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2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

22ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Dear neighbors,

We did it—we made it through another mostly remote session! The 2022 legislative session was a short one however, I'm proud of what we've accomplished in these 60 days.

This session we passed a historic state budget that prioritizes funding for behavioral health and long-term care. We passed legislation that supports the work to find more solutions for affordable housing and addresses homelessness. It has been a very productive session and I'm excited to share some of our key accomplishments.

Flip through this newsletter to learn more about the legislation we passed and how we're working towards a much more affordable and healthier Washington for all.

Also, I want to take the time to thank each one of you for your support and involvement during this session. Thank you for tuning in, participating in our townhall, sending emails, and showing up for the issues that are important to you. Though the session is over, I invite you to reach out to my office to share your thoughts and ideas or ask any questions.

As always, it is my honor to serve you as your state representative.

With gratitude,

Jessica Bateman
State Representative
22nd Legislative District



2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP-UP

BUDGET INVESTMENTS FOR HOMELESSNESS & HOUSING

Top priorities for me this session have been pushing for more affordable housing, addressing the homelessness crisis and protecting people from losing their homes by increasing access to more resources.

With the cost of living continuing to go up, inflation, and the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, I know we need to do more for our communities.

A Washington where people aren't in crisis in the streets or struggling to keep a roof over their heads is possible.

This year's supplemental budget is a good start. Here are the details:

- Increases utility assistance (broadband, energy, water, garbage, and recycling) - \$160m
- Provides additional funds for rental assistance - \$45m
- Allocates funding for homeless provider stipends - \$55m
- Funds landlord mitigation - \$27m
- Provides funding for services for individuals living in public areas - \$45m
- Transfers half a billion dollars to Capital Budget for housing needs - \$500m

REET TAX EXEMPTION/ AFFORDABLE HOUSING - HB 1643

This bill allows non-profit developers and public housing authorities to preserve existing housing and/or acquire land for new development without being subjected to the real estate excise tax (REET).

Additionally, it creates an incentive for property owners to sell their properties to such organizations.

PROVIDING A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION FOR LIMITED EQUITY COOPERATIVE HOUSING – SB 5713

This bill provides a property tax exemption for limited equity cooperatives with low-income residents. This exemption will help reduce housing costs increase home affordability for working families.

The goal of this limited equity cooperative approach is increasing homeownership for BIPOC communities and begin building intergenerational wealth.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING RESOURCES - HB 1724

HB 1724 establishes an advisory committee on permanent supportive housing within the Department of Commerce (DOC).

This committee will help coordinate the best arrangement for key stakeholders between local, state, and federal partners who play a critical role in providing permanent supportive housing.

It also adds an operator of permanent supportive housing the DOC's Affordable Housing Advisory Board.

Permanent supportive housing (like the Home Fund's Unity Commons) is key to ending chronic homelessness.



APPLE HEALTH AND HOMES - HB 1866

Stable housing is a critical factor when it comes to the health care treatment for people who have been chronically homeless.

HB 1866 establishes the Apple Health and Homes Program which provides housing and community support services to those who meet the eligibility criteria to finding stable housing.

This bill treats chronic homelessness as a key component of medical care, making it so that more people can find a home.

CHARITY CARE – HB 1616

There are millions of families in Washington that can't afford hospital care and HB 1616 bridges that gap.

This bill standardizes the way hospitals across the state provide and bill for services to patients receiving subsidized care, increasing access to free and reduced cost healthcare to 2.2 million Washingtonians.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH BUDGET FUNDING

Here in Washington, investing in behavioral health is a priority. Whether you or someone you know needs help with a mental health crisis or substance use disorder, help is available for you.

Our budget includes:

- \$51 million to increase the rates for mental health and substance use disorder providers
- \$100 million for behavioral health providers that were impacted by COVID and are desperate for financial assistance to stay in operation
- \$24 million to fund housing and employment for individuals struggling with behavioral health issues
- \$23 million for expanded opioid response programs and supports
- \$35 million to fund crisis, outreach, and diversion programs

22ND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

LONG-TERM CARE AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES BUDGET FUNDING

This year's supplemental budget includes increasing provider rates to pay a fair wage to long-term care workers, funding to assisted living centers, salary increases for in-home care providers, and more.

Washington families can rest assured that loved ones in long-term care have the support they need with our state budget that:

- Continues COVID temporary rate increases for LTC and DD providers - \$425m
- Raises wages by increasing long-term care workforce rates:
 - o Supported living rates - \$155m
 - o Assisted living rates - \$34m
 - o Nursing home rates - \$74m
- Funds Area Agencies on Aging to reduce caseloads ratios for case managers - \$24m
- Provides funding for community options for hard to discharge hospital patients - \$66m
- Funds are provided to allow individuals with developmental disabilities to access both employment and community services - \$14m
- Funds in-home personal needs allowance increases - \$58m



DEMENTIA ACTION COLLABORATIVE BILL – HB 1646

I was proud to introduce legislation to support the more than 100,000 people living with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia here in Washington.

The Dementia Action Collaborative (DAC) evaluates the current and future impact of Alzheimer's disease and other dementias on Washingtonians. The DAC is also in charge of implementing, reviewing, and revising the Washington State Alzheimer's Plan.

The work of the collaborative is imperative to our state and HB 1646 strengthens and reforms the collaborative, ensuring this work continues.

INSULIN AFFORDABILITY – SB 5546

In 2020, the Legislature directed health plans to limit the cost of insulin to \$100 per month. That was set to expire next year. Under this new law, insulin will now be capped at \$35 per month through 2023 for all health plans.

LEOFF 2 BENEFIT ENHANCEMENT - HB 1701/SB 5791

This session I co-sponsored HB 1701 which provides options for an increase in retirement benefits for LEOFF 2 members.

The available options depend on where a member is in their service career.

For members entering active service after Feb. 1, 2021, there is an increase in the benefit multiplier (one factor of calculating monthly pension payments) between their 15th and 25th year of service.

LEOFF 2 members that retired prior to Feb. 1, 2021, will receive the same benefit being provided to LEOFF 1 members under SB 5791.

SB 5791 also provides LEOFF 1 members with a one-time lump sum payment equal to \$100 per month of service for retirees and a minimum of \$20,000 for catastrophic and duty disability retirees.

PERS/TRS 1 PLANS COLA - HB 1721/SB 5676

Unlike PERS/TRS 2 and 3 plan members, PERS/TRS 1 members do not automatically receive cost of living adjustments during their retirement.

This means their pension benefits struggle to keep up with inflation over time.

This bill provides a 3% cost of living adjustment for PERS/TRS 1 retirees. The COLA is capped at \$110/month.

THE WORK AHEAD

While I am proud of the work we accomplished together this session, I am excited to make more progress next session creating an equitable healthcare system, a fair and sustainable tax code, and solving our housing crisis.

I am committed to ensuring that no one is left out or left behind and that all Washingtonians have an opportunity to thrive.

SUPPORTING OUR WASHINGTON WORKERS

I was proud to vote for a budget that put people first and recognized the tireless work of our frontline caregivers, public employees and retirees.

Washington workers deserve fair pay, especially in these trying times with the reality of inflation and growing cost of living.

Our retirees have provided critical services to the citizens of our state—it is time for us to provide when they need it the most.

A huge win this year is the wage increase for our workers across the state. The allocation of funds in the budget include:

- Funding state employee salary and wages - \$284m
- Providing funding for higher education employee salary and wages - \$174m
- Funding PERS and TRS 1 benefit increases - \$21m
- Providing funding for state employee recruitment and retention - \$84m

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Please do not hesitate to contact my office to share your questions, comments, or ideas!

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I look forward to hearing from you!