

Olympia Update

From Senator Curtis King, 14th District



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April 24, 2015

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

For months, the plan has been for the Legislature to adjourn on Sunday, April 26. While the Senate has done everything possible to finish on time I am disappointed to report that the Legislature will be adjourning today - two days early and Gov. Jay Inslee has called for a 30-day special session to begin on Wednesday, April 29.

After delivering on every major issue, the Senate continues to wait for majority leaders in the House of Representatives to bring some critical budget bills to a vote. In particular while the House was quick to vote out a spending plan that included a hefty \$1.5 tax increase for the two-year operating budget, we have yet to see the plan for how they pay for their wish list.

Over the past 15 weeks, the Senate has been working hard to pass a number of key fiscal measures out of our chamber in an effort to finish on time and on budget.

- Three weeks ago the Senate passed a \$38 billion **operating budget** that puts education first and includes no new taxes. The budget the Senate passed would be balanced over four years using the increased revenue (\$3 billion) the state is projected to receive over the next two years; it also would leave the largest reserve in state history.

As you know, the Legislature has been tasked with responding to the state Supreme Court's *McCleary* decision that ordered the state to invest more in basic education. I'm proud to say the Senate proposal makes the largest increased K-12 investment in state-budget history and lifts the amount of the state budget would devote for primary education to \$18 billion – a level that has never been seen.

One of the most exciting components of our proposed operating budget includes a **25% cut** in tuition at our four-year state schools. This plan would help 200,000 students make college more affordable without student loans or grants. This middle-class tax cut has

generated a lot of excitement, judging from the email and phone calls my office has received.

- Back in early March, the Senate proposed a \$15 billion **transportation revenue package** that would support 20,000 family-wage construction jobs and devote \$1.4 billion to maintain and preserve our state's roads and bridges. This plan supported by both sides of the aisle included some important reforms to our state transportation department. Funding would come from an 11.7 cent/gallon gas-tax increase implemented over three years. Last week, the House of Representatives unveiled its version of this revenue package. While there is agreement on many details, the accountability that our Senate majority demanded is absent from the House plan.

Local students spend week in Olympia

Over the past three months, it has been my pleasure to sponsor local students to serve as legislative pages for a week in Olympia. These students performed duties like distributing mail, running errands, delivering messages on the floor of the Senate chamber and made new friends. Part of their day was also spent attending Page School where they learned about the legislative process and the role elected officials play.

Here are two students I sponsored earlier in this legislative session. I'll feature more student pages in a future e-newsletter.



Julissa Peart, a home-school student from Yakima, worked in Olympia during the first week of the legislative session.



During the second week of the legislative session, Alexandra Cloud from Wishram served as a page.



Kaitlin Falk, a resident of Selah, took a break from her paging duties to join me at my desk in February.



In March, Alyssa Chichenoff, a student at Eisenhower High School in Yakima spent a week paging at our state capitol.

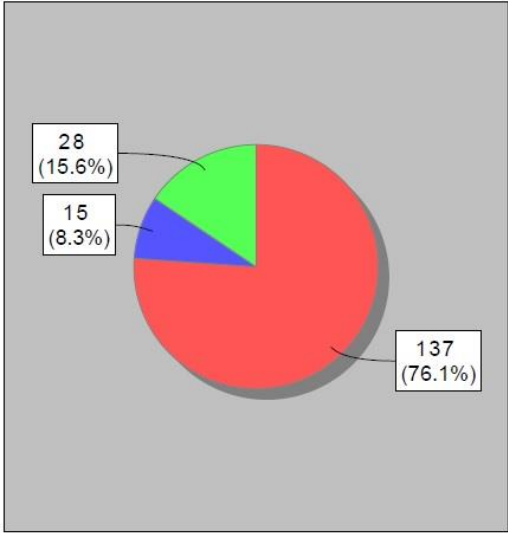
It is always a pleasure to have young people from my district come to Olympia to work as student pages.

Telephone town hall – a great success, thanks to you!

I sincerely appreciate all who participated in my telephone town hall a month ago. There was lively discussion about everything from education funding to oil-train safety. During the event I took two polls. I thought you might be interested in the results.

First I asked:

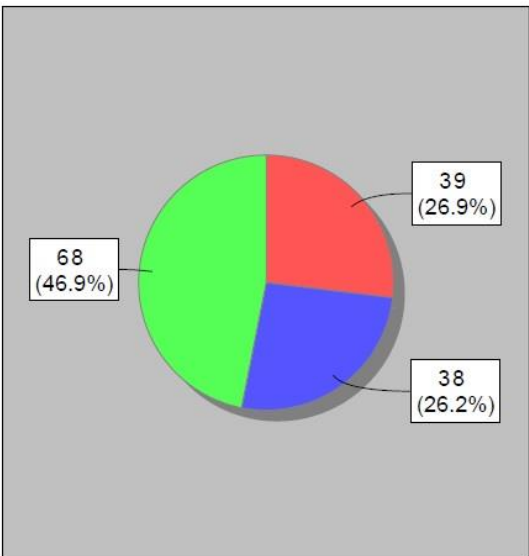
Washington's minimum wage is highest in the nation at \$9.47 an hour. The House majority has passed a bill to raise it to \$12 by 2019. Should the Legislature:



- a) Leave well enough alone.
- b) Raise the minimum wage to \$12, even if it means some workers get raises and some workers get laid off.
- c) Leave the minimum-wage law alone but also create a “training wage” aimed at helping young people get their first jobs.

Later in the town hall I asked:

The latest revenue forecast indicates revenue will be up 8 1/2 percent for the next budget cycle. Should the Legislature:



- a) Come up with a budget that lives within that amount of revenue...meaning no tax increases?
- b) Raise taxes to allow a 15 percent increase in spending, as the governor wants?
- c) Raise taxes just enough to fund education and meet the McCleary obligation?

I was pleased to see interest in creating a training wage for teens. I strongly believe we need to provide our kids with the tools to get their first job. Making it easier – not harder – to hire young workers would be a great first step.

The hour flew by and I hope everyone enjoyed the telephone town hall as much as I did.

In closing...

I hope you find my Olympia Update informative and that you will continue to [contact me](#) with your thoughts, opinions and concerns about state or district issues. Your opinion is of great value to me. It truly remains my honor to serve you in the Washington State Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curtis", written in a cursive style.

Curtis King
State Senator, 14th District

P.S. If you no longer wish to receive my e-newsletters you can simply unsubscribe by clicking the **Subscriber Preferences** link below.
