

REPRESENTING
WASHINGTON'S
24TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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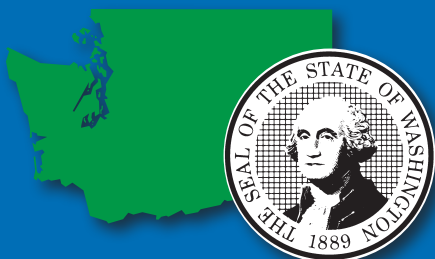


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Leave a message for your lawmakers on the
Legislative Hotline: 1-800-562-6000



24TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

2025

SESSION REPORT

Dear neighbors,

This was a tough session—but we managed to balance the state budget and finish our work on time again. This is historically rare, with most state legislatures going into overtime, year after year.

Inside, you'll learn about the major issues we tackled, including the state budget, the capital budget, the new transportation budget, natural resources, and legislation we wrote that passed both chambers and signed into law.

Our focus is on relentlessly fighting for the people of the 24th District, so we want to thank everyone who stood up and spoke out for local projects and legislation that affects the district.

There isn't enough room here to address every issue. We will send regular e-newsletters about specific topics and breaking news, and you are always welcome to contact our offices to learn more about issues or bills that interest you.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your 24th District lawmakers!

A handwritten signature of Rep. Adam Bernbaum in black ink.

Rep. Adam Bernbaum

A handwritten signature of Rep. Steve Tharinger in black ink.

Rep. Steve Tharinger

A handwritten signature of Sen. Mike Chapman in black ink.

Sen. Mike Chapman



A BALANCED BUDGET

This session, we faced a massive budget deficit of between \$12 billion to \$16 billion or more, depending on how you looked at the problem over the next four years.

State law requires the governor to propose what's called a Book 1 budget, which is a balanced budget with no new revenue. Outgoing Gov. Jay Inslee did his duty before leaving office and showed us that budget, and the cuts to services, schools, and health care were horrific. We also recognized the harms of an all-revenue budget. Instead, we passed a common-sense compromise, with tough cuts and smart revenue, trying to do the least harm possible.

There is some good news hidden in all of that. A new investment of \$100 million helps hire more local police officers and bolster public safety. There's \$775 million to boost special education in our public schools, addressing a critical need.

College will be more affordable, with zero tuition hikes and a \$45 million boost to the Washington College Grant.

For more details about the state operating budget, capital budget or transportation budget—visit fiscal.wa.gov.

NATURAL RESOURCES

We're probably a little biased, but our state without a doubt is the most beautiful in the country. Every Washingtonian treasures our waterways, forests, mountains and all of our stunning and iconic natural resources. These places make Washington special and a destination for people from all over the world. It's up to all of us to protect the natural splendor of our state—this is a duty we in the legislature take very seriously.

The budget makes natural resources and public lands a major focus, with significant investments in salmon hatcheries—a record \$75 million—as well as \$365 million for salmon and steelhead recovery, floodplain safety, water supply infrastructure, and more. The budget also appropriates \$171 million for water infrastructure, \$120 million for the popular Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program and \$63 million for state parks.

Our natural resources are an enormously important part of who we are as Washingtonians as well as a significant part of our state's economic well-being. We're proud of these meaningful investments that will ensure our state's natural resources remain healthy, strong, and here for future generations.

CAPITAL BUDGET

The new \$7.6 billion capital budget includes \$329 million in local projects here in the 24th District.

Rep. Tharinger serves as chair of the House Capital Budget Committee, and Sen. Chapman is Deputy Chair for the Capital Budget Team in the Senate, so we made sure that this budget invests in our communities, our economy, and our future.

There's also \$1 billion for K-12 schools and early learning, including \$202 million for small school districts and tribal compact schools, \$151 million for school seismic safety, and \$100 million for early learning facilities.

Finally, there is \$130 million in grants and projects to expand behavioral health care in community settings along with the completion of the new forensic hospital facility at Western State Hospital.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

There isn't a single magical solution to the housing and homeless crisis, which affects all of us.

We tackled this issue from every direction: with new laws making it easier to build housing, with funding in the operating budget to prevent homelessness and get people off the street, and with capital budget funding.



NEW LAWS:

- **HB 1217** Rent stabilization protects tenants against excessive rent hikes while still allowing increases to cover repairs and other costs. It works for both tenants and landlords — renters gain year-to-year predictability, and landlords retain the flexibility to reasonably raise rent to cover their costs.
- **SB 5148** Ensuring local governments comply with the state's affordable housing laws.
- **HB 1491** Expanding opportunities for transit-oriented development.
- **HB 1403** Lowering barriers to construction of affordable condominiums.
- **HB 1757** Streamlining processes to convert commercial offices to residential housing.
- **HB 1696** Modifying the covenant homeownership program so more people can afford a home.
- **HB 1096** Allowing homeowners to create new housing through a streamlined lot-splitting process.

Operating budget funds: \$145 million to tackle the housing and homeless crisis and \$6 million for diversion funding to keep children from living on the street.

Capital budget: The new two-year construction budget invests a total of \$782 million to projects related to affordable housing and emergency shelters.

24TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT • 2025 SESSION REPORT

TRANSPORTATION

The new transportation budget makes \$15.6 billion in improvements to our state's network of highways, ferries, trains, and buses.

Two of us—Sen. Chapman and Rep. Bernbaum—serve on the Transportation Committees in each chamber, so we worked together to make sure this budget addressed problems and needs in the 24th District.

In a difficult budget year, we passed a bipartisan transportation budget that puts real funding to preservation and safety while keeping our state moving forward. The final budget is balanced and doesn't cut funding for basic safety or the State Patrol. It also keeps Climate Commitment Act funds dedicated to addressing climate change, a huge issue here in the 24th District with more miles of coastline than any other district.

There are \$20.622 million in projects entirely in the 24th District, including:

- SR 117 Truck Route at US 101 interchange improvements, \$3.125 million
- SR 109 bypass at Quinalt, \$1.31 million
- Makah Passage project, \$7.825 million

The budget also includes projects shared between the 24th and nearby districts, including \$72 million for the US 12 Highway-Rail Separation in Aberdeen (total cost over six years) and \$6 million for Grays Harbor Transit HQ ROW permitting and final design.



BILLS by Sen. Chapman

Fish and Wildlife officers (Senate Bill 5653), signed into law.

This bill allows both lieutenants and captains at the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife the same collective bargaining rights as those who rank below them, helping us better attract and retain great employees and ensure that everyone who protects our natural resources have the same rights.

Vessel length/nonresident (Senate Bill 5281), signed into law.

There's a lot of excitement about the upcoming World Cup in 2026, and in preparation for this event and Washington's role in it, there are several investments and policy changes that will help make this event a success.

SB 5281, which will, for a fee, allow larger vessels to enter Washington's water ways, increasing economic activity and helping fund youth swimming and water safety programs in the process.

We anticipate the World Cup will draw interest and visitors from all corners of the planet. Recreational boating is already an enormous economic driver in our state, this bill will only serve to increase it.



BILLS by Rep. Bernbaum

Prescribed burns and wildfires (House Bill 1563), signed into law.

Liability concerns made landowners wary of using prescribed fires, one of the best tools to prevent catastrophic wildfires. This bill addresses this issue by creating a pilot program which provides limited state coverage for wildfire escapement and clarifies the claims process.

Early learning age requirements (House Bill 1351), signed into law.

This bill expands access to childcare by allowing some kids who just miss the age cutoff to access the program making the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) more efficient by allowing some ECEAP slots in classrooms which would be left empty to be filled by kids who just miss the age cutoff.

Timber purchasing reporting (House Bill 1389), signed into law.

This bill relates to stumpage value tables, important for establishing the current market value for timber and ensuring that prices are accurate.

Vehicle and driver licensing (House Bill 1439), signed into law.

Cleans up technical changes needed to keep our state's vehicle licenses and driver licenses in compliance with federal law.



BILLS by Rep. Tharinger

Health care transparency on prices (House Bill 1382), signed into law.

This reforms the state's All Payer Claims Database, a key resource for information about health care costs and spending. This bill helps align state law with federal policy to make health care prices more transparent and accessible.

Capital budget (House Bill 1216 / Senate Bill 5195), signed into law.

As explained before, funds \$7.6 billion in projects around the state to build schools, parks, colleges, and other vital infrastructure.

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KEEP IN TOUCH

If you have a question about specific legislation or an issue, please contact us and we'll lead you to the right information. It's our honor to represent you in the House and Senate, and we welcome your ideas, stories, and comments.

Please feel free to contact any—or all—of us by phone, email, or mail.

Thank you for taking the time to read this, and we hope to hear from you soon!



Sen. Mike Chapman



Rep. Adam Bernbaum



Rep. Steve Tharinger

