



**SENATE  
DEMOCRATS**  
PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

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# **Tribal Priorities Legislative Report**

# 2023

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Acknowledgements

Senate Democrats (SDC) have long partnered with and continue to engage with Tribal leaders and communities across the state.

Partnering with and supporting Tribes in Washington strengthens all communities. The first peoples of Washington are the original stewards of the land and continue to advocate for the preservation of natural resources and sustainable ecological practices. The Senate Democratic Caucus (SDC) engages with Tribal leaders and communities across the state, so we can work together. The SDC knows we must:

- Recognize Indian Tribes as sovereign governmental entities and increase State-Tribal partnerships and agreements.
- Develop and implement policies to improve the health, housing, and education outcomes of Tribal communities.
- Recognize the historic relationship among tribes, the land, and natural environment.
- Support the restoration and protection of the land and natural resources.
- Cultivate and preserve existing relationships between state, local, and Tribal governments.

SDC leadership seeks to ensure communication with Tribal leaders. The SDC designated two senators and one staff member to liaise with Tribal nations. The following report provides a snapshot of Tribal priorities for the 2023 legislative session. *Please note, this report is not exhaustive and serves as a supplemental document highlighting major legislation and appropriations.*

# MESSAGE FROM LEADERSHIP LIAISONS

## The Senate Democratic Caucus recognizes the importance of direct communication with Tribes

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Prior to session, we invited members of the Senate Democratic Caucus to learn from University of Washington law professors about foundational American Indian law and the ongoing battles to protect and preserve Tribal treaty rights in Washington. This was an opportunity that provided recognition and education of the unique relationship the state has with Federally-Recognized Tribes. This training provided historical context on the state's commitment to government-to-government relationship and the current policy issues that envelop that relationship.

Tribal leaders were invited to meet directly with the Senate Democratic Caucus on three occasions in which we worked to remain current on policy and budget issues.

We hope to stay apprised of complex policy issues affecting Tribal communities across Washington and Indian Country as a whole, and continue providing learning opportunities for our members.

It has been a pleasure working with the Tribes this session, and we look forward to further strengthening our relationship through direct communication and engagement opportunities as we prepare for the next session.

Thank you for your continued partnership,



**Sen. Claudia Kauffman & Sen. Derek Stanford**

SDC Leadership Liaisons to Tribal Nations



# PRIORITY LEGISLATION

We urged and supported the passing of legislation with lasting impacts on Tribal communities in and around Washington

## Honoring Billy Frank Jr's Legacy

[HB 1639](#) legislatively designates March 9 as Billy Frank Jr. Day and permits funding be used for the creation and installation of a Billy Frank Jr. statue.

## Tax & Investments

[HB 1352](#) allows a county treasurer, subject to their approval, to invest funds of a Federally-Recognized Tribe when an authorized Tribal official enters into an intergovernmental agreement to invest Tribal funds with the county treasurer.

[HB 1756](#) establishes a taxing structure for renewable energy projects that better serves the needs of the communities in which they are sited.

## Protecting Indigenous Women and People

[HB 1177](#) continues the important work from last session by creating a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People Cold Case Investigations Assistance Unit within the Office of the Attorney General.

[HB 1512](#) creates an MMIW/P Missing Persons Toolkit containing regularly updated information related to locating and recovering missing Indigenous persons.

# PRIORITY LEGISLATION

## Supporting Natural Resource Co-Management & Tribal Consultation

[HB 1216](#) creates a framework for siting new clean energy facilities across the state. The bill establishes the Interagency Clean Energy Siting Coordinating Council, which will help coordinate governmental agencies, local and Tribal governments, and community interests through the process.

[HB 1322](#) establishes a framework for bi-state water resource management in the Walla Walla watershed, which spans the border with Oregon and includes lands belonging to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

[HB 1792](#) lays out a plan to resolve legal water use disputes in the Nooksack watershed. The bill requires the Department of Ecology to seek public review and input on adjudication filing forms and establishes filing deadlines.

## Advancing Digital Equity and Supporting Tribal Workforce Development

[HB 1711](#) ([SB 5689](#)) provides a state sales and use tax exemption for internet and telecommunications infrastructure projects involving a Federally-Recognized Indian Tribe. Specifically, this will allow for the Quinalt Indian Nation the ability to partner with Washington to build the necessary infrastructure for reliable, high-speed internet access.

# PRIORITY LEGISLATION

## Enhancing State-Tribal Relations

HB 1481 permits Federally Recognized Tribes in Washington to opt-in to the Law Enforcement Officers' and Firefighters' Retirement System Plan 2.

HB 1684 allows Federally-Recognized Tribes to opt-in to — or opt-out of — the requirement to report the Standard Occupational Classifications or job titles of their workers to the Employment Security Department.

HB 1290 (SB 5086) requires Tribal agencies with Tribal officer certification written agreements with the CJTC to reimburse the CJTC for 25% of the cost of training. Tribes without current written tribal officer certification agreements with the commission are required to pay the full cost of providing training.

## Helping Native Children Stay in Native Homes

SB 5683 authorizes Alaska Native/American Indian (AN/AI) children and Tribes to use the Child Specific License out-of-home placement program. It provides a simpler, faster alternative to traditional foster care licensing and will result in more AN/AI children staying in their communities instead of non-relative foster care placements.

SB 5124 provides subsidies to guardians who have been licensed as foster care parents. This will incentivize placements with relatives and people who already have an established relationship with the child and can help speed up family reunification outcomes.

SB 5256 makes permanent the Child Welfare Housing Assistance Program, which was slated to expire in July. The program is also expanded to include families at risk of entering the dependency system.

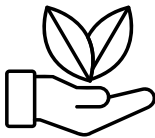
# HIGHLIGHTED APPROPRIATIONS

We highlighted budget area priorities that will greatly affect tribal communities



## Protecting Indigenous Women & People

- Extended/expanded the MMIW/P Task Force into next biennium
- Direction (via Cooper Jones safety council) to review all pedestrian related fatalities/serious injuries when the victim is a member of Federally-Recognized Tribe.



## Addressing Historical and Intergenerational Harms to Tribal Communities

- Funded the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Tribal Advisory Committee to conduct research and outreach to understand the operations and impacts of Indian boarding schools in Washington and develop recommendations for the state to acknowledge and address the historical and intergenerational harms caused by Indian boarding schools and other cultural and linguistic termination practices.



## Enhancing Government to Government Relationships & Prioritizing Consultation

- Funded the Burke Museum to support Tribal consultation work
- Funded the establishment of the Tribal cultural affairs program at the Washington State Arts Commission.
- Funding for conflict resolution process between local drainage and irrigation districts, state and federal resource agencies, and Skagit Tribes (Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, and Sauk-Suiattle Indian Tribe).



## Investing in Our Climate

- Directed at least 50% of Climate Commitment Act capacity grants (approx. \$13M) to Tribes and Tribal organizations to provide guidance and input.
- \$10M of the climate transit programs is provided solely for Tribal transit grants.



# HIGHLIGHTED APPROPRIATIONS



## Prioritizing Health Care & Behavioral Health Supports

- Funding through the federal American Recovery Plan to support the recovery of American Indians and Alaska Natives with substance use and mental health disorders (Washington Healthcare Authority).
- \$1M of the workforce education investment account is provided solely for the Center for Indigenous Health to increase the number of American Indian and Alaska Native physicians practicing in the state of Washington.



## Preserving and Protecting Natural Resources & Treaty Rights

- Funding for increased law enforcement capacity on agency managed lands, to develop a statewide recreation plan, and jointly create a statewide data management system to make informed management decisions that meet conservation goals for public lands. The agencies will collaborate with tribal governments to ensure cultural resources and cultural practices are considered and incorporated into management plans (DFW).
- Funding for pass-through grants to Tribal entities (among others) for the protection, recovery, and restoration of biodiversity, the recovery of threatened and endangered species, and a review of DFW (DFW).
- Funding to conduct an analysis for new electricity generation, transmission, ancillary services, efficiency, and storage, sufficient to offset those presently provided by the lower Snake River dams. (Department of Commerce).

# HIGHLIGHTED APPROPRIATIONS



## Investing in Education Supports & Culturally Relevant Curriculum

- \$1.2M appropriated for the Native American Scholarship Program.
- Appropriated funding for a detailed analysis of the opportunity gap for Native American students, the progress in developing effective government-to-government relations and adoption of Tribal histories curriculum, and recommendations for continuing efforts to close the achievement gap (GOIA).
- \$9M for phase 2 construction of the UW Intellectual House.
- \$2.1M appropriated for the Office of Native Education (ONE) within OSPI to increase services to Tribes. Of this appropriation, \$1M is provided for ONE to convene a work group to develop appropriate, culturally affirming literacy supports to serve AI/AN students identified as benefiting from such supports (OSPI).
- \$300K appropriated to fund a Tribal liaison at OSPI to facilitate access to and support enrollment in career connected learning opportunities for tribal students (OSPI).
- Appropriation for DCYF to continue implementation of an infant and early childhood mental health consultation initiative to support Tribal childcare and early learning programs.

# NEXT STEPS

## Partnering with and supporting Tribes in Washington strengthens all communities

The SDC recognizes that partnering with and supporting Tribes in Washington strengthens all communities. This interim, we are prioritizing education opportunities for members and increased communication with Tribal leaders. We look forward to keeping in touch with you as we prepare for the next legislative session. Please feel free to reach out directly to member liaisons Sens. [Kauffman](#) and [Stanford](#) and SDC Tribal liaison [Crys Florez](#) with any questions, comments, and/or concerns..

01

### Education for SDC Members

Providing ongoing learning opportunities for Senate Democratic Caucus (SDC) members to learn about Tribal histories and relevant policy issues.

02

### Meetings for Tribal Leaders + SDC Members

Creating more opportunities for Tribal leaders to directly engage with SDC members.

03

### Keeping In Touch

Maintaining regular communication with Tribal leaders and communities to stay apprised of current issues.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SDC Leadership, Policy and Communications Staff

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Jade Sierra, LA to Sen. Kauffman

Jessi Cadorna, Session Aide to Sen. Kauffman

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*Thank you for your continued engagement.*

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