

2009 LEGISLATIVE REPORT

from **Senator Rosa Franklin**



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Dear Friends,

We are now gearing up for the '09 session. I do not have to tell you that we are in uncertain economic times. Many families are struggling to make ends meet and wonder how long the financial downturn will last. Unfortunately, no one seems to know when the crisis will end.

As we look ahead to the 2009 legislative session it is crucial that your elected leaders make responsible short and long-term fiscal choices that will set our state on a path to economic recovery, opportunity and sustainability. Jobs, education, health care and public safety remain my top priorities.

Representing the 29th Legislative District in Olympia is about creating opportunities and finding solutions to the problems we face. I will work with you and for you as we face these difficult times together.

The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a better understanding of our state's budget picture and solicit your input for balancing the budget with an expected shortfall of more than \$5 billion.

Although I'm hitting the highlights, there's more going on that I can't fit in—so please visit my new website in early January at www.sdc.wa.gov/franklin.htm to get more specific details and information on what we're doing to bring economic security and opportunity to families. Your input is always valued. Contact me by mail, online or call our hotline.

Sincerely,

Rosa Franklin
Rosa Franklin

Let's stay in touch

One of the best ways to stay in touch as well as receive timely information about my legislative issues is by e-memo.

If you would like to receive it, please send me an e-mail at franklin.rosa@leg.wa.gov.

Budget

When we passed the 2008 supplemental budget in March the Legislature left \$850 million in state savings accounts. What wasn't evident then was just how badly the economic downturn and credit crisis would impact the state. The "rainy day" fund is clearly not enough.

The decline in consumer confidence is the result of the drop in home prices and real disposable income. As a result we've seen a decrease in taxable retail and home sales – both of which are key sources of revenue for the state. The state faces a revenue shortfall of more than \$5 billion.

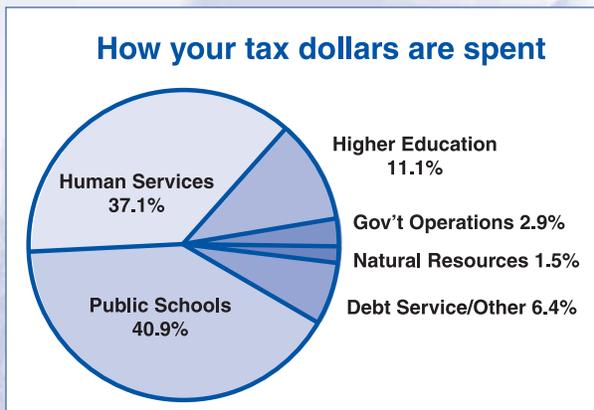
Just like the many families in our state struggling to stay atop of their growing daily expenses, our state income is lagging nearly 16 percent behind what is needed to pay to fund essential public services. The magnitude of the current shortfall is comparable to the 1981-83 budget cycle, which faced a 17 percent shortfall. This is the worst economic downturn I've witnessed since entering public service. Significant cuts will be necessary.

While we have great challenges ahead, we also have great opportunities to make the kind of big changes that

will help us better meet our long-term goals as a people and a state. For instance, we must continue to lead in shaping our state's sustainable growth by planting the seeds of a homegrown green economy and creating green research and manufacturing jobs. This means investing in renewable and alternative energy technology – wind, solar, wave, tidal, geothermal and nuclear. I also support a state stimulus package within our capital and transportation budgets that will reflect the needs of every corner of our state and get people back to work.

By thinking about where we want to be two, four or six years from now, we can make choices here at home to help drive our economy forward, while protecting taxpayers' basic priorities:

- Good jobs
- Strong schools
- Healthy families
- Safe and sustainable communities



Education

Washington's basic funding structure for the K-12 system has not significantly changed for over two decades. The demands on our K-12 educational system have grown exponentially over the last decade and expectations for students have changed dramatically. The Legislature intends to respond by developing a new funding formula that meets the evolving need of our students and schools.

The following issues will also have to be addressed by the Legislature in 2009:

- Setting of priorities and the accompanying phase-in and timeline for new education funding.
- The role of local revenue.
- How deregulation may play a role in providing some local relief during the phase in.

Health Care

As a former nurse, I know how concerned many of you are about skyrocketing health care costs. Every 30 seconds in the U.S. someone files for bankruptcy because of a serious health problem. This should not be happening in one of richest countries in the world. We need sensible rules to make sure that everyone has fair and affordable health care that they can count on.

This session we will focus on finding ways to bring down health care costs by simplifying the medical administrative process and making the health care system more efficient. This is an important step in putting Washingtonians back in control of their health care.

Health care remains one of my top legislative priorities, and I will do my best to make health care more affordable.

Home Foreclosures

According to mortgage experts, one in 200 homes will be foreclosed upon and six in 10 homeowners wish they understood the terms of their home loans better. Knowing where to go for advice to avoid foreclosure is important. The organizations listed below are a good resource. (Please note that many organizations are receiving a high volume of calls.)

Home Foreclosure Help

- **Consumer Counseling Northwest**..... 253.588.1858
- **Tacoma Home Ownership Center**..... 253.627.6560
- **Consumer Education and Training Services (CENTS)**..... 206.267.7017
- **El Centro de la Raza** 206.329.9442

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Town Hall Meeting

Join Me

The Legislature will reconvene January 12th to begin the process of writing a new state budget. I am scheduling a series of town hall meetings so that I can hear directly from you about what you think the Legislature should be focusing on. My seat mates Rep. Steve Conway and Rep. Steve Kirby are invited to join me.

January 31, 2009 – Saturday

Bates Technical College –
South Campus Cafeteria
2201 South 78th Street
Tacoma, WA
10:00 am – Noon

February 5, 2009 – Thursday

Lakeview Elementary School
Multi-Purpose Room
10501 – 47th Ave. SW
Lakewood, WA
6:00 pm – 8:00 pm



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