

WASHINGTON STATE • 14TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

# State Representative Gina McCabe

2016 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

P.O. Box 40600 • Olympia, WA 98504-0600

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## State Representative Gina McCabe | 2016 Legislative Review

### Promoting a business-friendly environment

When I first began representing you, it was important I bring my perspective as a small-business owner to Olympia. I've made tough decisions, balanced budgets, and made lifelong relationships with the people who depend on me for a paycheck. I've also seen how government regulations have become out-of-control, and how they directly affect an employer's ability to keep and create jobs.

I'm working hard to be part of the solution. As a result, my House Republican leadership team entrusted me with the role as assistant ranking Republican on the House Business and Financial Services Committee as well as the Labor and Workplace Standards Committee.

I would like to see employers receive the support and incentives necessary to drive our economy forward, create more job opportunities for the people in our state, and be active members of our communities. That's why I've formed a bicameral and bipartisan Washington State Business Caucus that meets during the legislative session to discuss regulations, fair workplace standards, and how state government can help businesses grow to benefit our economy. I'm looking forward to continuing these conversations in our very own communities and taking 14th District employers' perspectives back to Olympia.





# State Representative Gina McCabe



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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2016 legislative session adjourned at the end of March, which means I'm back home enjoying our beautiful 14th District. Session was a mixed bag, with a number of accomplishments worth celebrating. Here are the highlights:

- We created a framework for K-12 education funding solutions in preparation for continuing to address McCleary funding obligations;
- Saved public charter schools after the state Supreme Court invalidated them last September right before the school year began;
- Addressed the teacher shortage and enhanced teacher recruitment;
- Required vision screening for students;
- Established a statewide Parent to Parent program to help parents of children with special needs; and
- Much more!

Although session adjourned for the year, I'm available to assist you year-round. If you're having problems with a state agency, or you have questions, comments or ideas, please don't hesitate to contact me. Your feedback and involvement is vital as I work to ensure the voice of the 14th District is heard loud and strong in Olympia. It is an honor to serve you in the state House of Representatives.

Honored to serve,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gina McCabe".

**Rep. Gina McCabe**  
14th Legislative District



## 2015-17 operating budget and 2016 supplemental operating budget



Last July, after the longest legislative session in state history, the Legislature passed a two-year, \$38 billion operating budget. Significant investments were made in our state's mental-health system, K-12 education and early learning programs, and we made historic cuts in college tuition. Some have called this a 'no new taxes' budget, but that's

simply not true. Some of the tax increases include a new 37 percent tax on medical marijuana for patients and a "click-through nexus" Internet tax, which threatens eBay, Etsy and other Internet vendors. During the time of budget negotiations, we had \$3.2 billion in revenue growth for the 2015-17 budget cycle – certainly not the time to raise taxes on hardworking families.

The 2016 supplemental operating budget approved by the Legislature in March increases spending by \$191 million while avoiding major tax increases proposed by the governor and House Democrats.

Some of the investments include:

- \$15 million for K-12 education, including \$5 million to recruit and retain K-12 staff.
- More than \$40 million for mental-health programs.
- \$4.2 million to keep public charter schools open.
- \$16 million for early learning and child care.
- \$190 million from the Budget Stabilization Account, our state's rainy day fund, to pay for last year's wildfires.

While these investments are crucial, I ultimately could not support this spending plan either. This budget does not set us up well for the future, especially since economists are warning of a possible recession. It relies too heavily on fund transfers and it doesn't leave much in the 2019 ending-fund balance. Among the list of fund transfers, \$16 million was swept from the Public Works Assistance Account. The monies from this account are used to help local governments with infrastructure costs like water and sewer.

A supplemental budget is meant for small, midcourse adjustments to the biennial budget for emergencies and caseload forecasts. This budget goes beyond that, and I believe we could have achieved a more fiscally responsible plan.

## Investing in our communities

Areas throughout the 14th Legislative District will be seeing some development as a result of the 2015-17 capital budget and the 2016 supplemental capital budget. I'm proud to say we've brought the following projects home to our side of the mountains:

- \$64,000 to update the heating system at the Twin Bridges Museum in Lyle.
- \$270,000 for restoration of the Lyle Activity Center.
- \$50,000 for the proposed expansion and reconstruction of the Yakima Children's Museum Center.
- \$46,000 to upgrade the heating system at the Centerville School District.
- \$172,000 for the Skyline Community Meeting Space in White Salmon.
- \$155,000 for improvements to the Goldendale Senior Center.
- \$1 million for the Perry Technical School.
- \$1 million for the renovation of the Maryhill Museum.
- \$1,000 for a central alarm system installation at Mill A School in Cook.
- \$3 million to Skamania County for state forest land replacement.

Sometimes referred to as the "bricks and mortar budget," the capital budget approves money for: the construction and repair of public buildings; local governments and nonprofit organizations for infrastructure, housing and cultural and heritage facilities; and other long-term investments, such as land acquisitions and transfers.

## Bill to help Yakima, other counties throughout state signed by governor



*Rep. Gina McCabe is joined by Yakima County Commissioner Kevin Bouchey for the signing of House Bill 2391.*

My **House Bill 2391** to align federal and state payroll laws was signed by the governor in March. Due to conflicting state and federal statutes, some counties in Washington have been out of compliance with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), making them subject to large monetary fines at times. We've been experiencing this problem in Yakima County, which uses a monthly payroll, because taxes are not taken out of a draw-day pay and are, therefore, out of compliance with the IRS. This bill is a simple fix that changes the draw-day procedure for monthly payrolls. We must ensure our counties and local governments can continue operating efficiently.

Specifically, House Bill 2391 modified monthly payroll systems so that no more than 50 percent of earned salary is paid on the draw day. The bill was requested by Yakima County Auditor Charles Ross, my predecessor in the state Legislature.

## Travis Alert Act gains traction in 2016

Travis, a nonverbal child with autism, is one of many examples of the need for more education on how to communicate with individuals with disabilities. On the mailbox outside their Wapato home, Travis' parents have painted a blue puzzle piece meant to alert first responders in an emergency that there may be a person with disabilities present. But that puzzle piece – or any other alert system – is unrecognizable to some, and Travis' parents would like to see that change.



Travis King, with Rep. Gina McCabe, drops the Travis Alert Act into the bill hopper at the state Capitol.

I have been privileged to work with Travis' mom, Threasa, and dozens of other parents, first responders and advocates on **House Bill 2287**. The bill calls for an enhanced 911 program for people to optionally submit information pertaining to one's disability so dispatchers could deliver critical information to first responders during emergencies. It would also create a training program for first responders instructing them how to best respond to emergencies involving persons with special needs.

The "Travis Alert Act" would be a great first step in ensuring individuals with disabilities remain safe in emergencies. While it gained momentum during the 2016 legislative session, it did not make it through the process this supplemental year. I hope the 14th District is soon able to say they were the first in the nation to enact this critical program.

## Keeping our communities SAFE

Big strides were made the past two years to improve care for sexual assault survivors. The Sexual Assault Forensic Examination, or "SAFE," Task Force, which I co-chair, recommended two important bills that received the Legislature's and governor's approval this year.

My **House Bill 2711** will commission a study to determine the availability of sexual assault nurse examiners (SANE) in Washington state and make recommendations for improvements. There is currently a shortage of SANEs, so the study will determine how many more are needed and how the services they provide can be improved in rural and interurban communities.

**House Bill 2530**, which I co-sponsored, will create a statewide tracking system for rape kits. There are currently 6,000 untested kits in Washington.

These bills are positive first steps for supporting sexual assault survivors.

## Zeroing in on community, children safety

When I began serving the 14th District, I came into the position ready to work on solutions that would keep our children and most vulnerable safe. This year, I sponsored several bills to accomplish this:

- **House Bill 2183**, or "Erin's Law," would establish a task force to develop sexual abuse prevention curriculum for grades K-12. Schools already teach kids about the dangers of drugs, and how to stay safe in fires and natural disasters. I believe we should add sexual assault prevention to that list of curriculum so children can stay and feel safe in their neighborhoods.
- **House Bill 2639** would require the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to study and analyze the costs and advantages in equipping school buses with seat belts. I think it sends an inconsistent message when we tell our kids to buckle up in cars, but neglect to do so on the bus to and from school. Now that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration endorses the use of seat belts on school buses, as well as the OSPI, there may be more interest to look into this important student safety measure. Six states currently require school-bus seat belts.
- **House Bill 2970** would strengthen voyeurism laws and address voyeuristic practices like "up-skirting." With the ever-changing wave of technology, it's important this bill passes so women feel safe not only in the halls of a school or college, but cases have surfaced in malls under stairways and even under bathroom stalls. Since last session when I first introduced this bill, there's been at least one known case where a teacher has been engaged with voyeurism at his school. Had my bill been enacted, the student would have had a clear course of action.

Unfortunately, these bills did not advance this short legislative session and will need to be reintroduced in 2017 for reconsideration. I will continue my work on this legislation during the interim so together we can take Washington's school and community safety to the next level.

## Paying it forward to Washington's veterans

I was proud to have my 'One Business, One Vet' bill, **House Bill 2040**, signed into law last year. The legislation was meant as a means

to increase veteran employment and pay it forward to the 600,000 veterans currently in Washington state. Now, with the hard work of the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs, Employment Security Department (ESD), and the Department of Commerce, as well as local chambers of commerce, associate development organizations and businesses, the goal of this legislation is finally coming to fruition.

With this partnership, ESD has launched the YesVets pilot project, which aims to get more employers to say "yes" to hiring veterans. The program began this February in Klickitat, Kittitas, Skamania and Yakima counties, and we're planning a statewide launch on Flag Day 2016 (June 14). We've already had our first business - Atlas Staffing in Yakima - receive their YesVets decal. Thank you for making this program a success!

You can learn more about the YesVets program by visiting [YesVets.org](http://YesVets.org).

