



We the People
insure domestic Tranquillity

2024 SESSION REPORT • SEN. JIM McCUNE • 2nd LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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District 2



Dear Friends,

The Washington Legislature finished its 2024 regular legislative session March 7, and it was one of the hardest-fought sessions I have seen during my time in the Legislature. From pornography in the classroom to a path for banning natural gas to attempts to triple the rate of growth of property taxes, we faced a number of assaults on our rights and our wallets from the majority party.

In some cases, we were able to galvanize the support of the people to push back on this radical-left agenda; in others we fought the good fight but unfortunately still fell short.

I see it as our job to listen to the people and amplify their voices at the Capitol. This year we had an unprecedented opportunity to do that, as Washingtonians sent six initiatives to the Legislature to push back against the bad policies coming out of Olympia these past few years. Despite initial resistance by the majority to consider any of the initiatives, we eventually saw the historic adoption of three initiatives, with the remaining three going directly to the people.

Prior to this year, only six such initiatives had been adopted by the Legislature ever; since our state's initiative process began in 1912, all other initiatives have gone to the ballot.

As a member of the Senate Law and Justice Committee, I worked on several issues aimed at addressing the lawlessness crisis in our state. From the plague of the "Kia Boyz" and their use of stolen cars to commit smash-and-grab burglaries to the dehumanizing modern slavery known as human trafficking, I pushed for good policies to make our communities safer and restore justice for victims of crime.

While not surprised, I was disappointed and frustrated that the majority party refused to get tough on crime, rejecting several public-safety measures, while introducing bills to expand rights and benefits for criminals. And worse yet, majority members continued their disturbing assault on our Second Amendment rights, with one new measure essentially driving local, federally-licensed firearms dealers out of business.

Overall though, this was a busy year for our office, and I'm glad to be back in the district, getting an opportunity to discuss it with many of you in person.

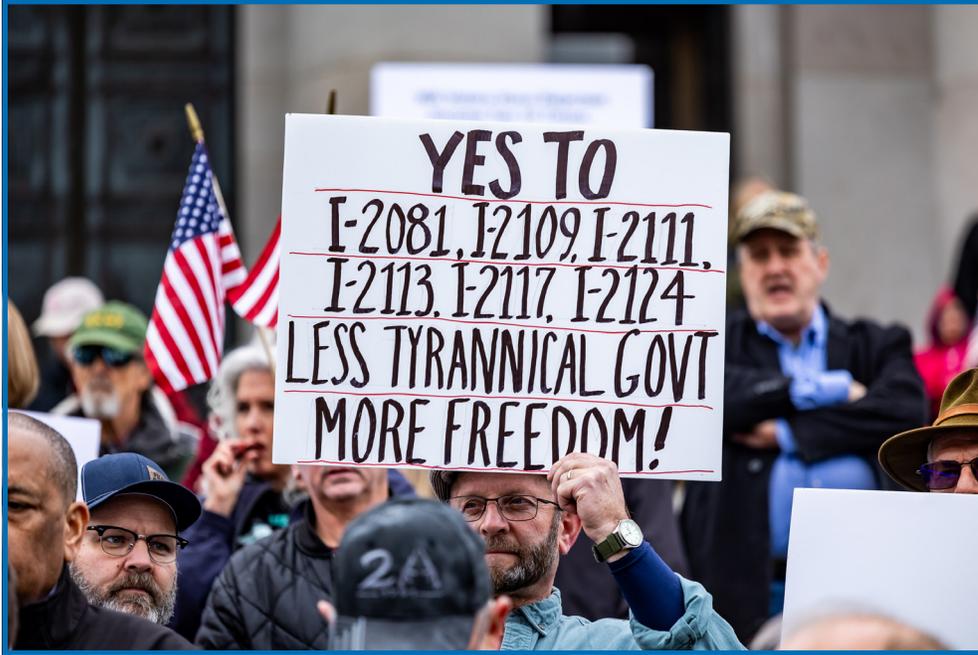
While this year's 60-day session is over, please remember that I represent you year-round. Do not hesitate to reach out to my office with your questions and concerns. My legislative assistant, Matthew Smith, or I will be happy to assist you in any way we can.

It is an honor to serve the people of the 2nd Legislative District.

Sincerely,


Sen. Jim McCune

LISTENING TO THE PEOPLE: Legislature passes three of six initiatives.



Fed up with the destructive and burdensome policies passed by Olympia's Democrat majority in recent years, citizens collected more than 2.6 million voter signatures to put six initiatives before the Legislature. All six received more than 400,000 signatures each and were certified by the Secretary of State in January and February of 2024.

Initially, the Democrats who control the House and Senate refused to hold public hearings on any of the people's measures – despite the state constitution making it clear that (outside of the budget) considering initiatives to the legislature should be the top priority.

After Republicans, reasonable Democrats and citizens of all stripes rallied, spoke out and demanded some action, the majority relented and agreed to hold hearings and votes on three of the six measures.

In strong, bipartisan votes, the Legislature passed all three.

Here's a quick review of the initiatives passed, which will take effect June 6:

- **I-2113** gives officers the ability to pursue suspected criminals once again. This is a big win for our law enforcement as it restores tools needed to keep our neighborhoods safe.
- **I-2081**, a "Parents' Bill of Rights," reaffirms that parents are the primary stakeholders in their children's upbringing. It does not change the actions schools or healthcare providers can take, but simply requires parents or legal guardians to be kept informed about such actions. It promotes transparency.
- **I-2111** puts into law a ban on state and local personal income taxes in Washington. This aligns us with what the people of Washington have expressed many times. It also benefits our economy by making our state more attractive to businesses.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts, the majority party refused to even allow the public to testify on the remaining three initiatives. As a result, under our state constitution, these measures will now be on the November ballot for Washington voters to consider.

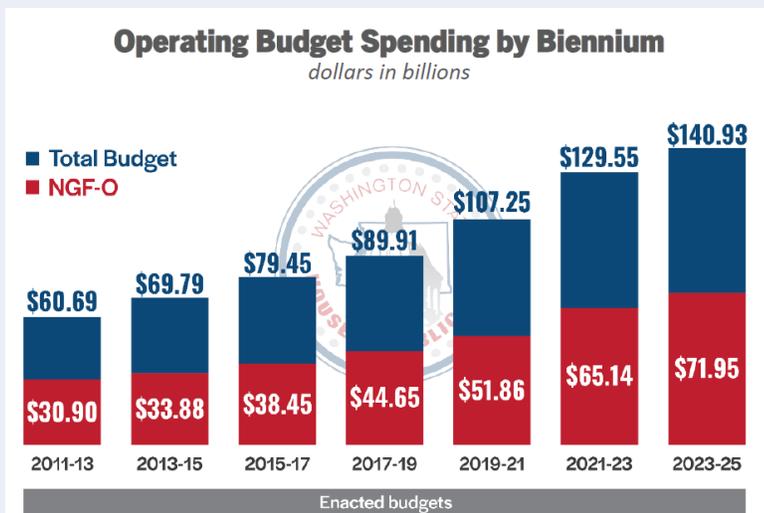


Operating budget

I opposed the supplemental operating budget adopted this session for several reasons. For one, while we successfully fought to make sure that there are no new taxes in the budget, the majority party missed yet another opportunity to provide meaningful tax relief for struggling Washingtonians. There is no excuse for this given the record revenue over the past few budget cycles. Also, as you can see by the chart, state spending has more than doubled over the past decade.

Other reasons I opposed the operating budget include:

- It does not keep the state's commitment to fully reimburse those in our agricultural industry who were promised they would not be impacted by the state's cap-and-trade law ("Climate Commitment Act").
- Medicaid reimbursement rates supported in the budget are not adequate to cover state-subsidized health programs, particularly critical for rural health providers.
- Instead of focusing on key priorities, it spreads spending over 1,000 separate line items.
- Migrants, those seeking asylum, and refugees are given \$36 million in basic needs, employment and training, health care, and housing support.
- \$412,000 in the general fund/total for taxpayer-funded abortion services at the University of Washington.
- The state Attorney General's Office gets \$247,000 for a task force to devise a statewide approach to "combating political extremism and mass violence through a public health prism." This is a sneaky way of achieving the goals of House Bill 1333 – the controversial, failed bill that would endanger free speech and target conservatives and Christians.



Graph Courtesy of House Republicans.

Capital budget update invests an additional \$13 million in 2nd District

The Legislature unanimously passed a supplemental capital budget on the final day of the session. Although it is only a supplemental spending plan, updating the budget adopted in 2023, it includes support for infrastructure projects and improvements throughout communities in our region and state.

The capital-budget projects approved for the 2nd District include:

- Nisqually New Full-Service Park, \$3.5 million
- Charter Park Master Plan Bathroom, \$52,000
- City of Lacey Regional Public Safety Training Center, \$50,000
- City of Roy Water Infrastructure, \$300,000
- Eatonville Community Track & Field Restrooms, \$300,000
- Ohop Grange Insulation & Electrical Upgrades, \$36,000
- Washington Soldier's Home Cemetery Pavement & Parking Extension, \$72,000
- Yelm Activated Alleyway, \$46 ,000
- 2023-25 Minor Works Preservation, \$49,000

Majority paves way for ban on natural gas Selling out Washington families for corporate interests

House Bill 1589, which became law as soon as it was signed by Gov. Jay Inslee on March 28, allows Washington's largest utility to meet arbitrary state emissions requirements by **more than doubling consumer gas prices**, discouraging gas usage, and **ultimately shutting off gas service** one community at a time.

Homeowners and businesses will bear the cost of converting from gas to electricity. The Building Industry Association of Washington estimates costs to residential customers to average \$39,767. The impact on business also will be enormous, and energy costs will soar.

HB 1589 reverses the concept behind state utility regulation. Until now, the idea has been to promote efficiency while protecting customers from excessive costs. This bill imposes enormous costs on customers in the name of protecting one company from the financial consequences of bad energy policy.



Far-left Senate Democrats kill students' bill to teach meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance

This session I introduced a bill to require schools to teach children the meaning behind the words of the Pledge of Allegiance. This was a bill that was brought to me by some very bright and thoughtful students from Eatonville Middle School in our district.

In these divisive times, it was genuinely refreshing to hear these students testify on the bill and talk about what the pledge means to them – how it can be a unifying force for all citizens and a way to honor our country, our shared national values and the legacy and sacrifice of our veterans.

But as they rightfully pointed out, this can only be the case if students actually understand the words and phrases they are compelled to recite.

As reported by Seattle-based KOMO News, a 2022 poll conducted by RealClear Opinion Research found civic education of students is a priority for most of their parents.

More than 70% of parents supported students learning “the principles underlying American politics, such as the history and ideas behind the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution,” while 46.9% said their children feel “pride” when they see the American flag.

Senate Bill 6205 was approved by the Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, moved to the Rules Committee and then out of Rules to the Senate floor calendar. There it was killed by the Senate majority, after debate within the Democratic Caucus.

There’s a certain sector of people who really do not like this country anymore and want to change it to something the rest of us would not want. While our nation has its problems, it is a beautiful country.



Majority Democrats fight to keep pornography in schools

Legislative Democrats blocked my effort to make sure pornographic material is not included in public schools, and passed a bill forbidding locals from prohibiting such materials.

The law created by House Bill 2331, which you can read at www.tinyurl.com/yc4nvmyv, essentially takes away parents' rights, and school boards' authority, to remove sexually explicit, profane, and indecent materials from our schools.

The bill, which Democrats pushed through with purely partisan votes in the House of Representatives and Senate, keeps taxpayers who don't have kids in schools from complaining about inappropriate materials, bans grandparents from filing a complaint and keeps districts from proactively removing obscene materials from its schools.

This measure violates due process and free speech rights under the U.S. Constitution and essentially prevents grandparents or guardians with children from voicing their opinions at school-board meetings.

I certainly don't want my four grandchildren being exposed to pornographic books. I should have every right, as a taxpayer, to speak against this inappropriate material, yet this new law treads on our constitutional right to free speech.

I proposed an amendment to this bill (both in committee and on the Senate floor) that would have addressed the problem. It simply would have banned pornography in schools, using the language in Washington law that already bans certain material from being provided to and viewed by those under 18 years of age.

Democrats rejected it at both levels, therefore supporting the presence of filthy books in our schools. Unfortunately, they didn't just fight to let pornography remain in our schools. They made the process so difficult for parents, taxpayers and other concerned citizens that we may never get such books removed from school libraries.

As it stands now, both this new law and schools that provide dirty books to children are violating federal and state laws on child pornography.

While reasonable people can disagree, there is nothing right about forcing school districts to expose students to pornography. Those who support it, including my colleagues on the left, are wrong. They have no excuse.



Majority continues its assault on your Second Amendment rights, while standing up for criminals

The majority passed three bills in the 2024 session that continue to chip away at the Second Amendment. **House Bill 1903** makes it a civil infraction up to \$1,000 to fail to report a stolen or lost firearm within 24 hours, **Senate Bill 5444** further restricts where you can legally carry, and **House Bill 2118** puts onerous new regulations on small firearm retailers, which could have the effect of financially squeezing them out of business.

During debate on SB 5444, I was able to get passage of an amendment that restored concealed carry as a whole, with restrictions being limited to only certain locations like zoo's, aquarium's, public libraries, transit stations and regional park facilities, among others. Please read the Senate report for Senate Bill 5444 (www.leg.wa.gov) for full details.

HB 2118, which was signed by the governor and will go into effect on July 1, is by far the worst of these bills. It is an attack on small business and an attack on legal gun owners.

While infringing on your rights, the majority party also was introducing legislation that would have reduced penalties for criminals, including:

- **House Bill 1268**, about reducing sentences for gang, drug, and gun related crimes around schools and bus stops;
- **House Bill 1396**, which would have reduced sentences for aggravated first-degree murder;
- **House Bill 2030**, to allow convicted murderers spending life in prison to vote, serve on a jury and hold public office; and
- **House Bill 2177**, which would have required sex offenders to serve on a state sex offender policy board.

Thankfully, none of these measures passed. However, it shows that the majority clearly puts criminals ahead of crime victims and public safety.

Missed opportunity: House fails to act on bill to address 'smash-and-grab' robberies

The so-called "Kia Boyz" (named for their favorite make of stolen vehicle) and other, often-juvenile, criminals continue to make headlines for destructive smash-and-grab robberies, especially at cannabis retailers and vape shops.

These cannabis shops are in all of our neighborhoods, and have really become a magnet for an unprecedented level of criminal activities.

To address this issue, I introduced Senate Bill 6133, which goes straight at this trending criminal activity. Often the perpetrators use stolen vehicles to smash into storefronts, take what they can, and then quickly flee in another stolen car.

My bill would have added an extra year of jail time for someone convicted of robbing a pot shop in a smash-and-grab. It would also require those businesses to report robberies or attempted robberies to the Washington State Liquor and Cannabis Board.

The board can't track how often robberies or attempted robberies are happening because reporting isn't required.

Whether people like it or not, cannabis stores have been legal in Washington for nearly a decade, and the state is bringing in

nearly half a billion dollars a year in tax revenue from this product. If the state is going to profit from having a legal cannabis industry, it should also do everything possible to protect workers, customers and the community from criminal activity at cannabis retailers.

My bill passed the Senate unanimously but failed in the House.



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LD 2

Victory! No support for property-tax hikes from Olympia this year

A controversial Senate Democrat bill to let local governments exceed the 1% cap on annual property-tax increases died this session thanks largely to the work of Senate Republicans and pressure from taxpayers and renters across the state.

The legislation sought to repeal the voter-backed limit first set in 2001 (Initiative 747) and give cities and counties the ability to annually hike property-tax rates by up to 3% without voter approval. But it ran into fierce opposition from Republicans and residents across the state who warned the measure would drive up living and housing costs through the roof.

The public pressure helped kill the bill just hours before it was scheduled to come to the Senate floor for a vote.

