meetings — The open carry of guns doesn't belong at school board, city council meetings, nor ballot counting locations. Some in our community are genuinely frightened by weapons being displayed. All Washingtonians deserve safe participation in civic engagement without intimidation.

Active Shooter Drills — School shootings are relatively rare, and we should not prepare our children to be anxious

and afraid at school. Active shooter drills are associated with increases in depression, anxiety, and fears about death among children as young as five years old., their parents, and teachers. It's time to rethink reactive school safety strategies. I was proud to sponsor **HB 1941** which specifies that lockdown drills may not include live simulations of or reenactments of active shooter scenarios that are not trauma-informed and age and developmentally appropriate.

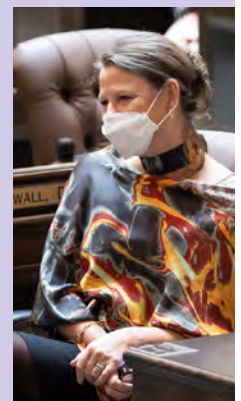
We can protect people from gun violence without violating the Constitution and I will continue to work for solutions that protect our communities from the devastation of gun violence.

Thank you for your calls and emails. I appreciate your advocacy for a stronger, safer, and more inclusive community—and I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

Thanks again,



Rep. Amy Walen



OUR OPERATING BUDGET



This year's supplemental budget is focused on bringing everyone along in our economic recovery. Thanks to one-time federal funds and strong economic growth over the last year, we were able to make these investments without any general tax increases and with a healthy reserve for future rainy days.

- **Small businesses:** expanded Business and Occupation tax credits, **\$100 million** for restaurants and hospitality businesses, and **\$75 million** for disaster response.
- **K-12 education:** expanded outdoor education, **\$44 million** for school nutrition, **\$91 million** to add counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers.
- **Children, youth and families:** **\$50 million** to increase Working Connections Child Care provider rates, **\$13 million** to expand ECEAP slots and summer ECEAP.
- **Homelessness and housing:** **\$160 million** for utility assistance, **\$45 million** for rental assistance, **\$27 million** for landlord cost mitigation, **\$55 million** for homeless service and shelter providers.
- **Public health and healthcare:** **\$125 million** for COVID-19 response and vaccination efforts, **\$22 million** for children's Medicaid dental rates, **\$25 million** for community health centers.
- **Behavioral health:** **\$100 million** for providers, **\$23 million** for housing and employment for individuals with behavioral health issues, **\$35 million** for crisis, outreach and diversion programs.
- **Long-term care and developmental disabilities:** **\$425 million** for temporary COVID-19 provider rate increases, **\$263 million** to raise LTC wages, **\$14 million** to increase access to employment and community services.
- **College and workforce development:** **\$34 million** to expand the Washington College Grant and provide additional Bridge Grants, **\$150 million** to create a self-sustaining student loan program, **\$6 million** to increase financial aid outreach efforts.
- **Natural resources:** **\$180 million** for salmon habitat and recovery, **\$11 million** for recreational lands maintenance, **\$113 million** for wildfire suppression and recovery, **\$58 million** for solar incentives.

OUR TRANSPORTATION BUDGET

This session we passed a historic transportation budget that will help move Washington ahead. We developed this budget with stakeholders, local elected officials, and feedback from over 90 listening sessions to create a plan that meets the needs of our state, all without an increase in the gas tax.

Our priorities were preserving our infrastructure, reducing carbon emissions, expanding safe, accessible, and reliable options to get around, and addressing the harm caused by previous transportation policies.

Within the budget we were also able to secure funding for projects specific to the 48th legislative district, including:

- **\$33.5 million** for pedestrian and bike safety projects, including **\$18 million** for an Eastrail multi-use corridor through Bellevue, **\$8 million** to add a crossing and improve bicycle/pedestrian safety on SR 520 & 148th Ave NE, **\$6.9 million** for the "Bellevue Gap" in the Mountains to Sound Greenway Trail, and **\$650,000** for pedestrian crossing and sidewalk expansion in Bellevue.
- **\$380 million** over the next 16 years for I-405 and SR 167 corridor improvements, including funding to prevent delays in Bus Rapid Transit development and ensure alignment with Sound Transit timelines, as well as \$406 million for SR 520.
- **\$5.5 million** in funds to expand bike share options in Kirkland, Bellevue, and Redmond.



48th District Legislative Report

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CAPITAL BUDGET

The capital budget is our state's construction budget, and this year we leveraged federal dollars to make additional investments in priority areas we heard about from you. Statewide, we're investing:

- **\$439 million** for housing, including **\$300 million** for rapid acquisition for housing and **\$15 million** for homeless youth projects.
- **\$111 million** for behavioral health
- **\$224 million** for early learning, public schools, and higher education, including **\$22 million** in grants to distressed schools
- **\$100 million** to expand broadband internet service around the state
- **\$101 million** in clean energy projects

In addition to these statewide investments, we've also secured funding for local organizations in the **48th district**, including:

- **\$2 million** for the Illahee Affordable Housing Project in Bellevue to preserve affordable housing, avoid displacing residents, and provide immediate housing opportunities for families experiencing homelessness.
- **\$2.5 million** in funding for Friends of Youth in Redmond to provide emergency shelter and transitional housing for our youth.

