

Senator Chris Marr

Dear Neighbors,

I'm back home now after a grueling and difficult legislative session and already have been making the rounds to meet with folks and reconnect with the district.

There's a lot to report and in this newsletter I'll tell you about the Legislature's solution to the state's budget problem — and why I voted against it. I'll also tell you about a series of bills I worked on to increase access to prescription drugs, promote a new industry in Washington, and improve safety for our kids and emergency responders.

But my job doesn't end when the Legislature leaves Olympia, not by a long shot.

In fact, I've recently re-opened my district office downtown, right across from the Davenport Hotel. It's centrally located so that it can be easily reached by folks from both the north and south sides of Spokane.

Unlike a lot of folks in the Legislature, this is my day job. And you'll usually find me working out of my downtown office five days a week or more. This is a great time of year for me to meet with constituents one on one or visit with various civic organizations to learn more about constituents' needs and concerns.

Sometimes being a legislator means helping a constituent cut through red tape at a state agency. Sometimes it simply means directing them to the place where they can get the help they need. And sometimes it means addressing their concerns by re-writing state law. In fact, many of the bills that I sponsor originate with problems that are brought to me in my district office.

So I invite you to make use of the resource by giving my office a call when the need arises. This is why I'm here.

Sincerely,



Chris Marr
State Senator, 6th Legislative District



Standing Committees:

- Transportation (vice chair)
- Environment, Water and Energy
- Health & Long Term Care

Spokane office:

827 W. First Ave., Suite 318, Spokane, WA, 99201
Phone: (509) 456-2450
E-mail: marr.chris@leg.wa.gov
Web: <http://www.sdc.wa.gov/senators/marr/>



Why I couldn't support the budget solution

Over the course of the last two sessions the Legislature has faced a budget shortfall like no other in the history of our state. In total, the multi-year shortfall totaled almost \$12 billion, a full one-third of the state general fund budget.

To their credit, legislators made many difficult decisions. But, unfortunately, I was unable to vote for the budget this year because I could not support the new taxes used to support it and the suspension of Initiative 960's taxpayer protections. Let me tell you why.

closed a \$9 billion shortfall last year without resorting to new taxes and started off this session by making millions of dollars in additional cuts, we didn't go deep enough. In my view, we didn't adequately reprioritize state spending before the House and Senate began voting midway through session to suspend I-960's two-thirds vote requirement for new taxes. That's a place I just couldn't go.

So when a series of votes ensued over the weeks that followed to raise taxes on businesses and middle class

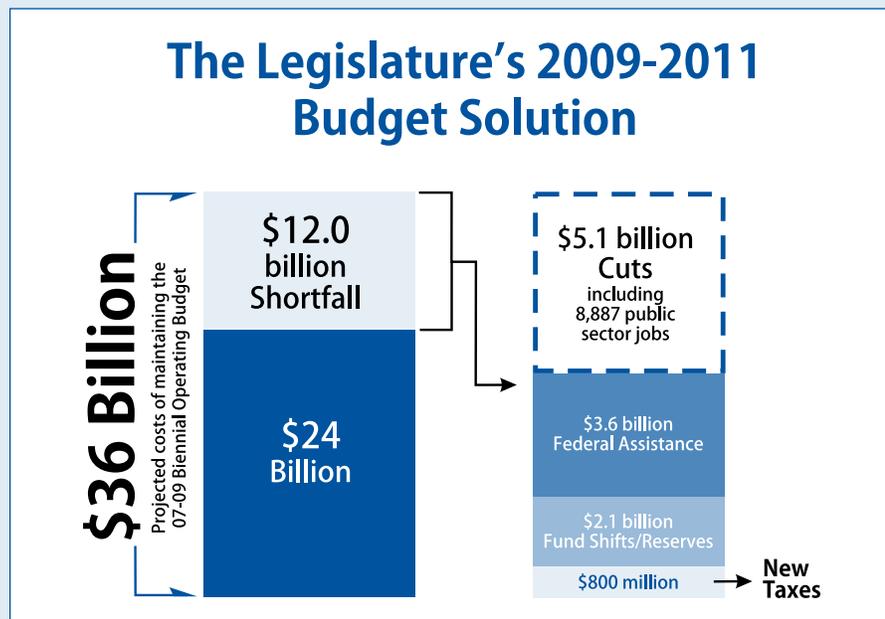
the past two years, it was too much for middle class families struggling to make ends meet. It was too much for so many small businesses just barely clinging to life, waiting for the economic turnaround to return them to profitability.

And, ultimately, it was too much for me.

Unfortunately, these budget problems aren't going away. Over the last two years the Legislature has kept some valued services alive by using temporary assistance from the federal government or other one-time dollars from the state's rainy day fund. Those dollars are going away even as demand for state services continues to grow.

That means that next year the Legislature almost certainly will be facing another budget shortfall. And when it does I will be an advocate for fundamental reforms that downsize government and avoid the kind of new taxes that threaten to stunt our economic growth.

I believe the state's long-term ability to sustain core government services — providing an excellent educational system for our kids and a responsible safety net to catch our most vulnerable citizens when they fall — is entirely dependent on our ability to stimulate job growth and expand our tax base. I believe we can better protect those core services and our economy by making more tough decisions about lower priority services our state can no longer afford.



I said going in that new taxes should only be used as a last resort and considered only after the Legislature had exhaustively gone through the budget to identify savings and fundamentally reform government to make it smaller.

While it's true the Legislature

families, I was a no vote. And I voted against the final budget proposal that depended on them.

Even though the final tax package of about \$800 million was dwarfed by the \$5.1 billion in cuts to services and public employee compensation over

Getting results

I've had the good fortune this year to have a number of bills approved by both the House and Senate and signed into law by the governor.

Standing up for victims' rights

Last year I was approached by the family of a young man — Ian Fleming — who had been seriously injured after being assaulted by another juvenile. Under the state's juvenile restitution laws, Ian was entitled to have his expenses reimbursed by his assailant.

But those laws only cover actual expenses up to the time that restitution is set, in this case about \$9,000. It did not cover the \$10,000 in additional costs for procedures that Ian could not undergo until his body had sufficiently healed from the trauma of his injuries.

So I introduced Senate Bill 6192 to allow the restitution terms to be changed during a period of up to 10 years after the offender's 18th birthday. The bill was signed into law and will prevent victims from being left holding the bag for unforeseen treatment costs.

Fighting for our craft distilleries

Three years ago a bill I proposed was signed into law defining craft distilleries as those that use Washington-grown ingredients to make up more than half the raw materials used in the production of spirits. That led to Washington's first grain distillery since prohibition,



Ian Fleming, left, sustained serious injuries in a 2006 assault but was unable to get all of his medical expenses covered under the state's juvenile restitution laws. A bill sponsored by Sen. Chris Marr will change that.

Spokane's own Dry Fly Distilling.

Since then, the company has taken off beyond expectations, selling in 17 states and Canada. Two other Washington craft distilleries have begun selling spirits and a third has begun production. Eight other craft distilleries have been fully licensed and at least 16 more license applications are pending.

This year I sponsored Senate Bill 6485 which triples the volume each distillery is allowed to produce each year from 20,000 gallons to 60,000. It will further allow all domestic distillers to pour spirits at special occasions in Washington.

This bill also was signed into law to boost a new industry in Washington while supporting our oldest one — agriculture.

Making prescription drugs more available

Also signed into law this year was Senate Bill 6627, my bill allowing Washington pharmacies to fill prescriptions written

by advanced nurse practitioners in Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia.

The bill recognizes the increasingly mobile nature of our society. It's also one small thing we can do to make prescription drugs more accessible for folks who may live in Spokane but work in Idaho and vice versa.

Preserving options for fire service

This year I introduced Senate Bill 6418 at the request of the city of Spokane to preserve future fire service options. Currently, a city the size of Spokane has limited options. But under the bill a city with a population up to 300,000 would be allowed to be annexed into a fire district or create its own with a public vote.

This ultimately could give voters a greater say over the level of fire service they deem most appropriate.

Preserving public safety

This year I brought a couple bills to the Legislature to increase safety for our kids and emergency responders. Both were signed into law.

I introduced Senate Bill 6363 after learning an informal survey of school districts produced rampant reports of motorists driving through school zones at speeds well in excess of the posted 20 mph limit.

This kind of behavior simply can't be tolerated and we can't wait for a tragedy to occur before we take action. The bill doubles the fine to \$248, an amount that could not be reduced by a judge.

The new penalty is identical to what is assessed when a motorist drives past a school bus with its "STOP" paddle extended. The bill also establishes a process for crossing guards to notify authorities within 72 hours of an incident occurring to spur an investigation.



Sen. Chris Marr presides over the Senate during a pro forma floor session in late March.

House Bill 2464 also was signed into law. It's the House version of my bill to double fines for motorists who speed past law enforcement or emergency vehicles stopped on the roadside while responding to a call.

It also creates the crime of reckless endangerment of emergency zone workers for motor-

ists who speed by in a manner that would be likely to endanger emergency responders. Violators would have their driving privileges suspended for 60 days.

Roadsides are dangerous work environments for police and fire crews and we need to do a better job of protecting those who protect us.

SPS 10-7667 • 4-2010 • SP

PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
OLYMPIA WA
PERMIT #133

**Senator
Chris Marr**
PO Box 40406
Olympia, WA 98504-0406