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2025-2026 Legislative Update 42nd Legislative District

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2025-2026 Legislative Update

42ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



Dear friends and neighbors,

These are hard times, and our community feels it everywhere. Groceries cost more. Housing feels out of reach. Childcare is hard to find and harder to afford. And when you're raising kids or caring for an aging parent, the stress compounds quickly. In moments like this, government shouldn't make life harder. It should show up, do its job well, and help people feel supported.

That belief has guided my work this last biennium. Our responsibility is to meet people where they are. That meant focusing on affordability and stability for working families. In 2025, we protected investments in housing, health care, and education, passed rent stabilization to bring relief to renters, and advanced policies to build more housing, strengthen schools, and support working families.



During the 2026 session, we faced even greater economic uncertainty driven by inflation, tariffs, and federal cuts to basic services like Medicaid and food assistance. In response, we focused on protecting what matters most - food, shelter, health, and safety, while taking meaningful steps to reduce costs.

At the same time, we continued investing in education, from expanding access to school meals for every student to strengthening special education and ensuring our schools are safe, supportive places where every child can learn and belong. Because when we invest in kids, we invest in the future of our entire community.

Access to health care remained central to my work as Vice-Chair of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. At a time when federal decisions are putting coverage and affordability at risk, we acted to protect access to essential services here in Washington because no one should have to choose between their health and their financial stability.

I ran for office to serve, to listen, and to act. I'm here for families doing their best in difficult circumstances, for children who need protection, and for neighbors who want a system they can trust.

Thank you for the opportunity to do this work on your behalf and for our community.

In Service,

WORKING HARD AND DELIVERING FOR THE PEOPLE OF WHATCOM COUNTY

AFFORDABILITY

While many cost pressures are driven by national and global factors, we focused this session on practical steps to ease the burden:

- Expanded energy assistance for households facing high utility bills,
- Protected access to preventive health care,
- And removed barriers to opening grocery stores and pharmacies in underserved areas.

At the same time, I introduced several bills to take on rising health care costs directly that:

- Required insurers to spend more premium dollars on patient care,
- Improved transparency and oversight in prior authorization decisions,
- Ensured Medicaid homecare funding supports caregivers,
- And made it easier for patients to understand what services are covered.



STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTIONS

Keeping children safe while supporting families has been central to my work as a social worker. In 2025, I introduced legislation to:

- Strengthen prevention and response by improving child abuse risk assessments,
- Address the growing danger of synthetic opioids like fentanyl,
- Improve coordination during mental health crises,
- And protect children in youth sports and ensure schools are prepared for emergencies.

In 2026, I continued this work by introducing legislation to:

- Intervene earlier when children are at risk,
- Connect families to services before situations escalate, while maintaining clear standards to act when safety is at stake,
- Support caregivers and strengthen systems around vulnerable children and adults,
- And advance safeguards to protect young people online.

This work is about balance to protect children, support families, and build systems people can trust.



EDUCATION



School is about more than classrooms. It's about opportunity, stability, and making sure every child has a fair shot. In 2025, we:

- Increased funding for materials, supplies, and operating costs to help districts keep pace with inflation,
- Made major progress on special education by removing the enrollment cap and boosting funding to better serve students with disabilities,
- Protected funding for school meals,
- Expanded local effort assistance to support districts across the state,
- And invested in dual credit programs and teacher workforce development.

Beyond funding, I've continued to champion early literacy and student well-being. That includes:

- Supporting Dolly Parton's imagination library,
- Expanding outdoor education opportunities.

In 2026, we stayed focused on protecting these gains including special education support and programs for students experiencing homelessness and foster youth. We also worked to hold higher-education tuition steady and preserve access to the Washington College Grant, helping keep higher education within reach.

INVESTING IN THE 42ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

The 2025-2026 capital and supplemental capital budgets prioritize creating jobs today while building stronger, more resilient communities for the future. Together, these investments total **over \$155 million in our community:**

- Whatcom Community College Technology & Engineering Center – \$51,042,000
- Whatcom Waterway Remedial Action – \$39,378,000
- Nooksack Integrated Floodplain Early Actions – \$13,050,000
- Whatcom County Crisis and Treatment Center – \$11,350,000
- Nooksack River: Floodplain Phase 4 - \$10,309,000
- Lummi School District Modernization – \$5,481,000
- Lynden Wastewater Treatment Plant Renovation & Expansion – \$515,000
- Swift Creek Natural Asbestos Cleanup – \$4,000,000
- Mercy Affordable Housing – \$3,072,000
- Central Library Interior Renovation – \$2,000,000
- Setting Sun Circle Community & Arts Center – \$515,000
- Meridian School District Whatcom Early Learning Center – \$1,100,000
- Evergreen Recovery Center Women's Inpatient Treatment – \$1,545,000
- Engedi Refuge Counseling Center Expansion – \$103,000
- Haynie Grange Facilities Modernization – \$170,000
- Lummi Island Grange – \$77,000
- Affordable Housing at Lynden Transit Center – \$500,000

These investments focus on what matters most: expanding affordable housing, modernizing schools, better preparing for future floods, and supporting affordable housing and healthcare.