

Rep. Elizabeth Scott



WASHINGTON STATE HOUSE

39th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

SPRING 2016



Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you have about government. I'm also happy to speak to your civic organization, church group or community center. I'm privileged to be your state representative and I'm here to serve you.

In Liberty,

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Committees:

- Early Learning and Human Services (Assistant Ranking Member)
- Commerce and Gaming

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2016 session and special session are over. The good news is we passed a supplemental budget without any new taxes and without dipping into the 'rainy day' fund except to help pay for fighting the forest fires from last year.

Legislation was passed to keep charter schools open and 19 of my cosponsored bills were signed into law, including a bill legalizing the use of your wood burning stove in a power outage, no matter whether the stove is certified or not, and even in a burn ban.

Another of my favorite cosponsored bills requires that upon notification that their baby has been diagnosed with Down Syndrome, parents will be given information about Down Syndrome and a list of resources and contacts for support.

Voters want it to be difficult to raise taxes

Six separate times in the past 22 years, citizens have voted to require 2/3 of the House and Senate to agree before raising taxes! In each instance, either the courts or the Legislature has meddled with the will of the people to negate this important taxpayer protection. It's time for a constitutional amendment! I cosponsored House Joint Resolution 4215 to do just that. This session, we tried a procedural move on the House floor to bring it up for an immediate vote, but were denied by majority Democrats.

Holding government accountable

Government, at all levels, needs to be held accountable. This session, the state Senate exercised its constitutional oversight authority by not confirming Transportation Secretary Lynn Peterson. There were just too many missteps and unanswered questions within WSDOT to allow the status quo to continue.

In addition, the head of the Department of Corrections, Secretary Dan Pacholke, resigned as a result of his agency's early release of 3,200 inmates, resulting in the deaths of two innocent people. Again, holding state agencies accountable is part of our job as members of the legislative branch.



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Outlawing female genital mutilation

For the third year in a row, I introduced legislation (HB 2685) to outlaw the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), also known as female genital cutting. Officials estimate between 9,000 and 25,000 young girls and women in our state are either suffering from FGM or at risk to have the brutal practice imposed on them against their will. In the hearing on my bill, a woman from the King County Somali Health Board testified that “cutters” are even being flown in to Washington state from overseas to perform FGM on immigrants and refugees here.

This is an abhorrent practice steeped in gender inequality and efforts to control women’s sexuality. The long-term health complications are in addition to the initial pain and horror of the procedure itself. Infections, chronic pain, cysts, bleeding and reproductive troubles follow these girls for the rest of their lives.

Despite broad bipartisan support with 29 Democrat and Republican cosponsors, including the Chair and Vice Chair of the Public Safety Committee, my bill was killed. I’m hopeful that someone will bring this bill up again next year and we will see justice for these women and girls.

Unelected bureaucrats say men can use girls’ bathrooms and showers?

I’ve heard from many of you with concerns over the Washington State Human Rights Commission’s recent ruling allowing people to use whichever bathroom or locker room they choose. As you might imagine, there has been a state-wide uproar about this issue, and rightly so. I signed onto legislation repealing this rule; however, the Democrat chair of the House Judiciary Committee did not hold a hearing on any legislation dealing with this issue. I’m disappointed the voices of so many were silenced by the will of so few.