

SENATOR
ANN RIVERS
SERVING WASHINGTON'S 18TH DISTRICT



405 Legislative Bldg., PO Box 40418, Olympia, WA 98504-0418 • (360) 786-7634 • Ann.Rivers@leg.wa.gov

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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Today is day 30 of the 60-day regular session. We have officially reached the halfway point!

Today also marks the second cut-off date meaning that bills that were not approved by their assigned committees are in essence “dead” and will not move forward in the legislative process for further consideration. These deadlines are necessary to keep the Legislature on track to complete its business within the allotted 60-days.

We now have one week to vote on bills before they either “die” or move to the House of Representatives for consideration.

Sincerely,

NEW! Candid Conversation about Marijuana

I'm really excited about the new format of my video updates. Click [HERE](#) to watch the first episode of *Candid Conversations with Sen. Ann Rivers*.

I want to tackle the tough or taboo topics that we're faced with in our state right now, and I want it to be in a format that it's easy to understand and fun to watch.

This week I discuss medical marijuana and how the voter-approved recreational market affects patients and public safety. I also explain my measure, [Senate Bill 5887](#), which establishes standards for the industry and helps reconcile the differences between the medical and recreational marijuana industries – it's a tough issue, but it must be addressed.



Watch the first installment of my new video show – *Candid Conversations*.

Please take a few minutes to watch the video update and let me know what you think. *What topics do you want me to address in my next video? What questions do you have about our state or perhaps specific bills being discussed in Olympia?* Send me your questions at Ann.Rivers@leg.wa.gov.

Job Climate and Minimum Wage Discussion

The unemployment rate is 6.6 percent – the lowest it has been in 5 years, according to the Employment Security Department’s latest numbers. The drop in numbers is said to be due to a shrinking labor force as discouraged job seekers stopped looking for work. In fact, if the labor participation rate was at the prior 20-year historical average, the unemployment rate would be 13.7%.

However, Washington’s job market does continue to improve with an estimated 41,800 jobs added over the past year. While the total number of jobs in the state is still 53,000 below pre-recession levels, we are moving in the right direction.

I’ve heard from many small business owners in the district who are concerned about the recent proposal to increase our minimum wage to \$12 per hour over the next three years. Washington already has the highest state minimum wage in the nation at \$9.32 per hour.

An increase would not create jobs – it would hurt small businesses at a time when they are just starting to recover and hire additional staff. Increasing the hourly wage would limit businesses from hiring young people and they need the valuable part-time work experience to help prepare them for their future.

6th Grade Brush Prairie Student Testifies on Bill

Last week I had the great pleasure of meeting Elle Winn, a 6th grade student from Brush Prairie, and her parents when they came to Olympia to testify on [Senate Bill 6466](#) – a bill that originated out of an idea Elle proposed to me. Over the summer she sent me a handwritten letter with her idea to use military veterans to help keep schools safe – what a great idea, right?!



The Senate Law and Justice Committee held a public hearing on the proposal and approved the measure for further consideration. You would have never known that it was Elle’s first time testifying before a Senate committee – she did a great job! You can read more about Elle and the bill [HERE](#) or watch coverage of the hearing [HERE](#) (Elle testifies around marker 29:25).

2/3 Majority to Raise Taxes

Last week, the Senate voted on a [measure](#) that would amend the state constitution to require a two-thirds majority vote of the Legislature to raise taxes.

This is something that Washington voters are clearly in favor of because voters have approved it five times during the past 20 years, with the most recent time being in 2012 when 72 percent of voters from the 18th District approved [Initiative-1185](#).

I voted in favor of the measure and even though the Senate voted 25-21 to adopt the measure, it unfortunately failed to receive the constitutionally-required 33 votes necessary for approval. I anticipate that a similar measure will be introduced next year (and subsequent years) until the will of the voters is enacted in our state constitution.

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Stay Connected!

Legislative E-mail: Ann.Rivers@leg.wa.gov

Visit my website: www.SenatorAnnRivers.com

Olympia Phone: (360) 786-7634

Toll-Free: 1 (800) 562-6000

Olympia Address:
405 Legislative Building
P.O. Box 40418
Olympia WA 98504-0418