



# STATE REPRESENTATIVE JESSE YOUNG

## 2014 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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### 26TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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Dear Friends and Neighbors:

Now that the state Legislature is out of session – we adjourned March 13 – I'd like to take this opportunity to give you an update on some of the issues we've been working on.

I'd also like to introduce myself! In January, the Kitsap County Board of Commissioners and Pierce County Council unanimously appointed me to replace Jan Angel, who is now our state Senator. It is a great honor to serve you in the state House of Representatives. You can read more about my background inside.

This year was a short, 60-day session, so there were no major policy initiatives, however we *were* able to achieve some positive results for the state and the 26<sup>th</sup> District.

My job as your representative is to listen, act, and be an *effective* voice for *you* on the issues we *all* care about, especially:

- Jobs,
- Health care, and
- Fiscal responsibility

We live in a great part of the state and I believe we have tremendous opportunities to achieve great things. Our communities here are diverse and it's my pledge to be an independent voice that stands for all of our unique values. My work in Olympia and my votes there reflect my dedication to that cause. Working together, I believe we can make a positive difference for the people of this district and state.

Thank you for your time, and I hope you find the information in this newsletter useful.

Sincerely,

Jesse Young  
State Representative  
26<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

# STATE REPRESENTATIVE **JESSE YOUNG**

## Strengthening our ferry system

Although it didn't pass this session, important work was done on a bipartisan bill promoting passenger-only ferries. I support the legislation, and believe we can make progress on it next year.

The bill would create voting districts allowing local residents to decide if they'd like to fund passenger-only ferries.

As officials from Kitsap Transit noted in Transportation Committee testimony, Kitsap County is dependent on ferries, and this bill would help people get from South Kitsap and Bremerton to Seattle in 30 minutes, as is now possible from Bainbridge Island.

There has already been a four-month test of a new ferry service with five round trips per day from Bremerton. The ferry was designed to operate at high-speed through Rich Passage and it succeeded. The service was very popular with the passengers.

The key to this legislation is the element of local control and decision-making. Residents would have the power to decide if they wanted to tax themselves in return for the benefits of passenger-only ferry service.



## Improving mental health care

When I was appointed to this position, one of the top concerns I heard from county officials was funding for mental health care. Washington state has done a terrible job of properly funding mental health programs, and as a result we have a crisis in our health care and criminal justice systems.

This year, despite the short session, we made *significant progress* on better fulfilling our duty to those with mental illness, who are among our most vulnerable populations.

As a result of a collaborative process, I went from not supporting to *strongly* supporting additional mental health funding for counties. At first the funding was structured in a very "top-down" way, which I didn't think gave local experts the ability to direct funds most effectively. But by the end of session we came up with a plan that offered much more flexibility to counties so they could do the most good.

We also increased funding for children's mental health and psychiatric beds. There's still a long way to go but I'm pleased with the progress we've made.



## Helping homeless students

When I was in high school, even though I did very well academically I was understandably distracted by the fact that we didn't have a home to call our own. My brother and I were camped out in a friend's backyard, my mom was staying somewhere else, and we desperately wanted our own place. A high school counselor took me under her wing and helped me apply for colleges, even paying my admission fees when I didn't have money.

It was with these experiences in mind that I *gladly* voted for the **Homeless Children Education Act**, which has now been signed into law. It will improve the way we keep track of how homeless students are doing in school. It will also help teachers connect homeless students with existing resources designed to help them graduate.

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## Bringing good jobs to the 26<sup>th</sup> District

We know the 26<sup>th</sup> District is a great place to live. I'd like to see it become an even greater place to find a job, also.

In addition to strengthening the family-wage jobs we already have here, we have the opportunity to bring more technology jobs to the 26<sup>th</sup> District. This session I introduced a bipartisan bill to do just that.

My bill would take advantage of infrastructure that we already have to attract high-wage blue-collar and white-collar jobs by giving tax credits to IT service sector employers who locate to areas around naval bases. Areas such as ours already have well-trained workers, and if we provide incentives to employers, that means more people can live and work here without having to commute. What's more, we must move to keep these jobs on our shores. I work in this industry, and not only are these jobs not currently abundant within our district, those that exist in other states (like California) are leaving to India and elsewhere at a rapid pace. With focus, we can attract these jobs to our district, and make them available to our communities and our children.

I'll continue to work on this bill and more throughout the interim.

## Providing quality education and teacher pay



Rep. Young speaks to students in the state Capitol.

Washington state has fallen behind in K-12 education funding. Our state constitution says it is our “paramount duty” to provide for the education of all children within our borders.

In a 2012 ruling, the state Supreme Court found that the Legislature was not living up to its constitutional duty. The Court ordered the Legislature to abide by its own 2018 deadline for fully funding basic education. That means we have no time to lose.

As a proponent of fiscal responsibility and prioritized spending, **I am strongly in favor of the “Fund Education First” approach to budgeting.** Our teachers and

children deserve such focus and it's our duty to prioritize taxpayer dollars where they are needed most. This doesn't mean simply throwing money at K-12, but *thoughtfully targeting* money where we can get the best results for our students.

**We must also follow through on our commitments to teachers.** Back in 2000, Washington voters passed an initiative for automatic cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for teachers. When the recession started in 2008, these were suspended. But now that the economy is slowly recovering it is time to once again give teachers their voter-approved pay raises. To that end, I was proud to stand up for teachers this session and advocate for permanent COLAs. While it didn't happen this year, I will work hard in 2015 to make it happen. It's the right thing to do..

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### An introduction

Since I was appointed to this position when session had already started, I wanted to take a brief moment to tell you a bit about myself.

Growing up, I learned very early the lessons of how hard work and determination can overcome obstacles. While I was a kid, my small family was impoverished and sometimes homeless. I understand tough times.

Thanks to the work ethic that my mom instilled in me, along with the support and guidance of some amazing public school teachers, I was able to beat the odds. I graduated from Wilson High School as Valedictorian, going on to attend and graduate from the University of Notre Dame. Since then, my career as a software and technology consultant has provided well for my family and has given me in-depth experience in a variety of industries.

My wife and high school sweetheart, Jennie, and I are the proud parents of five children. The determination I had to achieve personal success in my youth, is equal to the resolve I have now to serve our community with non-negotiable integrity, servant leadership, and strong work ethic.



Rep. Young on the House floor.

### Please stay in touch

Even though session is over, I am available to assist and meet with you year-round. If you are having a problem with state government, or if you have questions, comments or concerns, please feel free to contact me. I am here to serve you.