

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
20th DISTRICT
GARY C. ALEXANDER

State of
Washington
House of
Representatives



WAYS & MEANS
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER
HEALTH & HUMAN
SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS
ASSISTANT RANKING MEMBER
STATE GOVERNMENT
& TRIBAL AFFAIRS

November 30, 2010

The Honorable Christine Gregoire
Governor of Washington
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I understand the serious budgetary challenges our state is facing. I agree that we must take action quickly in order to lessen the impact to our citizens, clients, and employees. My colleagues and I in the House Republican caucus are ready and willing to make the difficult but necessary decisions.

I reviewed your draft statement of the problem and proposed budget reductions. I agree with many of the suggestions you highlighted and have, in fact, advocated for some of them myself. As you know, I support eliminating the General Assistance Unemployable (Disability Lifeline) program, curtailing or eliminating the Basic Health Plan, and suspending certain K-4 enhancements.

There are some policies and items on your list I do not agree with. First, I do not believe we should take any actions that are retroactive. These monies have already been spent or committed. It's time to move forward, we should not play games with the budget. Forget about delaying payments. I was working for Governor Evans' budget office when we implemented the 25th month, counting revenues for July in the previous biennium but not expenditures. It took many years for the state to recover. Let's not go there.

There are items I would suggest you consider in addition to the above mentioned list. The first is suspension of all-day kindergarten. While I understand the importance of early learning, the focus must be on fulfilling the state's constitutional and paramount duty of funding K-12 education. Another item is the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Our caseloads are increasing because we have become one of the most lenient programs in the country. Washington was once a leader in "welfare to work" programs, now we have lost sight of the goal and ultimately our control. It is time to redefine the box.

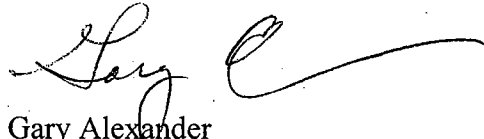
The last item is employee health care benefits. While I do not feel that we can maintain an 88 to 12 percent ratio, I also do not believe that a shift to 74 to 26 is realistic. I would

propose a graduated ratio based on income, starting with 14 percent and ending with 26 percent. The median should be at 20 percent and it should begin in January.

Finally, I would suggest that whatever action we take in the supplemental budget should be carried over into the 2011-2013 biennium.

I look forward to discussing these ideas with you on December 1.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Alexander", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gary Alexander
State Representative