



SENATOR
Chris Gildon



REPRESENTATIVE
Kelly Chambers



REPRESENTATIVE
Cyndy Jacobsen

25th District Legislative Preview



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We hope you have had a wonderful holiday season! In advance of the 2022 legislative session, which will get underway on January 10, we wanted to send you this mailer to share with you our legislative priorities and ask for your feedback on a few issues.

As always, we are committed to bringing your priorities to the forefront in Olympia and ensuring the 25th District is the best place in Washington to live, work, and raise a family.

We face a growing number of challenges at the moment, not just because of the pandemic, but also because of many ill-advised policies that have passed in previous sessions. Our goals during the 2022 session will be to fix these policies and pass new ones that improve public safety, reduce your cost of living, hold government accountable, and restore the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches to ensure your voice is represented in everything we do in state government.

Like last year, much of the upcoming session will be conducted remotely. That is disappointing because the critical ingredient of in-person participation is being left out of the public policy process. However, we will work to make the best of it and be as accessible as possible to you throughout session. Your voice matters, and your input and advocacy are invaluable to us. We can't do our jobs effectively without you, so please continue reaching out to us anytime.

It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

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2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PREVIEW



LOWERING TAXES AND MAKING LIFE MORE AFFORDABLE

Despite the pandemic, tax collections in Washington have remained strong. The Legislature is expected to enter the 2022 session with a four-year budget surplus of around \$8.8 billion – in addition to \$2.2 billion in reserves and

\$1.2 billion in unspent federal stimulus funds.

Whether Washington's economy has been thriving or struggling, the majority party has continued passing new and higher taxes – 22 over the last three years to be exact. With such a large budget surplus, it is time for the Legislature to finally pass meaningful tax relief for you and your family, whether through a property tax cut, an expansion of the working families tax credit, or some other means.

We will also be working to repeal the new long-term care insurance program and payroll tax that was passed by the majority party in 2019. In fact, legislation has already been drafted. While we know how beneficial long-term care insurance can be in a person's latter years, the reality is the plan being offered by the state is anemic when compared to other options available in the insurance marketplace. Many of those who are scheduled to pay this new tax will never even be eligible for the benefits being offered by the state. That's a problem. We are encouraged the governor recently announced a delay in the implementation of the program, but we believe it should be repealed outright.

We are focused on a number of other life affordability issues as well. First, we will be advocating for bills that seek to make rent more affordable and give renters some room to save for a down payment and eventually become homeowners. We will also be supporting legislation that seeks to increase the supply of housing and make the dream of home ownership viable for more Washingtonians.

Second, we will be working on ways to provide relief at the gas pump. One idea we have is to fundamentally change how we pay for transportation infrastructure. Currently, we fund these projects with state gas tax revenue. That means each time we need to build a new road or bridge, we look at raising the gas tax. This system is archaic and sets us up for failure in the long run. We are proposing shifting away from reliance on gas taxes and toward using the state portion of tax collected on the sale of a motor vehicle to fund infrastructure.

Overall, we are committed to advocating for tax relief and responsible policies to help alleviate financial burdens for struggling families, students, small business owners, and the most vulnerable.

IMPROVING ACCOUNTABILITY AND ENSURING YOUR VOICE IS HEARD

We continue to hear from many of you regarding the issue of government accountability. Unfortunately, the governor and his appointees are overseeing a growing number of failures, including:

- A homelessness crisis that has only gotten worse.
- A child care affordability and accessibility crisis.
- A bottom 10 ranking in housing affordability.
- Drug overdose deaths at an all-time high.
- Violent crime at a 25-year high.
- The fewest number of police officers per thousand people, ranking our state last in the nation.
- Heartbreaking outcomes for children in our foster care system.
- Crippling data breaches.
- 2.7 million acres of unhealthy forests, which can contribute to catastrophic wildfires.
- Significant cost overruns for transportation projects.
- The early release of prisoners.
- The decertification of Western State Hospital, which led to a loss of federal funding.
- The Employment Security Department's inability to prevent massive fraud and deliver timely unemployment benefits.

We want you to know that we hear your concerns and will continue taking action to improve results and move policy in a better direction for all Washingtonians.

We will also continue demanding that the majority party join with us in passing emergency powers reform. It's been more than 650 days since Governor Inslee declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. House and Senate Republicans have worked tirelessly to pass emergency powers reform because we believe it is inconsistent with the design of our state constitution and representative government to allow one person to unilaterally rule the state for this long. It is imperative that we restore the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches on day one of the 2022 session.

25TH DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE PREVIEW

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PREVIEW



MAKING OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER

When it comes to improving public safety in the 25th District and around the state, we believe it is critical for our men and women in law enforcement to have the necessary training and tools to do their jobs effectively. We also believe accountability is of the utmost importance, and that all who serve and protect our communities must be held to the highest possible standard. Accordingly, there are certain elements of the police reform bills that passed during the 2021 session that are beneficial and should be retained. For instance, the City of Puyallup has already prohibited chokeholds and neck restraints, required officers to wear identifiable clothing, and authorized the use of deadly force only when officers need to

protect themselves or others from an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.

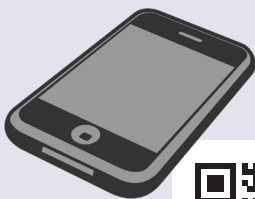
However, as we've all seen in the news over the past year, other provisions within these bills put public safety at risk and thus must be fixed. We are relatively confident lawmakers will work together to amend these bills in three ways. First, through a return to the legal standard of reasonable suspicion, allowing law enforcement to pursue suspected criminals. Second, through a change to the escalation of force provision that prohibits officers from intervening except in cases where a person is committing an act of violence. Law enforcement must be able to serve as the link between a person experiencing mental distress and a mental health provider. Third, through the reinstatement of non-lethal tools, such as bean-bag projectiles, to ensure officers don't have to expose themselves to unnecessary levels of risk or use greater force to control a situation.

Something else we must focus on is the burden some of these bills are placing on local governments. House Bill 1223, for example, requires electronic recording of custodial interrogations. However, many police departments across our state do not have body cameras to do this recording, which means officers are resorting to using the cameras on their personal phones. That is unacceptable. Our officers cannot be expected to record each one of these brief encounters on their own phones.

Effectively, House Bill 1223 created a de facto requirement that all law enforcement officers in Washington state wear body cameras. We know there is widespread support for body cameras, and we believe additional transparency is a step in the right direction. However, implementation in Puyallup is expected to cost \$1.2 million when factoring in the cost of equipment, data storage, and compliance with public record requests. That's why we believe the state should cover the funding. Our obligation is to provide law enforcement with the tools they need to succeed, but we must do it in a way that doesn't negatively affect city budgets.

We understand the frustrations that led to calls for greater police accountability last session. However, we cannot have laws on the books that make it easier for people to commit crimes. That's why we must thoughtfully amend these bills. It is also important to note that Washington ranks last in the nation in terms of the number of police officers per thousand people. This is a crisis that all elected officials should have a sense of urgency about. We desperately need more police officers patrolling our streets, but that will not happen if we continue passing laws that put them in greater danger and make it harder for them to bring criminals to justice. For the sake of our communities, we must have a balanced approach that prioritizes safety and accountability for all.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



As we get closer to the start of the 2022 legislative session, we want to hear from you. What issues matter most to you? What do you believe the Legislature should be focused on? What policies do you support or oppose? Please take a minute to fill out our online survey by typing in the web address below or scanning the QR code with your mobile device.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MB52GXF>

Thank you for taking the time to read this update. We will talk with you again in the new year!



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Contact Your 25th District Lawmakers

If we can be of any assistance during this unprecedented time, please do not hesitate to contact our offices. It is a pleasure and honor to serve as your 25th District lawmakers. We look forward to hearing from you!



SEN.
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