



Senator Mike Carrell

28th Legislative District

2009 Session Review & Survey

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I hope you're looking forward to a wonderful summer! **The 2009 legislative session is now complete and there are a number of issues I'll cover in this newsletter.** The 2009-11 state operating budget that passed contains numerous cuts to prisons, as well as human services, education, health care and natural resources. I voted against the budget because it has the wrong priorities for our community. For example:

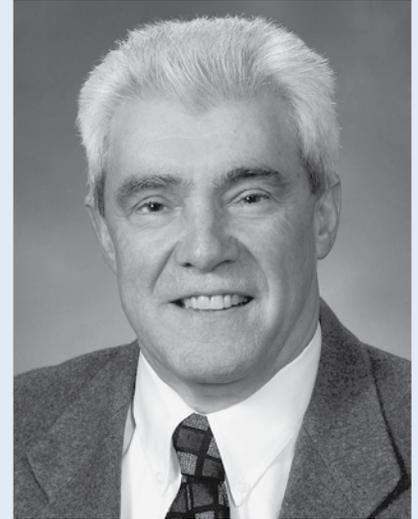
- Many college and university placements will be eliminated, yet **the state is giving away \$400 million in free college tuition.**
- Also, up to 40,000 people could be dropped from the Basic Health Plan but **illegal immigrants will continue to receive taxpayer-funded health care.**

The budget, which includes more than \$300 million in tax and fee increases, fails to fully address the state's record deficit and leaves us prone to an even worse financial situation in the future. Some of the cuts to programs in this budget were "backfilled" with one-time federal stimulus money and transfers from other state accounts, like the capital budget. Many programs were just suspended rather than rethinking our priorities. Because federal stimulus money to keep these programs afloat will not be available when we write future budgets, I will be striving to find more efficiencies in government to save us money down the road.

As always, it's an honor to represent you in the state Senate. If you have any comments or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me. Your input helps me better represent you. Also, if you'd like to join my "Kitchen Cabinet" and receive periodic legislative e-mail updates, send me an e-mail to carrell.mike@leg.wa.gov with your name, address and phone number. I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Mike Carrell
State Senator, 28th District



Contact Info

Olympia office:

102 Newhouse Building
P.O. Box 40428
Olympia WA 98504-0428

Home Phone: (253) 581-2859

Office Phone: (360) 786-7654

Toll-free: (800) 562-6000

TTY: (800) 635-9993

Fax: (360) 786-7819

E-mail: carrell.mike@leg.wa.gov

Web: SenateRepublicans.wa.gov/Carrell

Committees:

- Human Services and Corrections
- Judiciary
- Ways and Means
- Joint Committee on Military and Veteran Affairs

Sub-Committees:

- Eminent Domain Task Force
- Council on Aging
- Council on Children and Family Services

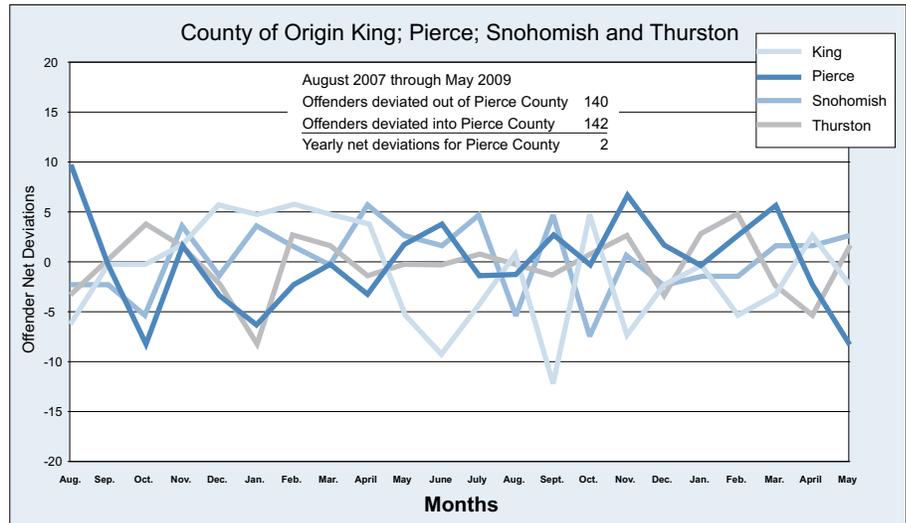
Get involved! Citizen survey inside...

My prison reform legislation – A two-year update

It's been two years since the governor signed my legislation, Senate Bill 6157, to improve the way offenders are supervised upon release. Because of this legislation, Pierce County is no longer a dumping ground for felons.

These new laws require that an offender coming out of prison must be returned to his or her county of origin unless it is determined to be inappropriate under certain circumstances.

In nearly two years, our county has gained only two more felons than we're supposed to have, which is a significant turnaround from the decades prior to 2007. **According to the Pierce County prosecutor, before my bill there were 150 to**



This graph shows the difference between the number of felons who were supposed to be released into Pierce County but were diverted elsewhere and the number of felons who were supposed to go elsewhere but were diverted into Pierce County.

200 offenders per year who should have gone back to their counties of origin but were instead dumped

here. Reducing that to almost zero is a huge improvement.

Issues on which I worked this session

I was successful in getting a number of bills through this session. Among those were two bills that I prime-sponsored which have already been signed into law.

- **SB 5130 – Prisoner access to public records.** This new law limits the number of frivolous public records requests by inmates who are abusing the public-disclosure system and trying to dig up personal information. I've never seen a bill move through the Legislature as quickly as this one did. The state needed the new law because of prisoners who are notorious for filing public-records requests that waste time and money. The irony is that one of these inmates is seeking public records from my office on the very bill that prevents inmates from seeking public records!

- **SB 5525 – Rental vouchers.** This law will provide limited rental vouchers for up to three months for felons if they have no money for housing upon release from prison. In 2008, the Department of Corrections held about 800 offenders an average of half a year past their release date because they lacked money for housing. This extra time in prison costs you an average of about \$16,000 per offender. My bill gives released offenders enough time to find employment, but not enough time to become dependent on the state, and will save the state up to \$5 million per biennium.

Another important bill that stalled in the House of Representatives this year (after passing the Senate unanimously) would have restricted the computer access of violent sex predators



housed in the state's Special Commitment Center on McNeil Island to prevent them from accessing child pornography.

Despite personal requests from several lawmakers and a signed letter asking the Speaker of the House to allow a floor vote on this bill, the House chose not to do so.

In just the past two years, there have been 110 prosecutions of SCC residents for either federal or state criminal charges, ranging from

possession of child pornography to violation of copyright laws. For some, simply possessing adult pornography is a violation of their commitment conditions in the SCC, since all of the residents are sex predators or are awaiting a commitment hearing. It's become a huge problem that is tying up resources and preventing these individuals from correcting their behavior, and I find it disappointing that the House stopped this bill that would have helped to solve the problem.

The bill would have allowed the use of a computer by SCC residents only under supervision. It's unfortunate that some in the House seem more focused on raising taxes and fees than protecting the public.

Anderson Island: Lessons learned

As you may recall, earlier this year an underwater avalanche damaged the cable which supplies electrical power to the residents of Anderson Island. After many weeks of my working with local and state agencies, the problem has been temporarily resolved and power was restored to island residents.

One of the lessons I learned from this ordeal is that **the state of Washington is not prepared for a major catastrophic event**, such as a large earthquake. A major earthquake could destroy much of our county's infrastructure making it difficult, if not impossible, for aid and rescue workers to reach

everyone in need. As we saw on Anderson Island, simply losing electrical power meant no heat, water or lights for many.

A major earthquake would also damage or destroy county water lines, sewer lines, electrical systems, and even bridges and overpasses. Government at every level is not prepared to handle that kind of massive emergency. What happened on Anderson Island is a microcosm of what could happen on a much larger scale in Pierce or any other county in Washington, and I'm going to be examining ways to improve the system for the safety of all our state's citizens.

CITIZEN SURVEY

I'd like to hear from you! Please take a moment to fill out this short survey to let me know what issues you are concerned about. **Just mail it back to my office or send your thoughts in an e-mail to carrell.mike@leg.wa.gov.**

1. This session our main focus was the state budget. Was that a primary concern of yours as well? If not, what state issue is your top priority and why?

2. I'm always working to find solutions to state problems, specifically in the areas of public safety and saving taxpayer money. Are there other issues you'd like me to address in the Legislature?

3. This year, I began using a new way of listening to constituent concerns through the use of "telephone" town hall meetings. Have you had a

chance to participate in one yet, and if not would you like to participate in the next one? Do you think that these telephone town halls are a more convenient and cost-effective way to communicate as opposed to traditional town hall meetings?

- _____
- _____
- _____
4. Despite having passed a "balanced" budget this session, the state will still be facing a budget deficit in the future due primarily to overspending. What ideas do you have to cut back state spending and/or improve services?

5. Would you like to talk to me personally about your concerns? If so, please give me your e-mail address and/or phone number and I'll be happy to get in touch with you soon.

Community Involvement

In recent years, I was able to help secure funds in the state capital budget for the new shelter over **DuPont's historic Dynamite Train**, which transported dynamite and other explosives from DuPont



to the Puget Sound during World War I through the Vietnam War. Construction of the train's shelter is now complete and I've been

volunteering my time helping to get the 1941 locomotive running again. It's been a very rewarding pastime for me!

You can see the completed shelter at **DuPont's Historic Town 100-Year Gala** on Saturday, July 25, from 1-4 p.m. Part of the festivities will include starting up the Dynamite Train locomotive, blowing its air whistle and running it down the track. There will be an old-fashioned ice cream social in Robinson Park next to the DuPont museum, which will debut the exhibit, Life in a Company Town: Yesterday and Today. It's also the same weekend the Old-Timers (people who worked at the original DuPont site) will have their reunion, and visitors can also

preview the documentary film, DuPont's Roots: Pathways to Fort Nisqually, and tour the ground floor of the assistant superintendent's house, which was built in the early 1900s. It should be a fun-filled, family event for all ages and **I look forward to meeting you there!**

Struggling to pay for health care?

The state insurance commissioner has information to help you find the health care resources you need. Just call the Insurance Consumer Hotline at **1-800-562-6900** or visit **www.insurance.wa.gov/consumers/FirstAid_Uninsured**.

SPS # 09-7398 SP

PRSRT STD
U.S. Postage PAID
Washington State
Department of
Printing 98501

Senator Mike Carrell
102 Newhouse Building
P.O. Box 40428
Olympia, WA 98504-0428