15th Legislative District

2010 Session Review

Rep. Bruce Chandler Sen. Jim Honeyford Rep. David Taylor

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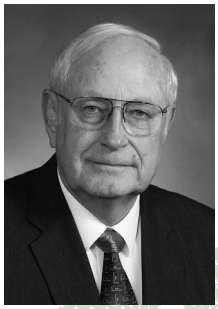
Washington State Legislature

Keep in touch!

Sen. Jim Honeyford



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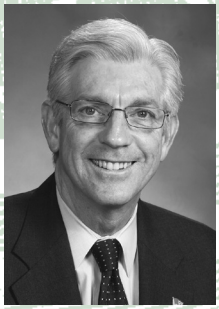
Committees:
- Environment, Water and Energy, *ranking Republican*
- Labor, Commerce and Consumer Protection
- Ways and Means

Rep. Bruce Chandler



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Committees:
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- Ways and Means
- Commerce and Labor

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Committees:
- State Government and Tribal Affairs
- Technology, Energy and Communications
- Ecology and Parks

15th Legislative District
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Dear friends and neighbors,

The regular legislative session ended March 11, but because majority party budget negotiators could not agree on a tax package, the governor called us back for a special session March 15.

Coming into the session in January with yet another spending gap, we were committed to forging some much-needed reforms of government programs and spending. In the midst of a recession, our state had an opportunity to help employers create jobs and give our economy the boost it needs. We supported proposals to reduce regulations and provide incentives for current and new employers to provide much-needed jobs.

Unfortunately, the suspension of taxpayer protections ended all serious discussions about reform. Tax increase proposals soon followed, targeting the stability of our economic climate. We voted against the suspension of the Taxpayer Protection Act (Initiative 960), as well as every tax increase proposal.

It has been a grueling and frustrating session, but we remain committed to providing our district with strong, principled leadership that puts people – not politics – first. Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions, concerns or suggestions.

It's an honor to serve you in Olympia.

Jim Honeyford
Sen. Jim Honeyford

Bruce Chandler
Rep. Bruce Chandler

David V. Taylor
Rep. David Taylor

Remember to return your 2010 Census form

The answers you give on the census form are used to decide the number of representatives each state has in the U.S. Congress. Having everyone counted is also critical to the security of rural communities, and will ensure that federal funding will be allocated to these areas to support schools, broadband initiatives, hospitals, emergency services and public works projects. The USDA has teamed up with the U.S. Census Bureau to encourage all farmers and ranchers to complete the 2010 census. Remember, your answers are confidential. Federal law protects your privacy. The data collected cannot be made public for 72 years.

United States Census 2010

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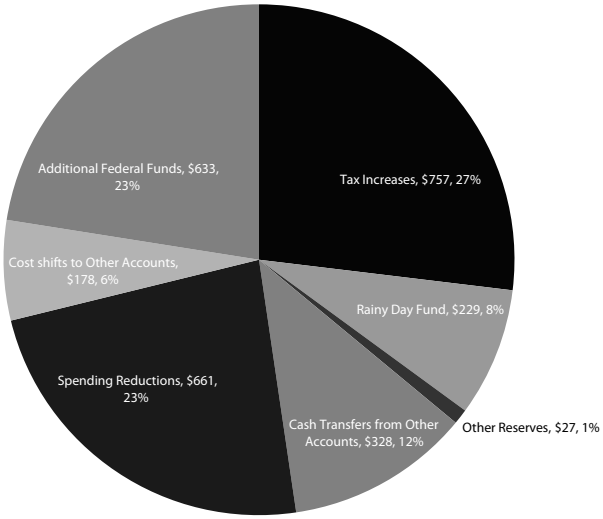
Budget & Taxes

The majority party relies much more on one-time money than on long-term efficiencies to solve its $2.8 billion budget problem. *(Dollars in millions)*



Data: Office of Program Research. Includes HB 2921 (Early savings)

This year the Legislature passed a $30.5 billion supplemental operating budget. The supplemental budget was amended by Sen. Honeyford to include $500,000 to help rural Lower Yakima Valley residents dealing with contamination in drinking water wells. At least $100,000 of the appropriation will go to help Yakima County create a groundwater management area to address this serious problem.

Unfortunately, the budget does not include any real reforms aimed at fixing our state's structural deficit. The majority party proposed reducing spending by just 1 percent from what passed last year. They missed opportunities to privatize the state print shop and liquor sales — services that could easily be done more efficiently by the private sector. At the same time, salaries for many state employees were actually increased.

Raising taxes during a recession is the wrong direction for our state. It will only result in fewer jobs, fewer small businesses and a slower economic recovery. We believe the state should have taken a different approach. Tax increases should be a last resort, not the first. Instead, the majority party passed the largest one-year tax increase in state history, amounting to $800 million in employer and targeted sales taxes.

Majority party suspends Taxpayer Protection Act

On Feb. 24, Governor Gregoire signed **Senate Bill 6130** into law. This measure gutted most of the provisions of Initiative 960, also known as the Taxpayer Protection Act. In 2007, voters enacted the initiative to:

- require a two-thirds vote of the Legislature, or a vote of the people, to raise taxes;
- express public opinion through an advisory vote on tax increases;
- require notice to voters in the voters' pamphlet regarding actions by the Legislature that raise taxes; and
- require public notifications and 10-year cost projections when bills are introduced, heard and passed which increase taxes or fees.

The majority party voted to suspend the first three provisions of this voter-approved initiative. We voted 'no' and stood up for you and your wallet.

Rep. Chandler considers legislation on the House floor.

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Fire-fighting legislation

After the Dry Creek fire that destroyed the landmark Silver Dollar Café, we held a public meeting in late August to discuss the response to the blaze and how to better handle wildfires in lands outside of a fire district. As a result, we sponsored several pieces of legislation.

- **House Bill 2667**, signed into law, requires a specified radio channel be used for fire response by various emergency responders during a wildfire. Improving communication will speed up the time it takes to fight a fire, protecting property, the public and the state's financial investments.
- **Senate Bill 6462**, which stalled in the House, would have essentially asked firefighters with the equipment and manpower to help outside of their fire district. Known as the "Good Samaritan Law," the bill would have also provided firefighters immunity from civil liability when fighting a fire outside their jurisdiction and when providing emergency care, rescue, assistance, or recovery services at the scene of an emergency.
- **Senate Bill 6652**, would require the Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) to establish rules to minimize the risk of fire resulting from rail grinding, welding, or vegetation clearing activities by railroads. Fires caused by railroad operations, such as the one along the Columbia River a couple years ago, are a huge safety concern, and the UTC has the statutorily-granted authority to regulate some specified rail safety matters. Unfortunately, the majority party failed to pass SB 6652 out of the Senate Transportation Committee prior to the end of the regular session.

These are just part of the answer to how we fight both forest and rangeland fires. More work needs to be done and we plan to work with fire commissioners, land owners, and various state agencies to find reasonable solutions.

Rep. Taylor and 7th District Rep. Shelly Short review proposed amendments prior to a House floor debate.

Fighting for water rights

Senate Bill 6267 expedites processing of water rights applications by providing full-cost reimbursement to the state in exchange for expedited applications. The measure will tie costs to getting applications moving. We worked hard to strip out exorbitant fees that were slipped into the bill with no guarantee of the processing of the application. People have an expectation that their applications for water will be processed in a timely manner. Unfortunately, some property owners have been waiting for decades to receive an answer from the Department of Ecology. We are pleased the bill passed the Legislature and was signed by the governor.

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Bill highlights

Chandler bills addressed property value restitution, unemployment insurance

- **House Bill 2668** would have allowed property owners who had a well moratorium to be reimbursed for the loss in property value for property taxes.
- **House Bill 2920** would have stabilized unemployment insurance tax rates for employers, providing relief and certainty for employers to succeed and create more jobs.

Taylor bills addressed GMA, state land-use plans, livestock grazing

- **House Bill 2692** would have replaced the three regional Growth Management Hearings Boards with a single, seven-member panel selected by county commissioners rather than by the governor.

  Under Rep. Taylor's proposal, members of a new consolidated board would have been appointed by the commissioners in the counties represented by each seat. The measure would have ensured local governments are the decision-makers in choosing board members, to promote local control and bottom-up planning.
- **House Bill 2491** would have required the state Parks and Recreation Commission, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the Department of Natural Resources to coordinate their land-use plans with local government officials.
- **House Bill 2501** would have expanded grazing programs on agency-managed lands. The bill would have allowed counties to waive PILT (payment in lieu of taxes) if the Department of Fish and Wildlife allowed private grazing on the land. The proposal would have benefited the department, counties and ranchers, as well as hometown economies.

Honeyford bill supports Civil Air Patrol members

- **Senate Bill 6647**, signed into law, will allow Civil Air Patrol members to work with their employers when emergency situations arise, so they can take time off to serve the state on various Air Force missions. It also prohibits an employer from discharging or disciplining Civil Air Patrol members for taking related to vital emergency service operations.

Sen. Honeyford and Rep. Steve Conway (far right) stand with Civil Air Patrol cadets and officers as Gov. Christine Gregoire prepares to sign Substitute Senate Bill 6647.

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Health care reform act: What it means for Washington

An analysis by the Washington Policy Center of the recently passed federal health care reform plan finds some troubling consequences for Washington:

- The number of people on Medicaid will increase by 280,000 for a total cost to Washington taxpayers in excess of $30 billion over the next 10 years.
- 205,000 Washington seniors will be forced out of Medicare Part C.
- Because of the 21 percent cuts in Medicare reimbursements to providers, Washington seniors will have a more difficult time finding a physician.
- Between 300,000 and 480,000 people in Washington will still lack health insurance.
- The new law will force 432,000 young, healthy people into health insurance they may not want, need, or be able to afford.

In addition to the harm this massive bill will cause, we are very concerned about whether parts of it are constitutional. This plan will put an enormous imposition on our state in a way that jeopardizes our state's sovereignty, which is protected by the 10th Amendment. The individual insurance mandate provision of the bill requires people nationwide to purchase a specific private product for the first time in U.S. history. This too may be unconstitutional.

We support, and have actively endorsed, state Attorney General Rob McKenna's decision to join a bipartisan, nationwide group of attorneys general to challenge the constitutionality of the new law.

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