

2015 Update from your 3rd Legislative District Team



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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We are pleased to share this legislative update with you. Highlights from the 2015 legislative session include:

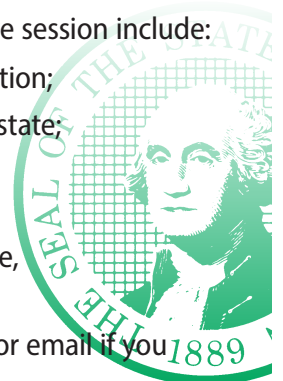
- A historic investment in K-12 education funding, early learning, and K-3 class-size reduction;
- A first-ever tuition cut for all public university, college, and tech school students in the state;
- Funding for the completion of the North Spokane Corridor to I-90 and vital bike, pedestrian and transit projects in Spokane; and
- Authorization and funding for a Washington State University Medical School in Spokane, and increased funding for UW's medical education in Spokane.

We hope you find this update useful and informative. Please don't hesitate to call, write, or email if you need more information or have questions. It is an honor to serve you.

Senator Andy Billig

Representative Timm Ormsby

Representative Marcus Riccelli



A Step Forward in Fully Funding Education

INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

Children in Spokane and across Washington have the best chance for a successful future when they have access to high-quality early learning opportunities.

This session, the Legislature passed the Early Start Act and made historic investments in early learning. This will expand access to early learning, improve the efficiency of the state's early learning programs, and improve their quality, benefitting our entire community.

The Legislature also increased our investment in K-12 education by \$1.3 billion, helping to address the state's constitutional obligation to fully fund basic education. This investment will fund:

- Class size reduction in grades K-3;
- All-day kindergarten;
- Classroom supplies and materials;
- School operating costs; and
- A long overdue cost-of-living adjustments for our teachers.

We still have work to do in education, particularly as we strive to address the disparity in educational success between children from low-income families and their fellow students from middle- and high-income families.



Closing this opportunity gap is crucial, and many of the investments made this year will help achieve our goal of providing access to a world-class education for all children regardless of income or geographic location.



Sen. Andy Billig:

"We made historic advances in early learning and K-12 education funding this year but our work is not yet done. As a state, we must remain focused on providing world class educational opportunities for every student."

HONORING A LOCAL HERO

This session, the Senate honored Spokane resident Carla Peperzak for her bravery and heroism during World War II. As a member of the Dutch Resistance, Carla helped protect more than 40 Jews from the Nazis. Carla, now 91 years old, continues to serve her community, speaking frequently to school groups about her experiences.



Protecting Families in Our Community

MENDING THE SAFETY NET

Many of us here in Spokane know all too well that funding for public services took hits after the Great Recession— a time when more citizens than ever needed those services. As the economy began to rebound, we were able to reverse the trend, and this session we continued mending that net, sewing up holes and making the whole thing stronger.

- \$245,000 for statewide Parents for Parents efforts to reunite separated families;
- \$94,000 to provide advocacy for Spokane children with histories of abuse or neglect;
- A grant to The Gathering House, a unique Spokane treasure offering job training in food service;
- \$31 million restored to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program;
- More than \$40 million added to Children’s Services to help foster kids and abused children;
- Millions of new dollars for the Food Assistance Program; and
- More than \$200 million for persons with developmental disabilities and those in long-term care.



PRIORITIZING MENTAL HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Our community was shocked when Sheena Henderson was murdered at Deaconess Hospital by her estranged husband, Chris, who then turned the gun on himself. Just hours earlier, Chris had legally retrieved his weapon from police custody. It was confiscated when Chris appeared to be suicidal, but was returned as he no longer posed a threat in the eyes of the law. No one close to Chris knew that he was armed again.

This Spokane tragedy prompted each of us to introduce legislation to prevent it from happening again. We were able to see Sheena’s Law signed by Gov. Inslee in April. Now, before a firearm can be returned in a situation like this, family members of the person will receive 72 hours’ notice.

There were a number of other mental-health bills this session to improve services to patients.

- Nearly \$70 million for dedicated space and beds
- \$11 million for assisted outpatient treatment
- \$4.6 million for additional competency evaluation staff
- \$4.7 for Joel’s law – designed to help families get help for their loved ones in crisis



Rep. Timm Ormsby:

“The safety net is the state’s way of saying to seniors, to children, to the unemployed and the injured and the mentally ill, ‘We’ve got your back.’ It’s what a government worth its salt does.”

Building a Healthy Spokane

HEALTHY FAMILIES, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES FOR SPOKANE

Thanks to the Affordable Care Act and the state Apple Health program, Spokane County has seen the uninsured rate drop from 13 percent to about 3 percent in just two years. That's real progress in getting our neighbors, friends, and family the health care they deserve.

Our region faces challenges that go beyond just having health insurance, like access to primary care providers and specialists, and guaranteeing everyone has the same affordable and quality access to care, regardless of income status.

We were able to address a lot of gaps in coverage for children, including testing for developmental disabilities and autism for Medicaid customers. We also passed a simple but important bill to test newborn children for critical congenital heart defects.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND A NEW MEDICAL SCHOOL

For the first time in state history, college students across Washington will see a tuition decrease. Democrats fought hard to make sure ALL students in public universities and community and technical colleges got a tuition cut.

We are proud that this year we advanced health care and higher education by creating the WSU medical school, increasing funding for UW's medical education in Spokane, and expanding the number of residency slots allowed, so more students can stay in state to complete their education and practice in our rural and underserved communities.



Rep. Marcus Riccelli:

"Keeping our families healthy is why I was so pleased to sponsor the bill, working with other legislators and our community, to create a WSU medical school. Quality, accessible health care with a major boost to our local economy in biomedical research will lead to a stronger, healthier Spokane."



Moving Spokane Forward

A BILLION DOLLARS FOR SPOKANE-AREA INVESTMENTS

This year the Legislature passed a comprehensive transportation package that ensured the North Spokane Corridor from Francis Avenue to I-90 will be completed. Over the next decade the project will invest nearly \$900 million, creating jobs and boosting our economy while making long-term improvements to our region. The package was balanced on both sides of the state with multi-modal projects, including:

- \$15 million dollars into the Central City Line high-performance transit system.
- \$8.8 million for the University District Gateway Bridge linking Riverpoint and East Sprague.

Our communities are also receiving funding for the following important facilities in our community:

- \$8.15 million for the NEWTECH Skill Center;
- \$300,000 for the Women & Children's Free Restaurant;
- \$300,000 for the Women's Club;
- \$300,000 for the Corbin Senior Center;
- \$85,000 for the MLK Jr. Family Outreach Center; and
- \$18,000 for the Spokane Children's Theater.



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VISIT OUR MOBILE OFFICE!

Stop in and share your
comments or questions
with your state legislators.

Thursday, October 8
Saranac Commons
19 W. Main, Spokane
4 – 5:30 p.m.

