



STATE REPRESENTATIVE NORMA SMITH

10th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

Spring 2016

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

It's an honor to represent you. Thank you for trusting me to serve as part of your 10th District legislative team. I hope you'll find this newsletter informative as I provide an update on some of the progress we have made the past two legislative sessions.

I remain committed to finding positive solutions to the most pressing issues we face in the 10th District and around our state. I've built strong relationships with members on both sides of the aisle, working in a respectful and bipartisan way to help enact good public policy.

In a political climate where the news coverage often focuses on our differences, please know the majority of work happening in Olympia is broadly bipartisan. From energy to education, public safety to transportation, mental health to economic development, the divisions we face are certainly real, but you are trusting us to find common ground. We all have our own areas of expertise, our own passions and our own beliefs. However, if we are willing to be respectful to one another and listen, and willing to pursue the right things regardless of who gets the credit, sound policy solutions can be found.

Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions, comments and ideas. My door is always open to you. Your stories inspire my work and inform my decisions, and it's important I hear what you have to say on issues affecting the 10th District. I look forward to meeting with you, your community group, school or other civic group to discuss legislative issues and answer questions.

Thank you for the privilege of serving you.

Sincerely,

Norma Smith
State Representative
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(R-Clinton)

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- Technology & Economic Development (*Ranking Member*)
- Capital Budget (*Assistant Ranking Member*)
- Labor & Workplace Standards

STATE REPRESENTATIVE NORMA SMITH

Operating Budget

The 2015-17 operating budget we passed last year makes record investments in K-12 education, while also funding long overdue cost-of-living adjustments for our teachers, who are working to give our students the best possible education.

The budget also cut tuition for the first time since the 1970s. The cost of higher education has grown out of reach for too many individuals, denying them a chance to improve their lives and achieve their dreams. The tuition reductions provided in the budget will help tremendously.



What was not included in the spending plan should also be recognized – the approximate \$1.5 billion in tax increases initially proposed by House majority leadership. With our economy still recovering, a budget free of any major tax increases is a big win for the taxpayers of Washington state.

While there are a number of policies in the budget with which I have concerns, I believe it is a solid spending plan overall. It protects taxpayers, makes progress in education while putting in place the building blocks to continue making significant investments, protects our most vulnerable, and keeps our economy on a steady foot by being mindful of our economic recovery. It's critical to remember that for many Washingtonians, the difficult consequences of the recession are far from over.

Although it took a few weeks of special session to reach an agreement and finish the legislative session, the 2016 supplemental operating budget moves us forward without compromising our values. We increased education funding, invested in services to help homeless youth and foster kids, made investments to expand access to mental health care and paid for last summer's fires.

As I've said before, a budget is a statement of our values. It isn't enough to stand up for policies that support our kids and families; we also need to stand up for funding these policies.

Capital Budget

The 2015-17 capital budget we passed last year is a strong spending plan that provides for the priorities and immediate needs of our state. As the assistant ranking Republican on the House Capital Budget Committee, I was deeply involved in negotiations in order to help craft a responsible, sustainable budget that makes good investments for our state and

spends your tax dollars responsibly. From the beginning, House Republicans and Democrats worked on behalf of all Washingtonians to achieve bipartisan agreement in addressing key priorities within the existing bond capacity. I'm grateful we were able to come together in compromise to provide funding for: K-12 and higher education school construction, K-3 class-size reductions, increased mental-health bed capacity, housing for veterans and other vulnerable individuals, mitigation for the drought, fire hazard reduction efforts, and more. I can truly say this budget is going to make a lasting impact for our communities and the state.



The 2016 supplemental capital budget, which was approved with a strong bipartisan vote, makes key investments for K-12 school construction, community-based mental health centers, and infrastructure repairs related to the recent wildfires in our state.

As part of the capital budget negotiating team, I will continue leading efforts going forward to obtain the necessary data and information in order to make the crucial and significant investments in classroom construction. We cannot accomplish smaller classroom sizes without adequate space for our students and teachers.

Education



Education continues to be the primary focus in Olympia. Last year's operating budget made significant progress for our students and teachers, including nearly \$3 billion invested in K-12 education, a sizeable tuition reduction at our state's colleges and universities, and historic investments

in early learning. We aren't close to done, but I am pleased to see the momentum moving in the right direction.

We must continue our efforts to reverse several decades of decisions that grew reliance on local tax dollars to fund basic education. A levy lid once as low as 10 percent of a district's levy base has been ratcheted up to its current level of 28 percent. Meanwhile, the state has relied on local districts to pay competitive salaries and fund other components of education that are the constitutional responsibility of Washington state. I have been asked to serve as one of eight members on the Education Funding Task Force during the interim and can assure you responsible and targeted K-12 education investments will be the primary focus in 2017.

2016 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE • TENTH DISTRICT

Legislation I've Introduced and Supported

2015: Last session, my bill to establish the Joint Center for Deployment and Research in Earth-Abundant Materials (JCDREAM) passed overwhelmingly in the House and Senate, and was signed into law by the governor. **House Bill 1897** was the culmination of years of personal research and a commitment to sustainable stewardship. I crafted the legislation with the assistance of researchers from the state's three major research institutions – Washington State University, University of Washington, and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL).

The goal of JCDREAM is to establish a transformative program in earth-abundant materials to accelerate the development of next-generation clean energy and transportation technologies in Washington state. It is the first of its kind in the nation. Research will be conducted at WSU, UW and PNNL, and will involve the private sector to ensure the research stays tied to projects that will grow local businesses and create jobs. This partnership will also maximize opportunities to attract private funding and federal research dollars to the state.

The current dependency on rare earths mined overseas, which have a well-documented legacy of environmental damage and human rights consequences, is unsustainable. The advancement of clean technologies will have a profound impact on the future – primarily with regard to national security, energy independence, sustainability and environmental responsibility. We truly have an opportunity to lead by putting forward a compelling vision and framework to advance the use of earth-abundant materials in clean technologies!



Another bill I introduced that was signed into law by the governor was **House Bill 1896**, which implements a statewide minimum privacy policy to prevent consumers' energy use from being disclosed by utility companies without their permission. A person's energy usage is valuable to third parties who want

to profit, but it is personal information and MUST remain private. My bill makes sure the government provides adequate consumer protections by extending data privacy policies to public utility districts and other services collecting energy data within homes. I will continue to work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to do everything we can to help protect people's personal information from breach or exploitation.

Derelict legacy fishing nets: cleanup project

For those of us who live in the Pacific Northwest, the health of Puget Sound is an important issue. In 1997, U.S. Senator Patty Murray, D-Washington, and then-U.S. Representative Jack Metcalf, R-Washington, established the Murray-Metcalf Commission to explore innovative ways to protect and restore marine resources in the Northwest Straits. After a year of research and discussion, the Murray-Metcalf Commission published a report that laid the groundwork for what was to become the Northwest Straits Initiative, which was authorized by Congress in 1998. Removal of derelict fishing gear then began in 2002.

2016: The governor recently signed two of the bills I introduced during the 2016 session into law.

House Bill 2309 extends the loan term of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) program from 20 years to 30 years. More than \$1.5 billion currently flows through this revolving loan program for important projects, so our local communities will see an enormous benefit from this loan extension. The extension will help our communities better address challenges on the ground, and at a lower monthly cost, which is good for Washington.

House Bill 2875 establishes the Office of Privacy and Data Protection. The office will be tasked with seeking ways to limit data collection and unneeded use by state agencies, as well as monitoring citizen complaints regarding the collection and use of personal information. It will also be required to conduct an annual privacy review, hold annual privacy training, and educate consumers through public outreach across Washington state. My efforts built on Gov. Inslee's initial executive order signed earlier this year to create the office. I am grateful to the governor and his staff for their efforts in positioning our state as a leader in privacy and data protection. Our bipartisan work to establish this office will enable the state to work with state agencies to establish best practices to safeguard the private information of Washingtonians.



I have heard from many of you over the past year about how important solar incentives are for the 10th District. That's why I sponsored **House Resolution 4664** and co-sponsored Rep. Jeff Morris' **House Bill 2346**, both of which were approved by the House with strong bipartisan support. These pieces of legislation would promote greater deployment, bring a final conclusion to the state's solar incentive program, and establish the Solar Module Stewardship Takeback and Recycling Program – the first of its kind in the nation. We need to create certainty for those who made a significant investment in renewable energy, while also recognizing an emerging industry sector in our state. It is important we be forward-looking and work to build on our shared values of pursuing sustainable, renewable energy to complement our clean energy grid. I will continue working on behalf of you on this issue.

A few years back, I led an effort to secure the final \$3.5 million necessary to complete the removal of the nets from the shallow waters of Puget Sound. What a joy it was last August at the Port of Everett to celebrate the removal of almost 6,000 derelict fishing nets from our waterways. Our work removing these nets means the permanent restoration of more than 800 acres of marine habitat!



Public Safety



My family has been a part of the military and EMS communities for decades, and I have the utmost gratitude for those who serve our neighborhoods and nation to make them safer places to live. Public safety is at the heart of all we do as elected officials. Any steps we can take to help those who serve us so selflessly, or policy actions we can take to protect the families and children of Washington state, are always among the most impactful for me. For this reason, I wanted to highlight a couple of bills from this past session that deserve some attention.

This year, I was pleased to support **House Bill 2872** to provide a pay increase to our dedicated public servants in the Washington State Patrol (WSP). With a high percentage of troopers eligible for retirement, trooper academy class-size numbers at

historically low levels, and salaries uncompetitive with competing jurisdictions who are actively recruiting troopers, it was time to address the state's growing recruitment and retention problem. Our members of the WSP put themselves at risk each and every day to protect and safeguard our highways and families. It was important for the Legislature to take this step to better take care of them.

Another bill I was excited about this session was **House Bill 2545**, which seeks to reduce public health threats by establishing a process to restrict the use of toxic flame retardant chemicals in certain types of consumer products. The bill is important for young children due to the focus on prohibiting toxics in the manufacture, sale, and distribution of children's products. It's also meaningful to firefighters, as it prohibits the manufacture, sale, and distribution of residential upholstered furniture containing specified levels of certain toxic flame retardants often breathed in and/or left on clothing and turnout gear following a residential fire. I supported this bill for several years, and was so pleased to finally see it signed into law earlier this year.

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Staying in Touch

If you would like to receive my legislative email updates, please visit my website – **RepresentativeNormaSmith.com** – and enter your email address at the top of the page. Please note that due to election-year restrictions, I cannot send out another email update until December.

I look forward to your invitations to speak to your group, classroom, or to meet with you for a cup of tea or coffee to discuss the issues most important to you. Please contact my office any time to schedule an appointment. Thank you again for the opportunity and trust you have given me to serve as your state representative.