

3rd Legislative District 2012 Legislative Report



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RESULTS OF THE 2012 SESSION

We're glad to be back home in Spokane after a challenging but successful Legislative session in Olympia. Despite an unprecedented revenue shortfall, we once again balanced the budget and fought for investments in our community that will pay dividends now and for years to come.

A few highlights from the recently passed state budgets:

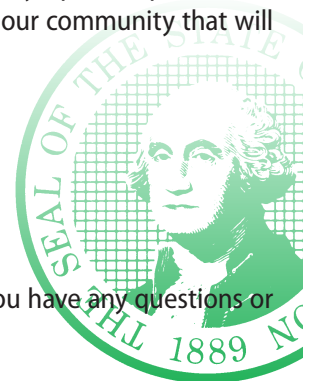
- Maintains all current investments in K-12 education and higher education
- Protects the social safety net for our most vulnerable
- Moves Washington forward with renewed transportation investments
- Creates tens of thousands of jobs and promotes our region's economic recovery

We hope you'll look inside for all the details. Please do not hesitate to contact any one of us if you have any questions or comments. It's an honor to serve as your 3rd District Legislators.

Senator Lisa Brown

Representative Andy Billig

Representative Timm Ormsby



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EDUCATION

Despite a dramatic revenue shortfall, Democrats fought for a budget with no cuts to education. We worked hard to ensure teachers have the tools they need to succeed, and that every child has access to a high-quality education. We also focused on measures to help our littlest learners start school on the right foot.

Highlights for Spokane:

Successful transitions from preschool to kindergarten – WaKIDS is an innovative assessment process for incoming kindergarteners, and has been successfully piloted in some schools. Thanks to a \$60 million federal early learning grant, every child entering kindergarten will be assessed by 2014 – three years earlier than anticipated.

A Collaborative Schools for Innovation and Success (CSIS) project in Spokane Public Schools - Across the country, CSIS projects are proving successful in helping students succeed. Approved public or private Colleges of Education and school districts select low-performing elementary schools and implement models of instruction and educator preparation, helping serve at-risk and low-achieving students.

One million dollars in new student loan funding for aerospace training – The Spokane Aerospace Technology Center, which will open later this year, is one of three centers where the loan will fund students, helping them access short-term customizable training programs. This is in addition to \$500,000 used to start the program earlier this year.



“Some people are surprised to learn that there are over 80 aerospace firms in our area. Customized aerospace training programs support our growing aerospace industry cluster. This funding will help ensure an available and trained workforce which is integral to a vibrant and competitive aerospace industry in our region.”

– Sen. Lisa Brown

“

The research is clear that investments in early learning are the best way to close the achievement gap, increase education results and reduce the drop-out rate. The Legislature’s action this session in creating WaKIDS and the continued growth of all-day kindergarten demonstrates our state’s strong commitment to early learning and the success of all children in Washington.

”

– Rep. Andy Billig

“

No cuts to K-12 education. That’s good, but it’s not good enough. The Supreme Court was clear that we have to do better for basic education, and as our economy improves and revenues grow, education has to be first in line. We have great, hard-working teachers who can do the job, if we give them the best tools and send them kids who are ready to learn. ”

– Rep. Timm Ormsby

SAFETY NET

We pushed for a budget agreement that truly reflects our community's values. This means saving critical safety net programs and protecting the most vulnerable in our community. The great news is, we succeeded!

Sally's House SAVED – Provides emergency foster care to Spokane-area children ages 2-12 who are removed from a dangerous home.

Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program SAVED – Provides non-cash emergency rent and utilities assistance to the temporarily disabled so they don't end up on the streets.

Disability Lifeline SAVED – Provides housing and medical assistance to adults, many of them veterans, with serious disabilities that prevent them from working.

Basic Health Plan SAVED – Provides affordable health insurance to the working poor.

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) SAVED – Helps low-income families afford child care so they can work. Additionally, authorization for the program was INCREASED to help more low-income parents get back to work.



“

I'm pleased that the final state budget protects key health care programs for low-income families like the Basic Health Plan and Apple Health for Kids. Increasing access to health care remains an important priority for our community.

”

– Rep. Andy Billig

“

One of our most important accomplishments this year was revamping the way services are delivered to at-risk kids and their families, one-on-one. The best ideas came from the front-line staff who do the real work. The results: better lives for our kids, better accountability for our taxpayers. ”

– Rep. Timm Ormsby

“

I know on a very personal level how important child care is for working adults and especially in single-parent families. I have long been a strong supporter of the Working Connections Child Care program, which helps families with low incomes pay for child care while they work.

– Sen. Lisa Brown ”



Rep. Ormsby with (L-R) Evelyn Beard, Ian Sullivan, Amanda Dorsey, Carlos Lynch and Kevin Johnson. These future leaders from Spokane's Odyssey Youth Center visited the Capitol to learn about advocacy.

JOBS

One of this session's biggest achievements was passage of the \$1 billion jobs package. It puts 18,000 people to work right away on construction, repair and improvement projects around the state. These projects also pay long-term dividends as they create public infrastructure that will spur our economy for decades to come. And several key bills this year help create jobs by making our state more attractive to industry, from aviation biofuels to motion pictures.

Highlights for Spokane:

\$37 million to complete the WSU medical school building in Spokane - Hundreds of jobs will be created during the construction phase, and when complete, the project is expected to support 13,000 new jobs.

Aviation biofuels mean jobs for the Spokane region - Aviation biofuels research is happening at WSU, and both Spokane International Airport and Fairchild Air Force Base are potential markets for a Washington-refined product.

Renewal of a tax incentive to bring the film industry to the state - and to Spokane - \$72 million in economic activity was generated in Washington between 2007 and 2009 from the film industry. It also creates sustainable jobs throughout the year.

\$3 million to Spokane Community College Extended Learning Center

\$1.8 million for Spokane Professional Technical Skills Center

“Last year, we secured \$35 million for the first phase of the Biomedical and Health Sciences Building at WSU-Spokane. This year, even in tough financial times, we were able to obtain an additional state investment of \$37 million to complete the building. The medical school will improve health care access, improve quality of care, and make a sustainable economic impact in Spokane, which is why I worked so hard to help secure the funding.”

- Sen. Lisa Brown

“The only thing that's going to end the current recession and get our state back on its economic feet again is a dramatic increase in the number of people with jobs. Real jobs. As vice-chair of the House Capital Budget Committee, I was privileged to help craft the jobs package that will put so many men and women back to work. If you don't think government has a hand in creating jobs, take a look at somebody pouring concrete for the medical school here in Spokane. Think about the private-sector architects, engineers, energy-efficiency experts and local contractors these projects benefit. And don't forget all the people who run the businesses and shops where these folks are going to be spending their money. These are jobs, and they're exactly what our state needs.”

- Rep. Timm Ormsby

“Our state is already a leader in sustainable aviation biofuels, and we're home to the only U.S. airline actively using aviation biofuel. An important missing link in this emerging and promising industry is a regional aviation biofuels refinery. My aviation biofuels bill helps establish that infrastructure, which will create jobs and foster prosperity across the state.”

- Rep. Andy Billig



Senator Brown with WSU pharmacy students at the groundbreaking of the Biomedical and Health Sciences Building.



FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE 2012 SESSION

Sen. Lisa Brown says...

From the beginning, our work has been about listening to the concerns of people across Washington. Our goal was to answer those concerns with a budget that fully funded education and protected the social safety net.

Earlier this month we claimed victory not for legislators, but for the students who will stay in school, for working parents who will be able to find childcare, for sick people who will receive care, and for the 18,000 workers who will find a job thanks to our final state budget and capital investment package.

Rep. Timm Ormsby says...

Anyone who reads a paper know this session was marked by tension, drama and divisiveness. It could easily have been a disaster, but it wasn't. I give Lisa enormous credit for that; her leadership over in the Senate was crucial. In the House, it was a pleasure to watch my new seatmate, Andy, and his fellow freshman Democratic representatives. They got busy on day one and they never stopped working.

The final results, for vulnerable people, for working folks and job-seekers, for kids and families, for taxpayers, were far better than I'd dared to hope for back in January. Not every bill that passed was good, and a lot of good bills fell by the wayside. But we'll be back, and we'll keep working for smarter, more efficient, more effective government.

Rep. Andy Billig says...

In addition to fighting for good jobs, quality education, and a strong safety net, this session was about standing up for equal rights. We became the seventh state in the nation to achieve marriage equality for all. I was proud to cast my vote in support of this historic legislation.

Equal rights also means equal access. I sponsored legislation to grant equal access to voter registration for young voters. Currently, we deny access to the most popular method of voter registration – Motor Voter – to many young voters when we should instead be encouraging their participation in civic life. Although the bill didn't pass the Legislature this session, I will continue my efforts to fix this inequity.



Rep. Billig speaks with students from the YMCA Youth and Government program in the Capitol Rotunda.

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TRANSPORTATION

The Legislature passed a supplemental transportation budget that creates or sustains 43,000 jobs. Key investments in this budget for our region include an additional:

- \$5 million for the North Spokane Corridor
- \$2.25 million for the Safe Routes to School program that helps children to stay safe and healthy
- \$1.6 million to the Washington State Patrol for auto theft investigation units

Further, the Legislature invested \$7 million in funding to reduce the highway maintenance backlog and to meet urgent preservation needs on the state highway system, and \$9 million in additional support to public transit. Representative Billig led the way as vice chair of the House Transportation Committee helping to write this bipartisan budget.



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