

State Senator **Ron Muzzall**

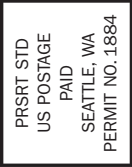
COVID – 19 Response and Resource

This new virus poses a serious threat to the daily routines, physical and economic health of communities around our state. Various levels of government are stepping in to provide the resources, but it’s up to us to be good neighbors and take care of one another.

In the final days of session, the Legislature approved House Bill 2965, which provides \$175 million in emergency funding from the rainy-day fund (like our savings account) for the COVID-19 response at the state level. Any unused funds will go back to that account. Those funds will be used to support our fellow Washingtonians affected by the virus, including expanded unemployment benefits for workers and nursing-home payments. In addition, the CARES Act federal stimulus includes expanded unemployment benefits for employees and small-business owners. You can visit www.esd.wa.gov for updates.

We have an obligation to come together during this time. I’m urging everyone in our district to be patient and do your part to prevent the spread to vulnerable members of our community. The governor announced that the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy,” order that prohibits public and private gatherings and nonessential businesses from operating has been extended through May 4. I understand this will be a significant hardship for Washingtonians, but taking these unprecedented steps will save lives.

You can visit <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/> for more resources and information on what your state government is doing in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition, the Senate Republican Caucus has created a website that has compiled a list of resources you may find valuable as we weather this storm. Go to: src.wastateleg.org/resources-information-managing-covid-19-outbreak.



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2020
**Legislative
Review**

10th
*Legislative
District*



State Senator
Ron Muzzall
10th Legislative District

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

While I was hoping this short session would have been relatively uneventful, the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) and other pressures sucked the air out of the room. I’m very pleased that, despite partisan differences on a variety of other issues, the Legislature was able to approve necessary policies to help our state as it grapples with the spread of this virus. These somewhat extreme measures are testing our resolve, but I believe that we’ll be stronger because of it.

As I write this update, I don’t know exactly how our state or nation will have fared. I trust that like in any time of national strife, we can and will prevail by putting aside our partisan differences. We are embracing the best version of ourselves and realizing we are all in it together. There’s no time for tribalism, rather we have an obligation to be friends and neighbors first.

We can have tough conversations, disagree on policy issues and still respect one another. We must assume the best in people. I do. I take your concerns to heart, but that doesn’t mean I’ll always make the vote you think I should. For every ‘yes’ on an issue there are usually just as many ‘no’s’ and a variety of opinions in between.

My office is here to help where we can. During this time, email continues to be the best way to contact me – and remember: Stay Home, Stay Healthy. It is an honor to serve you.

Sincerely,

Ron Muzzall,
Your 10th District State Senator



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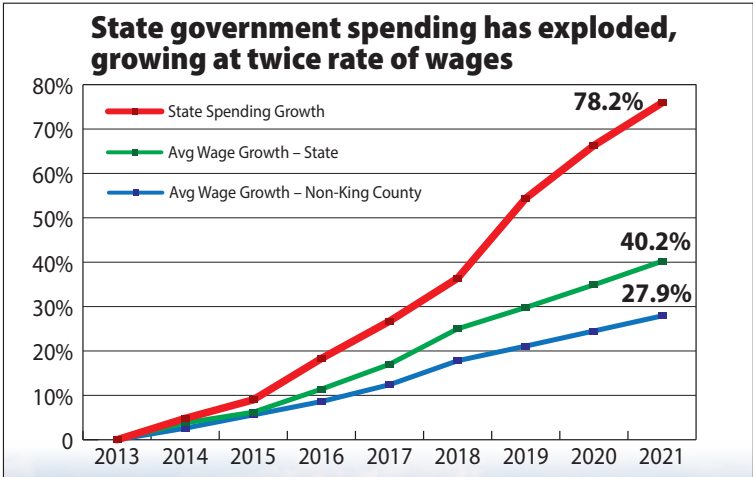
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What Happened In Olympia?

The 2020 legislative session is what’s referred to as a short session. We met in Olympia for 60 days to address emergent needs and, as I referenced above, we had a big need to address. We did work on other policy issues, including making other tweaks to the state budget and a litany of bills from environmental issues to health care and more. I serve you in the state Senate on three committees: Health and Long Term Care; State Government, Tribal Relations and Elections; and the Senate’s budget committee, Ways and Means.

I was a disappointed where we ended up with state spending. While the majority did exhibit some restraint, I feel like we chose to spend too much. During the session, we had some good news that the state was projected to take in \$1.5 billion more than we expected. In fact, that has been the case for years. With this supplemental budget, we’ll have seen state spending increase by nearly 80 percent since 2013. Granted, we made some significant investments before I got here in education, but that rate of growth is more than double the growth in average wages. What are we getting for it? We still hear that schools funding is a problem. We haven’t seen any significant progress in getting homeless people off the streets and getting the help they may need. I’m skeptical that more and more state spending without a real check on what we’re getting for it is the right answer.



More Affordable Health Care

We did have some wins when it comes to health care. I’m proud to have supported legislation, Senate Bill 6087, which capped out-of-pocket costs for a 30-day supply of insulin at \$100. The explosion of the price of this life-saving drug necessitated some intervention, though philosophically, I’m opposed to those kinds of policies. This was just a Band-Aid. I believe that we need to get a real handle on the skyrocketing costs of health care. However, some of the things we do in Olympia every year aren’t helping. Consider that this year, one of the first bills signed into law was a \$1 billion tax on small business. That includes a big tax hike on doctors, mental-health providers and nursing homes. We can’t complain that health-care costs are rising while doing things that actually increase the costs at the same time. We also have a data problem. The health-care system lacks transparency. It’s hard to get a handle on the various inputs that drive costs. We do have some studies in the works, but they are hung up in red tape. During a hearing on how the progress is going, the Senate Health and Long Term Care Committee was told that the agency responsible just didn’t do that work. This despite the Legislature giving it clear direction and money to do it.



Standing Up For Parents

You’ve undoubtedly heard about the controversy surrounding legislation on mandatory sex education starting in kindergarten. Both sides of the issue accuse the other of spreading misinformation. For me, I think that the policy and content are pretty clear and that what some consider ‘age-appropriate’ is anything but. When the debate was going on in the House on the bill, there was a mature audience warning for television viewers.

At the end of the day, I voted ‘no’ because parents, educators and students in the district were clear that they opposed the bill. For me, it’s about the rights of parents to determine what kind of education their child receives. The bill is another unfunded mandate for districts that requires bureaucrats in Olympia to determine what curricula should be taught. After the bill passed the Senate, thousands showed up on the Capitol steps to urge that the governor veto it. Believe me, voices opposing this overreach far outweighed the largely special interests that supported it.

