

44TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 2024 UPDATE FROM REP. APRIL BERG



Bolstering our Workforce

This year, the Legislature not only passed policies to provide protections for Washington's workers, such as expanding paid sick leave, adjusting the Equal Pay and Opportunities Act to expand protections and consider intersectional identities, and instituting a Dancers Bill of Rights to improve workplace standards for adult entertainers, but also made investments that will bolster job creation. This year's \$1.3 billion supplemental capital budget funds investments in school construction, behavioral health facilities, and affordable housing construction, working with local partners to build these projects and create jobs in every corner of the state. In addition, all three supplemental budgets include millions in Climate Commitment Act funding that will pay for clean energy and climate programs and projects throughout the state, many of which could create new jobs in this sector.

Affordable Housing

The housing affordability and stability crisis is affecting every corner of Washington. Residents face housing shortages, skyrocketing rents, and unstable living conditions. While there is no single solution to these problems, we've worked to increase the housing supply, stabilize rent and housing costs, and support those that are still unable to afford housing.

This session, we passed bills to legalize co-living (**HB 1998**), remove hurdles and create an incentive to convert existing commercial structures to residential housing (**SB 6175**), speed up construction of affordable workforce housing (**HB 1892**), and task the state building code council with recommending changes to make it easier to build triplexes, quads, and other multiplex housing options (**HB 2071**). In addition, we invested an additional \$230 million in the supplemental operating budget to support local homelessness services and housing programs, as well as more than \$127 million in additional funding for the Housing Trust Fund through the supplemental capital construction budget.

These policies and investments continue to build up our response to the housing and homelessness crisis, but we know these efforts must be sustained and expanded. Unfortunately, two critical pieces of housing legislation were not successful this session: The Affordable Homes Act (**HB 2276**) and Rent Stabilization (**HB 2114**). The Affordable Homes Act, which I sponsored, would ensure Washington has predictable, sustainable funding to increase the supply of truly affordable housing by decreasing the real estate excise tax rate imposed on most properties and adding a Real Estate Transfer Tax (RETT) on high value properties, which also reduces the share of taxes paid by lower- and middle-income families. Rent Stabilization, which I cosponsored, would prevent landlords from raising rents more than 7% each year and require a 180-day notice for increases over 3%, among other renter protections. While disappointed that these policies did not pass this session, I am undaunted and will continue to keep fighting to ensure the people of Washington have safe and affordable housing options at all income levels.



College Athlete Protection (House Bill 2352)

I introduced the College Athlete Protection Act to usher in a new era characterized by fairness, financial equity, and enhanced healthcare coverage for college athletes. Under this bill, NCAA Division I athletic programs would have to establish a degree completion fund, ensuring players receive a just share of their teams' annual revenue. The bill would also require schools to shoulder the responsibility of covering sports-related injuries and providing medical insurance for student-athletes. Essentially, the bill seeks to prioritize the well-being of those whose contributions significantly impact the success and revenue generation of collegiate sports programs.

While my bill was not successful this session, I am excited to report that the NCAA has adopted new policies, effective in August of this year, that are comparable to my bill! This means that college athletes will enjoy more protections that will guarantee scholarships, ensure mental health and health service costs are covered, provide career counseling and life skills development, and more.

44TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 2024 UPDATE FROM SENATOR JOHN LOVICK

The 2024 Legislative Session Was About Public Safety

For my entire career as a state patrol officer, sheriff, Snohomish County executive, state representative, and now as your state senator, my number one priority has been keeping our communities safe. This past session, we took major steps forward toward a safer Washington and a new culture of public safety.

Our Regional Training Academies Are Changing the Culture of Policing

The Criminal Justice Training Commission (CJTC) Regional Training Academies (RTAs) we funded in 2023 began their first classes last year. Good policing and a good police culture start with training. Our RTAs are leading the way.

For too long, we missed out on promising police recruits because they were not able to leave their home, children, and family to attend basic training at the main CJTC campus in Burien. Now, RTAs in Pasco and Vancouver are giving recruits the option to train in the communities they live in and love, strengthening the essential bond between officers and the communities they protect.

These academies are already easing our police staffing shortage and changing the culture of policing. We're training more officers than ever before and getting them into the communities that need them.



"The heart of compassionate and effective policing is a personal connection to the neighbors and neighborhoods you're working to keep safe."
— Sen. John Lovick

Building a Police Force That Represents the Community (Senate Bill 6157)

Senate Bill 6157 is a simple but significant piece of legislation brought to me by the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs (WASPC). Under this new law, the nearly 15,000 eligible DACA recipients in Washington state will finally be able to apply for positions with sheriff offices, city police, city fire departments, and for fish and wildlife officer positions.

These Washingtonians grew up in our neighborhoods and deserve the opportunity to serve and protect the people and places they love. DACA recipients represent a new generation of young, diverse talent for Washington state law enforcement, and I know they will change the culture of public service for the better.

Increasing Female Representation and Diversity in Law Enforcement (Senate Bill 5424)

When my friend Sue Rahr, the former sheriff of King County and former executive director of the Washington State CJTC, came to me with the idea of increasing female representation and diversity among police by allowing flexible work schedules, I immediately got to work drafting a bill.

When **Senate Bill 5424** becomes law, agencies will have the option of allowing fully trained officers to work less than 40 hours a week. These flexible work schedules will help agencies staff busy weekends, recruit the next generation of peace officers, and help retain senior officers, new parents, and those pursuing higher education.

Our goal is to increase female representation in law enforcement to 30% by 2030. A longstanding barrier has been the incompatibility of police work schedules with the demands of raising young children. In survey after survey, women have cited the lack of flexible work schedules as an obstacle to entering and remaining in the profession.

We will never again force good officers to retire because of inflexible work schedules. The introduction of these new flexible work schedules is a transformational moment for policing in our state. I am proud to have played a part, alongside so many others, in getting this bill signed and enacted into law.



Now Let's Keep Moving Forward

I always tell people, "Culture Eats Strategy for Breakfast." **The heart of compassionate and effective policing is a personal connection to the neighbors and neighborhoods you're working to keep safe.**

There is nothing more important than being safe and feeling safe in our communities.

44TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 2024 UPDATE FROM REP. BRANDY DONAGHY

This session, I sponsored several bills, which touched on a broad range of areas including education, traffic safety, and resiliency legislation. I've been working on resiliency legislation for several years now with the ultimate focus of laying the foundation for creating a more robust emergency preparedness system in our state.



Establishing Rules for Paraeducator Education (House Bill 1277)

As a parent, I understand just how vital paraeducators are to our educational community, and how important it is that they have timely access to the training they need. **HB 1277** updates the guidance the Paraeducator Board provides and implements a consistent set of resources and training for paraeducators, while allowing some flexibility for smaller districts. Paraeducators require access to the training they need to do their jobs effectively and help our kids develop the skills to thrive. On a personal note, my son Alex is autistic, so I'm proud that he and my husband joined me when the governor signed this bill into law earlier this spring.

Thoughts on the 2024 Legislative Session

This session, we saw the passage of some great legislation, including the state's supplemental transportation budget, a \$14.6 billion plan to prioritize the state's public safety, preservation and maintenance of existing infrastructure, and investments in the ferry system.

Right here in our neck of the woods, projects that are funded with this budget include:

- SR 522/Paradise Lk Rd Interchange & Widening
- U.S. Highway 2 Safety Enhancements
- SR 9/176th Street SE to SR 96: Widening
- SR 9/South Lake Stevens Road Roundabout
- SR 9/Marsh Road to 2nd Street – Widening with Bridge Construction
- SR 9/SR 204 Interchange

Additionally, I secured \$361,000 in funding in the state's supplemental operating budget for the state's Military Department so that they can complete a study regarding statewide building code and construction standards and provide recommendations for functional recovery of buildings and critical infrastructure directly following an earthquake.

To learn more about state budgets, visit fiscal.wa.gov.

Traffic Safety Cameras (House Bill 2384)

I introduced this bill to improve traffic safety. Did you know that 800 people lost their lives on Washington roads in 2023? It's the highest rate on record since 1990. Sadly, speeding and substance use are the leading factors in traffic deaths. **HB 2384** concerns the use of traffic cameras to deter drivers from speeding, the second most common risk factor in fatal crashes in our state.

This piece of legislation clarifies how cities and counties can opt to establish speed camera programs through local ordinances, while maintaining privacy protections and allowing city and county governments to reinvest revenues from traffic camera fines into traffic safety improvements.

Studies show that fixed camera sites can reduce injury by up to 25 percent and fatalities by up to 32 percent. People who are aware of speed cameras are also less likely to drive recklessly.

We all want our loved ones to make it home safely at the end of the day and this piece of legislation is one step towards making that a reality for everyone right here at home.



The Work Ahead

Over the next several months, I'll be continuing to advance work on our state's resiliency plan. Washington has the second-highest earthquake risk, so I have my work cut out for me to ensure we have the safety protections in place that we need.

Additionally, I plan on reintroducing legislation to incentivize building additional affordable housing and to further advance traffic safety.