



“My kitchen table is your kitchen table – I will always have a chair for you”

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40th Legislative District

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COVID-19 vaccinations are still underway to protect our community from the ongoing pandemic. If you have questions about the vaccine, or to find a vaccination site near you, head to VaccineLocator.doh.wa.gov, or call the COVID-19 Information Hotline at **1-800-525-0127**, then press #.

LD40



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Report on the 2022 Session

Friends & Neighbors,

We recently wrapped up the 2022 Legislative Session after passing policies and making investments that will help our communities grow and recover as we come out of this pandemic. A special thank you to the health care professionals, teachers, child care providers, grocery store workers and many others who are working so hard throughout these difficult and stressful times.

Though we had some long days (and some very late nights), I'm so proud of what we were able to accomplish. We took historic steps to support families, protect our communities, and help our small businesses get back on their feet.

We supported small and Main Street businesses hit hard by increasing the small business B&O tax credit and investing in help for hospitality businesses, arts, heritage, and cultural organizations. We also funded things like rent, utility, and food assistance to better support the families struggling most in our state.

We invested in the mental health and well-being of our children with more school nurses, counselors, and social workers in K-12 schools. And we ensured all parents can actively engage in their child's learning by increasing language access in our schools.

Our biggest climate win was passing the historic Move Ahead Washington transportation package, which ushers in a sustainable and achievable transportation future for our state, investing in everything from bicycle and pedestrian grants to EV charging stations, to transit, including ferries.

We started our COVID-19 recovery work in 2021 with the Washington Recovery Budget, and this year we continued with unprecedented supplemental budget investments, a capital budget to meet our state's challenges, and a historic transportation package that moves us forward. I invite you to keep reading for an update on more of our work this session.

It's an incredible honor to represent you in Olympia,

Rep. Debra Lekanoff



The Legislature recently wrapped up the 2022 legislative session. Below are some significant budget investments made, pieces of legislation I successfully passed, and issues I intend to continue working on for our district and the state. Thank you for the honor of serving you!

Investing in Recovery

Everyone deserves to come out of this pandemic better than they went into it. Now is the right time to make smart, strategic investments in what workers, families and small business owners need to recover. That's why we passed a budget that provides:

Education & Child Care: Funding for more school counselors, nurses, psychologists, and social workers; teacher salary increases and school operating costs; expanded access to preschool and childcare programs; and supports for foster youth and their families

Housing & Homelessness: Funding for utility and rental assistance; landlord cost mitigation; homeless service and shelter providers; and record investments to bolster the Housing Trust Fund

Behavioral Health: Funding for crisis, outreach, and diversion programs; supports for behavioral health providers; and expanded opioid response programs

Economic Development: Funding for a B&O tax credit for 70% of small businesses; assistance for restaurants and other hospitality businesses; grants to local chambers of commerce and main streets; and supports for arts, heritage, and cultural organizations

College & Workforce: Funding for a new state student loan program offering an interest rate of just 1%; nurse education opportunities and tuition assistance; and cybersecurity, digital literacy, and cyber workforce development

Move Ahead Washington

Transportation Committee members hosted over 90 listening sessions to hear the top transportation priorities from communities across the state. The more than \$16 billion, 16-year Move Ahead Washington transportation package addresses the concerns they heard and reflects our focus on meeting the needs of every community. It's a future-oriented plan that prioritizes preserving our infrastructure, reducing carbon emissions, expanding safe, accessible, affordable options to get around, and addressing the harm caused by past transportation policies.

How Move Ahead WA serves the 40th District

The families of our district have been clear in their call for much-needed investments in the ferries many rely on each day. Move Ahead Washington invests \$1.6B in our ferries, including funding for four new hybrid-electric vessels, vessel and terminal electrification projects, preservation and operations support, and to allow children 18 and under to ride free.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Alert

As many of you may know, I am the only Native American currently serving in the Washington State Legislature, and that is the perspective I bring when developing legislation. Since joining the Legislature, one of my top policy priorities has been to advocate for the safety of the first peoples of Washington state.

Too many Indigenous mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters have been torn from their families. We know that Indigenous women and people go missing and are murdered at rates higher than any other ethnic group in the United States. In Washington, more than four times as many Indigenous women go missing than white women, according to research conducted by the Urban Indian Health Institute in Seattle.

After working with Sen. Manka Dhingra last session to secure funding for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People (MMIWP) Task Force, last summer I served as a member. This session, I successfully championed legislation stemming from that work: **House Bill 1725**, which creates a first-in-the-nation, alert in Washington state to help identify and locate missing Indigenous women and people. The alert system will operate similarly to the 'silver alert' established for missing vulnerable adults, broadcasting information on message signs and in highway advisory radio messages when activated, as well as through press releases to local and regional media.

In addition, it will serve to increase awareness about this crisis, which affects every community and every family. And it will take

collaboration among all governing bodies, law enforcement, and media to bring awareness and stop these horrific crimes. **The unheard screams of our brothers and sisters will finally be heard across our state.**

A Commitment to Tribal Consultation

In Olympia we talk about big issues like early childhood education, treatment of drug addiction, housing, caring for an aging population, and protecting the environment. These are the things that tribes are funding every day in their communities and neighboring areas. Our government-to-government relationships with all 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington state are crucial to the well-being of everyone who calls this region home.

That may even be especially true regarding the stewardship of our air, water, lands, and natural resources. Tribes are essential partners in the fight against climate change, and I'm proud to report that the Legislature passed my legislation to set in place a procedure for tribal consultation on Climate Commitment Act-funded projects (**HB 1753**). This update to the critical climate change mitigation program passed last session respects the sovereignty of tribal nations by ensuring early, meaningful consultation on Climate Commitment funding decisions that may affect tribal resources or rights.

Salmon Eggs in One Hand and Seeds in the Other

Salmon is intertwined within our economy, culture, and the values of Washington state, but it's interconnectivity is often not considered when developing policy. The 2022 Legislative Session opened the door for us to have meaningful conversations around the salmon and shellfish industries in conjunction with agricultural industries. Our state and Washington's treaty tribes have a relationship as co-managers of our salmon and shellfish resources, while we also have a deep, rich need for sustainability in agriculture. I'm glad to report we were able to provide funding for salmon recovery programs and a monumental investment in fish passage culverts through the Transportation Budget, while also investing in agricultural programs to conserve and protect farmland, as well as increase the sustainability of their industry.

These two industries can and should be brought together to build their relationship, as they will have to work in tandem to address their needs when it comes to combatting climate change and protecting Washington's natural resources for generations to come. We have much work still to do, and I am dedicated to continuing that work throughout the interim and into the future!