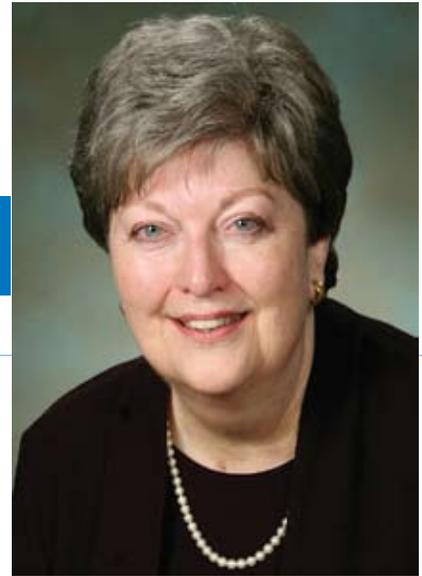


Washington State Senator • 38th Legislative District
Senator Jean Berkey

2010 Legislative Newsletter



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Senator Jean Berkey

represents the 38th Legislative District, which covers Everett and the Marysville area. She is Chair of the Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance Committee and is a member of the Transportation Committee.

Dear Friends,

The 2010 legislative session recently ended after one of the toughest sessions in our state's history.

The state economy and the challenge of balancing the budget have drawn the lion's share of attention this legislative session, and rightly so. But that doesn't mean that's all the session was about.

It was also about job creation and economic development. It was about improving the ways government works, whether by improving services or streamlining costs. It was about maintaining public safety in the face of new threats and trends in society. It was about making meaningful improvements to our public school system, including preschool and higher education.

The Legislature made many very positive accomplishments in these areas that have been largely overlooked due to the intense focus on the budget. But I believe these accomplishments are well worth highlighting, and I believe you'll agree.

You'll find details inside this newsletter. Please take a minute to look it over, and, as always, let me know your thoughts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jean". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

State Senator
38th Legislative District

Job creation and economic development



Green jobs – The JOBS Act of 2010 will give voters the option of approving \$505 million in bonds to finance energy efficiency improvements to public schools and buildings on public college and university campuses. This will create 38,000 jobs while making our public schools safer,

healthier, and more energy efficient, saving school districts \$126 million annually in operating costs.

Creating jobs in the construction budget – The Legislature approved a 2010 construction and maintenance budget that creates 13,700 jobs while funding shovel-ready construction projects in our K-12 schools, at our colleges

and universities, in community health and human services facilities, projects related to toxic clean-up, Puget Sound restoration and water quality projects, forest fire and forest disease prevention projects, community vitality projects and public safety projects.

Creating jobs in the transportation budget – We're putting 18,000 people to work annually in good-paying jobs on critical infrastructure and safety projects across the state at a time when the competitive climate is bringing projects in under bid and under budget, saving money that we can apply to additional transportation projects.

Worker retraining – The Legislature provided funding for retraining an additional 3,800 workers in high-demand fields, including aerospace.

Improving the ways government works

Streamlining government – We've set the stage for dramatically streamlining government by creating the Agency Reallocation and Realignment of Washington (ARROW) commission, modeled on the highly successful Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) created by Congress in 2005. Just as BRAC took the politics out of the base-closing process and broke gridlock that for years perpetuated billions in wasteful spending, the ARROW commission can do the same when it comes to making our state government more efficient.

Implementing ferry reforms – We reformed longstanding bargaining rules so that state ferry workers' pay, benefits, claims and arbitration will fall in line with that of other state workers instead of those of Alaska and other regions with far different standards.

Reforming General Assistance-Unemployable – When accidents happen or illness strikes, hard working people can fall on hard times. The GAU program is meant to provide temporary help, until people get the medical care they need, recover and get back to work-or, until it's clear that federal disability benefits are warranted. This year we



added time limits to GAU, a long-overdue reform needed to keep this benefit temporary. We also decided to offer care, not cash -- substance abuse treatment and housing vouchers. Research tells us that this is the most effective way to help folks facing the toughest problems get their lives back on track. Savings are expected to top \$25 million.

Paying off with prevention – Fifteen years ago, there were more than 1,500 juvenile offenders in state facilities every day. Thanks to crime prevention programs we have implemented that number is down to 650 and falling. These programs have saved the state hundreds of millions of dollars over that period of time as juvenile crime has been reduced. Over the next three years, we will close down Maple Lane School in Centralia, saving an additional \$5.8 million a year.

Closing costly corrections facilities – Through prevention efforts, rehabilitation of juvenile offenders, and sentencing reform, we have slowed the growth of crime to the point that we can now close McNeil Island Corrections Center without compromising the safety of our citizens. Due to its age and island location, MICC is one of the most expensive prisons to operate. Savings to Washington will top \$59 million a year.

Maintaining public safety

Responding to the Lakewood office tragedy – Lawmakers responded to the Lakewood officer tragedy in a compassionate, thoughtful and measured fashion. We passed a measure that, if approved by the voters, will amend the constitution to allow judges to deny bail to someone who has committed a crime that could result in life in prison if the individual has shown a history of violence that could endanger public safety.



Providing Green River flood protection – Because of weaknesses in the Howard Hanson Dam, the Green River Valley is vulnerable to severe flooding in the coming months that could devastate our regional economically. Currently, flood insurance to supplement federal flood coverage is

incredibly hard to come by for businesses in the Valley. We passed a critical bill that will give businesses the surplus coverage they need in the event of a flood disaster.

Making baby bottles safer – After years of hard work, the Legislature passed a bill to limit the use of the toxic chemical bisphenol A(BPA) in certain plastic products intended for children such as baby bottles, sippy cups and sports bottles. Washington is now one of less than a handful of states that have enacted legislation to remove this harmful chemical from certain consumer products.

Prohibiting driving with a cell phone – We made roads safer for all motorists by making it a primary offense to operate a cell phone while driving. The new law still allows the use of hands-free devices and calls to report serious emergencies but bans texting and other handheld uses. The law also prohibits cell phone use of any kind by a driver with a learner's permit or intermediate license.

Meaningful improvements to our public school system

Race to the Top funds – Lawmakers coordinated ongoing K-12 education reform efforts to make the state more competitive in its application to the federal “Race to the Top” grant program. Our measure will benefit all schools by increasing accountability, flexibility and targeted reforms in educator preparation and evaluation systems. Schools that continue to struggle will have access to a new strengthened system of support.



Increased funding options for our schools – We lifted the levy lid by 4 percent and increased levy equalization by 2 percent from 2011 to 2017, so that school districts could have more financing options during these times of steep budget cuts. Districts are authorized to go back to the voters for additional levies to take advantage of the new 4 percent levy increase.

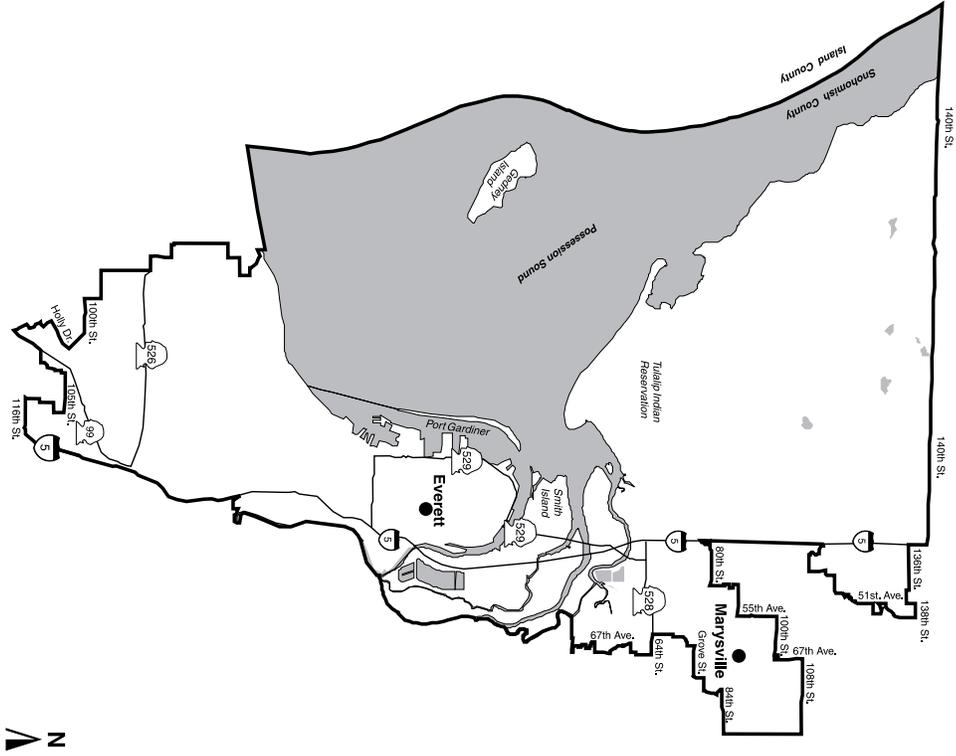
Early learning opportunities – Studies have shown that few strategies for reducing the achievement gap are as successful as giving children learning opportunities at the most critical point in their brain development. That's why we started down the path to ensure preschool opportunities for the three and four year old children who need them most. Because it's one of the smartest investments around and can produce returns in as little as a decade, we've set a goal of guaranteeing early learning opportunities for all eligible children from low-income families by the 2018-19 school year.

Refocusing the state lottery – We're creating a new revenue source for higher education, which has suffered severe cuts to balance recent budgets, by refocusing the way the state Lottery markets its products and funds state services. Based on more successful lotteries in Georgia and Arkansas, this change will dedicate lottery revenues to higher education and market the Lottery that way, with expectations of generating \$456 million in additional lottery funds annually.

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