

# Senator Brad Hawkins

## 12th Legislative District



**Senator  
Brad Hawkins**

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### **SUBSCRIBE TO MY E-NEWSLETTER**

My office sends email newsletters throughout the year. To keep current on legislative issues important to our district, please visit my website and add yourself to my distribution list. My email newsletters are distributed approximately monthly throughout the year and more frequently during legislative sessions.

### **LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION**

- [fiscal.wa.gov](http://fiscal.wa.gov) (State budgets)
- [leg.wa.gov](http://leg.wa.gov) (Legislature)
- [tvw.org](http://tvw.org) (Session video)

Dear 12<sup>th</sup> District residents,

The Washington State Legislature adjourned its 105-day session on April 23rd as scheduled. The session was a busy time for me as I continued as the Ranking Member of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee. This session was particularly busy for the education committee due to proposals involving learning loss, special education, and transportation funding.

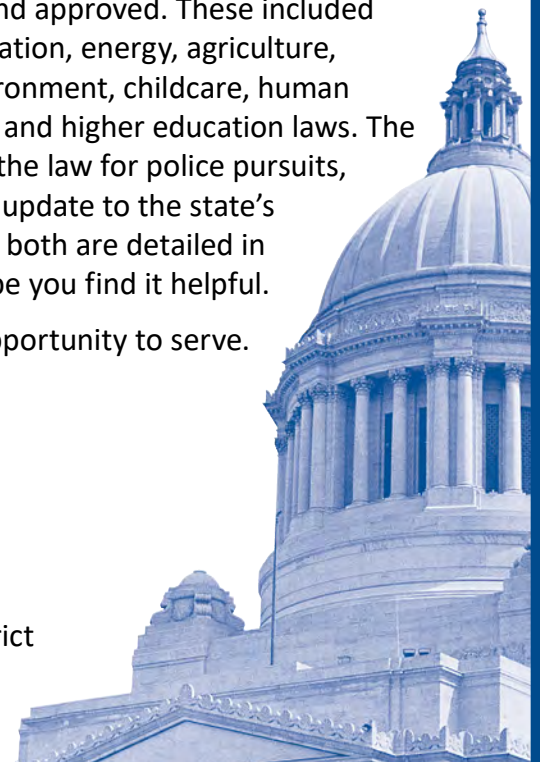
In accordance with our State Constitution, the Legislature alternates between longer and shorter sessions depending on when the state's two-year budgets are developed. This session was a longer session because all three budgets needed to be approved for the 2023-25 biennium, which begins on July 1, 2023. The operating budget (\$69.8 billion), transportation budget (\$13.5 billion), and capital budget (\$9.0 billion) were finalized on the final days of session after much negotiation. I voted against the operating budget but for the transportation and capital budgets.

In addition to the passage of the budgets, other significant bills were debated and approved. These included adjustments to education, energy, agriculture, law and justice, environment, childcare, human services, healthcare, and higher education laws. The Legislature updated the law for police pursuits, but failed to pass an update to the state's drug possession law, both are detailed in this newsletter. I hope you find it helpful.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Sincerely,

Brad Hawkins  
State Senator  
12th Legislative District



# Senator Brad Hawkins • 12th District

## Operating Budget Approved

The operating budget funds the day-to-day operations of the state, including early learning, K-12 education, higher education, health and human services, criminal justice, natural resources, and other areas. The Washington State operating budget has grown considerably over the past 15 years and is now \$69.8 billion for 2023-2025.

For state expenditures, much of the spending (44%) is dedicated to K-12 education with funding allocated to 295 school districts based on student enrollment and established formulas. Other spending includes early learning, higher education, human services, corrections, long-term care and more. On the revenue side, most of the taxes collected include the state portion of the sales, Business & Occupation, and state school tax. The state also collects some revenue from specific charges and fees.

While there are always things to support in a budget of this size, I ultimately could not approve of this level of spending given the uncertainties in our state and national economies. The Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council is responsible for estimating the incoming revenues and provides quarterly reports to the state. Revenues are expected to significantly slow in our state over the next two and four years. I would prefer that our state maintain larger reserves to guard against any economic slowdown, and possible budget cuts.



The state operating budget has grown significantly over recent years, far outpacing population growth and inflation. Some of these spending increases were in response to the 2012 State Supreme Court's McCleary decision on K-12 education funding. The budget approved for 2023-2025 is \$69.8 billion. This level of spending concerns me considering the uncertainty in the national economy.

## Updates on Police Pursuits and Drug Possession Laws



Two of the most significant bills considered this session involved police pursuits and drug possession laws. The police pursuits law was updated, but a compromise related to drug possession could not be achieved.

- **Police Pursuits (passed): Senate Bill 5352** Law enforcement officers have long been authorized to engage in vehicular pursuits under a “reasonable suspicion” standard. During the 2019 legislative session, one involving multiple changes to police practices, the threshold for vehicle pursuits was raised to a “probable cause” standard, which I did not support. This change created many challenges for communities throughout the state. The law was changed back this session to a “reasonable suspicion” standard for pursuits involving a violent offence, sex offence, vehicular assault or driving under the influence. I voted “Yes.”
- **Drug Possession (not approved): Senate Bill 5536** The State Supreme Court struck down Washington’s felony drug possession law in its 2021 Blake Decision. To temporarily clarify matters of drug possession, the Legislature that year enacted a short-term fix that expires this July, establishing drug possession a misdemeanor. After much debate on a proposed compromise, the Legislature did not approve a new measure to replace the expiring law. The compromise was designed to assist people struggling with personal drug use but also establish stiffer penalties for people who refuse treatment. I voted “Yes” in the Senate.

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## Notable Bills Approved

Every session, thousands of bills are proposed, but only a small number successfully advance through the full process. This year, over 2,300 bills were introduced with approximately 400 approved. A helpful resource about legislation, if you have questions, is the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000. Below is a list of some of the notable bills approved:

- **SB 5582** Nurse Supply
- **SB 5272** Safety Cameras
- **SB 5599** Gender Affirming Care
- **HB 1051** Robocall Reduction
- **HB 1216** Clean Energy Sites
- **HB 1436** Special Education
- **HB 1110** Increasing Housing
- **SB 5371** Orca Protection
- **SB 5352** Police Pursuits
- **HB 1238** School Meals
- **HB 1048** Voting Rights
- **SB 5236** Hospital Staffing
- **HB 1175** Petroleum Storage



## Please Visit My Website

As your state senator, I pride myself in providing excellent customer service and communications. To learn more about me and my legislative work, please visit [senatorbradhawkins.org](http://senatorbradhawkins.org) and follow me on Facebook [@SenatorBradHawkins](https://www.facebook.com/SenatorBradHawkins). These sites include information about me, my legislative priorities, news releases, and email newsletters. You can also subscribe to my email newsletter to receive current information and legislative updates.

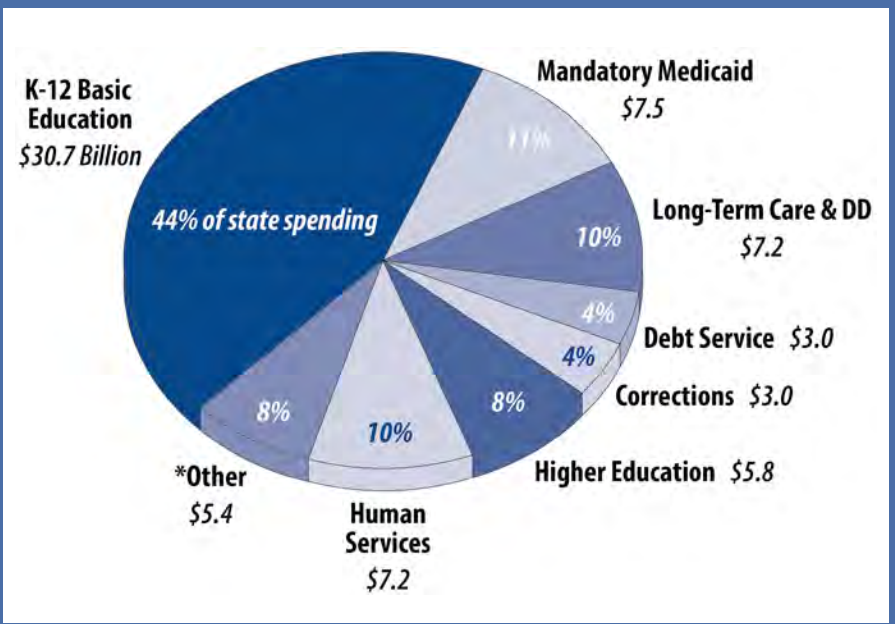
Website [senatorbradhawkins.org](http://senatorbradhawkins.org).

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## 2023-2025 State Operating Budget – \$69.8 billion

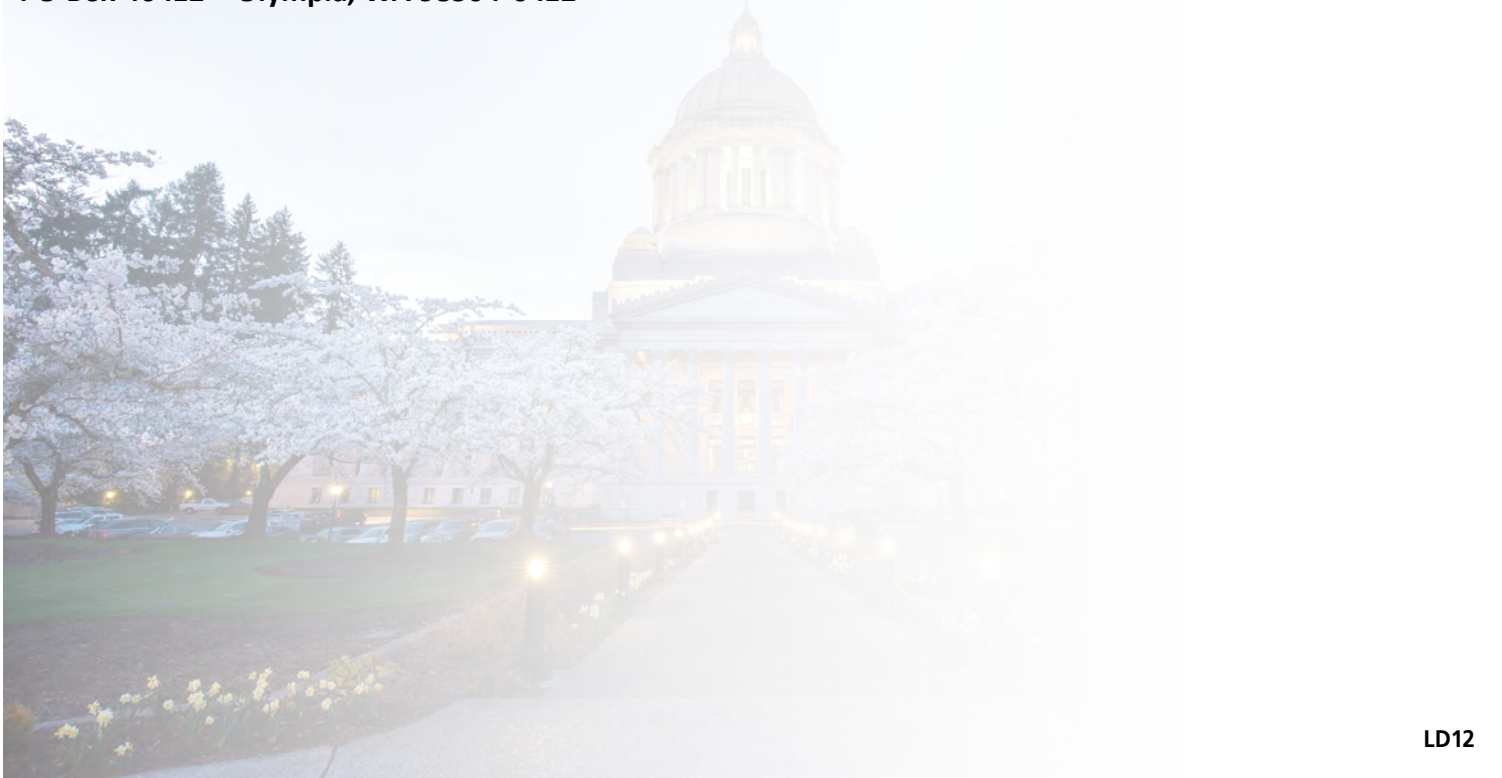
Washington state budgets on a two-year basis and develops three separate budgets. The three spending plans – the operating, transportation, and capital budgets – address different priorities. The approved operating budget (\$69.8 billion), transportation budget (\$13.5 billion) and capital budget (\$9.0 billion) authorize spending for a two-year period or “biennium” beginning July 1, 2023. When the Legislature convenes on January 8, 2024, it will begin work to develop budget updates for the remainder of the biennium (until June 30, 2025). The operating budget is the largest of the three budgets and funds the day-to-day operations of the state, including early learning, K-12 education, higher education, health and human services, criminal justice, natural resources, courts, and other areas.



# State Senator **Brad Hawkins**

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## My public service commitment to you:

- Demonstrate a responsible use of tax dollars
- Continually focus on serving constituents
- Stay open-minded about issues before me
- Be a good listener and respect differences
- Answer questions directly and honestly
- Be a good communicator by sharing facts
- Always put public service before politics

Thank you!  
Brew

