



Session update from Olympia

March 1, 2011

Dear neighbor,

As we enter one of the busiest weeks all session, I am pleased to report that many key pieces of legislation have now passed out of committee and continue to move forward in the legislative process.

Helping families affordably insure their property

Households along shorelines are finding themselves subject to policy hindering their ability to acquire insurance or face difficulties selling their home.

Under local shoreline master programs along Washington's coastline, if a shoreline buffer changes over time, residential structures already in existence could be defined as "nonconforming use."

For residents, this can spell an increase in premiums and can even affect the marketability of a home for sale on the market.

[Senate Bill 5451](#) simply removes the designation "nonconforming use" from residential shoreline evaluation.

The goal of the proposal is to streamline a policy that has proven itself harmful to families up and down Washington's coastline – and to do so without environmental degradation. With this narrowly crafted legislation, we have achieved that goal.

The bill now heads to the House of Representatives for

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further consideration.

In the coming days, I am hopeful that many more of my bills will make their way to the floor as well. The Senate has already taken action on a few other key pieces of legislation that I also support.

Among the top are preserving the Guaranteed Education Tuition program, or GET, and providing student loans to aerospace students. Both these important pieces of legislation help ensure our children's future education.

Preserving GET program for students

The state's popular Guaranteed Education Tuition program, or GET, lets parents buy college credits at today's tuition rates to finance their kids' future education at our state colleges and universities. Right now over 120,000 families have invested in GET units. As tuitions increase, being able to apply GET units to the bill really helps the family budget. But the GET program has become a bit out of balance.

[SB 5749](#) creates a new funding model so we can keep the fund strong and able to continue providing this great opportunity to help Washington families save for their kids' college education.

Under the current plan, 100 GET units can be redeemed for one full year's tuition and state fees at the University of Washington, the state's most expensive university. Units must be used within 10 years after the first unit is redeemed.

Under the proposed changes, 100 GET units would be redeemable for the average of tuition and fees at all six of the state's four-year institutions, including Western Washington University, and would need to be used within six years after the first unit is redeemed.

Creating a 21st Century aerospace workforce

Our state is home to more than 600 aerospace companies. While market demand has expanded over the years, the

number of skilled workers has not. Though 85 percent of aerospace students are being hired, on average, even more are needed. With last week's announcement of Boeing as the winner of the Air Force aerial tanker contract, this figure is only sure to rise.

[SB 5674](#), would address this need by creating Washington's first aerospace training student loan program. The short-term loan program would give financially needy students the ability to finance and pursue vocational training.

At a time when many Washingtonians struggle to find work, this program would help them transition into well-paying careers.

That's huge: Every new job can mean the difference between a household that is struggling and one that is prospering. We've known for some time that many of our top employers recruit workers from out of state because they can't find enough properly trained Washingtonians. This bill address that need head-on, to the benefit of our residents and our employers alike.

Looking ahead

For the remainder of the week, we will be working from the Senate floor, including evenings and the following weekend. We have just over a week to consider bills that have survived the cutoff and pass them on to the House. Though time will be tight, I am confident in our ability to pass out the key pieces of legislation that will get our economy moving again.

Should you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions, as always, please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff.

Best wishes,

Kevin Ranker