

SENATOR
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SERVING WASHINGTON'S 18TH DISTRICT



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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

On Saturday, Rep. Liz Pike and I hosted two in-district town hall meetings. It was great to see many of you there – thank you for joining us and voicing your concerns!

It's hard to believe March is already here, which leaves us with less than two weeks in this year's regular session. Last week, we were in our assigned committees evaluating bills from the House of Representatives. Beginning this week, we will be back on the floor full-time voting on committee-approved House bills.

Thank you for staying connected with me while I am in Olympia. It's an honor serving you in the state Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann".



Bipartisan Supplemental Budget Proposal

Last Wednesday the Senate overwhelmingly approved a supplemental budget proposal that is projected to balance over four years and prioritizes education without raising taxes.

Since this is the first time in six years that we have entered session without a budget deficit hanging over our heads, we were able to propose a true *supplemental* budget. It is after all the purpose of a short session - to make minor adjustments and fixes to the two-year state operating budget approved in 2013.

The Senate spending plan focuses on STEM – science, technology, engineering, and math. It fully-funds school districts' instructional technology costs with \$38 million for K-12 classroom technology, enabling schools to invest in upgrades that best fit their needs.



Watch what lead budget writer Senator Andy Hill had to say about the budget.

Higher education gets the biggest overall budget increase with \$44 million focused on students, not institutions. Plus, tuition rates remain frozen for the next school year.

The Senate's budget proposal now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration where representatives are expected to propose their own plan before the two chambers reach final agreement.

Sign-up for the Senate Page Program

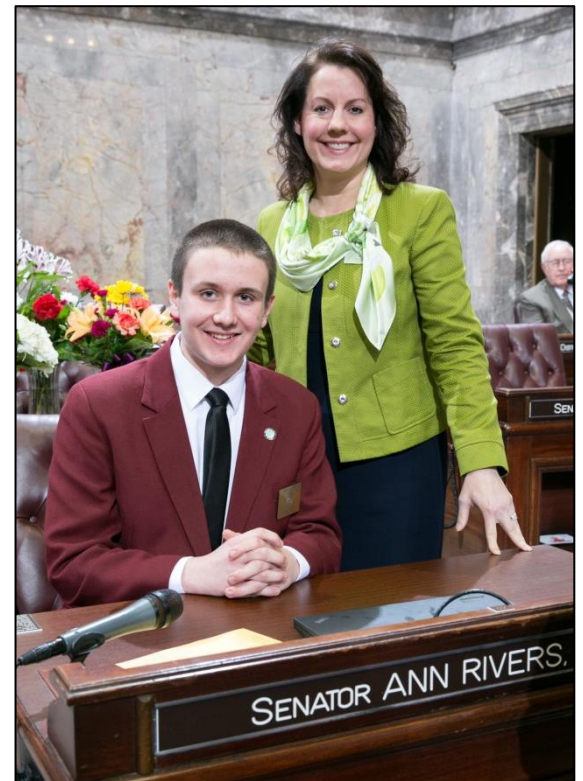
I encourage all students ages 14-16 to apply for a paid, week-long Senate page position here in Olympia. The page program offers students the unique chance to take an active role in our government and learn more about the state Legislature.

Timbercrest freshman Blake Hirst spent last week as my page and he said being on the Senate floor as bills were being passed was a fascinating experience.

He decided to apply for the Senate page program after one of his friends participated in the program last year.

For more information or to apply for the 2015 session, please visit:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/Senate/Administration/PageProgram/>.



Legislation Update

I have several bills still alive and well in the legislative process. I'll continue to keep you updated about them but in the meantime, please let me know if you have any questions.

Senate Bill 5887 - this measure would reconcile the medical and recreational marijuana markets. It's a bill that I've been working on since last year to help put proper parameters and protections in place while still maintaining a patient-first focus. Because it has a monetary component to it, it can be brought to a vote at any time during session.

Status: Awaiting approval by the Senate Budget Committee.

Senate Bill 6007 – a bill developed by public utility districts from around the state, would protect customers' information – both electronic contact information and usage information.

Status: Passed the Senate unanimously and was approved by the House Committee on Local Government; currently waiting for final approval by the House of Representatives.

Senate Bill 6016 – the intent of this bill is to implement grace periods for the state health benefit exchange in a way that protects our state's patients, health insurers and health care providers.

Status: Passed the Senate unanimously and was approved by the House Committee on Health Care and Wellness; currently awaiting approval by the House of Representatives.

Senate Bill 6069 – this is a constituent-request bill that would give an extra layer of protection and notification to victims of sexual abuse.

Status: Passed the Senate unanimously and was approved by the House Committee on Public Safety; currently waiting for approval by the House of Representatives.

Senate Bill 6286 – this bill clarifies the law surrounding horticultural nurseries that grow plants in containers as opposed to the ground. Container farming extends the growth and selling season for businesses, whereas bare-root operations are limited to a selling season of December through March.

Status: Passed the Senate with a 42-5 vote and was approved by the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources with a referral to the House Finance Committee for evaluation.

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Stay Connected!

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