

SENATOR JIM HONEYFORD

15TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT - WASHINGTON STATE

SENATE

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Senate continues to put the ‘public’ back in public education with capital-budget approval

OLYMPIA...The Senate today approved its proposal to build over 2,100 classrooms, fully fund 80 parks and trails, inject \$60 million into local-government infrastructure projects statewide and provide \$30 million to expand the number of community behavioral health beds.

Over 30 percent of the Senate’s \$3.9-billion capital budget is devoted to supporting public education – through funding of new classrooms tied to K-3 class-size reduction efforts, more backing for skills centers and allocations for key projects at Washington’s largest public universities.

“Every legislator in Olympia has been focused this year on how to reduce class size and substantively improve education, but none of that can happen without building more classrooms. With this capital budget we are providing the brick-and-mortar complement to the *McCleary* books and buses,” said the Senate’s capital-budget chair, Sen. Jim Honeyford.

“The capital budget funds the construction and maintenance of state assets across Washington, and we saw opportunities to have it fit hand-in-glove with our operating budget and its emphasis on education. I’m pleased that my colleagues saw the possibilities I did for making education a priority in a way that hasn’t been seen in a generation,” said Honeyford, R-Sunnyside.

Additionally, the capital-budget proposal would complete 80 parks and trails around the state that have been in the waiting line for years.

“By temporarily delaying the Washington Wildlife Recreation Program’s procurement of habitat lands, for two short years, it frees the WWRP to focus on its own goal of developing recreation areas for the people who should be using them – the taxpayers,” said Honeyford.

The Senate proposal also supports local infrastructure and provides family-wage jobs by funding projects on the state [Public Works Board](#) loan list, and public-works loans authorized by previous legislatures, in addition to allocating \$37 million for new local projects.

“This education-focused proposal lays a solid foundation for final negotiations with the capital-budget leaders in the House of Representatives,” said Honeyford. “In the end I have no doubt that we will hammer out an agreement that supports our kids, provides important construction jobs and builds up our fragile economy.”

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