



This week in Olympia

Feb. 1, 2012

Dear Neighbors,

Today is a historic day for the Washington state senate. We will be voting on [SB 6239](#) tonight-- that's the Marriage Equality Act, also known as gay marriage. This has been an incredibly difficult issue for many members, but today it appears, we have a majority of votes to bring this bill to the floor and pass it.

I will be voting to support SB 6239. In my view, this is yet another step in the progress our wonderful country is making towards eliminating discrimination and achieving equality. The minority GLBT community has fought long and hard for this recognition, and I am so very moved to be able to take this step forward today. When I first came

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Contact Information:

Olympia Office:
John A. Cherberg Bldg., Room 224
PO Box 40433
Olympia, WA 98504

Phone: (360) 786-7664

to Olympia, I was a very fresh “freshman” in the House where a very long and hateful debate took place to enact “DOMA” a bill called the “defense of marriage act.” I voted against that bill, but the majority party was successful in passing it into law. With today’s action, I feel that we finally righted a wrong and established equity for all our citizens.

Let me assure you that this legislation does not require any church or religiously affiliated organization to recognize or perform a marriage. No religious organization will be required to provide accommodations, facilities or any privileges related to such a marriage. Not all religions hold the same theological view on this issue, in fact my denomination’s Bishop for Western Washington actually traveled to Olympia to testify in favor of this bill. This legislation affects only our code of civil laws.

First Milestone of the Session

This week is also a pressure cooker because bills must pass out of committee by Friday, or be considered dead. I am pleased to report one of the most important health care bills in my committee passed out of committee this morning with bipartisan support. The Washington Health Exchange framework was created last year, so this year we created the

Fax: (360) 786-7450

Toll-free legislative hotline:
1-800-562-6000

TTY/TDD Hearing impaired
hotline: 1-800-635-9993

E-mail:
karen.keiser@leg.wa.gov

Web site:
<http://www.sdc.wa.gov/senators/keiser/>

Legislature Public Website:
www.leg.wa.gov

Check out “In the Loop”

If you’d like to keep up with legislative actions, you can check out the Senate [podcast](#) “In the Loop” for a summary of the week’s events or visit us on Twitter [@WASenDemocrats](#). A tip for Twitter users – follow [#waleg](#) to see what other people are saying about the Washington State Legislature.

“rules of the market” with [SB 6178](#). This competitive marketplace will allow tens of thousands of citizens to make good choices between comparable insurance plans that will be affordable and available by January 1, 2014. It is a cornerstone to the foundation of the Affordable Care Act that is key to health reform.

Bills That are Staying Alive

I am also pleased to tell you that my bill to allow day spas to serve a complimentary glass or wine passed out of committee this week. One bill that I hope will pass Thursday is [SB 6228](#), which makes it illegal to discriminate against an unemployed job seeker just because of the applicant’s job status. More than a hundred on-line ads by employers with “no unemployed need apply” were uncovered in a data search. In my view, that is a terribly unfair practice. My bill would forbid such restrictions by employers.

I will send a full report of bills that passed, or failed to pass, this week’s cutoff in my next e-newsletter.

District Page: Andy Beal

One bright spot to tell you about was the delightful young man who I was able to sponsor as a Senate page last week. Andrew Beal is a student at Aviation H.S and plans on becoming an electrical engineer. Andy spent a week in the Legislature learning how it works and writing his own bill during page activities.



Senator Karen Keiser with page Andrew Beal.

As always, please contact my office if we can be of assistance with information or help with an issue you may have with a state agency, or if you have questions about legislation being considered.

Always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Keiser". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Karen Keiser