

Sen. Javier Valdez · Rep. Gerry Pollet · Rep. Darya Farivar

Legislative Priorities in 2023

Affordable Housing

Our budget is a statement of our values and priorities. The \$1.2 billion for housing in the coming biennium shows that moving unsheltered people into real housing with supportive behavioral health services is a top priority, along with legislation to increase housing supply. We increased housing supply (**HB 1110**), eased barriers to accessory dwelling units (**HB 1337**), streamlined conversions of unused or underused buildings into new housing (**HB 1042**), and supported those living in manufactured home communities (**HB 1129/SB 5198** and **HB 1771**). We also focused on creating paths to homeownership, especially for low-income families and communities who have historically been prevented from owning their own home due to racially restrictive real estate policies (**HB 1474**) and keep vulnerable populations such as disabled veterans and seniors in their homes with a targeted property tax exemption (**HB 1355**).

Climate Change

By implementing strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of climate change, we can ensure a more resilient future for ourselves and the next generations. Electrifying the state (**SB 5165**), reducing greenhouse gas emissions by decarbonizing state energy systems (**HB 1390**), and keeping our environment and communities safe from toxic cosmetics and providing safe battery recycling programs (**HB 1170**, **HB 1047**, and **SB 5144**) have been the leading ethos of environmental legislation this year.

Community Safety

We heard from you about the need to address police pursuit legislation (**SB 5352**), improve domestic violence protections (**HB 1715**) and trauma-informed response (**HB 1028**), respond to the fentanyl crisis (**HB 1209**), and provide off-ramps to treatment and recovery (**SB 5134**). Supporting survivors of crime and protecting our community are two critical responsibilities of the state. With a diverse package of legislation and over \$23 million for diversionary programs, therapeutic courts, the 988 Crisis lifeline, designated crisis responders, and other services, we have improved opportunities for treatment and reduced our reliance on the criminal justice system to address a public health emergency.

Drug Possession

On May 16, the Legislature reconvened for a special one-day session to pass a final compromise version of **Senate Bill 5536** to address the gap left by the unconstitutionality of our prior drug possession laws. Your 46th district legislative delegation worked to ensure that people struggling with addiction and behavioral health have access to the treatment they need rather than just being jailed. From here, we hope to build on this uniform drug possession law by increasing community and mobile treatment facilities.

Protecting Reproductive Rights

When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned abortion protections, we stepped up to strengthen abortion protections at the state level. We've passed legislation to protect private health data (**HB 1155**), protect those who provide reproductive care (**HB 1469**), and allow the state to distribute mifepristone (**HB 1854**). In this year's operating budget, we have also secured funding for emergency contraception vending machines at community colleges and universities. Looking ahead, we must remain vigilant in responding to attacks on the fundamental right to bodily autonomy.

Making Our Tax System Fairer

We are strong supporters of the state's new capital gains tax. The tax was recently upheld by the Washington Supreme Court, bringing in over three times the expected estimate. We began using it to fund education for the coming biennium. The tax applies to investment returns over \$250,000 in a year. After the session ended, we had more good news: the tax is bringing in \$200 million more for education and \$350 million more than we projected for school construction!

Workforce Development

Reducing workforce shortages and making higher education and vocational training more attainable requires streamlining licensing requirements for military spouses (**HB 1009**), behavioral health care professionals (**HB 1724**, **HB 1503**), nurses, dental hygienists (**HB 1287**), forensic pathologists (**SB 5523**), and apprentices (**HB 1050**). We expanded the workforce pipeline by creating more educational opportunities with college in the high school programs (**SB 5048**), expanding applied doctoral degrees to regional universities (**HB 1030**), increasing financial aid opportunities for students (**HB 1289**, **HB 1763**, **HB 1823**, **SB 5702**), and providing childcare for those in apprenticeship training (**HB 1525**).



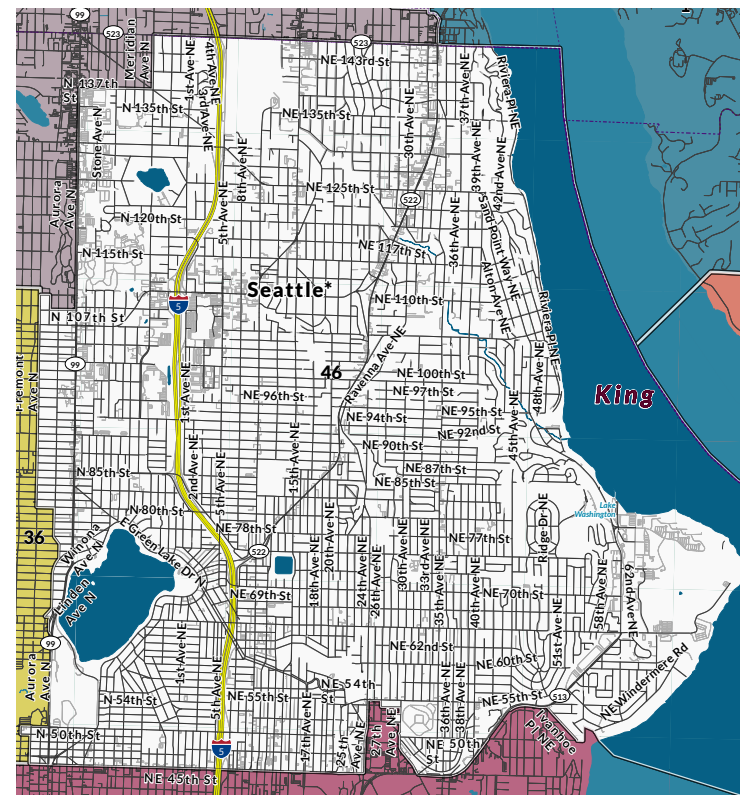
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END OF SESSION UPDATE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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TOWN HALL MEETING NOTICE



46th Legislative District Community Townhall

Wednesday June 28th
from 6:00-7:30 PM

Nathan Hale High School
Performing Arts Center
10750 30th Ave NE
Seattle, WA 98125



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END OF SESSION UPDATE

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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Sen. Javier Valdez · Rep. Gerry Pollet · Rep. Darya Farivar

I invite you all to reach out to my office with any questions or comments. Below you will find ways to reach me and stay up to date on my work. I can't wait to hear from you!

Sign-up for my newsletter:

<https://senatedemocrats.wa.gov/valdez/e-newsletter/>

Or follow me on Facebook for more updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/SenJavierValdez>

Please join me at my "traveling town hall" drop-in discussions. **Email me for location or zoom link** or any input: gerry.pollet@leg.wa.gov

Sign-up for my newsletter:

<https://housedemocrats.wa.gov/pollet/e-news/>

Or follow me on Facebook for more updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/RepresentativeGerryPollet>

If you have any questions, want to share comments, or just want to say hello then please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sign-up for my newsletter:

<https://housedemocrats.wa.gov/farivar/e-news/>

Or follow me on Facebook for more updates:

<https://www.facebook.com/RepDaryaFarivar>

Legislative Update from Senator Javier Valdez

Our focus on putting people first during the 2023 legislative session resulted in significant strides across various issue areas. From promoting affordable housing and increasing public safety to protecting the environment, we made substantial progress in our district and across the state. Here are updates on important legislation passed that will make a difference for all our neighbors.

Gun Safety

Since my arrival to the Legislature in 2017, I have been a leader and major proponent of improving gun safety in our state. I am proud that this session we tackled this pressing issue head-on by dedicating ourselves to enacting meaningful measures that strike a balance between responsible gun ownership and safeguarding our families. Here are some significant gun safety bills that successfully passed this year:

- **HB 1240:** Bans the sale, manufacture, and import of assault weapons in Washington state, making us the 10th state in the nation to implement such a ban.
- **HB 1143:** Institutes a 10-day waiting period for all firearm purchases and requiring comprehensive safety training.
- **SB 5078:** Mandates gun manufacturers and dealers to implement reasonable controls to prevent dangerous individuals from accessing firearms.

The measures we have taken this session to address gun violence are significant, but our work is far from over. I will continue to advocate for effective gun safety measures, ensuring our schools, neighborhoods, and public spaces are protected.

Protecting Our Democracy

As the vice chair of the State Government & Elections Committee, it is my pleasure to share we made significant progress to ensure Washington's elections remain fair and accessible. One of the key achievements was **Senate Bill 5152**, sponsored by me, which specifically addresses the use of synthetic media and provides relief for candidates and campaigns in response to the growing use of manipulative media in election campaigns. Synthetic media, or "deepfakes," has become a concerning trend in campaigns, misleading voters and posing a threat to democracy. The new law ensures clear disclosure requirements for manipulated media, protecting the integrity of our elections.

Taking a Stand Against Hate and Violence

Doxing, the unauthorized publication of personal information with the intent to cause harm, has become increasingly prevalent in the digital era, used to intimidate, harass, or blackmail individuals and organizations. **House Bill 1335**, which addresses the harmful practice of doxing, was signed into law this session. As a proud sponsor of the Senate companion bill — **Senate Bill 5231** — and a supporter of the House bill, I firmly believe that hate crimes, swatting, and doxing have no place in our society. These destructive practices not only harm individuals but also foster fear and mistrust. In Washington state, we value diversity and unity —hate and violence are not tolerated.

Transportation Budget

The \$13.4 billion transportation budget for the 2023-2025 biennium in Washington State includes funding for many important projects across the state. This includes \$1.3 billion allocated for our state's ferry system to support the acquisition of five new hybrid-electric ferries. To address climate change and promote sustainable transportation, the transportation budget benefits from revenue generated by the Climate Commitment Act. Close to one billion dollars have been assigned to transit, electrification, bike, and pedestrian projects, as well as incentive programs aimed at reducing CO2 emissions. This comprehensive transportation budget showcases a proactive approach to addressing critical infrastructure needs, promoting sustainable transportation, and ensuring informed decision-making for the future.

As your state senator, I remain inspired and motivated by the incredible strides we have taken. However, the work is not done. The challenges we face require our continued dedication, resilience, and collaborative spirit. I look forward to continuing to work for the safety, prosperity, and well-being of our communities. It is an honor to represent you.

Thank you,



Senator Javier Valdez



Legislative Update from Rep. Gerry Pollet

Legislation I developed for 2023 with communities and experts spanned from education and open government to climate change and environmental justice. We also focused on affordable housing, abortion rights, and keeping local journalism alive. Here are some of the highlights of legislation and funding which were enacted and work remaining.

Education Funding: Despite our constitutional obligation, our state fails to fund every child's education with regards to special education services needed by students with disabilities. The state further caps how many children with disabilities will receive funding in each school district. I view this cap as unconscionable and unconstitutional. This session, I passed **House Bill 1436**, adding \$417 million in new support for special education during this biennium and nearly a billion dollars over the next four years. I worked with the Seattle delegation to secure \$14 million for the Seattle Public Schools Skills Centers to provide space to learn critical skills for high-demand vocations such as the building trades, and dental and maritime industries. Looking ahead, I am hopeful we can completely remove funding caps and provide all students with a high-quality public education.

Protecting Students from Sexual Harassment on College Campuses: Administrators, sports coaches and faculty found to have committed sexual misconduct have been able to quietly leave an institution without having to disclose the offense to their next employer – where they continue predatory behavior. This is called "Passing the Harasser." In 2020, I developed and passed the first legislation in the US to end this practice. This year, working with UW faculty and student survivors, we developed and passed **HB 1522** to expand the protection to address sexual misconduct at conferences.



As the Chair of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee, I've overseen audits to improve government performance and transparency. This year, we've focused on improving the performance of the Employment Security Department in processing pandemic-era unemployment claims and improving how schools use federal funds to reduce learning loss during COVID-19.

Open Government: I've also heard from you about the ads, digital media and mailings urging you to call or email legislators to support or kill legislation on behalf of some special or corporate interests hiding behind a front group with a nice sounding name. This session, I developed legislation with the Public Disclosure Commission and Senator Valdez to close this loophole. **House**

Bill 1317 was signed into law in April, requiring special interests to disclose who is really funding their lobbying efforts the same way campaign ads disclose top donors. In March, I was **honored as the open government legislative champion for the past year by the Washington Coalition for Open Government.**

Reducing Gun Violence: Assault rifles are made for one purpose: killing humans. I was one of only a handful of legislators who were willing to cosponsor a ban on assault weapons when it was first introduced at the request of AG Bob Ferguson in 2016. This year, we finally passed **House Bill 1240** to prohibit the manufacture and sale of assault weapons in Washington!

Investing in Washington

As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I advocated for increased funding for public education, expanding access to college pathways, and investing in healthcare - with an emphasis on our dire behavioral health needs. We've secured a historic investment of \$1.1 billion to reduce homelessness and support community behavioral health services, health provider rate increases, substance use disorder prevention and treatment and crisis diversion.

In review, the 2023 legislative session has focused on uplifting those most in need, while also recognizing that we can't address one area at the expense of others. Our collective goals, such as affordable housing, behavioral health access, reducing workforce shortages, education and providing safe access to healthcare, mutually reinforce each other. I will continue listening to you and keep working on solutions to our most pressing challenges.

Thank you,



Representative Gerry Pollet

Legislative Update from Rep. Darya Farivar

As the daughter of Iranians who came to the United States seeking peace and freedom, my first legislative session focused on pursuing equitable policies that empower all individuals and families to prosper and pursue their dreams. As I review some of the work accomplished in my first legislative session, I hope the takeaway will be that we put forth big, bold solutions to our state's toughest issues and built a Washington that works for everyone.

House Bill 1345: Maintaining family bonds during incarceration reduces recidivism and promotes rehabilitation and successful reintegration into our communities. Yet, those who are involved with the justice system have faced inequitable barriers in accessing family visitation privileges. This year, I passed a bill to remove extended family visitation from the list of privileges that the Department of Corrections requires incarcerated individuals to contribute to.

Senate Bill 5440: There are over 850 people in jail waiting for over 300 days for a timely competency evaluation and restoration. Working with the sponsor, Sen. Dhingra, we've put forward policy that increases access to diversion services, shortens wait times, and prioritizes treatment for people with behavioral health disorders waiting to stand trial.

Healthcare & Medicare Affordability: People should not have to make the difficult decision between paying rent and visiting the doctor. This year, we've invested over \$1 billion in funding for health equity, increased rates for health care workers, and increased provider rates and reimbursement. The state budget also includes \$6 million to address the Medicare affordability cliff. Next year, I am excited to continue advocating for one of my bills, **House Bill 1313**, to provide more opportunities to make Medicare more affordable.

Nowruz – Persian New Year: As the first Middle Eastern woman and first Iranian American woman elected to the Washington Legislature, it was an honor to introduce and pass **House Resolution 4629** honoring the Persian New Year or "Nowruz". This is a huge step in recognizing the cultural contributions that Iranian Americans have provided our state and is critical in responding to recent rises in hate crimes against minorities.



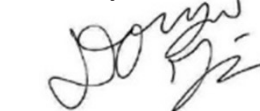
Capital Budget Wins for the 46th Legislative District

As a member of the Capital Budget Committee, it's been an honor to direct resources in Capital Project funding to our district. Here are some of the items your 46th LD delegation advocated for in the budget:

- **\$13 million** for University of WA Medical Center to provide a behavioral health renovation that adds psychiatric beds and increased capacity for on demand treatment.
- **\$1.5 million** to help ROOTS Young Adult Shelter increase shelter capacity for unhoused and at-risk youth and services such as family reconciliation.
- **\$1 million** is allocated to construct and modernize early childhood education and assistance facilities at the Northgate Jose Marti Early Learning Center which is operated by El Centro de la Raza.
- **\$778,000** for the Refugee Artisan Initiative Maker Space and Cultural Center in Lake City to provide social service and a multipurpose community center construction project that will serve distressed communities.
- **\$258,000** for Sail Sand Point to maintain and upgrade the community boat center and increase access to sailing and paddling to everyone regardless of age, income, or ability.

We still have a lot of work left to make sure our state policies include feedback from those with lived experience (**HB 1541**), provide child sexual abuse survivors with the option to seek justice against abusers as adults (**HB 1618**) and improve behavioral health delivery through the Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program. I look forward working on these issues in the future. It is an honor to serve and represent you.

Thank you,



Representative Darya Farivar