



Senator

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*Senator Eide's Week in Review – Special Session Edition
December 1, 2011*

Greetings from Olympia!

Monday marked the start of the special legislation session called by Gov. Chris Gregoire to address the state's \$1.7 billion budget shortfall due to lagging revenues as a result of the Great Recession.

By law, the special session can run no longer than 30 days, which means it must end on or before Dec. 27. The 2012 regular legislative session will begin not long after that, on Jan. 9.

The governor's budget and revenue proposal:

Last week Gov. Gregoire released her operating budget proposal to solve the state's revenue shortfall, consisting of two components. The first is a budget that makes up the shortfall by cutting a wide range of public services. The second is a revenue proposal that would let the public vote to "buy back" a portion of the cuts through a small tax increase.

The all-cuts budget slashes \$1.7 billion in public services for the balance of the biennium, leaving a reserve of \$601 million. This week was spent conducting work sessions and hearings on the proposal.

Protestors migrated to Olympia to voice their opinion in a big way – more than 3,000 filled the steps, halls and hearing

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rooms of the state Capitol Monday and Tuesday.

The proposal reduces the days K-12 students spend in the classroom by four days, saving \$99 million, and reduces levy equalization by 50 percent – which would amount to a serious cut for Federal Way School District. At the higher-ed level, institutions would be cut by 15 percent overall.

All of the education cuts, however, could be bought back via Gov. Gregoire’s revenue proposal.

The revenue proposal, meanwhile, has three parts: a ballot referendum for a temporary, half-cent sales tax increase for three years; a package of fees and other revenue sources requiring a simple majority vote of the Legislature; and a package of tax changes requiring a two-thirds vote of the Legislature.

The sales tax increase is projected to generate \$494 million and buy back the governor’s proposed reductions mostly in K-12 and higher education. The majority vote package would generate \$59 million. The two-thirds vote package would generate \$282 million and would be used mostly to buy back cuts in human services and health care.

You can see the full details of Gov. Gregoire’s proposals [here](#) as well as an overview of the proposal by Senate Ways & Means Committee staff [here](#).

Interpreting the education budget:

This week the Senate Ways and Means Committee considered the governor’s proposed budget for K-12 and higher education. The committee room was packed and many people testified on behalf of these critical public services. Together, K-12 and higher education represent just over half of the state’s \$32 billion operating budget.

In Olympia, it’s easy to get lost in the numbers. But one uncommon bit of testimony from Renton Technical College, helped show committee members the price of further cuts to an already strained higher education system. Students from the college produced a short film they shared with committee members. Click here to watch:



Expanded policy focus:

This session, in addition to my duties as Majority Floor Leader, I will also represent the 30th Legislative District in a new, expanded capacity as the Vice Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee.

The appointment comes after the shocking and sad passing of the former vice chair, Sen. Scott White, who died in October.

It is an honor to have a greater role representing Federal Way on all issues transportation related in the state Senate, though bittersweet. Sen. White was an inspiration to many, including myself.

Duties and responsibilities of the position will include a direct role in crafting the Senate Transportation Budget, increased oversight and input on all proposals related to the movement of goods and people and presiding over the committee in the absence of the chair.

Top on my list of priorities is ensuring the timely completion of the Triangle Project [I-5/SR-18/SR-161]. The project is a major component to ensuring that people and freight can efficiently move through our region and remains a top priority. I plan to keep a watchful eye on this and future south King County transportation infrastructure projects.

Try your hand at balancing the budget:

This session, there will be no easy choices when it comes to balancing the state budget and closing a \$1.7 billion revenue shortfall.

Courtesy of the League of Education Voters, we're offering constituents a chance to balance the budget themselves with our new budget calculator. It offers a list of possible cuts and new revenue sources, allowing you to mix and match your way to a balanced budget. [Try it out here.](#)

In win for WA, 737 MAX goes to Renton:

Machinists at the Boeing Company have reached an agreement with management that will ensure the next generation of the 737 – the bestselling commercial airplane of all time – will be built in Washington.

[According to the Seattle Times:](#)

“The agreement secures a new 4-year contract between the union and the company, 10 months before the existing contract expires.

“The union's push to nail it down early was made to ensure that Washington State keeps 737 final assembly, which Boeing had earlier this year opened up to other locations.”

Boeing has [already booked orders for about 700](#) of the new jets. The Washington Aerospace Partnership, which had been campaigning to keep 737 production in Washington, [contended that keeping the line in-state was vital](#) to retain leadership in an industry that employs 87,000 people at 650 different companies. Boeing alone has added 3,000 jobs since the start of the recession.

Stay in touch!

Please know that I am always happy to meet with constituents and community organizations during the legislative session in Olympia. Please give me a call or send an email if you would like to discuss the issues important to your community and state.

As always, it is an honor to serve you.

Best,

Tracey Eide

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