44th Legislative District Review

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM REP. BRANDY DONAGHY *continued*

appointments, and local services. We also continued support for transit and multimodal transportation options that give families more flexibility and help reduce congestion on crowded roadways.

This budget also reflects the reality that transportation is about more than pavement. It is about safety, accessibility, and making sure our infrastructure keeps up with growth. Whether it is improving local connections, supporting freight movement, or investing in a more dependable ferry and transit system, these decisions have a direct impact on everyday life here at home.

We know there is more work to do, especially as costs rise and our infrastructure ages. I will continue advocating for transportation investments that are practical, community-centered, and focused on the needs of the people who use these systems every day.

Prioritizing Public & Community Safety

Keeping our communities safe, healthy, and prepared remains one of my top priorities.

This year, I was proud to help advance legislation to make albuterol more accessible in schools, helping ensure students experiencing asthma emergencies can get care quickly when every second matters. For families, this is more than a policy change, it is peace of mind. Students should be safe at school, and staff should have the tools they need to respond in an emergency.

We also made important investments this session to support broader community safety, including funding for behavioral health, crisis response, and services that help people get support before emergencies escalate. Public safety is strongest when communities have access to prevention, early intervention, and the resources needed to keep people stable and connected.

This work also includes supporting safer public spaces, stronger emergency preparedness, and investments that help local communities respond to challenges more effectively. From school safety to neighborhood resilience, these are the kinds of investments that help people feel secure in their homes, schools, and communities.

Community safety is not just about responding to crises. It is also about building systems that are proactive, compassionate, and effective. I will continue working to support policies and investments that protect families, strengthen neighborhoods, and help our communities thrive.

STATE SENATOR
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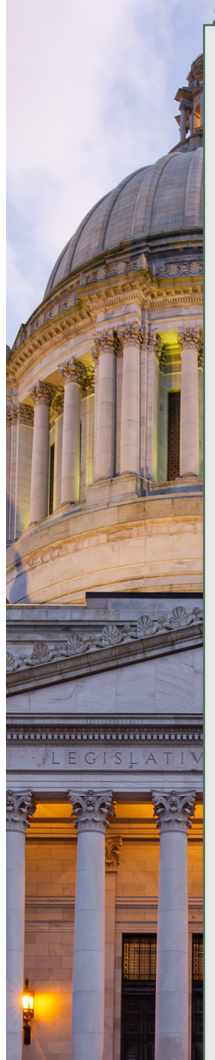

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Committees:
- Transportation (Vice Chair)
- Business, Trade & Economic Development
- Law & Justice
- Rules

I invite you all to reach out to my office with any questions or comments. Below you will find ways to reach me and stay up to date on my work. I can't wait to hear from you.

You can reach me directly at: John.Lovick@leg.wa.gov

Sign-up for my newsletter:
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- Finance (Chair)
- Appropriations

It's vital to our work in Olympia to hear from you, so please reach out with any comments, questions, or suggestions. You'll find ways to connect with me and stay up to date on my legislative work below. I hope to hear from you soon!

You can reach me directly at: April.Berg@leg.wa.gov

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- Consumer Protection & Business
- Education
- Technology, Economic Development & Veterans

If you have any questions, want to share comments, or just want to say hello then please do not hesitate to contact my office. Below you will find ways to stay connected. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM SENATOR JOHN LOVICK

This year, we passed legislation to make the neighborhoods in our state safer.

Supporting our Education System

The best investment we can make in our future is in our classrooms.

- $109 million to build more schools.

- -$240 million more for special education and important student services like Ninth Grade Success, Homeless Student Support, Foster Youth Educational Outcomes, and Dual Language grant.
- Establish the Pre-K Promise Account to fund 10,000 more early learning slots in the next 10 years (Senate Bill 5874).
- Free school lunches and breakfasts for all public-school students starting in 2029.

- Support for unhoused student success (House Bill 2594).
- Provide behavioral health support for students (House Bill 1634).

School Safety – SB 5272

Extracurricular sports and activities give students the opportunity to learn leadership, teamwork, and the value of hard work.

Over half of our referees have felt unsafe on the job. Competition is healthy, but conflict and violence are unacceptable. SB 5272 makes our student events safer, strengthening consequences for anyone interfering by using intimidation or violence. We can reverse the trend of poor sportsmanship and a lack of respect, making our sporting events welcoming to everyone.

Integrity, Dignity, and Accountability for Law Enforcement Leaders – SB 5974

As a state trooper and Snohomish County sheriff I learned the most important values are integrity, dignity, and accountability. We must always look through the lens of leadership because accountability and professionalism start at the top.

It has taken far too long to update the laws guiding our police chiefs, marshals, and sheriffs. SB 5974 holds law enforcement leaders to the highest standards of preparedness and ensures they abide by the standards of conduct followed by every other officer.

According to an Emerson College poll, 75% of Washingtonians support this policy. It's about public safety and accountability. Updating eligibility requirements, requiring leaders to be certified, ending the practice of deputizing untrained civilians to enforce the law, and requiring all leaders to uphold state law and the constitution will ensure that everyone we empower to detain, arrest, or use force is well-trained, highly prepared and professional.

Veterans Benefits – SB 5420

Veterans risked their lives to protect us, promising to prioritize our safety, well-being, and freedom above their own. We must honor our end of the promise, helping veterans and their families be happy and successful. This legislation speeds up the process of giving veterans, uniformed service members, and military spouses access to critical benefits.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM REP. APRIL BERG

Balancing our Outdated Tax Code

Washington continues to have the second most inequitable – or upside-down – tax code in the nation. This is in part because it over-relies on funding from regressive taxes like the sales tax, which put the biggest squeeze on people with low and middle incomes. Meanwhile, the ultra-wealthy get a special deal. For example, households making over $1 million per year pay around 4% of their income in state and local taxes in Washington - compared to around 11% for median-income households and 14% for the lowest-income households.

That's why we passed the Millionaires Tax (SB 6346) this session, a 9.9% tax on households earning over $1 million per year, with the first $1 million exempt. It goes into effect in 2028 for collections to begin in 2029 and will affect less than 0.5% taxpayers in Washington – or around 20,000 taxpayers – while generating around $3.5 billion per year in revenue. Those revenues will be used to fund essential services like schools, health care, and child care, as well as to provide tax reductions for the working families who have been shouldering a disproportionate share of the tax burden in our state under our current regressive system, and small businesses.

Highlights of tax reductions and affordability measures in the Millionaires' Tax include:

- **Expansion of the Working Families Tax Credit**, putting more money back in the pockets of 460,000 additional Washingtonians;
- **Doubling the Small Business Tax Credit** so businesses grossing under $300,000 will not owe B&O (that's 59% of WA businesses!) and those grossing under $600,000 will receive a reduction;
- **Removing the sales tax on diapers, over the counter medications, and hygiene products**, which combined with the existing exemption on food means most things in Washingtonians' grocery carts will be tax free; and
- **Free school meals** for all students in Washington public schools.

The funding will also be used to support essential services like K-12 education, health care, and higher education, as well as help address the need for local public defense funding and deeper investment in the Fair Start for Kids account, which funds early learning and child care. The Millionaires Tax is going to help balance our regressive tax code by asking the wealthiest to pay their fair share while ensuring vital services for communities and tax relief for Washington's working families and small businesses.

Local government flexibility (HB 2442)

Local governments are on the front lines of meeting community needs, but too often they are constrained by outdated rules about how revenue can be used. I sponsored this policy to give cities and counties practical tools and flexibility to invest in what their communities need most, from affordable housing and childcare to public health and mental health services. This measure is really about empowering communities. Whether it's stabilizing affordable housing, supporting public health clinics, or investing in services that help children and families thrive, local leaders will now have more ability to respond to the real challenges their residents face.

Addressing the penny (HB 2334)

Following the federal government's decision to stop minting pennies, I introduced this policy to establish clear rules for cash transactions. It creates a simple, standardized method for rounding cash transactions to the nearest nickel, ensuring businesses and consumers across Washington have clear guidance as the one-cent coin disappears from circulation. The new law establishes asymmetrical rounding for cash payments to the nearest five cents: Totals ending in 1 or 2 cents round down to 0; ending in 3, 4, 6, or 7 cents round to 5; ending in 8 or 9 cents round up to 10. The rounding rules apply only to cash payments, and state agencies are directed to develop clear guidance for transactions that combine cash with other payment methods, ensuring consistent practices across our Washington state businesses.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM REP. BRANDY DONAGHY

Transportation Investments for Our Communities

As our region continues to grow, investing in transportation is essential to keeping people connected, supporting local businesses, and making daily life more manageable for working families.

This year, the Legislature passed a supplemental transportation budget that makes important investments in preserving and maintaining the roads, bridges, ferries, and transit systems Washingtonians rely on every day. That includes a stronger focus on maintenance and reliability, because keeping our existing system safe and functional must come first.

For communities like ours, these investments help improve the corridors people depend on to get to work, school, medical

Rep. Donaghy - continued on back page