

From the Desk
of Judy Warnick,
13th District
Senator

Greetings,

I hope you have had a safe and fun summer. As fall arrives there is a lot going on throughout our area and in Olympia. I recently traveled with my House colleagues around our legislative district visiting local newspapers to discuss the recent court decisions on education as well as other issues facing our district and state.

Rep. Tom Dent and I speak with Editor of the Royal City Register, Ted Escobar over lunch

Recently the Supreme court issued two rulings. One places a fine of \$100,000 a day on the Legislature (and ultimately taxpayers) for what the court views is a failure to adequately fund education. This is despite the fact that since the Majority Coalition Caucus began leading the Senate in 2013, the Legislature has invested \$4.5 billion more in education. Education spending now makes up nearly half of the state's budget. This ruling is concerning in that I believe the court has overstepped its authority. Our state constitution is clear that the legisla-

tive branch is responsible for making decisions on spending, not the judicial branch.

The second ruling deemed voter-approved charter schools unconstitutional. This is simply an unfair decision to the thousands of students and parents who are already enrolled and excelling at new public charter schools. The court's decision has been deeply criticized for its timing and lack of foresight which puts other successful education programs at risk as well. The state attorney general recently filed a motion for the court to reconsider its ruling and even former governor Christine Gregoire, who opposed charter schools, called the decision, "not right, not fair." This particular case has raised many eyebrows because many of the justices that ruled in the majority received significant campaign contributions from the state teachers' union who vehemently opposes school choice. I recommend you read a recent article about the case by clicking here.

Looking Ahead

As the chair of the Senate Agriculture, Water and Rural Economic Development Committee, I am mindful of the challenges our state – and particularly our area - face

when it comes to water access and quality. This year those issues are compounded even more by the severe drought that has affected every corner of our state, but has hit our agricultural communities in eastern Washington the hardest. While I'm grateful the Legislature approved emergency funds to assist communities across our state that are suffering,, the fact remains that money can't replace needed water. Thankfully, our farmers and citizens have done an excellent job of preserving and protecting our water resources.

I have been closely monitoring the state Department of Agriculture's new push to increase inspections for dairies and farmers using manure as fertilizer aimed at preventing run-off and ground water pollution. This may be an example of unneeded, burdensome regulations. Just this past Monday the governor's office issued a list of businesses they intend to target with a new tax on their carbon output. The list included McCain Foods, a local food processor in Othello. Why are they included in a list among industries like oil refineries and power plants? The fact is that our state will reach its goals to reduce carbon without these types of risky interventions that burden busi-

nesses and working families.

Around the District

In addition to meeting with our local newspapers, I recently attended an event at Big Bend Community College called the New Americans' Citizenship Day. This was a free event to help current legal permanent residents apply for citizenship. Becoming a citizen is a lengthy and expensive process and this workshop provided help to immigrants seeking to achieve the American Dream by becoming citizens of our great country. The program is in part funded by the state Department of Commerce and was graciously hosted by Big Bend Community College. I commend these volunteers and the more than 70 people seeking to become American citizens from all over the world including Mexico, Denmark, and Argentina.

It is an honor to serve as your state Senator. Please don't hesitate to contact me with questions regarding state government.

Sincerely,

Judy Warnick

Judy Warnick

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