

2016 Report to the 36th Legislative District

Building a better Washington



The state's new capital budget will build classrooms, college housing and other vital infrastructure across our state.

Building schools and colleges—The new budget includes \$34.5 million for K-3 class size reduction grants, \$34.7 million for the School Construction Assistance Program and \$70 million in student housing and other projects at state community and technical colleges.

Homeless kids and affordable housing—\$2.5 million toward the Homeless Youth Grant Program to help the estimated 35,000 homeless students in our public schools; \$2.25 million for Supportive Housing and Emergency Shelters; and \$8 million in new funding for the Housing Trust Fund.

Mental health—Mental health issues can happen to any family. Treatment is effective, and our state simply wasn't doing a good job of getting people the help they needed. In the capital budget, we invest \$8.5 million for the Crisis Triage Center Grant Program; \$7.5 million for Mental Health Supportive Housing; \$7.9 million for critical repairs and upgrades at state mental health facilities and hospitals; and \$5 million for the Community Behavioral Health Grant Program.

Here in the 36th District, it will also fund the Holocaust Center, with \$200,000 in the capital budget for the center.

Senator Reuven Carlyle Representative Gael Tarleton Representative Noel Frame

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Report to the 36th Legislative District

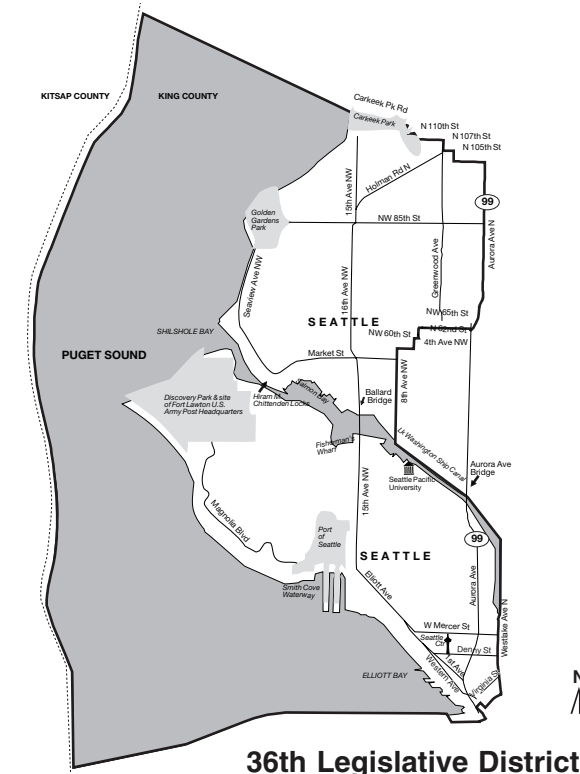
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36th Legislative District



2016 WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE REPORT TO THE 36th Legislative District

Spring 2016



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Dear neighbors,

So what happened this year in Olympia, and how will it affect our families in the 36th District?

This newsletter is meant to give you some answers. Inside, you'll find details about the major debates and accomplishments for 2016—and what's left to be done next session.

Lawmakers passed three budgets:

- An operating budget to fund schools, colleges, mental-health care and other core functions;
- A supplemental capital budget that will build schools, parks and mental health facilities; and
- A supplemental transportation budget to help people get to where they need to go.

As your representatives to the House and Senate, we three stand united in the belief that business as usual must end. We don't want, and can't afford, D.C.-style political gridlock here in Washington state. Doing nothing is not an option. We must make bold progress to give our kids a better life.

Accomplishing that means fully funding our public schools. That will require reforming our state's obsolete and unfair tax structure. We stand united behind those two goals, and you can learn more about education and tax reform inside.

Mental health, affordable housing and the homeless crisis are three other big issues facing our neighborhoods and Washington state as a whole. Inside are details about new funding to help tackle those problems.

This newsletter isn't big enough to talk about every piece of legislation and issue that came before us. If you're interested in something specific—or have an idea or comment—please contact our offices.

We appreciate the chance to serve the citizens of the 36th and hope to hear from you soon. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Reuven Carlyle *Noel Frame*
Gael Tarleton

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Senator Reuven Carlyle



The 2016 Legislative Session was my first year as your new state senator following seven years in the House of Representatives. Despite divided government, I continue to believe passionately that we have it within us to make meaningful progress on the pressing public policy challenges facing our community. In Olympia we updated our budget and had many meaningful debates. Here is a high level update on some of our progress. Please continue to reach out on twitter, facebook, my blog or in person to connect about the issues and ideas that inspire you!



Governor Inslee signing my bill to improve educational outcomes for foster youth.

K-12 Education

We are at a critical juncture to fully fund K-12 education in our state and the Legislature has fallen far short. Not only did we punt this year on McCleary, we've unnecessarily placed our state's school districts in danger of losing nearly half a billion dollars by failing to simply allow them to protect their own local levy money.

While many are disappointed the Legislature has not laid the proper financial and policy groundwork for a bold approach to McCleary, we also remain committed to meeting the balloon payment that is required.

A bright spot of good news: After two years of hard work, HB 1999 was signed into law! Our efforts to align, coordinate and consolidate programs to improve education outcomes of foster youth were successful. I'll continue to push until Washington is first in the nation in foster youth educational success!

Transportation

In 2015, Rep. Gael Tarleton and I fought extremely hard to include an additional \$10 million in the state budget to strengthen Rapid Ride D and better Metro access throughout our district. This supplements the \$45 million per year provided by city taxpayers since Fall 2014. Thanks to these investments, Seattle has seen a 10% rise in King County Metro services with 110,000 service hours to 53 routes in June 2015 and 113,000 more hours last September. Conversely, Eastern King County has seen an 8% reduction in part because of the county funding challenges. Sound Transit is considering a plan to submit to voters that would have substantial impact on our district.

Community Projects

The Legislature has a mandate to cap K-3 class size at 17 students by 2018. Many of our neighborhood schools in Queen Anne, Magnolia, Greenwood and Ballard are bursting at the seams. We allocated \$40 million for additional K-3 classrooms statewide. This builds on our successful effort last year to help fund a re-opening of the Magnolia School!

Homelessness

Seattle and King County ranked #3 in the number of homeless people last year, only behind New York and Los Angeles. We need a responsible, comprehensive strategy as we reach a point of crisis. This session we added to last year's \$54 million homelessness services investment with an additional \$11 million, especially focusing on homeless youth:

- \$1 million for HOPE beds to provide adolescents with emergency shelter
- \$420,000 for shelter beds for young adults aged 18-24
- \$787,000 for street youth-specific programs
- \$2 million to assist homeless students and their families with stable housing

We continue to struggle to build a coordinated effort between city, county, and state organizations to tackle the broader mental health, addiction, and housing affordability issues that relate to homelessness.

Mental Health

Our mental health care system is essential to ensure treatment and quality of life for our community's most vulnerable. Yet Washington ranks 47th nationally in psychiatric beds per capita but 2nd in serious mental illness prevalence. That math adds up to an incredibly overburdened system.

Last year we made historic investments in mental health but returned to find our work partially hindered by unsafe conditions at our state mental health hospitals. We were successful in providing a robust \$41 million package to improve the state's hospitals and community mental health services.

Higher Ed

In 2016 we reduced tuition for the first time in history. Now, we need to continue to invest so students have more and better access to classes and can more efficiently earn a degree at our community colleges and universities. Tens of thousands of students are eligible for the state need grant but do not receive assistance due to lack of state funding. The State Need Grant shortfall continues to be a challenge and the state must step up in the 2017 budget to meet this critical need. I continue to fight to support the University of Washington and all of our colleges and universities.

Representative Gael Tarleton



My fourth regular session and seventh special session in the State legislature just ended. It's now clear: we must end business as usual. It is time to reexamine how we think about and structure our biennial and supplemental budgets.

Due to fundamental differences between Democratic and Republican values, our supplemental budget fails to sufficiently address several of the most critical issues like the teacher shortage crisis, homelessness, and improving the foster care system.

The House budget called on us legislators to think differently about what constitutes an "emergency" and warrants use of our budget stabilization account, also known as the Rainy Day fund. If being in contempt of court for not meeting our paramount duty to fully fund our K-12 public schools or receiving court orders to reform our mental health system do not constitute emergencies, then I do not know what does.

Constituents and advocacy groups understand the real emergencies -- ensuring all families have a safe and secure place to sleep at night, treating and caring for people with mental illness, and reducing classroom sizes. These are the real emergencies we face at the state level and in our communities.

Budget Victories

- \$15 million for youth homeless services
- \$55 million to improve mental health care
- \$47 million for K-12 schools
- \$26 million for higher education

Tinkering with the budget on the margins, choosing to cut here so we can fund another account, is just business as usual. Washington state will not be able to address real emergencies if the Legislature doesn't change the way we're doing budgets. The state will not fully fund K-12 education in the 2017-18 budget without a new budget strategy.

Under Democratic leadership, a new precedent was proposed this session: that statewide emergencies must also include long-term problems in need of urgent action.

However, we learned that the Republican-controlled Senate is not ready for this kind of

change. Because of this, the state supplemental budget falls short.

Despite the resistance-to-change agents in the Senate, our operating, transportation and capital supplemental budgets still advance core democratic priorities:

- \$15 million in new homeless funding, with a focus on addressing youth homelessness, and \$2.5 million for homeless youth facilities (one of which will be in Seattle.)
- \$6 million for the construction of mental health housing, and \$7.9 million for institution-based mental health facilities across the state.
- \$7 million to address the serious teacher shortage, and \$40 million for smaller classrooms.
- \$18 million to backfill the State Need Grant, increasing access to higher education for students across the state; and nearly \$8 million for tuition backfill that we promised our higher education institutions following tuition cuts in 2015.

We need to keep focused on building an economy that works for everyone. That means fostering clean energy solutions and clean water to protect our people and natural habitat. This session we adopted a tax incentives program for buyers of electric vehicles costing \$35,000 or less.

There is funding to promote the use of alternative fuels for commercial vehicles, and substantial investments in stormwater infrastructure and more than \$1 million for fish barrier removal. Unfortunately, despite three years of bipartisan work in the House and Senate, our efforts to extend the solar incentives program to 2023 failed in the eleventh hour. The Senate refused to bring it to the floor for a vote. We'll be back again in 2017.



Discussing debate strategy with the Speaker in my new leadership role as Majority Floor Leader.

House Democrats: Budget Priorities

- Addressing the teacher shortage crisis
- Continuing to fix the mental health system
- Helping the homeless
- Improving the lives of foster kids

More work to do

After final negotiations with Senate Republicans were complete, the state budget came up short:

- Funding for assistance to needy families (TANF) was not restored to pre-recession levels.
- Teachers will not receive a salary increase.
- There is no levy cliff funding for school districts.
- The \$22 million in contempt of court penalties aren't being paid.
- Low-income students will continue to make co-payments for school lunches.

Thank you for being champions for all the people who have no one else to be their champion. It is a privilege to serve you in Olympia and to work with you as we build a better future together.

Representative Noel Frame



Tax-break accountability for Boeing— and tax fairness for all

On the last day of session, Boeing announced it was cutting up to 8,000 more jobs. This came after lawmakers gave the corporation a record-setting tax break in 2013 with the promise of maintaining and growing more jobs in Washington state.

As taxpayers and citizens, we're getting a raw deal. Instead of more jobs, we gave more than \$8 billion in tax breaks to get at least 8,000 in layoffs. That's why as a member of the House Finance Committee, I fought to balance the Boeing deal by adding a job number requirement, or head count. Adding this element would also put us in line with other states competing for Boeing's business.

Increasing access to the American Dream Education for all

On my first day as state representative, I visited a fourth grade classroom at Lawton Elementary. This class is taught by Magnolia resident Lyon Terry, who was honored as the 2015 Washington State Teacher of the Year.

Mr. Terry has 28 children in his classroom, and they are wonderful. But they are also 443 students crammed into a school designed for far less. Mr. Terry told me a student loved a book so much she finished it in two days and ran to the library to pick up another. But when she got there, the doors were locked, and the lights were off. Because Lawton Elementary can't afford a full-time librarian.

This story harkens back to my own time as a public school student nearly 20 years ago, when I was a student at Battle Ground High School. The state wasn't fully funding our school, so we depended on local levies to make up the gap. But we lost three levies in four years and one of the devastating cuts was laying off our school librarian.

In the House, I proudly fought for legislation to help address the teacher shortage, over-crowded classrooms and other issues facing our public schools. I'm sad to report the House passed key reforms to expand opportunity for all, only to have them die when Senate Republicans refused to allow a vote on the Senate floor.

Making college more affordable

I supported and co-sponsored a number of reforms to make college more affordable. The high cost of college hurts not just families, but our state's prosperity and future. "Free to Finish" would reach out to students who dropped out just short of graduating and offer them free tuition to finish their degree.

We need to look not just at cutting tuition, but at free tuition. There's a reason why the wealthiest countries in the world offer free tuition—it's an investment in prosperity and helps all students compete for the best jobs in the world.

Housing Preservation Tax Credit

A good education and good job aren't much use if you can't find an affordable home for your family. I prime sponsored this legislation as a smart, effective way to create incentives to preserve existing affordable housing instead of tearing down buildings to build more expensive housing stock. While the legislation didn't pass this year, it's worth fighting for, because the housing crunch isn't going away.

Reducing systemic barriers to success

Access for students with disabilities—I'm proud to report that a bill I co-sponsored with Sen. Cyrus Habib passed both chambers and is now state law. This will help remove barriers to transferring colleges for disabled students around our state.

Better access to mental health care—I'm thrilled to report my bill, House Bill 2451, was signed into law by Gov. Jay Inslee and will make a difference for families in the 36th District and throughout our state. Last year, our state recognized some folks experiencing a mental health crisis are better served by outpatient treatment rather than involuntary commitment, which lets them to be closer to home, surrounded by their families and support network. One size doesn't fit all, so we need to make sure patients get the care they need in the right setting.

Foster care kids—Our foster care system is in crisis, with not enough families available for the kids who need placement. That's why I fought for the Mockingbird Family Model evaluation for innovative foster care delivery. I'm happy to say this was funded in the final budget. We need creative solutions like this to give every foster child a good home and a fair chance.

Closing the opportunity gap—Every child in Washington state is guaranteed the right to an equitable education under our state constitution. Closing the opportunity gap for children of color is the single most important step we can take to ensure that every student has an opportunity to learn. We passed legislation with the policy needed to close the educational opportunity gap. It was signed into law and we're funding this in this budget so that all students have an opportunity to succeed in school and life.



Taking a few moments during the busy session to lend my support for Youth Advocacy Day.