

8th DISTRICT SESSION REVIEW

2016



Representative

Larry Haler

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(January – March)
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Higher Education
(Assistant Ranking)
Appropriations
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Representative

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Public Safety
(Ranking Member)
Education
Judiciary
Joint Committee on Veterans'
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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The legislative session adjourned on March 29, after a 60-day regular session and 20 days of special session. Though it took more time than expected, we passed a true supplemental budget that continues important work from last year.

The supplemental budget addresses wildfire recovery, and invests in education and mental health services. Most importantly, it balances over the next four years as required by state law and did not include the major tax increases proposed by the governor and House Democrats.

Finally, we are happy to be back in the beautiful 8th District. Working in our community to help solve problems is our favorite part of being your representatives in Olympia. Please contact us with your questions, concerns and comments on issues important to you. If you would like us to visit your community group, school, or business please contact us to make arrangements.

Sincerely,

Larry Haler
State Representative

Brad Klippert
State Representative

2016 supplemental budget highlights

K-12 education

- \$5.2 million for the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program and paraeducator certification.
- \$4.2 million to keep public charter schools open and operating in Washington.

Higher education

- \$7.8 million for reimbursement to state colleges and universities for last year's historic tuition cuts.
- \$18 million to maintain state need grant funding with the College Bound program.

Mental health

- \$2 million for expanding the number of mobile crisis teams.
- \$6.8 million for additional state hospital registered nurses at Western State Hospital.

Health care

- \$4.3 million for health home services.
- \$29 million for home health care individual provider overtime.

Wildfire recovery

- \$190 million from the budget stabilization account for wildfire suppression costs related to the 2015 wildfire season.



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on the Internet:
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MY VOTE ON THE BUDGET



The main objective this session was to pass a supplemental operating budget. Though a budget was passed and I have deep respect for those who supported it – especially my seatmate and friend, Rep. Haler – I was unable to vote for it. Budgeting is often difficult, but we can do a better job of managing the people’s money and ensuring we keep the state on solid financial footing to protect against the affects of another recession.

The budget did fund some good programs, but I am concerned that it relies on fund transfers and federal dollars to pencil out. And, while it balances over the next four years as required by state law, it leaves only \$9 million by the end of 2019. While \$9 million seems like a lot of money, when compared to a \$38 billion budget it is spending down to the last penny.

In 2017, I’ll be working to pass a budget that meets the needs of students, families and the most vulnerable, and is balanced, sustainable and doesn’t raise taxes.

Honoring Washington’s farmers, ranchers and Future Farmers of America (FFA) students

House Bill 2017 created a special license plate issued by the Department of Licensing to honor Washington’s farmers and ranchers. Funds raised from the purchase of the license plate would go toward funding education programs sponsored by Washington’s chapter of the FFA.



Washington state has a rich agriculture heritage, and I am proud to say our farmers and ranchers feed the world!



Public safety

As a deputy sheriff and legislator, public safety is always a priority for me. This year, I sponsored legislation to strengthen the penalties for DUI offenders, improve protections for victims of crime, and ensure prisoners don’t receive time off their sentence for good behavior when they have committed a crime while in prison.



House Bill 2280 increases felony DUI’s from a Class C to a Class B felony, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, fines up to \$20,000 or both.

House Bill 2838 authorizes the Department of Corrections to impose no-contact requirements for an offender under its supervisions in community custody based on the offender’s risk to the community.



House Bill 2773 repeals the authority of county coroners to issues arrest warrants and requires them to present findings of an inquest directly to prosecutors.

House Bill 2900, co-sponsored by Rep. Haler, prevents state prisoners from receiving sentence reductions for good behavior if they are serving time for possessing contraband in a prison.

It’s an honor to have these bills signed into law, and I’m very grateful to everyone who worked so hard to help get them to the governor’s desk.

MY VOTE ON THE BUDGET



As a result of my efforts with House Bill 1485, I received an award from the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences. In the photo with me is Dr. Keith Watson, president of the university.

At the beginning of session, tax increases were proposed by Gov. Inslee and House Democrats and some even wanted to raid the state's rainy day fund for ongoing expenses. But this year is a supplemental budget year – a time for small adjustments to our two-year operating budget signed by the governor 10 months ago. It's not a time to grow state government.

In the end, I voted for a true supplemental budget; one that tapped the state's rainy day fund for the one-time expense of paying for last year's wildfires and allocated small but targeted investments in mental health and K-12 education. The overall spending increase to the state's \$38.3 billion biennial budget was around \$191 million.

Making it difficult to raise taxes – it's what the voters want!

As many of you have probably already expressed via your ballot, voters have repeatedly told state government they want further protections against unnecessary tax increases. Six times in the past 22 years, voters have approved a two-thirds legislative vote for tax increases. This doesn't make tax increases impossible; only that those wishing to raise taxes must adequately state their case in order to get two-thirds of the legislative body to agree.

Unfortunately, in each instance, the courts or the Legislature have negated the will of the people. This year, I co-sponsored House Joint Resolution 4215 to place this important taxpayer protection into the state constitution. While this constitutional amendment didn't pass this year, I'll continue to work towards protecting your hard-earned money.



Increasing access to quality, affordable health care



Last year, I introduced legislation (House Bill 1485) to address the shortage of family physicians in our state, especially in rural areas, by providing fiscal incentives for hospitals and clinics to develop or expand residency programs. The medical schools that participate in the Family Medicine Residency Network (FMRN) is expanded to include the Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences in Yakima and would also include future accredited medical schools.

When this bill was passed by the Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Inslee it was the culmination of a lot of hard work by more people than I can name. Expanding and creating new residency programs for family practitioners will impact Washington residents for decades to come.

I was invited to tour the University of Washington School of Medicine and its residency program last month. I'm excited for the opportunity to work towards increased access to quality, affordable health care for all Washingtonians.



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Saving charter schools

We were able to save our state’s voter-approved charter school system, which was thrown into jeopardy by a questionable ruling last year by the state Supreme Court. Senate Bill 6194 was a bipartisan solution supported by urban and rural representatives and senators. It allows charter schools to be funded from the state’s Opportunity Pathways account, which is a constitutionally unrestricted funding source from lottery revenues. While the governor did not sign this important bill, it became law without his signature. As a result, charter schools will continue to serve the needs of many students and parents throughout our state.

Keeping in touch throughout the year

This is the final newsletter we can send out for 2016 since it is an election year. We also cannot send out email updates. Fortunately, we are allowed to respond to constituents who contact us. If you ever have feedback or questions, please contact us using the information on the front of this letter.

Also, if you need a guest speaker for your civic, community or church event, please let us know. Keeping you informed about your state government is our privilege.

It is an honor to serve you!

