



WASHINGTON STATE SENATE MAJORITY COALITION CAUCUS

Overview of Legislative Accomplishments 2013-16

Accountability

- Extended the Medicaid Fraud False Claims Act through 2023.
- Promoted government transparency by increasing penalties for violating the Washington Open Public Meetings Act.

Agriculture

- Improved state government's ability to track diseased livestock.
- Improved solid-waste management to safeguard agriculture against destructive pests.
- Simplified how the public could find and compare water banks.

Budget

- Created a tax credit for businesses hiring veterans, to decrease the number of unemployed veterans.
- Provided property-tax relief for low-income seniors.
- Grew the state monetary reserves to their highest level ever, while also protecting the state's "Rainy Day Fund."
- Promoted job retention and growth through aerospace tax incentives and other tax reforms.
- Protected funding for state pensions.
- Protected funding for environmental-cleanup projects, despite an oil-revenue downturn.

Early Learning & K-12 Education

- Provided \$4.6 billion in additional K-12 funding over the last four years

- Made education funding a priority by investing new revenue into education at a ratio of 3:1 over compared to revenue for non-education purposes; this is a reversal of the prior 30-year trend.
- Fully funded school districts' transportation, materials and supplies costs.
- Doubled funding for support of low-income students.
- Reformed bilingual-education funding, resulting in an increase of over 50% in the rate of bilingual students entering the regular classroom.
- Funded all-day kindergarten for all of Washington for the first time.
- Made the largest K-12 construction investment in state history.
- Required school districts and law enforcement to implement emergency-response systems and to improve safety features.
- Required the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to design a system of support, assistance and intervention for schools in need of improvement, which includes persistently lowest-achieving schools.
- Expanded the Learning Assistance Program (LAP).
- Emphasized the focus of reading improvement for K-4 students.
- Improved the school disciplinary protocols.
- Increased protections of students' personal information.
- Saved Washington's voter-approved charter schools, which provide more choice for parents and students and reduce the opportunity gap.
- Created the Education Funding Task Force (EFTF) to continue the work of implementing the state's defined program of basic education.
- Required the development of a statewide teacher-recruitment campaign.
- Increased professional opportunities in education by issuing professional certificates to certain out-of-state teachers seeking employment in Washington, and allowing retired teachers to work as substitute teachers without suspension of their retirement benefits.
- Created grant opportunities for new teachers and increased teacher mentorship.

Higher Education

- For the first time in history, reduced undergraduate tuition at public colleges and universities in Washington, offsetting the tuition cuts with state funds to ensure the institutions would see no resulting loss of revenue.
- Passed "the REAL Hope Act," which expanded higher-education opportunities for undocumented students with long ties to Washington through eligibility for state financial aid.
- Protected higher-education students involved in military service by requiring education institutions to provide make-up classes and exams to National Guard members and reservists called-up on short-term active duty.

- Improved affordability of higher education for veterans and active members of the military by removing the one-year waiting period previously required to prove eligibility for resident tuition.
- Required each institution of higher education in Washington to award academic credit based on student veterans' military training and experience.
- Established a medical school and reestablished a forestry major at Washington State University.

Human Services, Mental Health & Housing

- Made significant new investments in treatment for the mentally ill.
- Empowered families to seek help for loved ones struggling with mental-health issues by enacting "Joel's Law".
- Increased and improved priority services for homelessness among youth and young adults, such as stable housing, family reconciliation, permanent connections, education and employment opportunities, and social, mental and emotional well-being.
- Gave judges discretion to convert all or part of a financial-restitution order into community-service hours for a juvenile offender if he/she is unable to pay, and gave the victim the ability to determine the nature of the community service.
- Increased accountability for the Department of Social and Human Services (DSHS) by requiring it to promptly report a near-fatality of a child in the care of DSHS to the Office of the Family and Children Ombuds, and conduct a review of the event.
- Improved care for people with developmental disabilities by increasing state home visits for those identified as having the highest risk of abuse and neglect, among other reforms.
- Reduced elder abuse by making an historic investment in abuse investigations.

Law & Justice

- Reformed and toughened criminal laws regarding human trafficking, earning Washington an A+ from the global anti-trafficking organization Shared Hope International.
- Toughened DUI-sentencing laws and created a pilot-level 24/7 monitoring program for DUI offenders.
- Encouraged the judicial branch to use therapeutic courts as a means to save money and encourage offenders to avoid recidivism.
- Fought animal cruelty by making it a crime in the first degree.

- Strengthened laws requiring the Indeterminate Sentence Review Board to notify victims when reviewing prisoner sentences.

Trade & Economic Development

- Improved Washington's business climate and stimulated job creation by establishing a formal review process for existing rules.
- Promoted economic development by improving the flow of information to businesses, streamlining government projects and enhancing the transparency of state-agency permitting and review processes.
- Aided economic recovery in the construction industry by enacting an impact-fee deferral.
- Promoted job retention and growth through aerospace-tax incentives and other tax reforms.

Transportation

- Provided a \$16 billion investment in continuing projects to improve Washington's transportation infrastructure.
- Prioritized public safety by allowing transportation-construction projects relating to shoreline management to continue after an environmental appeal has been filed.
- Responded to repeated and costly failures by the Department of Transportation, including the Interstate-405 express toll lane fiasco, by removing the secretary of transportation from office and forcing WSDOT to refocus on issues important to commuters.

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