

# 15TH DISTRICT

## 2022 SESSION REVIEW

Serving Eastern Yakima County including Selah, Moxee, Wapato, Toppenish, Zillah, Granger, Sunnyside, Grandview and part of Yakima.

### SENATOR JIM HONEYFORD



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**Committees:**  
Ways & Means (*Assistant ranking member*)  
Agriculture, Water, Natural Resources,  
& Parks  
Law & Justice

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The 60-day legislative session ended on March 10. Like every legislative session, there were bipartisan successes and outcomes that will benefit our communities. However, there were also major disappointments and missed opportunities – including the majority party's partisan approach to critical policies relating to taxes, transportation, and housing. We share our thoughts on these issues in this newsletter.

As your state lawmakers, our priorities continue to be: reducing tax burdens on working families; protecting our neighborhoods; holding state government accountable; and reining in the governor's emergency powers. Our sponsorship of legislation and voting records reflect these priorities.

### REPRESENTATIVE BRUCE CHANDLER



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**House Committees:**  
Rural Development, Agriculture,  
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Appropriations  
College & Workforce Development

The 2022 legislative session, like last year, was largely remote – including committee hearings held via Zoom. This virtual setting limited personal interactions, hurt the law-making process, and led to poor public policy. The Legislature must return to normal in 2023, including your ability to meet with state lawmakers in their offices, sit in the chamber galleries, testify in person, and have full access to the Capitol Campus.

While we have a part-time Legislature, we are year-round state lawmakers. Our offices, including our legislative assistants, are here to listen and help. Please don't hesitate to email, call, or send us a letter. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

### REPRESENTATIVE JEREMIE DFAULT



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Consumer Protection & Business  
(*Assistant ranking member*)  
Finance (*Assistant ranking member*)  
Rules

**Sen. Jim Honeyford**  
R-Sunnyside

**Rep. Bruce Chandler**  
R-Granger

**Rep. Jeremie Dfault**  
R-Selah



**Toll-free Legislative Hotline for ALL members: (800) 562-6000**

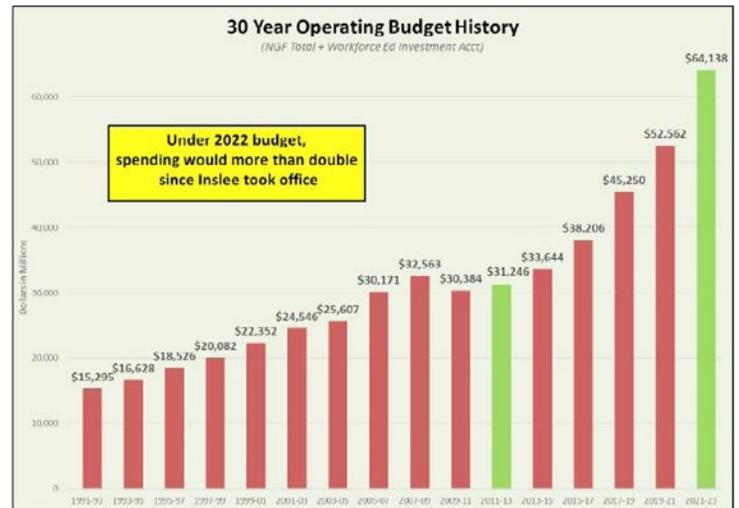
### The Partisan Supplemental Operating Budget

#### Unsustainable State Spending; No Meaningful Tax Relief

Many opportunities were missed by the majority party, but perhaps the most egregious was its failure to provide working families any meaningful tax relief despite a \$15 billion budget surplus. Inflation is at a 40-year high, resulting in higher prices for gas, food, housing, and electricity. Washingtonians need and deserve a break.

Republicans offered several tax-relief proposals, including legislation to lower property taxes, reduce the state sales tax, end the sales tax on diapers, repeal the controversial long-term care insurance payroll tax, and reduce manufacturing tax rates to help alleviate consumer inflation. These measures could not even receive a public hearing.

Instead, Democratic budget writers saw the historic surplus as opportunity to grow state government in an unsustainable manner. Their supplemental operating budget spends an additional \$6.2 billion on more than 1,300 new items, all of which the majority party viewed as more important than tax relief. With this additional state spending, the operating budget has grown by 22% – a whopping \$11.7 billion – from the 2019-21 budget cycle.

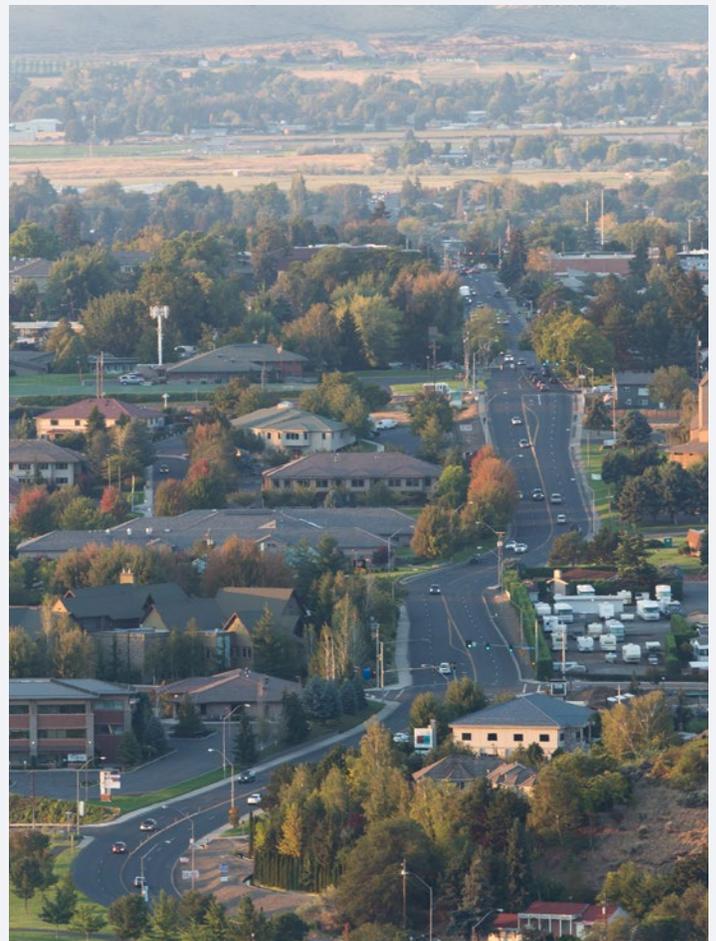


### The Bipartisan Supplemental Capital Budget

#### Local Projects Funded

Unlike the supplemental operating budget, the supplemental capital budget was crafted with bipartisan input – with Senator Honeyford again taking a lead role in the Senate. This state spending plan, often referred to as the construction budget, was approved by the Legislature unanimously. It includes new funding for many community projects that will benefit the 15th District:

- \$2 million for the Toppenish Hospital project;
- \$1 million for a new community pool at Martin Luther King Jr. Park in Yakima;
- \$650,000 for Yakima Habitat for Humanity;
- \$232,000 for the Yakima YMCA Park Development;
- \$100,000 for the Granger Historical Society new museum project;
- \$52,000 for the Selah Naches Food Bank;
- \$70,000 to purchase a good used bucket truck for the Yakima Trolley Museum;
- \$56,000 for minor works, including Yakima Valley Community College;
- \$30,000 for non-destructive weld testing in Sunnyside; and
- \$67,000 for the Yakima Greenway Master Plan.



## *The Most Partisan Session In My Memory*

In the closing moments of the 2022 legislative session, I took to the floor of the Senate chamber to voice my utter disappointment about the level of partisanship seen in the Legislature this year and what is best called the “tyranny” of the majority.

This year, as always, I offered bills to deal with real challenges faced by Washingtonians. For the first time in my 28 years as a state lawmaker, none was passed into law. I was not alone, as many House and Senate Republicans saw their bills face a level of rejection that was unprecedented.

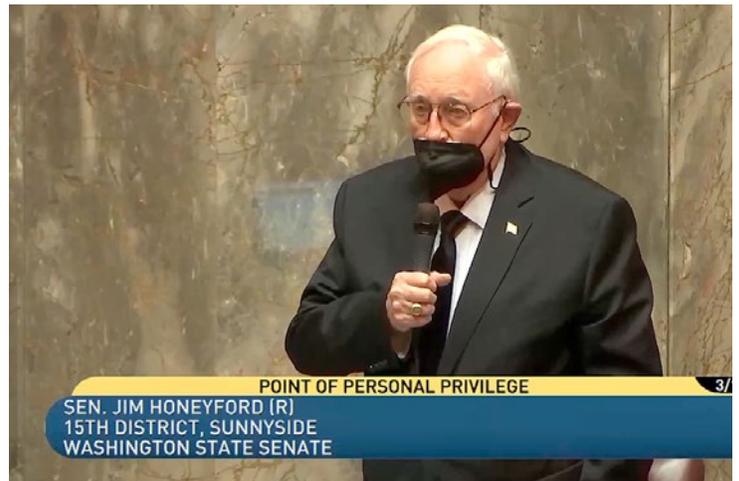
This partisanship was reflected in other ways. For instance, the majority shared its expensive, new transportation package with the media first, ignoring our input and delaying our ability to question the new fees they want from vehicle owners, drivers, and dealerships.

Republicans also weren’t approached about co-sponsoring Democratic bills the way we normally are, taking away a traditional opportunity to improve legislation before it is formally introduced. And at times, members of the majority side even “borrowed” Republican bills word for word and introduced them as their own.

## *Majority Party Blocks Bills To Help Address Fentanyl Crisis*

According to the Department of Health, opioid overdose deaths in Washington rose from 2013 through 2020, driven by heroin deaths, and more recently, fentanyl deaths. Deaths involving fentanyl and other synthetic opioids are now more common than those involving heroin, with the highest death rates and largest increases being seen in rural counties, such as Yakima and Klickitat.

To address this crisis, I introduced two bills this session. [Senate Bill 5509](#) would have excluded fentanyl-testing equipment from the definition of “drug paraphernalia.” Because a single dose of the deadly substance



This type of partisanship is bound to lead to bad policies – like the long-term care insurance program and anti-police bills – that will have to be corrected later. It also resulted in several important, life-saving bills being rejected for no good reason at all.

can kill a user, testing can save lives.

[Senate Bill 5524](#) would have imposed a life sentence for those convicted of committing a controlled-substances homicide involving fentanyl-laced drugs.

Our testing-strip bill passed the Senate unanimously, but never even received a hearing from the House Public Safety Committee. Our bill to increase the penalty for those convicted of committing homicide with fentanyl-laced drugs was completely ignored by the Senate majority.

## *Pot-Shop Protection Bill Fails To Clear Democrat-Controlled House*

In the days since the end of the legislative session, the news statewide has been filled with stories about armed robberies at cannabis retailers, including some that resulted in deaths. Unfortunately, I predicted this would be the case when Democrats failed to act on my bill to address this issue.

[Senate Bill 5927](#) would have added a year to the prison sentence of someone convicted of first- or second-degree robbery of a cannabis retail outlet. It is the same extended sentence that goes with the robbery of a pharmacy and would be applied to robberies of cannabis retailers when the crime is planned and carried out by two or more people.

Due to federal banking rules, these businesses are almost entirely cash-only operations, making them a target for robberies and a magnet for criminals. The number of robberies of cannabis stores is on the rise,

and this bill would have benefited not just the retailers but the community as a whole.



## ***Energy Efficient Housing Pilot Program***

As a long-time member on the House Appropriations Committee, part of my efforts this session related to the operating budget. I was able to get a provision in the budget for a pilot program administered through the Department of Commerce with the goal of reducing energy consumption and related costs for low-income agricultural workers in the Yakima Valley. It is grant funding that would go to community-based organizations with a proven track record of assisting agricultural workers. The dollars could be used to install solar panel systems and water heating systems, battery backups, the replacement of energy inefficient appliances, and weatherization of homes.



## ***Preventing Gang Violence***

I was also able to get a provision in the budget for the department to contract with nonprofit organizations in the Yakima Valley to form a community consortium to develop and implement strategies for the prevention of gang violence in Yakima County. The consortium must include representation from community-based organizations, gang-involved youth, law enforcement, and state agencies involved in juvenile justice. They would develop after-school activities such as counseling, tutoring and computer literacy for gang-involved youth. A media outreach campaign would be used to link the youth with employment, educational and training opportunities.

## ***Harmful Legislation Halted In Agriculture Committee***

As the ranking Republican on the House Rural Development, Agriculture, and Natural Resources Committee, my efforts this session were more about stopping bad bills than passing legislation to benefit our agriculture community and natural resources.

We were able to keep the governor's [House Bill 1838](#) from getting out of committee that would have put in place mandatory riparian buffers for salmon recovery habitat. If you farm or own land with natural resources, this requirement could have been devastating with buffers potentially reaching as wide as 250 feet. Landowners would have had to pay up to 30% of the costs to plant trees to comply with the riparian buffer zones and be fined \$10,000 a day for noncompliance. Large pieces of farmland would have been taken out of production, driving farmers out of business, and impacting our state's food supply.

We were also able to stop Department of Natural Resources' legislation to conserve one million acres of forest land and reforest an additional one million acres by 2040, while incentivizing small landowners to sustain their forests. The legislation was more about carbon and halting working forests than a balanced conservation, deforestation, and restoration plan. Many of the bill details were vague or unclear.

## ***Chiropractic Benefit***

Finally, there is a provision in the budget directing the Health Care Authority to develop an amendment to the State Medicaid Plan to add chiropractic services as a benefit.

## *Disappointments – Wasteful Spending, Endless State Of Emergency And Unconstitutional Laws*

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While I am pleased with many of the Legislature's accomplishments this year, including the supplemental capital budget, I have serious concerns with the irresponsible spending of our operating budget surplus, the endless state of emergency that remains in place, and several new laws that infringe on constitutional rights.

The majority party failed to use our state's huge budget surplus to give any property tax or \$30 car tab relief, or to build up our state's

rainy-day fund. They instead opted to spend today's record receipts on a Green New Deal. Not only does this create expanded future financial obligations for taxpayers, but it will also raise energy and transportation costs, overwhelm our state's electrical grid, and make no impact whatsoever on global climate. Every Republican voted against the Democrats' supplemental operating budget and transportation tax and fee package.

Additionally, Democrats refused to follow almost every other state, including California and New York, and limit the governor's emergency powers and end the COVID "state of emergency" now in its third year. Republicans offered several solutions to bring balance back to state government, but they were rejected.

The majority party also pushed through an unconstitutional ban on high-capacity magazines. Like the capital gains income tax they passed last year that was recently declared unconstitutional, [Senate Bill 5078](#) will cost the state millions of dollars in needless litigation and create legal uncertainty for Washington residents.

Despite these problematic policies, I continue to believe that our best days are ahead. Washingtonians are resilient and will insist that our state's leaders embrace common sense and the rule of law.

## *Honoring Veterans*

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One of my favorite moments of the legislative session was when I had the opportunity to give the Republican speech in support of [House Bill 1181](#) – a bill that creates the Washington State Global War on Terrorism Memorial Account and funds several Veteran suicide prevention efforts. You can watch my speech here: [https://youtu.be/SMBPd8\\_J0Yg](https://youtu.be/SMBPd8_J0Yg)

## *Recognizing Cooper Kupp*

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Another memorable day was when my colleagues in the House joined me in sponsoring [House Resolution 4662](#) honoring fellow Davis High School alumnus and Super Bowl LVI MVP, Cooper Kupp. The resolution recognized Cooper's outstanding achievements, his priorities of faith and family, and the class and humility he showed as the proud Yakima Valley and entire world watched his Super Bowl performance. I appreciate the Yakima Herald-Republic's coverage of this issue on February 28.



## *House Resolution 4672*

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I will not be seeking re-election in November. It has been an honor to represent my friends and neighbors in the 15th District these past four years. Thank you for the opportunity to serve, and for helping me accomplish some important measures.

My colleagues surprised me on March 7 by passing a House Resolution that recognized my legislative service. It was a special moment for me and my family.

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### Redistricting Changes

Depending on where you reside, this may be the last time we are able to send you a newsletter like this one. The Redistricting Commission created new legislative and congressional boundaries and the Legislature approved them. The 15th District will be changing. You can find new district maps here: [redistricting.wa.gov/final-maps](http://redistricting.wa.gov/final-maps)