14th District
2012 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

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Committees:
Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Ways and Means

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Committees:
Early Learning & Human Services
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Appropriations - *(Republican leader)*
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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2012 sessions have finally adjourned and it is good to be back in the Yakima Valley. The Legislature adopted a budget to address a $1 billion shortfall after a 60-day regular session and 31 days in two special sessions. Several reforms were adopted which we supported, and will address long-term sustainability in our state.

As you may know, the 2010 census led to redistricting in our state which will dramatically change the boundaries of the 14th Legislative District. We look forward to meeting with constituents about the changes. In the meantime, view the included maps on the back page of this newsletter or visit **www.redistricting.wa.gov**.

Enclosed is a short review of the 2012 sessions. We encourage you to visit our Web sites and sign up for our e-mail updates to get more information and updates during the year and in next year's session.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions, concerns or suggestions about state government. It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

Charles Ross Norm Johnson

We congratulate the A.C. Davis High School Pirates Boys Basketball Team for winning the 2012 Class 4A state championship game against Spokane's Central Valley. To honor the team, we sponsored House Resolution 4684, which passed the House unanimously. The resolution recognizes the team and its coaches "for their outstanding accomplishment." Pictured, we presented the resolution to the team.

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BUDGET

In February, House Republicans put forward the first budget proposal in the session. It focused on three core priorities of the state:

Fund education first – treat the education of our children as the top priority by funding it before anything else in the budget;

Protect the most vulnerable – seniors on long term care, children, people with developmental disabilities and those with mental health challenges; and

Protect public safety – we will not sacrifice the safety of families in our communities.

This year, after it was apparent Democrat majorities could not garner support for their budget proposals, Republicans joined the discussions when a philosophical majority formed in the Senate. Because Republicans had a seat at the negotiating table, the Legislature adopted several major reforms we supported:

1. **Offer less-rich pension benefits to new state employees** – The state's pension system is among the biggest cost-drivers in state government. Senate Bill 6378, which only affects employees hired after May 1, 2013, is expected to save taxpayers approximately $1.3 billion over the next 25 years.
2. **Improve transparency and insurance options for teachers and school district staff** – Currently, these public servants are required to purchase their health insurance from a single carrier – their school districts. This leads to unfair premiums for families and lack of choice. Senate Bill 5940 will require school districts and providers to:
   - offer more plans to employees;
   - ensure equity between single employees and employees with families; and
   - report data on costs of health care and administration.
3. **Four-year balanced budget requirement** – Washington is the first state in the nation to adopt a requirement that no budget could be adopted unless it balances for the current biennium as well as the next biennium. Senate Bill 6636 will force the Legislature to think about the budget for the long-term.

The final budget adopted by the Legislature actually spends less than in previous years. However, we still had several major concerns:

- The supplemental budget leaves **just $319 million in reserves**. This budget hopes that the economy will rebound when things are still very unstable.
- It **fails to make difficult choices** about our current budget by funding large social entitlement programs we can no longer afford. Ending these programs would not be popular, but it would have been responsible.
- It counts on a **one-time accounting change** to the state's cash flow. Using one-time money for ongoing programs is part of the reason our state continues to have budget shortfalls.

We voted "no," and look forward to continued work to make the budget more sustainable.

AGRICULTURE BILLS OF INTEREST

Agriculture is one of Washington's largest employers and the backbone of our economy. This industry is one of the main reasons we believe our state will rebound faster from the recession than other states in the country.

This year, we followed several bills moving through the Legislature affecting agriculture. There were several wins for ranchers, growers, food suppliers and others in the industry.

1. In the last hours of the special session, the Legislature adopted Senate Bill 6635 which included an extension of the B&O tax exemption for **food manufacturing** until June 30, 2015.
2. We made a small but important change to **water relinquishment** laws. Water rights holders who are waiting in line for a change or transfer request will not be subject to losing their entire water right for "non-use" thanks to the passage of House Bill 1381.

3. We passed Senate Bill 6044 relating to **pumped storage** of water. Now any public utility districts bordered by the Columbia River can supply water through pumped storage.
4. House Bill 2413 was proposed that would have severely crippled farmers' ability to spray **pesticides**. We are pleased this bill did not have the support to pass the Legislature.
5. House Bill 2349, passed by the Legislature, will allow for **beavers** considered a nuisance in Washington to be live-trapped and relocated to areas in the state where they can create natural dams to store water and improve stream flows.

Let's Get WASHINGTON WORKING AGAIN!

House Republican Solutions

PROPOSALS TO CREATE JOBS

We supported the following proposals to get Washington working again:

1. Simplify and reduce the number of tax rates for small businesses – House Bill 2290.
2. Pass a balanced budget - House Bill 1426 and House Joint Resolution 4225.
3. Reduce barriers to permitting projects that would create jobs – House Bill 1961.
4. Recognize hydropower as renewable energy – House Bill 1125.
5. Reform government programs and services – House Bills 1779 and 1872.

6. Enact major regulatory reform – House Bill 2276.
7. Address excessive agency rulemaking – House Bills 1151, 1156, 1341 and 1671.
8. Suspend the Growth Management Act in counties and cities with high unemployment – House Bill 1592.
9. Make state unfunded mandates optional for local governments – House Bill 2834 passed the Legislature, and we voted "yes."
10. Allow currently existing licensed card rooms to install video lottery terminals currently allowed only in tribal casinos. Estimates show revenue potential for this proposal at $450 million to $1 billion per year. – House Bill 2786.

Find out more about these bills at **www.houserepublicans.wa.gov/current-issues/hrc-job-proposal-tracking.**

ADDRESSING CRIMINAL GANGS

Yakima juvenile gang court used as statewide model

Last year, Yakima County created a juvenile gang court, the first of its kind in the nation, to set young people on the right track and prevent them from returning to crime. The court program helps young offenders turn their lives around with programs and treatment. They have one chance of doing it right. Otherwise a full sentence is imposed. Ten kids, ages 11 to 17, all repeat offenders, have been in the program, and all but one have stayed out of trouble.

The program has been so successful that Rep. Johnson felt it could be used as a model for other counties in Washington. He co-sponsored House Bill 2535 to encourage establishment of juvenile gang courts in counties that want to pursue such a strategy.

The bipartisan legislation:

- Authorizes counties to establish and operate juvenile gang courts, in which young offenders will be continuously supervised while they receive services;
- Provides that a young person must meet basic requirements for admission to a juvenile gang court;

- Allows counties to set stricter standards for admission and continuing participation in the gang court; and
- Requires that counties operating juvenile gang courts must keep track of information on participants, and that the state courts must report that information to the Legislature.

The measure passed the Legislature and was signed into law by the governor.

Civil anti-gang injunctions not passed despite Democrat sponsorship

For years, Rep. Ross has worked to allow local communities to use civil anti-gang injunctions to stop criminal gang crimes before they occur.

This year, a Democrat lawmaker sponsored House Bill 2594, with the hopes that it would garner more support. The proposal would have allowed law enforcement to go after known criminal gang members who are plotting their next crime to terrorize the neighborhood or continue a war with another gang. It would have put the burden of proof on local authorities to define and notify gang members under the injunction, and even would have provided legal counsel for gang members at the civil proceedings.

Unfortunately, the majority party could not gain the support needed to help end the crime sprees that tear apart our neighborhoods and leave families in fear. We won't give up on this – the people of the Yakima Valley have stood up time and time again against gangs, so we will keep fighting for their right to live in our community without fear.

Representative
Charles Ross

Representative
Norm Johnson

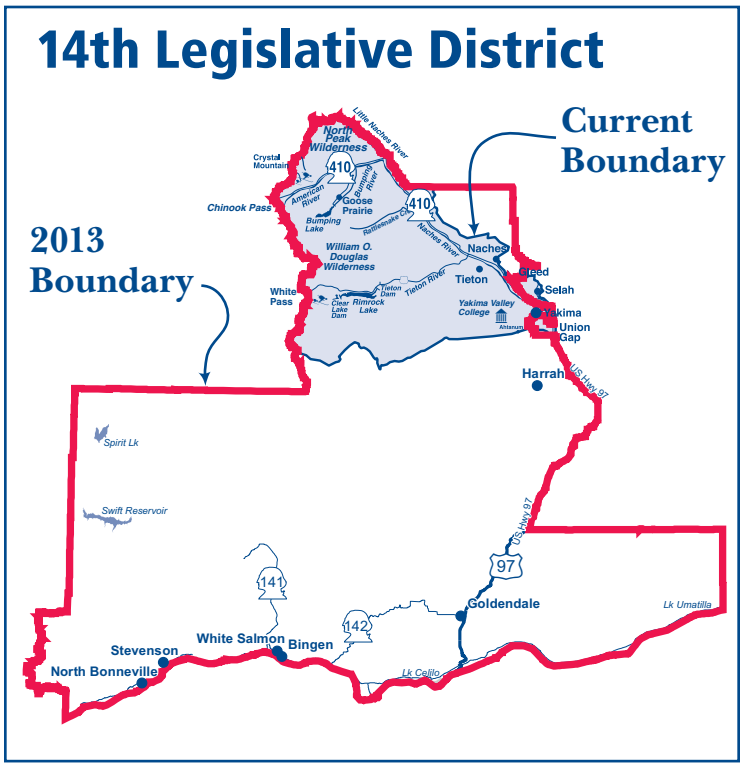
Legislature ensures transparency in clinic fees

Few things irritate patients more than receiving a medical bill and discovering new, unknown fees that may not be covered by insurance companies. One such charge on medical bills is a facility fee from hospital-owned clinics. It has recently appeared in bills of patients who received care at a Yakima clinic.

Several patients notified Rep. Johnson asking for his help. So he authored and introduced House Bill 2582, which requires hospital-owned clinics to provide upfront disclosure of facility fees.

The bill is simply a matter of medical transparency. A person or a patient has a right to know if they are being charged for the use of a facility in a hospital-owned clinic. Disclosure will allow patients to decide whether to use a clinic or go elsewhere.

The measure passed the House and Senate on a near unanimous vote and was signed into law by the governor.



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