Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This year's 60-day "short" legislative session ended on March 7. During session, the Legislature passed supplemental versions of the state operating, capital and transportation budgets. They make adjustments to the original two-year budgets approved by the Legislature last year.

Besides passing these budgets, we also passed three voter initiatives (out of six sent to the Legislature by the voters), regarding police pursuits, state incomes taxes and parental rights. Read inside for more information about the budgets and initiatives.

It continues to be a great honor and privilege to serve as your 14th Legislative District State Senator. If you have questions or comments, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. You may contact my office by phone, email or postal mail.

Sincerely,

Senator Curtis King
14th Legislative District

King bills signed into law

I am pleased that seven bills I proposed this session have now been signed into law:

- **SSB 5919**: Allows public utility districts to sell biogenic carbon dioxide.
- **ESB 5997**: Adjusts plumbing trainee hours reporting.
- **ESB 6087**: Increases funding for the fire service training account.
- **SSB 6089**: Improves electrical inspector requirements and pathways.
- **SSB 6108**: Modifies prompt payment rules for retainage in construction contracts.
- **SSB 6115**: Establishes speed safety camera policies.
- **SSB 6192**: Modifies prompt payment rules for change orders in construction contracts.

Senator King was on hand when Governor Inslee signed SSB 6192 on March 19.
I-2081 will restore the ability of Washington police officers which go into effect June 6. They are:

- The Legislature passed these initiatives. I voted for all three measures, on three of the initiatives. During the final week of the session, the legislative leaders scheduled joint House-Senate public hearings the people. Finally, just before the end of session, Democratic Legislature, we are dictated to hold hearings on all initiatives from the six initiatives sent to us in early January by voters. As a big story during this year's session was the Legislature's response to the initiatives sent to Legislature by voters.

I-2111 will ban any state or local income tax in Washington. The other three initiatives sent to the Legislature this year were ignored. Majority Democrats refused to hold public hearings on them or allow legislators to vote on them, so these measures will appear on the statewide ballot this November. They are:

- I-2109, which would repeal the state capital-gains income tax that was approved by the Democrat-led Legislature in 2021.
- I-2117, to repeal the state's costly climate policy that was enacted by majority Democrats in 2021 and took full effect early last year.
- I-2124, which would allow individuals to opt out of the mandatory payroll tax for the state-run long-term care program called "WA Cares."

Local projects funded in supplemental capital budget

The 2024 supplemental state capital budget includes major funding increases in K-12 school construction, behavioral-health facilities, affordable housing, water infrastructure, parks and more.

Rep. Chris Corry, Rep. Gina Mosbrucker and I are pleased with the capital investments the Legislature funded in our district. I am proud of our collaborative work to advocate for our local needs:

- Bringing It Home II 24-Hour Domestic Violence Shelter - $8.72 million
- Perry Technical Institute Electrical Program - $5 million
- West Klickitat Assisted Living Facility - $3 million
- Triumph Mental Health Treatment Center - $2.5 million
- Wishram School District Portable Buildings - $975,000
- Yakama Nation Detox Center - $900,000
- Yakima Drop-In Center - $800,000
- Kittitas Valley Hospital Hydrogen Storage System - $300,000
- Yakima Valley Crime Lab Facility - $200,000
- Swan Graphic Equipment and Furnishings - $108,000
- Filipino American Community of Yakima Valley Building - $103,000
- Mountain View Grange Improvements - $100,000
- Columbia Grange #87 Improvements - $25,000
- School Modernization Grants for Glenwood School District ($35,000), Roosevelt School District ($35,000) and Goldendale School District ($32,000)

Supplemental transportation budget

As ranking Republican on the Senate Transportation Committee, I was involved in developing the supplemental transportation budget, and am pleased the budget was approved unanimously by the Senate and House. The transportation budget provides $100 million for maintenance and preservation of our state's roads and highways. Another $33 million is for public safety, including additional Washington State Patrol cadet classes, DUI enforcement grants, wrong-way driver prevention and more.

Several projects in the 14th District were added or funding was continued in the supplemental budget. The most significant project is the Columbia River Bridge replacement between White Salmon and Hood River. Other projects include a new underpass for State Route 14 in Bingus, pedestrian and bicycle paths in West Yakima and White Salmon, repair of the State Route 241 Bridge in Malton, and Interstate 82 economic development improvements between Yakima and Union Gap.

Agricultural-overtime bill dies in Senate

One of the most important legislative issues in the Yakima Valley is overtime for agricultural workers.

In 2021, the Legislature passed a bill that phased in overtime for all of agriculture (55 hours in 2022, 48 hours in 2023 and 40 hours beginning in 2024). Agricultural associations in Washington have been concerned that the law overlooks the seasonality and variable nature of agriculture work.

Three years later we are seeing that our farms can’t afford to pay overtime to farmworkers. This year will be even worse than the last, as workers are limited to 40 hours, even though they want to work longer. Farms are also increasingly using automated farming machinery, which causes even fewer hours and jobs available for farmworkers.

We are one of the few states that doesn’t allow for a seasonality exemption. An exemption is a reasonable solution, wanted by both farms and farmworkers. I met with 300 farmworkers on the Capitol steps in Olympia in late January to rally against the law. They argued it has resulted in a significant loss of take-home pay and reduced hours. Many of those raising their voices work at Latino-owned farms, which have been among the hardest hit by the ag-overtime laws as they try to remain open and keep workers employed.

Last year, I introduced Senate Bill 5476 as a solution. It would protect farmworker jobs, put more money into farmworker pockets, and help keep our Washington state farms intact. The bill would authorize agricultural employers to select 12 weeks in a calendar year to employ workers for up to 50 hours in a workweek before overtime applies. After 50 hours of work is performed, overtime pay would apply. Unfortunately, SB 5476 did not even advance out of committee in both the 2023 and 2024 sessions.

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