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June 30, 2013

Giving the 8th Legislative District a voice

When I joined the Washington State Senate earlier this year, my desire was to bring Tri-Cities values to state government and give our district a voice in Olympia. **Because I was able to do that, the 8th District will see some of the benefits.**

I fought hard to represent our district and as a result, **Delta High School will receive \$5.4 million in new funding.** Delta is a shining example of a leader in statewide education. Their focus on the key STEM education areas (science, technology, engineering, and math) and ability to weave English, history and other subjects into the curriculum energizes kids to want to learn more about all subject areas. This will no doubt help thousands of kids to reach their full potential. In addition, numerous other 8th District projects received funding this year.



But the Tri-Cities voice goes beyond funding. As a member of the Senate energy committee, I was able to work with the chair of the committee to schedule a work group meeting in our district over the summer. **The Tri-Cities is such an important player in the statewide energy discussion that I felt it would have been remiss not to bring committee members for a closer look.** In addition, my work on the Senate Transportation Committee helped to schedule a transportation meeting in our district between now and next session.

I'm looking forward to continuing the Legislative work that I've started, and helping more lawmakers in Olympia hear the voices of the Tri-Cities.

Legislature passes budget that lives within our means

Washington state now has a budget that will keep it operational for the next two years. I'm very pleased with the final product, as it closely adhered to the goals we had set for ourselves at the beginning of the process. The 2013-15 operating budget:

- Contains no general tax increases. As a result of the most recent state revenue forecast which

showed a strong uptick in anticipated funds, there was no need for additional revenue;

- Invests **\$1.6 billion in new education dollars**, with a billion of that directly addressing the Supreme Court's McCleary decision. That decision declared the state was not doing enough to meet its constitutionally-mandated paramount duty to provide for basic education;
- Implements a number of reforms to make sure that education funding is spent wisely;
- **Freezes tuition at Washington's colleges and universities for two years**;
- Streamlines the way state government interacts with businesses, allowing them to **create more jobs**; and
- When the Legislature reconvenes in January of 2014, for the first time in years it will be looking at a budget surplus instead of a crippling deficit.



I'm extremely proud to be a member of a bipartisan caucus that was able to achieve all these great things for Washington, and I'm looking forward to working hard next year as well. The [Senate Majority Coalition](#) was able to prevent over a billion dollars in unnecessary tax increases proposed by the House of Representatives. **Just think of how much the coalition can accomplish together in 2014!**

Business regulatory reform and what it means to you

One of my top priorities this year has been to find ways to make it easier to do business in Washington State. That's why I proposed a package of legislation aimed at **reducing government inefficiencies** when it comes to how they deal with businesses.

I'm very proud to say that all four of my business bills passed and will become law - two passed as companion bills in the House of Representatives, and two Senate bills also passed unanimously. [Senate Bill 5679](#) will require the Department of Ecology, the Department of Labor and Industries and the Department of Health to annually review their rules, while [Senate Bill 5718](#) will help create a single online portal through which all businesses in Washington may interact with state government. **When private businesses spend less time and resources dealing with government regulations, they can divert those resources toward creating jobs and hiring more workers.**



While that's a good start toward helping to get our economy moving forward again, a lot more remains to be done. I'm committed to working hard toward that goal and will return next year with new ideas and new solutions to help get Washington back to work.

Take my 2013 Summer Survey!



Many of those new ideas and solutions come from 8th District residents just like you. I'd like to invite you to take my 2013 Summer Survey to help keep me informed about the issues that are important to you. After all, **listening to your input is the most important part of my job.** I work for you, so please visit www.senatorsharonbrown.com and take my online survey. It's easy and completely anonymous (unless you choose to share your contact information so I can get in touch with you about something specific), and I'll share some of the results of your feedback in a future Bridges e-newsletter.

In closing...

Due to election year restrictions, this will be the last e-newsletter I am allowed to send you until after December 1. Though I am not allowed to keep you updated on what's happening in state government with these Bridges to a Better Government e-newsletter, I can still respond directly to your input, take your calls, visit with you, and answer e-mails. I encourage you to keep in touch throughout the summer and fall, and I'll be sure to send you a new update once the election year time period ends. Until then, it remains my honor to serve you in the Washington State Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon R. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Sharon Brown
State Senator
8th District

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