

SIXTY NINTH LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

TENTH DAY

House Chamber, Olympia, Wednesday, January 22, 2025

The House was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by the Speaker.

Reading of the Journal of the previous day was dispensed with and it was ordered to stand approved.

There being no objection, the House advanced to the third order of business.

MESSAGE FROM KING COUNTY

A MOTION making an appointment to fill the vacancy in the position of state Representative for the 41st Legislative District.

WHEREAS, a vacancy exists in the position of state Representative for the 41st Legislative District due to the resignation of Representative Tana Senn, which is effective as of January 16, 2025, and

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 15 of the Washington state Constitution prescribes the process for filling vacancies in either house of the state Legislature, and

WHEREAS, the candidates must reside in the 41st Legislative District and be of the same political party as the legislator whose office is vacated, and

WHEREAS, the 41st legislative district Democratic Precinct Committee officers have met to consider candidates for the position, and

WHEREAS the King County Democratic Central Committee has submitted the names of three constitutionally qualified candidates to fill the vacancy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. Janice Zahn is hereby appointed to the position of state Representative for the 41st Legislative District in the Washington state House of Representatives and continue to serve until a successor is elected at the next general election and the successor has qualified.

B. A copy of this motion shall be provided to the clerk of the Washington state House of Representatives, the Governor of the state of Washington, and the chair of the Washington state Democratic Party.

Motion 16728 was introduced on 1/21/2025 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 1/21/2025, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Balducci, Barón, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Perry, von Reichbauer and Zahilay

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

MESSAGE FROM KING COUNTY

A MOTION making an appointment to fill the vacancy in the position of state Representative for the 34th Legislative District.

WHEREAS, a vacancy exists in the position of state Representative for the 34th Legislative District due to the resignation of a 34th legislative district state representative, who

has been appointed by the King County council to fill the vacancy of a state senator for that legislative district, and

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 15 of the Washington state Constitution prescribes the process for filling vacancies in either house of the state Legislature, and

WHEREAS, the candidates must reside in the 34th Legislative District and be of the same political party as the legislator whose office is vacated, and

WHEREAS, the 34th legislative district Democratic Precinct Committee officers have met to consider candidates for the position, and

WHEREAS the King County Democratic Central Committee has submitted the names of three constitutionally qualified candidates to fill the vacancy;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

A. Brianna Thomas is hereby appointed to the position of state Representative for the 34th Legislative District in the Washington state House of Representatives and continue to serve until a successor is elected at the next general election and the successor has qualified.

B. A copy of this motion shall be provided to the clerk of the Washington state House of Representatives, the Governor of the state of Washington, and the chair of the Washington state Democratic Party.

Motion 16729 was introduced on 1/21/2025 and passed as amended by the Metropolitan King County Council on 1/21/2025, by the following vote:

Yes: 8 – Balducci, Baron, Dembowski, Dunn, Mosqueda, Perry, von Reichbauer and Zahilay

KING COUNTY COUNCIL
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Girmay Zahilay, Chair

ATTEST:

Melani Hay, Clerk of the Council

There being no objection, the House advanced to the fourth order of business.

INTRODUCTION & FIRST READING

HB 1495 by Representatives Hill, Schmidt, Peterson, Reed, Goodman, Parshley, Ormsby, Pollet, Scott and Volz

AN ACT Relating to establishing a college promise pilot program; adding new sections to chapter 28B.92 RCW; making an appropriation; and providing expiration dates.

Referred to Committee on Appropriations.

HB 1496 by Representatives Berry, Bronoske, Abbarno, Lekanoff, Doglio, Peterson, Reed, Griffey, Simmons, Goodman, Parshley, Ormsby, Fosse, Pollet, Hill, Salahuddin and Scott

AN ACT Relating to strengthening patients' rights regarding their health care information by promoting access to information and providing enforcement protections for the appropriate use of the information; amending RCW 70.02.010, 70.02.030, 70.02.080, 70.02.090, 70.02.170, and

70.02.220; reenacting and amending RCW 70.02.260; and adding a new section to chapter 70.02 RCW.

Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

HB 1497 by Representatives Doglio, Reeves, Berry, Reed, Parshley, Ramel, Pollet, Hill and Scott

AN ACT Relating to improving outcomes associated with waste material management systems, including organic materials management systems; amending RCW 70A.207.050, 70A.205.540, 70A.205.545, 15.64.060, and 28A.235.180; adding a new section to chapter 70A.207 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 70A.205 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 19.27 RCW; adding new sections to chapter 28A.235 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 15 RCW; creating a new section; and prescribing penalties.

Referred to Committee on Environment & Energy.

HB 1498 by Representatives Davis, Couture, Macri, Griffey, Walen, Reed, Simmons, Goodman, Parshley, Leavitt, Pollet, Hill, Salahuddin and Scott

AN ACT Relating to domestic violence co-responder programs; reenacting and amending RCW 36.18.010; and adding new sections to chapter 43.280 RCW.

Referred to Committee on Appropriations.

HB 1499 by Representatives Reed, Goodman, Mena, Scott, Entenman, Cortes, Farivar, Taylor, Berry, Ortiz-Self, Lekanoff, Doglio, Ryu, Peterson, Parshley, Ormsby, Macri, Pollet, Hill and Salahuddin

AN ACT Relating to legal financial obligations; amending RCW 3.50.100, 3.62.020, 3.62.040, 3.66.120, 7.105.450, 9.92.060, 9.94A.725, 9.94A.750, 9.94A.753, 9.94A.760, 9.95.210, 10.01.160, 10.01.170, 10.05.140, 10.05.140, 10.05.170, 10.05.170, 10.64.015, 10.64.120, 10.82.070, 10.101.020, 35.20.220, 36.18.016, 36.18.020, 4.56.110, 6.17.020, 7.68.035, 9.92.070, 9.94A.6333, 9.94B.040, 10.01.090, 10.01.180, 10.01.185, and 43.79.505; adding new sections to chapter 10.01 RCW; repealing RCW 3.62.085, 10.46.190, 10.73.160, 10.82.090, and 70.48.390; providing an effective date; and providing an expiration date.

Referred to Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

HB 1500 by Representatives Reed, Entenman, Gregerson, Peterson, Fosse, Farivar, Doglio, Alvarado, Hill, Berry, Simmons, Ormsby and Macri

AN ACT Relating to resale certificates for units in common interest communities; and amending RCW 64.90.640.

Referred to Committee on Housing.

HB 1501 by Representatives Reed, Entenman, Gregerson, Peterson, Fosse, Farivar, Doglio, Alvarado, Hill, Berry, Lekanoff, Simmons, Ormsby and Macri

AN ACT Relating to inquiries into association governance or operations by unit owners in common interest communities; adding a new section to chapter 64.90 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 64.32 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 64.34 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 64.38 RCW; and providing expiration dates.

Referred to Committee on Housing.

HB 1502 by Representatives Rule, Macri, Lekanoff, Davis, Reed, Simmons, Parshley and Tharinger

AN ACT Relating to establishing a behavioral health teaching clinic designation and enhancement rate in Washington for

eligible licensed or certified behavioral health agencies; reenacting and amending RCW 71.24.025; adding new sections to chapter 71.24 RCW; and creating a new section.

Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

HB 1503 by Representatives Gregerson, Ryu, Ortiz-Self, Berry, Peterson, Reed, Goodman, Ormsby, Parshley, Macri, Ramel, Hill and Bergquist

AN ACT Relating to furthering digital equity and opportunity in Washington state; amending RCW 43.330.532, 43.330.534, 43.330.536, 43.330.539, and 43.330.5395; reenacting and amending RCW 43.330.530; adding new sections to chapter 43.06D RCW; creating a new section; and recodifying RCW 43.330.539 and 43.330.5395.

Referred to Committee on Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans.

HB 1504 by Representatives Reeves, Doglio, Davis, Reed, Ormsby, Ramel, Pollet and Thai

AN ACT Relating to enhancing public safety by requiring financial responsibility to purchase or possess a firearm or operate a firearm range; amending RCW 9.41.090; reenacting and amending RCW 43.84.092 and 43.84.092; adding new sections to chapter 9.41 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 43.24 RCW; prescribing penalties; providing effective dates; and providing an expiration date.

Referred to Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

HB 1505 by Representatives Walen, Berry, Lekanoff, Reed, Ormsby, Tharinger, Macri, Hill and Scott

AN ACT Relating to correcting obsolete or erroneous references in statutes administered by the insurance commissioner, by repealing defunct statutes and reports, aligning policy with federal law and current interpretations, making timeline adjustments, protecting patient data, and making technical corrections; amending RCW 42.56.400, 48.14.070, 48.19.460, 48.19.501, 48.19.540, 48.37.050, 48.38.010, 48.38.012, 48.43.0128, 48.43.115, 48.43.135, 48.43.743, 48.135.030, 48.140.040, 48.140.050, 48.150.100, and 48.160.020; repealing RCW 48.02.230, 48.02.240, 48.19.500, 48.43.049, 48.43.650, 48.140.070, and 48.160.005; and providing an effective date.

Referred to Committee on Consumer Protection & Business.

HB 1506 by Representatives Walen, Ormsby and Scott

AN ACT Relating to imposing a business and occupation tax on state-chartered credit unions that merge with a commercial bank; and amending RCW 82.04.405.

Referred to Committee on Finance.

HB 1507 by Representatives Scott, Berry, Peterson, Reed, Simmons, Ormsby, Farivar, Parshley, Fosse, Macri, Ramel, Pollet and Ortiz-Self

AN ACT Relating to prohibiting certain nondisclosure and nondisparagement provisions in agreements between health care providers and patients related to medical malpractice, or any tort or crime; adding a new section to chapter 4.24 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

Referred to Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

HB 1508 by Representatives Reeves, Parshley and Springer

AN ACT Relating to expanding revenue generation and economic opportunities from natural climate solutions and ecosystem services; amending RCW 79.02.010, 79.105.150,

and 79.15.010; reenacting and amending RCW 79.64.110 and 79.22.050; adding a new chapter to Title 79 RCW; and providing an expiration date.

Referred to Committee on Agriculture & Natural Resources.

HB 1509 by Representatives Taylor, Dent, Davis, Reed and Hill

AN ACT Relating to family reconciliation services; amending RCW 13.32A.040 and 13.32A.045; reenacting and amending RCW 13.32A.030; and adding a new section to chapter 13.32A RCW.

Referred to Committee on Early Learning & Human Services.

HB 1510 by Representatives Hill, Taylor, Davis, Peterson, Ormsby, Leavitt, Farivar, Macri, Scott and Ortiz-Self

AN ACT Relating to participation in the public employees' retirement system judicial benefit multiplier program by commissioners of the supreme court and court of appeals; and amending RCW 41.40.124, 41.40.767, 41.40.870, and 41.40.877.

Referred to Committee on Appropriations.

HB 1511 by Representatives Parshley, Fosse, Berry, Reed, Simmons, Leavitt, Fitzgibbon, Ramel and Paul

AN ACT Relating to Washington state ferries captains; and amending RCW 47.64.340.

Referred to Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards.

HB 1512 by Representatives Street, Simmons, Macri, Taylor, Duerr, Farivar, Reed, Alvarado, Morgan, Mena, Peterson, Pollet, Parshley, Berry, Gregerson, Lekanoff, Santos, Thai, Scott, Doglio and Hill

AN ACT Relating to improving traffic safety; adding a new section to chapter 47.01 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 46.64 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 46.63 RCW; and creating a new section.

Referred to Committee on Community Safety.

HB 1513 by Representatives Stearns, Doglio, Ramel, Street, Hunt, Kloba, Ortiz-Self, Berry, Reed, Simmons, Parshley and Timmons

AN ACT Relating to safeguarding natural resources in the Washington State Seashore Conservation Area; and amending RCW 79A.05.605, 79A.05.640, and 79A.05.650.

Referred to Committee on Environment & Energy.

HB 1514 by Representatives Ramel, Berry, Doglio, Hunt, Reed and Parshley

AN ACT Relating to encouraging the deployment of low carbon thermal energy networks; amending RCW 80.04.010, 80.04.550, 80.28.005, 80.28.010, 80.28.020, 80.28.030, 80.28.040, 80.28.050, 80.28.060, 80.28.065, 80.28.068, 80.28.070, 80.28.075, 80.28.080, 80.28.090, 80.28.100, 80.28.120, 80.28.130, 80.28.160, 80.28.170, 80.28.240, 80.28.430, and 19.280.030; adding new sections to chapter 80.28 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 80.04 RCW; and adding a new section to chapter 43.31 RCW.

Referred to Committee on Environment & Energy.

HB 1515 by Representatives Reed, Walen, Berry, Cortes, Peterson, Richards, Ryu, Macri, Hill and Scott

AN ACT Relating to modernizing the regulation of alcohol service in public spaces; amending RCW 66.24.710,

66.08.030, 66.44.100, and 66.24.690; adding a new section to chapter 66.08 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 66.24 RCW; creating a new section; and prescribing penalties.

Referred to Committee on Consumer Protection & Business.

HB 1516 by Representatives Hill, Taylor, Reed, Simmons, Morgan, Ormsby, Farivar, Parshley, Gregerson, Macri, Ramel, Pollet and Salahuddin

AN ACT Relating to conducting a study of insurance coverage options for permanently affordable homeownership units; creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

Referred to Committee on Consumer Protection & Business.

HB 1517 by Representatives Gregerson, Ryu, Doglio, Peterson, Reed, Ormsby, Parshley, Macri and Hill

AN ACT Relating to providing a revenue stream to fund digital equity programs; amending RCW 82.32.145; adding a new section to chapter 82.08 RCW; adding a new section to chapter 28A.650 RCW; adding a new chapter to Title 82 RCW; creating a new section; prescribing penalties; providing an effective date; providing an expiration date; and declaring an emergency.

Referred to Committee on Finance.

HB 1518 by Representatives Reed and Doglio

AN ACT Relating to enhancing public safety by establishing liability standards for certain vehicle collisions; adding a new section to chapter 4.24 RCW; and prescribing penalties.

Referred to Committee on Civil Rights & Judiciary.

HB 1519 by Representatives Fey, Barkis and Goodman

AN ACT Relating to making adjustments to the service and filing fees for vehicle subagents, county auditors, and other agents; and amending RCW 46.17.040 and 46.17.005.

Referred to Committee on Transportation.

HB 1520 by Representatives Thai, Reed, Simmons and Macri

AN ACT Relating to expanding pharmacists' scope of practice to improve access to health care and the management of chronic diseases; amending RCW 69.41.030; reenacting and amending RCW 18.64.011; adding a new section to chapter 18.64 RCW; creating new sections; and providing an expiration date.

Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

HB 1521 by Representatives Rule, Callan, Taylor, Hunt, Davis, Reed, Simmons, Springer, Hill, Thai and Timmons

AN ACT Relating to supporting caregivers who provide complex care services to children with heightened medical needs; and adding a new section to chapter 74.09 RCW.

Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

HB 1522 by Representatives Dent, Reeves, Springer and Hill

AN ACT Relating to approval of electric utility wildfire mitigation plans; amending RCW 80.24.010; adding a new section to chapter 80.28 RCW; creating a new section; and repealing RCW 80.28.440.

Referred to Committee on Environment & Energy.

HB 1523 by Representatives Macri, Low, Lekanoff, Fosse, Thai, Farivar, Berry, Doglio, Davis, Peterson, Reed, Simmons, Ormsby, Parshley, Pollet, Hill, Salahuddin and Scott

AN ACT Relating to establishing the essential worker health care program; adding new sections to chapter 43.20A RCW; adding new sections to chapter 48.02 RCW; creating a new section; and declaring an emergency.

Referred to Committee on Health Care & Wellness.

HB 1524 by Representatives Obras, Scott, Fosse, Hill, Gregerson, Reed, Berry, Parshley, Salahuddin, Peterson, Simmons, Ormsby, Macri and Pollet

AN ACT Relating to ensuring compliance with and enforcement of certain workplace standards and requirements applicable to employers of isolated employees; and amending RCW 49.60.515.

Referred to Committee on Labor & Workplace Standards.

HJM 4002 by Representatives Dent, Paul, Barkis, Nance, Entenman, Orcutt, Klicker, Mena, Shavers, Dufault, Ormsby, Springer and Timmons

Designating the bridge that carries Interstate 90 over the Columbia river near Vantage, Washington as the "Medal of Honor Bridge."

Referred to Committee on Transportation.

There being no objection, the bills and memorial listed on the day's introduction sheet under the fourth order of business were referred to the committees so designated.

There being no objection, the House advanced to the fifth order of business.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

January 17, 2025

HB 1012 Prime Sponsor, Representative Taylor: Authorizing the women's commission to solicit gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources. Reported by Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations

MAJORITY recommendation: Do pass. Signed by Representatives Mena, Chair; Stearns, Vice Chair; Waters, Ranking Minority Member; Chase; Doglio and Farivar.

Referred to Committee on Rules for second reading

January 21, 2025

HB 1073 Prime Sponsor, Representative Leavitt: Keeping our Washington national guard strong act. Reported by Committee on Technology, Economic Development, & Veterans

MAJORITY recommendation: Do pass. Signed by Representatives Ryu, Chair; Kloba, Vice Chair; Volz, Ranking Minority Member; Barnard, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cortes; Donaghy; Keaton; Paul; Penner; Simmons and Waters.

Referred to Committee on Appropriations

January 20, 2025

HB 1075 Prime Sponsor, Representative Walen: Expanding housing supply by supporting the

ability of public housing authorities to finance affordable housing developments. Reported by Committee on Housing

MAJORITY recommendation: Do pass. Signed by Representatives Peterson, Chair; Hill, Vice Chair; Richards, Vice Chair; Low, Ranking Minority Member; Jacobsen, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Manjarrez, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Barkis; Connors; Cortes; Dufault; Engell; Entenman; Gregerson; Lekanoff; Reed; Timmons;

Referred to Committee on Rules for second reading

There being no objection, the bills listed on the day's committee reports under the fifth order of business were referred to the committees so designated.

SIGNED BY THE SPEAKER

The Speaker signed the following bills:

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 8401
SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 8402

JOINT SESSION

The President called upon the Sergeant at Arms of the Senate and the Sergeant at Arms of the House to escort Speaker of the House, Representative Laurie Jenkins, Speaker Pro Tempore Chris Stearns, and Representative Hunter Abell to the Rostrum and members of the House of Representatives to seats within the Chamber.

Pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 8402, the President called the Joint Session to order. The Secretary called the roll of the members of the House of Representatives. The Secretary called the roll of the members of the Senate. The President declared that a quorum of the Legislature was present.

APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The President of the Senate appointed a committee of honor to escort the State Supreme Court Justices to the Senate Chamber: Senators T'wina Nobles and Phil Fortunato and Representatives Julio Cortes and Rob Chase.

APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The President of the Senate appointed a committee of honor to escort the statewide elected officials to the Senate Chamber: Senators Bill Ramos and Perry Dozier and Representatives Adam Bernbaum and John Ley.

APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

The President of the Senate appointed a committee of honor, consisting of Senators Emily Alvarado and Nikki Torres and Representatives Kristine Reeves and Hunter Abell to escort Chief Justice Debra L. Stephens to the Senate Chamber.

Sergeant at Arms Andy Staubitz announced the arrival of the Justices of the Supreme Court. The committee of honor escorted Justices to seats at the front of the Chamber. The President introduced: Associate Chief Justice Charles Johnson, Justice Barbara Madsen, Justice Steven González, Justice Sheryll Gordon McCloud, Justice Mary Yu, Justice Raquel Montoya-Lewis, Justice Helen Whitener, and Justice Salvador Mungia.

Sergeant at Arms Andy Staubitz announced the arrival of the statewide elected officials. The committee of honor escorted statewide elected officials to seats at the front of the Chamber. The President introduced: Secretary of State Steve Hobbs, State Auditor Pat McCarthy, Insurance Commissioner Patty Kuderer, and State Treasurer Mike Pellicciotti.

Sergeant at Arms Andy Staubit announced the arrival of the Honorable Debra L. Stephens, Chief Justice of the State Supreme Court. The committee of honor escorted Chief Justice Stephens to the rostrum. The President introduced and welcomed Chief Justice Stephens to the Joint Session.

The Washington State Patrol Honor Guard, composed of Sergeant James Maguire, Trooper Dean Gallanger, Trooper Matt Gagley, and Trooper Jared Raber, presented the Colors.

Page Keshav Karkamkar led the Chamber in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Travis Adams of Pasco performed the National Anthem.

Rabbi Seth Goldstein from Temple Beth Hatfiloh, Olympia offered the prayer.

The President welcomed and introduced Chief Justice Debra L. Stephens.

STATE OF THE JUDICIARY ADDRESS

Chief Justice Stephens: “Members of the Washington State Legislature, elected officials in the Executive branch, colleagues in the Judiciary, and people all across Washington,

I come before you as Chief Justice of the Washington State Supreme Court, representing the dedicated individuals who serve the public in the Judicial Branch of our government. We are the many judges and other court professionals who work every day, in communities large and small, to uphold our collective commitment to equal justice under the law. Thank you for receiving our Annual State of the Judiciary Report and providing this opportunity to highlight some of our work. Today, I will focus on efforts to build what we call, “Courts of the Future,” reflecting the judiciary’s continued push toward innovation, responsiveness and inclusivity in service to the people of Washington.

The past few years have tested us profoundly. We are still feeling the impacts of a global pandemic with immense personal and social losses. The resulting disruptions in judicial operations have underscored the urgent need for systemic improvements to deliver timely and equitable justice. But the challenges have only strengthened our resolve, and we arrive in 2025 with the benefit of lessons learned and of having more diverse voices at the table. Much of the work I will share today was accomplished under the leadership of Chief Justice Steven Gonzalez, and I want to take this opportunity to thank Justice Gonzalez for his vision and passion for justice.

Working together with leaders across the judicial branch and with our partners, we have achieved milestones that evidence the judiciary’s resilience and commitment to constant improvement. Courts continue to offer remote proceedings and alternative approaches to dispute resolution, employing new technologies that have increased access to justice in unprecedented ways. Developing solutions tailored to their specific needs, courts are working through backlogs, improving access while protecting public health and safety, and delivering critical services to our most vulnerable community members.

We have learned that, when it comes to innovation, one size doesn’t fit all, and improved communications among courts across Washington is key to on-the-ground success. Successful communication couldn’t happen without the dedication of volunteer judges and court administrators who serve in the leadership of their trial court associations. I want to recognize Judge Kristin Ferrera of Chelan County Superior Court, President of the SCJA; Judge Karl Williams of Pierce County District Court, President of the DMCJA; along with representatives from our associations for court administration and management, Frankie Peters of Thurston County and TJ Bohl of Pierce County. Thank you for your leadership and for joining us today.

Let me highlight just a few examples of successful court programs we’re working on across the state: Therapeutic courts. With support and technical assistance from our Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), innovative therapeutic court programs

have nearly doubled across the state. They provide vital alternatives to traditional sentencing through a focus on rehabilitation and services for individuals struggling with mental health and substance use disorders and other challenges. The expansion of therapeutic courts reflects the vision of the judges and court staff who lead them and their dedication to innovative justice solutions that reduce recidivism and foster community healing.

Court interpreter services. With your support, and assisted by the leadership of our Interpreter & Language Access Commission, services have been significantly expanded to ensure greater access to justice for non-English-speaking and limited-English-proficient individuals statewide. Courts are finding creative ways to deliver services and stretch our limited resources. We will continue to work together to enhance language programs because we know they are essential to fair access in our legal system.

Just as we strive to literally hear more diverse voices in our courts, we’ve launched a new Equity and Access web page, providing tools and resources for courts to implement diversity and inclusion strategies more effectively. This aligns with the judiciary’s broader strategic plan to ensure that every individual, regardless of background, experiences equitable treatment within our judicial system, in every court across the State.

In our report and at the Washington Courts’ website, you can learn more about other court initiatives that have been recognized by the Board for Judicial Administration with “Innovating Justice Awards.” These recognitions emerged as part of our COVID-19 pandemic response, to highlight the many ways courts adapted and responded to better serve the people in their communities. They express the collective appreciation of the BJA members and partners. And, along the theme of appreciation, please join me in acknowledging our BJA co-chair, Judge Alicia Burton from Pierce County Superior Court. I also want to thank and acknowledge the leadership of our judicial branch partner agencies: Sara Robbins, Director of the Office of Civil Legal Aid (OCLA) and Larry Jefferson, Director of the Office of Public Defense.

Courts of the future must be aware of the historic inequities of the past, and our judicial branch initiatives reflect an unwavering commitment to tearing down barriers, fostering inclusion, and building a justice system that truly serves all Washingtonians. We have learned not to mistake the normal for the neutral, and to recognize that what “Just Is” isn’t necessarily “Justice.”

I am proud that Washington’s judiciary is leading the nation in the transition from punitive justice to restorative practices. Restorative justice emphasizes healing, community engagement, and meaningful accountability. We see this in more effective approaches to criminal sentencing and juvenile justice, as well as in child welfare system reforms. At every level of court, we are accelerating our work to eradicate systemic barriers and better serve vulnerable communities.

Ours was the first state to create Supreme Court Commissions dedicated to equity and inclusion. For over 30 years, the Minority and Justice Commission has spearheaded initiatives to address racial disparities, for example in jury selection and participation, in bail practices, and with respect to criminal and civil fines and fees. The Gender and Justice Commission’s new database of services for survivors of domestic violence provides critical resources for those seeking safety and support. The Interpreter & Language Access Commission continues to enhance access to justice by expanding training and certification for interpreters and ensuring individuals with limited English proficiency can fully engage in legal proceedings. And the Commission on Children in Foster Care focuses on improving the delivery of services for our most vulnerable youth, working collaboratively with state and local partners. In addition to these commissions, we have workgroups and Task Forces that focus on urgent issues. I want to particularly acknowledge our Disability Justice Task Force that is working to develop solutions that ensure individuals with disabilities can fully participate in our court system. The ongoing work of these judicial branch entities is essential to elevating the voices of underserved individuals, convening important conversations, and fulfilling the mission of the judicial branch to be, not just a legal system, but truly a justice system.

Branch wide, our Efforts to effectuate the Blake decision are also gaining momentum. Collaborative initiatives by the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), local courts, public defenders, prosecutors, impacted individuals, and advocacy groups

have significantly expanded outreach. Highlights this year include the first-ever in-person Blake vacate and refund clinic at the Snohomish County Courthouse and extensive educational outreach in our prisons, community centers, libraries, and other public institutions.

As of January 2025, the Blake Refund Bureau has issued over \$4 million in refunds for approximately 3,300 Blake-qualifying cases. An additional \$21 million is pending for nearly 63,000 cases submitted by 127 courts. Meanwhile, over 55,000 Blake convictions have been vacated, benefiting more than 37,000 individuals in Department of Corrections custody. Outreach and relief efforts are set to continue expanding throughout 2025.

Across Washington, courts are closely watching the launch of the Pierce County Jury Pay Pilot Project, which increased juror compensation by 900%, addressing long-standing economic barriers and enhancing jury diversity. That project involves vital data collection and analysis, and represents an important first step to making jury service possible for more people. Much of the success of the project is due to the tireless work of talented individuals in the Pierce County Courts, and I want to express appreciation to court administrator Chris Gaddis and Superior Court Presiding Judge Susan Adams, who is here today. Research confirms what we know from our nation's history – jury service is the bellwether of our justice system. It enriches civic engagement for those who serve, and removing economic barriers to service is essential to fulfilling the constitutional promise of a jury of one's peers.

Sticking with Pierce County for a moment, let me also spotlight the Pierce County District Court's Pre-Trial Pathways Program. This program helps demystify the court process and connect participants to essential resources such as housing, behavioral health support, and vocational training. With 60% of participants identifying as people of color, initiatives like this address systemic inequities while fostering self-sufficiency and enhancing community safety by reducing recidivism.

Innovative work is also being done in new self-help centers providing support to unrepresented litigants. The Courthouse Clinic in Yakima County stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, addressing the challenges faced by pro se individuals in family law cases. Commissioner Shane Silverthorn, along with Quinn Dalan and Wendy Winfield of Central Washington Legal Aid, have launched a program that has already served over 250 individuals and families, helping to finalize agreed or default orders and eliminate court delays.

Self-help centers in Spokane and Grays Harbor are similarly providing resources for families that cannot afford a lawyer to help them navigate a range of complex legal issues and get their cases resolved. These are the type of services we hope to expand as we build courts of the future. They foster equity and access to the judicial system and help build public trust and confidence.

As we focus on building courts of the future, technology is front and center

Court continue to embrace new technologies that streamline and unify judicial operations. The Court of Limited Jurisdiction-Case Management System pilot project represents a major step forward in modernizing case management systems for limited jurisdiction courts. This user-friendly platform replaces antiquated stand alone systems and improves efficiency. Progress continues in implementing the CLJ-CMS in courts across Washington, and ongoing state support of that system is essential to its success.

The recent cyberattack on the Washington Courts network has brought into sharp focus the critical importance of effective cybersecurity measures. Thanks to the swift and decisive actions of the Administrative Office of the Courts, major systems were protected, and restored to operation within 18 days. This response time, among the best in the nation, underscores the value of the response systems we have developed and, more importantly, the resilience and professionalism of our AOC team and branch partners. Moving forward, we are investing in advanced cybersecurity protocols to safeguard sensitive information and ensure the public's trust.

We also continue to focus on Artificial Intelligence and emerging technologies, carefully evaluating their role in the justice system. Courts have piloted technology tools that have the potential to enhance efficiencies and improve court access, while ensuring that: judicial decisions will always be made by judges,

human bias won't be compounded, and private data will remain secure. The Board for Judicial Administration continues to engage stakeholders and work with the Washington State Bar Association AI Task Force and other justice partners. Artificial Intelligence presents both promises and perils, and we will work openly and collaboratively to address the appropriate role of emerging technologies in our courts of the future

Across Washington, courts are as busy as ever, and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) remains the backbone of our justice delivery system, providing vital support through technology, research, technical assistance and training. We gain efficiencies and promote consistent adherence to best practices by serving courts through the AOC structure. This is illustrated by recent initiatives, such as AOC's security incident reporting system, which is enhancing safety, transparency and accountability across all levels of the judiciary. We must support the continued ability of the AOC to maintain IT infrastructure and provide timely training and program support because it is essential to the ability of local courts to deliver timely, effective and equitable services in their communities.

I want to express appreciation to the legislature for your support of our courts. Over the last three years, you have worked to stabilize funding for the courts' statewide IT infrastructure, funded more secure rural courts, and enabled the work of dozens of therapeutic courts across our diverse state. Stable Judicial Branch funding – still a small part of the State's overall budget – will maintain critical services, training, and programs that benefit everyone who comes into our courts. We look forward to working with you this session on the continuation of prior commitments – including ongoing funding of existing systems and programs that are essential to meeting the Judiciary's promise to deliver equal justice under the law.

In closing, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to my colleagues across the judicial branch, to our partners in the legislative and executive branches and to the many community members whose dedicated work makes real progress possible.

The author Cornell West said that "Justice is what love looks like in public." We show our love and concern for one another when we work together to bend the arc of history ever towards justice. We do this work because we love it. And, working together, we will continue to build a court system that not only meets the needs of today but anticipates the challenges of tomorrow – fair, inclusive, innovative and accessible for all Washingtonians.

Thank you again for receiving our state of the judiciary report and for inviting us here this morning. Thank you."

The President thanked Chief Justice Debra L. Stephens for her remarks.

The President called upon the committee of honor to escort Chief Justice Debra L. Stephens from the rostrum and the Chief Justice retired from the Chamber.

The President called upon the committee of honor to escort the statewide elected officials from the Chamber.

The President called upon the committee of honor to escort the Justices of the Supreme Court from the Chamber.

MOTION

On motion of Senator Riccelli, the Joint Session was dissolved.

The Sergeant at Arms of the Senate and the Sergeant at Arms of the House escorted Speaker of the House, Speaker Laurie Jinkins, Speaker Pro Tempore Chris Stearns, and Representative Hunter Abell and members of the House of Representatives from the Senate Chamber.

The Speaker called upon Representative Timmons to preside.

There being no objection, the House advanced to the eighth order of business.

MOTION

There being no objection, the Committee on Appropriations was relieved of HOUSE BILL NO. 1356, and the bill was referred to the Committee on Finance.

There being no objection, the House adjourned until 9:55 a.m., Thursday, January 23, 2025, the 11th Day of the 2025 Regular Session.

LAURIE JINKINS, Speaker

BERNARD DEAN, Chief Clerk

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