

## Government Directory

*From protecting against fraud to helping you discover your family's roots, here are some helpful resources you may not have know about.*

**Legislative Information Center** - [www.leg.wa.gov/lic](http://www.leg.wa.gov/lic) or Toll-free 1-800-562-6000

LIC can answer virtually any question you have about bills that have come before the Legislature, the legislative process, Capitol tours, and even provides kid-friendly educational materials.

**State Attorney General's Office** - [www.atg.wa.gov](http://www.atg.wa.gov) or (360) 753-6200

You can file a business complaint, find information about protecting your family from fraud, or check out recent legal opinions issued by the AG.

**Washington Rx Program** - [www.rx.wa.gov](http://www.rx.wa.gov) or 1-800-913-4146

This is a free discount prescription drug program for residents of Washington. Participants save an average of 43 percent on their prescriptions.

**Department of Financial Institutions** - [dfi.wa.gov](http://dfi.wa.gov) or 1.877.RING DFI (746-4334)

Homeowners can find help dealing with foreclosure and consumers can find plenty of financial education from tips for talking to kids and tips for managing a tight budget.

**Office of the Insurance Commissioner** - [oic.wa.gov](http://oic.wa.gov) or 1-800-562-6900

You can contact their SHIBA Helpline for help finding affordable health insurance, research complaints made against insurance companies, and even find tips on insuring your pet.

**Department of Licensing** - [www.dol.wa.gov](http://www.dol.wa.gov) or 360-902-3600

Renew your tabs online, check on the status of a contractor or business you want to work with, and more.

**Secretary of State** - [www.sos.wa.gov](http://www.sos.wa.gov) or (360) 902-4151

Register to vote, peruse the state archives for interesting bits of state history, find out about your family's genealogy, or verify a charity's status before making a donation.

**211 - Health and Human Services Information** - [www.win211.org](http://www.win211.org)

Dial 2-1-1 in King County for referral and resource information about everything from emergency housing, help paying utilities, food banks, and more.

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## 48th Legislative District 2011 Session Report



Dear Neighbors

The 2011 legislative session is over and it's great to be back in the district. Thank you to all who contacted our offices to let us know your thoughts on the issues we were working on during the past several months.

There's no question this session was especially difficult. Due to the lingering effects of the recession and the consequent drag on our state's economy, we faced a \$5 billion budget hole for the coming 2011-2013 budget cycle. After many long hours of negotiations and public hearings, the Legislature passed a bi-partisan budget that will reduce state spending by \$4.6 billion – more than 12 percent of our overall operating budget.

Despite the enormous budget challenges this session, we were able to preserve some of the most critical services and programs for children and those with disabilities. We also passed many significant policy reforms along the way such as lowering costs of our workers comp system, changing how our cash grant assistance programs work, and more. Read on to learn more about our work in these areas and on how we dealt with the budget crisis in various areas of government.

We hope you'll take a few moments to read about how we represented you, and let us know if you have any ideas for things we can work on for the 2012 session. Since we're back in the district, you can call or e-mail. We always enjoy hearing from you.

Warm regards,

*Rodney Tom*

Sen. Rodney Tom



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**Senate Committees:**

- Ways & Means, Vice Chair
- Early Learning & K-12 Education
- Judiciary

*Ross Hunter*

Representative Ross Hunter



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**House Committee:**

- Ways & Means, Chair

*Deborah Eddy*

Representative Eddy



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**House Committees:**

- Judiciary
- Technology, Energy & Communications
- Transportation

## Senator Rodney Tom

### Maintaining quality and access in higher education

Washington's colleges and universities play a key role not only in our state's overall education system, but also as a primary driver of workforce and economic development in the state. Due to the enormous budget challenges currently facing state government, funding for higher education has been decimated. In fact, the University of Washington receives \$200 million less in state support today than it did in 1999. We can't continue on this pathway if we want to maintain the UW's leadership position as one of the top public universities in the country.

No one likes to see tuition increases, but the real question is how do we balance quality and access, while maintaining affordability. This session, as Chair of the Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee, I worked with my colleagues in the Legislature to develop a funding solution that provides Washington's public four-year colleges and universities the flexibility and stability necessary to maintain academic excellence, while also preserving the state's commitment to providing financial assistance to low and middle income students. Under House Bill 1795, Washington's public colleges and universities will see greater budgeting flexibility, coupled with increased financial aid obligations and performance measures. Schools will be able to set their own tuition rates until 2020, but if they do, they will also be required to provide more financial aid to students from low and middle income families.



### Promoting excellence in the teaching profession

Teachers have some of the toughest, yet most important jobs in our society as they attempt to educate our children and the leaders of tomorrow. Yet, the harsh reality is that teacher layoffs are inevitable during tough budget periods like the one we are now facing. With increased class sizes, now more than ever, we need to ensure that our kids have the most talented and effective teachers possible, which is why I sponsored Senate Bill 5959 this year as an effort to move the teaching profession toward a more performance-based model that rewards effectiveness in the classroom.

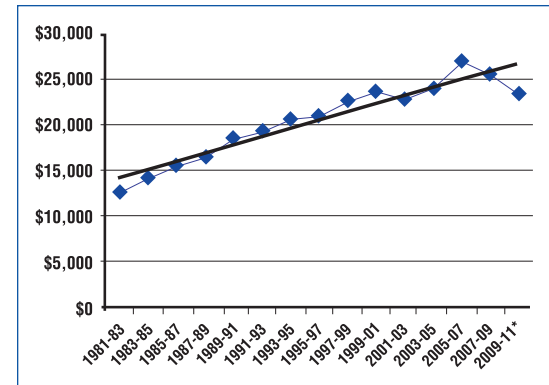


Under my bill, rather than using seniority as the sole measure in determining teacher layoffs during tough budget times, school districts would instead make workforce reductions based on teachers' performance in the classroom. Out of over 59,000 teachers in our state, only 459 are currently on probation. I felt if layoffs had to be made, those on probation should be the first to go. Why layoff great young teachers in lieu of the less than 1 percent teachers who have failed to demonstrate excellence in the classroom? We were able to pass this provision out of the Senate, but unfortunately, it died in the House. I will be continuing my efforts to make these common sense reforms to our K-12 education system next year.

## State Representative Ross Hunter

### The \$5.1 billion budget problem - A responsible, thoughtful, sustainable solution

This was my first session as chair of the House Ways & Means Committee, our budget-writing committee. It was a difficult task at best, given the challenges of crawling out from the worst recession since the depression and the consequent drag on our state's economy.



This chart shows the 25-year trend line of general fund state revenue (GFS). The variation in the last two biennia has been very extreme, causing major disruptions in the services we provide for citizens.

I worked very hard to make this budget consistent with my values and the reason I ran for this job in the first place. I care about children – their education, their health, and their future – and I tried to protect those as much as possible given the situation. I also spent a lot of time working with many very smart people – both in the House and Senate, Republicans and Democrats – to craft a budget that was responsible, thoughtful and sustainable.

No part of state government was spared from budget cuts, and thousands of people will feel the effects. And though this presents a sustainable spending level, we have to ask ourselves whether we want to continue funding things such as higher education, K-12 education and health care at these lower levels. We made many policy changes and reforms to reduce the long-term costs of some of these programs, but as our economy recovers, we need to be clear about what it is we should be funding and make sure we can do so.

The budget was reduced by \$4.5 billion and will reduce the number of state employees by another 1,253. Budget cuts include:

- \$1.2 billion for I-728 and I-732, the class size and teacher pay initiatives
- \$535 million for higher education (in part, offset with increased tuition revenue)
- \$215 million from elimination of the K-4 class size enhancement
- \$179 million from a K-12 employee salary reduction and \$177 million in state employee salaries
- \$116 million in reduced Disability Lifeline cash grants with remaining funding transformed into a housing program
- \$97 million for reduced personal care hours for long term care and developmentally disabled clients

Within the cuts are some small victories worth pointing out. Though we had to cut back on either the number of people we can serve or the range of services we provide, we preserved health care for kids, Basic Health for low-income workers, and the Disability Lifeline for those unable to work.

In some cases we even expanded funding because it was the responsible thing to do. For example, we expanded family planning services for low-income women because it actually saves us money. We increased financial aid for our lowest-income students by \$124 million. And we remained committed to protecting education funding as much as possible, including important K-12 reforms approved in 2009.

Links to several online budget resources are available at my website or you can always call me at my office.

## State Representative Deb Eddy

### Leading the nation in software piracy protections

Washington is one of the world's leaders in creating high value information technology. Stolen software used in foreign manufacturing results in unfair competition here in the US.

Microsoft, for example, cites a study finding the United States has lost 60,000 jobs as a result of China's piracy of Microsoft products. China exports billions of dollars of goods into the United States. The rampant use of pirated IT means those manufacturers are using property stolen from US companies to manufacture goods that they then export back to us.

I worked closely with all stakeholders to pass HB 1495, creating a cause of action here in Washington to require accountability of manufacturers using stolen IT. Besides signaling our intention to protect the intellectual property of businesses here, the legislation will be a model for other states.

### Reducing costs, protecting workers – reforms to workers comp

Workers comp is our no-fault insurance program that provides medical, disability and time-loss benefits to injured workers. In the wake of recessionary impacts on these funds, the Governor called for reforms to stave off double-digit premium increases and to stabilize the fund, long term.

I started working behind the scenes when it became clear that highly charged oppositional politics threatened to derail reform efforts. Ultimately, we passed a package of program changes that included the protective measures in my HB 2109, balancing the interests of both businesses and workers. The reforms include a Rainy Day Fund to minimize spikes in the premiums paid by employees, provisions to help workers return to work more quickly, and an optional structured settlement for workers 55 and older.

### Moving to a greener electric future

I've been working the past few years to ensure that government paves the way for electric vehicles (EVs). We've made great strides, I'm proud to say; check out [www.westcoastgreenhighway.com](http://www.westcoastgreenhighway.com) for more information. Lots of questions remain to be answered. This year, in response to concerns that charging stations would be subject to a tariff, we passed HB 1571, clarifying that these facilities are not under the jurisdiction of the Utilities and Transportation Commission.



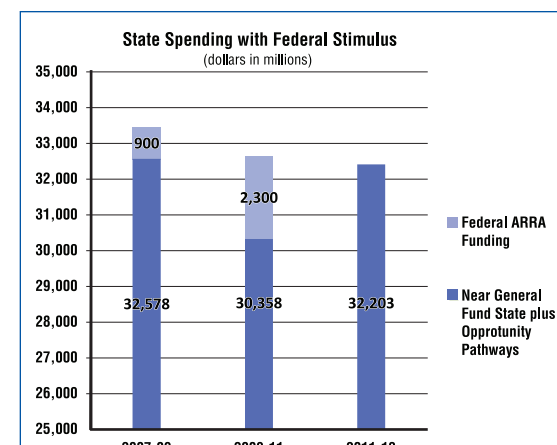
Some of the electric vehicles on display at a conference I spoke at in 2009

### An important environmental bill that failed

I worked hard to pass HB 1365, which would have amended Initiative 937, the renewable energy standards for Washington State. A slight tweak in language concerning the renewable energy credits earned by solar energy would have enabled one of the largest solar energy projects in the nation, the Teanaway Solar Reserve, to move forward by qualifying for a federal tax credit. Regrettably, the bill was caught in the final flurry of House and Senate negotiations and failed to pass.

### Building a bigger pipeline of aerospace workers

Our state's aerospace industry includes more than 650 companies working on everything from R&D to avionics. We have public-private training programs to ensure that these companies have well-trained workers. To help more local students attend these centers, my HB 1846 creates an Aerospace Training Student Loan Program to provide the kind of short-term, low-interest loans that are critical to helping people get the training needed to qualify for these jobs.



Though we will bring in more state money this year than last, we still spend less - even less than the 07-09 biennium.