



SENATOR

Paull Shin

21st Legislative District • Edmonds

March 2009



Dear Neighbors,

I write to you two months into what is already shaping up as one of the most challenging sessions I have been a part of at the Legislature.

Often the conversations with people I encounter in Olympia involve stories of hardship and uncertainty. It is difficult to feel stable when the economic world around you is crumbling—often affecting areas of your life you never anticipated problems like your school or your job.

I hear your pain and feel your struggle and know the current economic recession affects us all, in some way.

We are all in this together and I can assure you my colleagues and I are listening and examining all potential solutions from expanding international trade to growing local business.

I am pleased to tell you about steps the Legislature is taking now to help family security very soon and measures which set us up for stability in the future.

I invite you to attend a town hall March 21 to speak with myself and Reps. Mary Helen Roberts and Marko Liias to learn more about these critical issues.

Please visit SenateDemocrats.wa.gov for more detailed information on our budget.

As always, I would love to hear from you and wish you the very best.

Sincerely,

Sen. Paull Shin
21st Legislative District

Please Keep in Touch

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Senate Committees

Economic Development
Trade & Innovation (Vice Chair)
Agriculture & Rural
Economic Development
Higher Education & Workforce
Development
International Relations Subcommittee (Chair)

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JOB SECURITY

B&O tax credit bill for small business job creation

Although Washington was recently ranked as one of the best states for business, we need to do everything we can to provide incentives for new companies to come here. One way of doing this is by guaranteeing training for workers.

We recognize the national recession is taking a devastating toll on Washington workers and small businesses. A bill passed the Senate as part of the aggressive efforts to preserve and create jobs. It gives businesses with 10 or fewer employees a \$2,000 credit

for creating a job that provides wages and benefits between 150 percent of the minimum wage and \$40,000; for positions with wages and benefits in excess of \$40,000, it provides a \$4,000 credit. (SB 5899)

Customized job training programs for businesses

I know these are tough economic times. I hear it in the voices of people who come to testify in committee and I see it on the news and on the faces of people I speak with.

This session I sponsored a bill that lets employers participating in the

Washington Customized Training Program delay payments to the account during these extraordinary times. This—along with dedicating some of their funding towards training, marketing, and facilitation services—will increase the use of the program and make it an even more effective resource for worker training. The Customized Training Program is aimed at attracting new businesses to Washington and encourages existing businesses to hire additional workers. This bill moved swiftly out of the Senate and onto the House. (SB 5616)

HIGHER EDUCATION

Building a bridge to the middle class jobs of tomorrow

Despite Washington's budget challenges—and, in fact, because of them—higher education's role in helping our middle class workers and our economy is more important than ever.

Smarter college work study

Washington's employers can become more competitive with access to a greater pool of homegrown talent. Smarter work study programs can help students pay for college, empower them with experience in growing industries and emerging sectors of the economy, and give employers access to new local talent.

This focus of the state Work Study Program connects students with high-demand opportunities in private-sector

fields such as science, technology, engineering and math. In addition to providing critical financial help to students trying to pay for college, this will strengthen the connection between college and careers, providing real-world experiences that open doors, help students refine their career goals, and encourage program or degree completion. (SB 5044)

Job Skills Program, training for the jobs of tomorrow today

The Senate has passed a bill to strengthen the State Board of Community & Technical Colleges' Job Skills Program. This measure directs the board to place an emphasis on high-demand and high-growth job fields. By investing existing training



dollars into programs that involve collaboration with industry, we can help provide workers with training for the jobs of tomorrow and grow the talent pool businesses rely upon—ensuring that our investments get the most bang for the buck. (SB 5554)

STABILIZING THE ECONOMY



Early savings bill to boost state bottom line by \$735 million

Washington is among the best-managed states in the nation—according to the Pew Research Center for the States, we're fourth overall. This is good news, and also shows that we can do better.

In the midst of an economic downturn—with tax dollars at an absolute premium—it is especially important to continually fine-tune how services are delivered and make government work better.

The Governor has signed into law legislation that is estimated to improve the bottom line for the current two-year budget cycle that ends June 30 by more than \$730 million.

We are trimming agency administrative budgets, extending the state hiring freeze, freezing equipment purchases greater than \$5,000 and freezing salaries for the state's exempt and management employees. The package also seeks to utilize federal funds, and capture unspent money by state agencies and universities. (HB 1694 and SB 5460)

Though not addressed in the bill, legislative leaders have asked the Salary Commission—which is in charge of our pay—for a salary freeze, which I endorse.



Senator Shin speaks to international visitors

International relations—global economic opportunities

I am proud to chair the Senate's International Relations Subcommittee, which provides a forum to discuss the variety of ways Washington can enhance our global opportunities. In light of today's global economy, the Senate leadership asked me to chair this new subcommittee to look for more ways to increase trade and expand the market for Washington goods. Having spent a lot of time abroad, I've witnessed the real value of diplomacy and can say nothing replaces face-to-face interaction. Did you know nearly 16 percent of residents in our legislative district were born abroad? We need to capitalize on the diversity in our neighborhoods. I look forward to discussing specific ways Washington can leverage our strategic location and build relationships abroad. I plan to focus on port expansion, trade opportunities, international education, diplomacy and tourism.

Additional money into the pockets of the unemployed

Every dollar counts if you're among the unemployed. Out-of-work Washingtonians will receive more money than originally expected from the federal stimulus package because the federal benefits kicked in earlier. Beginning May 3, the State Employment Security Department will increase weekly unemployment payments by \$45 in state funds and \$25 in federal funds, or a total \$70 increase in weekly benefits. The state weekly minimum amount payable also increases from \$129–\$155. However, unlike the state increase, the federal increase is retroactive to Feb. 22. That means the first payment recipients receive in May will include a lump sum of the additional federal benefits accrued since Feb. 22. This provides additional spending power for necessities such as groceries and heating bills.

Unemployed middle class workers will receive unemployment benefits while training for new jobs by expanding access for unemployed workers and opening the program to disabled workers, honorably discharged military personnel and low-income workers. (HB 1906)

Tips on getting through to Unemployment

Many people trying to apply for unemployment benefits have encountered backed up phone lines at the Employment Security Department (ESD). The agency had reduced its staff during extremely low unemployment in 2007 and early 2008, which made good fiscal sense at the time. In December, the agency processed a record-setting 90,331 new claims—by far the most the agency has ever processed in one month.

With the number of applicants up by 92 percent, the agency found itself drastically short on trained intake agents. ESD has addressed this challenge by training new agents, adding phone lines and expanding hours and opening phone lines on Saturdays to better handle the unprecedented workload. But, until the

agency can catch up with demand, here are some tips to make the application process go smoother:

- Instead of applying by phone, apply online at www.esd.wa.gov.
- If you must call (800-318-6022), use a land line to avoid using up cell-phone minutes while waiting for an agent. The wait times will probably be long.
- Don't hang up. Redialing will put you at the end of the line.
- If you're a night owl, take advantage of the lighter traffic and call ESD's automated phone line in the wee hours such as 1 a.m.
- Be prepared with complete and accurate employment information for the past two years. Inaccurate information will delay your benefits.

Town Hall Meeting

Sen. Paull Shin invites you to attend a 21st Legislative District Town Hall!

Saturday, March 21, 2009

10:00 a.m. – Noon

Serene Lake Elementary

4709 Picnic Point Rd.

Edmonds, WA

Please join me for a discussion about education and general questions.

- Use the phone system's automated features to file a weekly claim, reopen an existing claim, check on a benefit payment and change your address.
- When you do get through, tell the agent the date that you first tried to call. Your claim will be backdated so you won't lose money because of the delay.

SPS#09-7268 SP, 3-09

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Olympia, WA 98504-0421



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