



Senator **CURTIS KING**

Serving Washington's 14th Legislative District

2022 Session Review

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 2022 legislative session ended on March 10, as scheduled. This year's 60-day session was a hybrid model: Legislative committees met via Zoom instead of in person, visitors were prohibited from member offices, and only a limited number of senators were permitted on the floor at the same time. But this year, senators and some staff had the option to participate in person in Olympia. I chose to participate from my office in Olympia as well as the Senate floor, and was pleased to debate in person once again.

This session, Republicans worked to undo the damaging bills passed in the 2021 session that harmed public safety and increased costs for Washington citizens. Our priorities were to restore trust in government, ensure safe communities, and provide inflation and tax relief. Unfortunately, our state's majority party worked against us in these areas.

It continues to be a great honor and privilege to serve as your 14th Legislative District state senator. If you have any questions or comments about bills or issues we addressed this legislative session, or if you have ideas for future legislation, please let me know. You can contact my office by phone, email or regular mail.

Sincerely,



Senator Curtis King
14th Legislative District

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► **SENATE COMMITTEES:**

- Labor, Commerce & Tribal Affairs
(ranking Republican)
- Transportation (ranking Republican)

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Sen. King and several children attended a March 26 rally at Martin Luther King Jr. Park in Yakima to celebrate the successful funding of \$1 million in the capital budget for the proposed new community pool, which was requested by Sen. King.

Supplemental capital budget funds projects in 14th District

The capital budget provides money for the construction and maintenance of state buildings, public schools, higher-education facilities, public lands, parks and other assets throughout Washington.

Working with my seatmates from the 14th District, Rep. Chris Corry and Rep. Gina Mosbrucker, we were able to secure capital budget funding for these local projects:

- Northwest Harvest Food Bank in Yakima - \$3.2 million
- Comprehensive Health Care's Goldendale facility - \$1.03 million
- Martin Luther King Jr. Park Community Pool in Yakima - \$1 million
- Klickitat County Animal Shelter in Goldendale - \$670,000
- Klickitat Wildlife Area Simcoe fencing - \$450,000
- Rock Creek Bridge replacement - \$400,000
- Steep Creek Bridge replacement - \$400,000
- Town of Naches Mobile Stage - \$250,000
- YMCA Yakima Park (15th District) - \$232,000
- YR-26 Jones Bridge replacement - \$150,000
- Yakima Valley Trolleys Bucket Truck in Yakima - \$70,000
- Naches Rearing Pond - \$50,000
- Yakima County Fire District 12 in Yakima - \$10,000

Why I voted against supplemental operating budget

The operating budget pays for state government's daily operations, including K-12 education, higher education, health and human services, criminal justice, natural resources and other areas.

On the last day of the session, the Legislature passed the 2022 supplemental operating budget (Senate Bill 5693), which makes adjustments to the two-year spending plan approved in 2021.

There are many worthy items in this budget, such as funding for more counselors, nurses and other school staff to help kids get back on track after enduring the damaging pandemic lockdowns and restrictions.



However, I voted "no" because this budget raises state spending by over \$5 billion to a new high of \$64 billion, an increase of \$20 billion since the 2017-19 biennium. These huge increases come at a time when Washingtonians are in dire need of financial relief. With a projected \$15 billion revenue surplus, I hoped part of this record surplus would go to help citizens who are struggling with historic inflation and rising gas prices. My Republican colleagues and I offered amendments to provide tax relief, but none were approved by the majority, except minimal B&O tax relief for the smallest employers in our state and a tax break for the film industry.



Bill for Hood River replacement bridge becomes law

The iconic bridge that crosses the Columbia River between White Salmon and Hood River, Oregon, needs to be replaced. It is too narrow and doesn't have lanes for pedestrians and bicycles. In recent years, there have been efforts on both sides of the river to make a replacement bridge a reality. This year, Oregon passed legislation to form a bistate commission to finance, construct and operate a new replacement interstate bridge. Washington unanimously passed my Senate Bill 5558 to join Oregon in this effort. The passage of this new law is an important step in building a new bridge, along with \$75 million in dedicated initial bridge funding, which also was passed this session.

2022 Session Review

Majority's new transportation package will punish drivers

■ *My proposal would fund transportation projects without tax or fee hikes*

One of the most costly proposals approved by the Legislature this session was the majority's "Move Ahead Washington" transportation package, which will impose major fee increases on drivers across the state. This package, created with no Republican input, does not sufficiently fund highway maintenance and improvements, and leaves out large portions of Eastern Washington and rural areas.

"Move Ahead Washington" higher fees on drivers include:

- increasing fees for an enhanced driver's license from \$24 to \$42;
- increasing fees for a state identification card from \$24 to \$42;
- increasing fees for vehicle license plates from \$10 to \$40 for an original plate, and from \$10 to \$30 for a replacement plate;
- increasing fees for motorcycle plates from \$4 to \$20 for a new plate, and \$4 to \$12 for the replacement fee; and
- increasing fees for a new photo for a driver's license or ID card from \$10 to \$20.

As lead Republican on the Senate Transportation Committee, I created a proposal that would make transportation investments statewide without any tax or fee increases. My proposal would have funded new highway projects, maintenance and preservation projects, fish-barrier removal, ferries, transit, rail and other modes of transportation. My

proposal used many of the same funding sources in the "Move Ahead Washington" package. The key difference is that my plan did not raise taxes or fees. Instead, starting in 2023, it would shift half of the state sales-tax revenue from car and truck sales in Washington to be spent on highway needs. This shift in vehicle sales-tax revenue could have generated more than \$12 billion over 16 years. There is a connection between vehicle sales and transportation, so it makes sense to use that tax revenue to address transportation needs in our state.

Legislature passes supplemental transportation budget

While I opposed the "Move Ahead Washington" package, I supported the 2022 supplemental transportation budget passed in March. The supplemental transportation budget includes just over \$11.65 billion in new spending, including more than \$6 billion for proposed capital construction projects. Among the projects receiving additional funds were the East-West Corridor Bridge in Yakima (\$5.8 million) and the Interstate 82 collector/distributor project (\$8 million).

The updated transportation budget includes funding of \$13.8 million for salary increases for State Patrol troopers, sergeants, lieutenants, and captains, \$2.5 million to ensure that state Department of Transportation-owned rest stops remain open for use, funding to reduce litter and homeless encampments on WSDOT right-of-ways, and \$300,000 for Washington State University to study issues related to increasing catalytic-converter theft.



Legislature delays implementation of long-term care law

An important bill we passed this session delayed the "WA Cares" long-term care payroll tax for 18 months. This problematic program has issues with premium costs, long-term solvency, portability and benefits. While we need to work to encourage and incentivize everyone to invest and prepare for their post-retirement and long-term care needs, this proposed program is too costly and cumbersome for the minimal benefit it will provide.



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2022 Session Review

Efforts to improve public safety

Some of the worst bills passed in the 2021 session were the anti-police bills. Since they took effect last summer, we have seen the real-time fallout of law enforcement being restricted in how they can respond to crime. Criminals are now succeeding, negatively



impacting communities across our state - putting us all at a higher risk and increased danger.

It is hard to understand why the majority blocked Senate Bill 5919, which would have helped to return law and order to our communities and allowed officers to engage in vehicular pursuits when there is reasonable

suspicion a person in the vehicle has committed a criminal offense. Supporting our police and restoring law enforcement's ability to stop crime will continue to be one of my highest priorities. With the large increases in drug crimes and overdose deaths, it is also hard to understand why we did not address 2021 drug possession laws for lethal drugs such as fentanyl, heroin and methamphetamine. People will continue to die from our lack of action.

Majority blocks emergency-powers reform

Many constituents have contacted me regarding Gov. Inslee's abuse of his emergency powers. I am opposed to the governor's COVID-19 vaccination mandate that resulted in many state workers being terminated from state employment, including Department of Transportation workers who would have kept mountain highways clear of snow and kept our ferries running. Jay Inslee was the ONLY governor in the U.S. who did not offer a testing option for state workers.

Republicans introduced numerous bills to achieve meaningful emergency-powers reform this session, but the majority party refused to pass any of them. Regardless, I will continue to fight to reform Gov. Inslee's emergency powers and protect the role of the people's voice in future decisions.

