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48th DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE NEWS

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- Civil Rights & Judiciary
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Legislative Update 48th Legislative District

Dear neighbors,

As your State Representative, I want to take a few minutes to share what we've been working on in Olympia and how it connects to the challenges and hopes we're hearing from folks across our district.

This year's session came with its fair share of hurdles. A tighter budget and growing uncertainty at the federal level made our job harder—but also more urgent. Nevertheless, I'm proud of the progress we've made, both for the 48th and for Washingtonians across the state.

Sincerely,



My Bills



Budget
Highlights



My
Webpage



Building Homes, Building Hope

We all know the cost of housing is out of control, and Washington is currently short about 250,000 homes. That's why I focused on making it easier—and faster—to build the kinds of housing we desperately need.

I introduced and supported legislation to cut red tape in permitting, prevent the abuse of historic designations to block housing, and make it easier to convert existing buildings into homes. One bill I worked on opens new financing options by allowing for-profit and non-profit housing developers to collaborate. And with the help of my former seatmate Rep. Joan McBride, I helped continue the push to let faith-based organizations develop affordable housing on their own property.

We still have a lot of work ahead—but this session marked real steps toward building the housing supply our communities need to thrive.

Delivering for the 48th District

Closer to home, I was proud to pass a bill that addresses an unexpected tax issue that was negatively affecting nonprofits working with the Together Center in Redmond.[a] These organizations do incredible work serving our neighbors, and they shouldn't be penalized for it. I'm also continuing efforts to bring clarity to tax rules that impact how we invest in our communities—especially in light of the Antio court decision,[b] which has caused confusion for both families and small businesses alike.

Want to see what else we've secured for our district? From transportation to education to community projects, I've put together a full list of local investments here: housedemocrats.wa.gov/walen



Safer Families, Stronger Communities

Public safety was another major focus this session. As part of the Public Safety Caucus, I worked to ensure funding reaches local teams that are equipped to respond to behavioral health crises, domestic violence, and substance use emergencies. These aren't one-size-fits-all problems—and our solutions shouldn't be, either.

We also advanced efforts to hold repeat offenders accountable, fight organized retail theft, and improve traffic safety. And I proudly supported legislation to establish a permit-to-purchase requirement for firearm sales in Washington—because keeping guns out of the wrong hands helps keep us all safer.

Lifting Up Our Most Vulnerable Neighbors

Every year, I'm inspired by the work happening quietly around us—caregivers, healthcare workers, immigrants, and families just trying to get by. This session, we made sure they weren't overlooked.

We passed bills to allow workers to use sick leave for immigration proceedings, increase Medicaid reimbursement rates so providers can stay afloat, and make it easier to access hormone therapies with fewer barriers. I also worked with Rep. Suzanne Schmidt to update our child support system so that it works better for today's economy, especially for gig workers and self-employed parents.

Fighting for Fairness & Consumer Protection

As Chair of the Consumer Protection & Business Committee, I helped lead efforts to protect Washingtonians from unfair practices—whether in the housing market, financial services, or even pet insurance.

We advanced bills to prevent pet insurers from canceling policies when pets develop health conditions, crack down on cryptocurrency kiosk scams, regulate earned wage access apps, and protect homeowners from predatory flipping practices. We also passed a bill that could finally remove medical debt from credit scores—a long-overdue step in helping families get ahead.

Looking Ahead

Not every bill I sponsored made it across the finish line, but I'm not giving up. I'll keep fighting to reduce firearm theft, improve conditions for animals in backyard breeding operations, and end fur farming in Washington. These are issues that matter to our values, our communities, and our future.

As federal uncertainty grows, it's more important than ever for Washington to lead the way. If agencies in D.C. fall short in protecting kids, seniors, working families, or our environment, then we must be ready to step in and fill the gap.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to do this work on your behalf. I'm proud to serve the 48th, and I'll keep showing up every day to fight for a healthier, safer, and more affordable Washington.

