

REP. DAVE PAUL'S END OF SESSION UPDATE



REPRESENTATIVE DAVE PAUL • 10TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

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SUPPLEMENTAL CAPITAL BUDGET – INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITIES

The Capital Budget funds important investments that create jobs and help improve the facilities and infrastructure in our region. Here are some highlights from this year's bipartisan work.

STATEWIDE CAPITAL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- **\$111 million** for facilities to help our state and communities to provide crisis and stabilization treatment services—and get families the help they need for loved ones.
- **\$100 million** to help develop the broadband infrastructure that families and businesses need for work, education, and healthcare services.
- **\$439 million** to help communities improve supportive housing, help those experiencing homelessness find permanent housing, and improve housing affordability, especially starter and workforce housing.

LOCAL CAPITAL BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS - \$3.4 MILLION

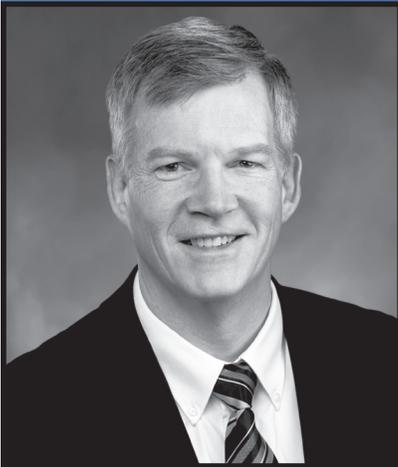
Our region was fortunate enough to receive some significant investments from the supplemental Capital Budget this session.

- \$875,000 to fund **Habitat for Humanity's Heron Park workforce housing project.**
- \$640,000 to **complete construction** of the **La Conner Regional Library.**
- \$400,000 to **South Whidbey Parks and Recreation** for its **proposed aquatic wellness center.**
- \$330,000 for **Camp Korey** to **improve its telemedicine services.**
- \$273,000 to **Island Senior Resources** to **upgrade its facilities.**
- \$250,000 to the **City of Langley** for **increased workforce housing.**
- \$206,000 for **renovations** of the **Coupeville Boys & Girls Club.**
- \$4 million to **construct** the **Mount Vernon Library Commons.**
- \$103,000 for **ventilation improvements** at the **Pilchuck Glass School** in **Stanwood.**
- \$100,000 for **design** and **permitting** to **modernize** the **pump station** near **La Conner.**

I'm proud to have fought hard for these investments in our communities – and to have helped secure funds for behavioral health, broadband, affordable housing, and other local projects that will improve the quality of life in the 10th Legislative District.

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10TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT



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Committees:

- Community & Economic Development (*Vice Chair*)
- College & Workforce Development
- Transportation

Friends and neighbors,

The last two years have been very challenging for so many in our community. This session, I looked for ways to support our rural communities and economies, fund important local projects, support veterans and military families, and improve public safety. I'm pleased to report that we made meaningful progress in each of these areas.

I sponsored several bills to tackle these priorities, including expanding the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship and pathways to family-wage jobs, improving college affordability, and removing dangerous abandoned marine vessels. But one of my biggest successes this session was passing legislation to allow spouses of active-duty service members and veterans who are disabled to voluntarily exempt themselves from WA Cares premiums. These community members either won't be in Washington long enough to benefit from the program, or they already have coverage.

Looking ahead, I will continue to collaborate with my colleagues across the state and across the aisle to improve affordability for Washington residents, families, and small businesses.

Thank you for continuing to advocate for the needs of our communities and neighbors here in the 10th district. Please reach out to my office if you have any questions, concerns, ideas, or suggestions.

Thank you,

Rep. Dave Paul

Public Safety

Everyone deserves to feel safe in their community, and I've been working alongside law enforcement officials, constituents, and local leaders to improve public safety throughout our region and Washington state. While there is still work to do, I'm pleased that the legislature made major commitments to your safety this session.

We face a looming workforce shortage of law enforcement personnel as many police officers and deputies near retirement. To help with this problem, the Legislature increased funding for the state's law enforcement academy. I also cosponsored **HB 1785**, which will help ensure Washington State Troopers are paid a competitive wage for their dangerous work.

In addition, **HB 1703** will modernize the 911 emergency system and help counties develop regional approaches to handling emergency calls.

The legislation also helps coordinate 911 calls with the new 988 behavioral health emergency system that will be implemented later this year. Similar to 911, the 988 number will connect callers to suicide prevention resources, crisis services, and mental health professionals.

These bills will go a long way toward improving public safety in our state so families and small businesses can thrive.

Helping Veterans and Service Members

Active duty servicemembers, reservists, veterans, and their families sacrifice a great deal in their service to our country. Throughout my time in the legislature, I've looked for ways to support these important community members.

More veterans die by suicide than in combat; our state must do more to support the mental health and wellbeing of veterans in our community. **HB 1181** helps prevent suicide among Washington's veterans and military members by providing better resources to health care providers and creating a community-based suicide prevention grant program for isolated veterans.

Our state can also do more to create educational pathways for reservists and veterans. I'm pleased that **HB 1642** will make college and professional training more affordable by expanding the Washington National Guard Post-Secondary Grant.

In addition, **SB 5874** expands residency status for certain qualifying active duty, veteran, and dependent students. This change will reduce tuition costs for eligible students—saving these families thousands of dollars each year.

I also plan to reintroduce **HB 1804** to ensure expeditionary medal recipients receive the public employee retirement benefits they deserve.

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Improving Affordability and Supporting Small Businesses

Like you, I'm concerned about the rising cost of food, consumer goods, and household necessities. Though the economy has improved as a whole, and unemployment is low, many local families are still struggling to make ends meet. Some of these price hikes have been caused by supply chain bottlenecks, highlighting how severe the affordability crisis is. Unfortunately, another part of the problem is corporate greed. We've seen CEOs brag about their company's extreme profits all while Americans are forced to spend more and more on everyday goods.

We shouldn't reward this bad behavior, which is why I entered this session looking for ways to support small businesses, help local families, and energize our communities and local economy.

I sponsored **HB 2018** which would have created a three-day holiday from sales tax over the Labor Day weekend. Unfortunately, though **HB 2018** passed the House, it did not pass in the Senate or into the final supplemental budget.

However, there is good news in the final budget: **SB 5980** will provide welcomed relief to many struggling small businesses by permanently increasing the B&O small business tax credit and filing threshold.

The state is operating at a surplus, and it must provide meaningful tax reform in the 2023 Legislative Session. The bipartisan Tax Structure Workgroup will present recommendations later this year, and I expect to see proposals to the reduce sales taxes and B&O taxes. I'm also strongly advocating for property tax relief—that's critical for families and seniors living on a fixed income.



Fixing our Ferry System

Like you, I've been incredibly frustrated by ferry reliability over the last year. Our community depends on ferries to get to work and medical appointments. I joined Sen. Liz Lovelett in reestablishing the Ferry Caucus to help work on this issue.

I'm proud that the Legislature listened—and the Move Ahead Washington transportation package provided historic investments to improve ferry services and our quality of life. The package includes:

- **\$1.3 billion** to build four new hybrid electric vessels and electrify two existing ships.
- **\$160 million** in additional funding to maintain and preserve the existing fleet.
- **\$350 million** in ferry operating support.

The Supplemental Operating budget allocated **\$9 million** for workforce development, recruitment, and retention. This includes **\$93,000** to partner with local community colleges and universities to provide housing for workforce training sessions and help cover the costs of transportation worker identification credentials for incoming ferry system employees and trainees. I spearheaded this program to help us train a ferry system workforce that will meet the needs of ferry riders in our region and across the state.

The funding to maintain and build our ferry workforce is critical since so many ferry workers are close to retirement. I've worked directly with the Washington State Department of Transportation to develop innovative ways of finding and training workers to join the Washington State Ferries. I'm working with community colleges and high school skills centers to connect young people to these family wage jobs—and build the next generation of ferry workers. These are the kinds of investments our ferry system needs to function properly. I will continue to fight for a more accessible and rider-friendly ferry system that works for all Washingtonians who rely on these services.



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Improving College Affordability

Reducing the costs of higher education is a critical priority. Programs like Running Start, College in the High School, and the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship are smart, cost-effective paths to family-wage jobs in our communities. I've worked hard and seen success in making these programs more accessible to everyone.

Many students have other responsibilities that prevent them from taking advantage of dual-credit programs. Building on my previous work that established a pilot program, this year I sponsored legislation to make summer Running Start a permanent and statewide program. This major victory for students and families made it into the final supplemental budget, expanding Running Start access for students across the state.

I also successfully passed legislation to expand the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship to include apprenticeship programs and more rural students, providing them another path to jobs in high-demand professions. Finally, this bill provides more opportunities for healthcare professionals to earn advanced nursing degrees. That's critically important as we work to train the next generation of nurses.

Strengthening Retirement Security

We know how important it is to have an attainable financial plan to age at home. Seniors, people living with disabilities, and their families should not be forced to spend down their savings, go bankrupt, or sell their homes to pay for long-term care. At the same time, many of you told me that we needed to strengthen the WA Cares program.

I proudly sponsored **HB 1733** to allow military spouses, veterans with disabilities, border state residents, and non-immigrant visa holders to voluntarily exempt themselves from the WA Cares premium. Military families sacrifice a lot for us, and they deserve our very best. Active-duty service members were never subject to the premiums, so it just makes sense to give their spouses the option of exempting themselves as well.

I also supported **HB 1732** to extend the rollout of the Long-Term Care Trust program by 18 months. During this extension, businesses will not have to collect premiums. This additional time will allow us to expand the program, allowing people closer to retirement to collect the benefits.

Protecting our Environment

Ten years ago, the *Deep Sea* caught fire and sank in Penn Cove, forcing fisheries to close as the state dealt with the environmental repercussions of the incident. I sponsored **HB 1700** to help local governments and ports get these safety hazards out of our waterways before they can do environmental damage. This landmark legislation will save taxpayers millions of dollars by removing these dangerous boats—before they can pollute our waterways.

Behavioral Health

We have all seen the impact of mental health and substance use disorders on our communities, and it is clear we need to do more. This year, I'm proud to have worked with my colleagues on some important legislation to improve our behavioral health system.

HB 1773 improves access to community-based treatment for people with serious behavioral health issues and makes it easier for families to get their loved one's care when they need it, without hospitalization.

HB 1860 helps connect patients with possible housing prior to being discharged. This is an important opportunity to break the cycle of homelessness many behavioral health patients face.

Finally, I secured funding in 2021 to improve mental health outcomes for young people in our community. I'm working with local officials in Island County to implement the pilot program. Feel free to reach out to my office if you're interested the project, or if you would like to learn more about our work.

