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Real News ⚡  
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## NW Orchid Society Indoor Plant Festival a huge success



Northwest Orchid Society's Indoor Plant Festival (Top and bottom-left). Lynnwood resident Denny Van Dorn, who specializes in Gesneriads and African Violets, and winner of the Best Gesneriad or African Violet (bottom-right). Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**LYNNWOOD**—The Lynnwood Event Center held its first-ever Northwest Orchid Society Indoor Plant Festival March 2 through March 3, featuring an array of plant displays and an awesome lineup of vendors.

At Seattle-based Northwest Orchid Society people from all over the region are united under a single hobby – a shared interest in the complex practice of growing, conserving, and propagating one of the most difficult species of plants to cultivate: the orchid.

“Our shows are a great way for people to engage a couple of times a year, show up, and meet some people or just enjoy the plants and see what the club is up to,” said Ben Johnson, Vice President of Events at Northwest Orchid Society. “We’ll find you a plant that will meet your price point and growing conditions. Give it a shot. We can make sure you find something that meets your needs and that’s what’s great about having a club nearby is you have an endless supply of people and plants that can work for you and beautify your home.”

Continued PAGE 11 >>

## First three Let's Go Washington initiatives to become law

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**OLYMPIA**—Three of six Let's Go Washington landmark initiatives to the legislature passed both chambers of the Washington State Senate and House on Monday, March 4, and will become law in 90 days after the Legislature adjourns on March 7—no signature by Governor Jay Inslee is needed. The three initiatives that did not receive public hearings as mandated by the Washington State Constitution, will instead, appear on the ballot for the General Election on November 5, 2024.

The three initiatives that passed are: I-2081, concerning parental rights which passed the Senate unanimously and the House 82-15; I-2111, preventing Washington State from enforcing an income tax which passed 38-11 in the Senate and 76-21 in the House; and I-2113, amending statewide police pursuit laws passed in the Senate with a vote of 36-13 and 77-20 in the House.

“This is a great day for everyone in Washington,” WAGOP Chairman Jim Walsh, the author of all six initiatives to the Legislature, released in a statement.

He added, “Restoring reasonable police pursuits of criminals and criminal suspects will lower crime rates. Establishing parental notification rights will support healthier and happier kids—and better school performance. And codifying Washington’s longstanding tradition of opposing any state tax on

Continued PAGE 08 >>

## Washington Democratic political power players announce retirements for 2024

By MARIO LOTMORE & PRESS RELEASES



Senator Karen Keiser (D-Des Moines)

Senator Andy Billing (D-Spokane)

**OLYMPIA**—Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig (D-Spokane) and Senate President Pro Tempore Karen Keiser (D-Des Moines), two high ranking policy makers who have shaped Washington politics for at least a decade, announce they will be leav-

Continued PAGE 07 >>

# Suspect charged with vehicular homicide of Trooper Gadd, in United States illegally

By MARIO LOTMORE

EVERETT—Raul Benitez Santana, 32, the Snohomish County man charged with the death of Washington State Trooper Chris Gadd, 27, entered the United States without permission and was in the country illegally, an ICE spokesman confirmed with FOX13 Seattle on March 5.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) confirmed that Mr. Santana, “entered the U.S. without admission or parole by an immigration officer,” FOX 13 Seattle reports.

First reported by Ari Hoffman, talk radio host of the Ari Hoffman Show on Talk Radio 570 KVI, ERO Seattle (ICE) placed an immigration detainer with the Snohomish County Jail on March 4, for Santana, a citizen of Mexico, who is currently being held on charges of vehicular homicide of Washington State Trooper Gadd and vehicular assault for a subsequent collision with a van carrying six passengers.



Defendant Raul Santana (left) with Public Defender Max Messinger (right) appearing in front of Snohomish County District Court presiding judge, Commissioner Jennifer Millett on March 4, 2024, in the probable cause hearing involving the death of Washington State Trooper Chris Gadd.

A detainer is the primary tool used by ICE to gain custody of criminal foreign nationals for deportation. It is a notice to another law enforcement agency that ICE intends to assume custody of a foreign national and includes information on the person’s previous criminal history, immigration violations, and potential threat to public safety or security.

ICE lodges detainers on individuals who have been arrested on criminal charges and there is probable cause to believe the person is a removable non-citizen. Under the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), a person who enters the U.S. without permission—aka border jumping—is “inadmissible,” meaning that they are generally ineligible to adjust status (or apply for a visa) while still in the United States. If the foreign national takes a voluntary departure from the U.S., s/he can apply for admission back into the U.S. after being abroad for three or ten years.

It is unknown if the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office will honor ICE’s request to hold Santana in custody if bail is posted, making him a flight risk. Snohomish County District Court presiding judge, Commissioner Jennifer Millett, on Monday, March 4, set bail at \$1 million against Santana for the death of Trooper Gadd. Santana’s father told

the Lynnwood Times after the probable cause hearing that he was in the process of finding an attorney and unsure if he could post bail for his son.

On May 21, 2019, Governor Jay Inslee (D) signed legislation making Washington state a Sanctuary State—restricting law enforcement from asking about immigration status and prohibiting both jails and state prisons from complying with ICE detainers. Inslee signed an executive order with similar provisions in 2017.

Senate Bill-5497, making Washington a sanctuary state, passed the House with a vote of 57-38, and the Senate with a vote of 27-21. Snohomish County lawmakers who voted for the bill were: Representatives Lauren Davis (D-Edmonds), Shelly Kloba (D-Kirkland), John Lovick (D-Mill Creek), Jared Mead (D-Mill Creek), Lillian Ortiz-Self (D-Mukilteo), Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds), Cindy Ryu (D-Shoreline), June Robinson (D-Everett), and Mike Sells (D-Everett); Senators Steve Hobbs (D-Lake Stevens), Marko Liias (D-Mukilteo), John McCoy (D-Everett), and Jesse Salomon (D-Shoreline).

Santana first had contact with Seattle Enforcement and Removal Operations (ICE) on October 28, 2013, for failing to appear for driving with a suspended license. According to KIRO7, Santana

has multiple run ins with law enforcement, from traffic infractions to domestic violence:

- Domestic violence assault in King County, May 24, 2019
- Driving with a suspended license in SeaTac, sentenced to 90 days incarceration with 85 days suspended, October 6, 2014
- Marijuana possession of 40 grams or less in Lynnwood, sentenced to 90 days incarceration with 87 days suspended, May 16, 2013
- Driving with a suspended license in Lynnwood, May 3, 2013

Commissioner Millet disclosed that in 2020, Santana was cited for driving 49 mph over the speed limit; in 2015, he was cited for a speed too fast for condi-

tions; and in 2012, for driving 11 mph over the speed limit.

WSP released the following statement on behalf of the family of fallen Trooper Gadd #927:

“We are working through what is undoubtedly the most difficult of times for our family as we mourn the loss of a loving husband, devoted father, caring brother, beloved son, and committed friend. We appreciate the outpouring of support we have seen from the community that Chris loved and served. We ask the media to respect our family’s privacy during this painful time.”

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**GENERAC**

# Court Hearing: Judge sets bail at \$1 million in death of WSP Trooper Christopher Gadd

By MARIO LOTMORE

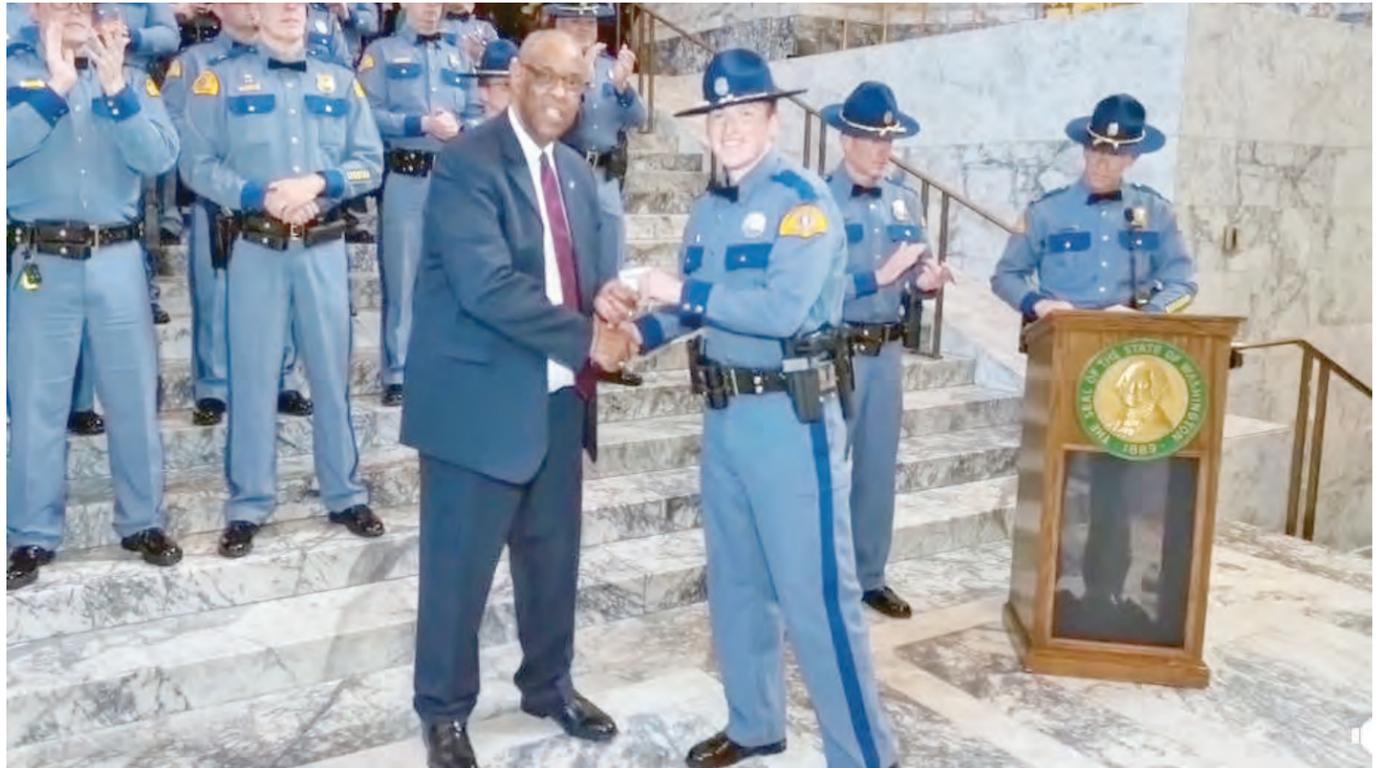
EVERETT—At Monday’s probable cause hearing for Raul Benitez Santana, 32, in the alleged vehicular homicide of Washington State Trooper Chris Gadd, who was tragically killed in the line-of-duty on Saturday, March 2, the District Court presiding judge set bail at \$1 million.

Mr. Santana’s father and two other family members attended Monday’s hearing, visibly distraught. He shared with the Lynnwood Times that it is a very difficult situation for everyone. He added that he is in the process of finding an attorney and unsure if he can post bail for his son.

Conditions for bail were that Mr. Santana is to have complete abstinence of drugs and alcohol, no further criminal or moving violations, not to operate a motor vehicle unless possessing a valid driver’s license and the vehicle is insured, and he must submit to a lawful BAC request.

The official charges against Mr. Santana are vehicular homicide, due to driving recklessly or impaired, for the alleged death of Trooper Gadd and a secondary charge of vehicular assault, due to allegedly driving recklessly or impaired, related to Santana’s vehicle subsequently involved in a collision with a van carrying six people after hitting Gadd’s vehicle. The driver of the van in the subsequent collision was transported to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. The five passengers in the van were not injured.

Snohomish County District Court presiding judge, Commissioner Jennifer Millett, rejected a request by Public Defender Max Messinger, who is representing Santana, for a continuance (postponement to the hearing), informing the court that another attorney, Emily Hancock, was assigned the case and that it was her wish to have Mr. Santana presented to the court in civilian clothes, and that she intended to file a motion.



Trooper Chris Gadd (right) with WSP Chief John Batiste at the graduation ceremony of the 116th Trooper Basic Training Class. SOURCE: Washington State Patrol.

Commissioner Millett also rejected Messinger’s plea to drop the charge of vehicular homicide brought by Snohomish County Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Tobin Darrow, stating it lacked merit. Messinger claimed that Trooper

Gadd’s vehicle was not displaying any visible lights, including brake lights, at the time of the incident when Mr. Santana was driving on the shoulder of I-5.

“The court reviews the findings of probable cause to determine whether or not there is a reasonable suspicion to believe that a crime occurred,” Commissioner Millett said. “When I review the RCW for vehicular homicide,

46.61.520, it indicated there are three ways vehicular homicide can occur. The first is that while operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicating liquor and/or drug; the second, is in a reckless manner; the third is with disregard for the safety of others.

“Reading Detective Monson’s probable

Continued PAGE 09 >>



from page 2 **GADD**

“Anyone wishing to send cards to the family are asked to address them to the WSP Marysville Office: 2700 116th St. NE, Marysville, WA 98271.”

WSP held an escort of Trooper Chris Gadd #927 on Tuesday, March 5, in Everett passing along State Road 526 and Everett Mall Way.

## WASHINGTON STATE PATROL MEMORIAL FOUNDATION SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY OF TROOPER GADD

The Washington State Patrol Memorial Foundation has shared below four ways community members can make donations for the Gadd family. All of the donations received in Trooper Gadd’s name will be given directly to the family.

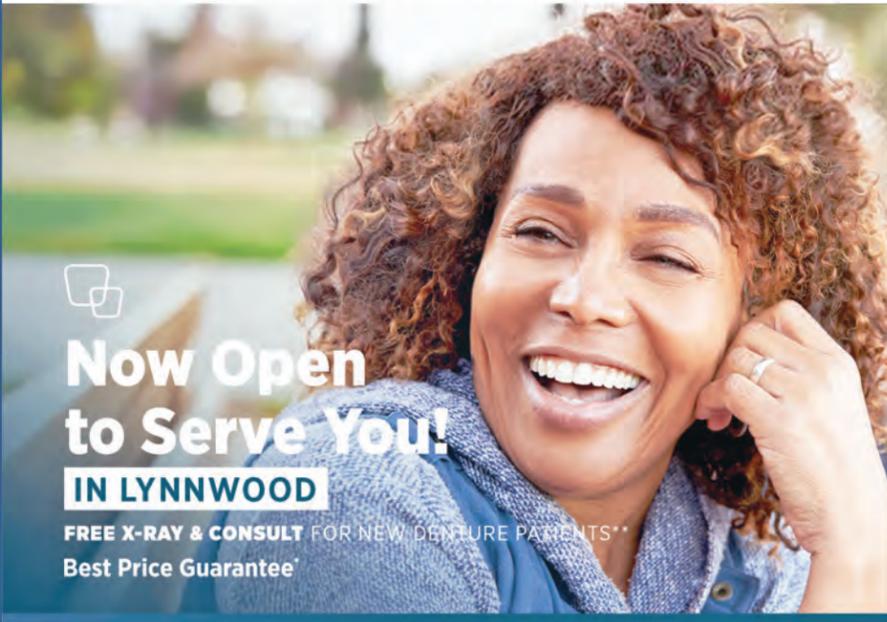
- Using Venmo, donations can be sent to @WSP-MemorialFoundation. Please note “Trooper Gadd” in the note section. (If last 4 is requested, use 4411)

- Go into any Chase Bank Branch and make a check deposit into the “Washington State Patrol Memorial Foundation” account. “Trooper Gadd” should be noted on the check note line.
- Using your own bank, you can log in online or through your mobile app and make a donation using Zelle. Donations can be sent to our WSPMF number, 360-597-4411, or email, wspmemorialfoundation@gmail.com. Please note “Trooper Gadd”. All donations received will be held for the family. There are no fees with using Zelle.
- You can mail a check made out to WSPMF with “Trooper Gadd” on the note line to:

WSP Memorial Foundation  
PO Box 901  
Prosser, WA 99350

For any questions, please contact Megan King at wspmemorialfoundation@gmail.com.

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# Another Emerald City Comic Con comes to a close with a knockout celebrity guestlist

By KIENAN BRISCOE

SEATTLE—Emerald City Comic Con, the region’s largest celebration of geek and pop culture, returned last weekend for its 21st year with what may be its biggest celebrity lineup since the pandemic.

The convention spanned from Thursday, February 29 through Sunday, March 3, opening each day at 10 a.m. with events lasting until passed midnight in various downtown Seattle buildings including the Seattle Convention Center Arch Building, the new Seattle Convention Center Summit Building and many nearby hotel conference rooms.

Each day, while exhibitors showcased their wares, from comic books; to art; to a variety of merchandise, throughout the 248,450-square-foot Artist Alley, and 573,770-square-foot Show Floor, panels, demonstrations, classes, and more ran non-stop through the building’s new 62 meeting rooms.

Separate to the massive show floor, artist alley, and literary block activities included workshops, karaoke, a full-fledged arcade, miniature painting, a Japanese-inspired maid cafe, a Star Wars Experience museum, non-stop board games, card games, and tabletop role playing games, drag queen BINGO, performances including live music, puppet shows, and a live acted Rocky Horror Picture Show, foam weapon fighting, dramatic productions, standup comedy, drawing and crafting classes, panels encompassing all things nerd culture, and much, much more.

On Saturday night late-nighters could even attend a prom-style dance and an after party held at Spin ping pong bar just a short walk away from the convention.

Making its first appearance this year was the Tavern, a 21 and up hangout spot with beer, wine, food, live entertainment, and a space where people could meet, play games, or just hang out.

Featured guests included, but are not limited to: Chris Evans (Captain America in the MCU films, Scott Pilgrim), Christina Ricci (The Addams Family, Yellowjackets), Billy Dee Williams (Lando in Star Wars), the voice cast of Adventure Time, the case of Critical Role (who also voice many characters in video games, anime, and other projects), the cast of Twilight, Christopher Lloyd (Doc in Back to the Future), the voice cast of Avatar: The Last Airbender, Elijah Wood (Frodo in the Lord of the Rings), Sean Astin (Sam in the Lord of the Rings), Jodie Wittaker (Doctor Who), Maggie Lawson (Psyche), esteemed horror writer/director Mike Flanagan, Kate Siegel (Haunting of Hill House), authors Terry Brooks (the Shannara series) and Veronica Roth (Divergent), Tom Kenny (voice of Spongebob Squarepants), Timothy Omundson (Supernatural), and many others including a list of prolific comic book writers and illustrators.

Many of these celebrities held panels discussing production stories and up-



Cosplay Central Crown Championships winners. First Place: Momo Naberrie as Queen Amidala of Naboo from Star Wars (center); Second Place: The Honest Cosplayer as Link from the Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild (left); Third Place: Jelevi Cosplay as Shara Ishvalda Armor from Monster Hunter World: Iceborne (right). SOURCE: Emerald City Comic Con

coming projects and offered the opportunity for fans to get autographs and souvenir photographs throughout the weekend.

Also featured during the convention was Washington Secretary of State Steve Hobbs who sat on a panel about book censorship and literary criticism and had his own booth on the show floor.

ECCC began its run in 2003 when Mukilteo comic book retailer, Jim Demonakos, organized a one-day event at Qwest Field Event Center. The event broke even at 3,000 attendees and has since grown to a multi-day spectacle, hosting around 100 thousand attendees a year. It relocated to the Washington State Convention Center, and neighboring hotels, shortly after being acquired by ReedPop in 2015.

“For me, ECCC has always meant home – it’s my hometown and the first event I ever worked on, seeing it turn 20 makes me feel equal parts proud and old,” said Kristina Rogers, ECCC Vice President. “We’ve built a home away from home for tens of thousands of people over the years and celebrating 20 years in Seattle Convention Center’s brand-new Summit building is the start of a great new chapter for us.”

The first comic book convention, New York Comic Con, was held in New York City’s Workman’s Circle Building in 1964. In the 1970’s comic book conventions rose in popularity, springing up in almost every major American city (and one in London). Currently the largest comic book convention is held in San Diego, San Diego Comic-Con, bringing in over 140,000 attendees from all over the world annually.

# WA Dept of Commerce awards \$1.85 million to Lynnwood-based Mini Einstein's Learning Ctr

BY KIENAN BRISCOE

**LYNNWOOD**—The Washington Department of Commerce awarded \$30.4 million to provide additional high-quality early learning spaces Across Washington. The funds will go toward renovation, and construction of 42 early learning facilities to serve nearly 2,500 children across 15 counties and create 2,422 new childcare slots, the Department says.

“Access to childcare is foundational for working parents and a critical component for equitable participation in the economy,” said Commerce Director Mike Fong in a press release. “Early Learning Facilities investments will bring high-quality childcare to Washington communities so that parents can work, knowing that their children are secure and thriving in a safe environment.”

Snohomish County-based recipients include Nova Family Resource and Childcare Center (Edmonds, \$53,800), WorldKid's Academy (Edmonds, \$700,000), Cornerstone Medical Services Foundation (Bothell, \$747,734), The Clearwater School (Bothell, \$982,223), Boys & Girls Club of Snohomish County (Edmonds, \$2 million), YMCA of Snohomish County (Marysville, \$2,128,200), Machinists Institute (Everett, \$2.5 million), and Mini Einstein's Learning Center (Lynnwood, \$1,847,370).

The Department of Commerce awarded projects in three categories: Pre-design (\$21,605 award limits); minor renovation and pre-development (\$216,052 award limits); and new construction and major renovation (\$2.5 million award limits).

When making award decisions, Commerce and Washington Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) evaluated key project criteria including the number of early learning spaces for kids from low-income families, the project location relative to other early learning facilities, and projects located in rural locations and low-income neighborhoods, the Department said. Since 2017, more than \$170 million to create nearly 13,000 childcare slots.

“We know that accessible, affordable, high-quality child care is a top priority for Snohomish County residents and employers. More work needs to be done by local, State, and federal partners to address this widespread need,” said Snohomish County Executive Dave Somers. “I welcome investments in child care from our partners at the State, and I am grateful to child care providers for their commitment to meeting the needs of our youngest learners and their families.”

Mini Einstein's Learning Center



Ashley Morga, Operations Manager at Mini Einstein's with Samantha Sciacca, its owner, at the entrance of the new secured building currently being renovated. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

(MELC), the Lynnwood recipient, is a Christian based early learning center which is veteran-owned and offers discounts for veterans and members of the military. Its mission statement is to: “serve families in the community by providing high quality care for their infants, toddlers, preschool, and pre-k children in a safe, supportive, exciting, and nurturing environment so that they can grow physically, socially, emotionally, and intellectually, and will come to understand that they are created and loved by God.”

After Samantha Sciacca, owner of Mini Einstein's Learning Center, started her teaching career working in the SeaTac public school system which was “eye opening,” she informed the Lynnwood Times. She left the public sector to help build the necessary foundation at a company called Cornerstone.

At Cornerstone Sciacca filled in wherever she was needed, starting as a teacher for three-year-olds, working as a cook, as a janitor, and eventually Assistant Director and finally Director shortly before getting notice that their building, on 220th in Mountlake Terrace, was set to be demolished. Having nowhere else to go, Cornerstone inevitably shut down after 20 years of operation, leaving its seven teachers, including Sciacca, without jobs, its 30 kids with no where to go, and one fewer childcare center in Snohomish County.

Only about 44 percent of child care need is currently being met in Snohomish County. What's more, Snohomish County saw a 25 percent drop in its early learning workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sciacca's husband, William, was deployed at the time with the U.S. Army.

She asked him how he felt about opening up a childcare center of their own when he returned and he replied: “sure without knowing what he was getting into,” Samantha joked.

“I didn't have a business degree, all I had was a vision of what I think students need getting into kindergarten — and that's an education,” said Sciacca. “And all of my teachers [at Cornerstone] said they were coming with me.”

In 2013 the foundation of what was eventually to become Mini Einstein's started out at Woodway Elementary School, a vacant building at the time, where they had a license capacity of 76 kids. When Sciacca's husband returned from active duty he assisted with operations and maintenance and from there they grew and grew. Today Mini Einstein's Early Learning Center (MELC) has 136 enrolled students and operates year-round.

“Our foundation is really about that education. We start our education at infancy. I have a lot of people discredit that just because a child can't talk they can't learn and that's completely, one hundred percent, opposite. Students can begin to learn at such a young age as long as you give them the tools and the foundation to do so,” said Sciacca.

“That's what makes us so different. We start so young and every year we're building on top of each other, by breaking up our classrooms into two separate age groups—a younger and older—so we can hone in on those fundamentals and benchmarks so we're not moving them too early if they haven't met those standards, and possibly moving them early than projected because we're seeing that they're going faster than the others. We want to keep challenging and

pushing our students to succeed.”

In 2015 Mini Einstein found, what they call, the “main campus” on 21020 67th Avenue West, in Lynnwood, Washington.

“I never once saw myself saying, when I was 18 going into college, that I'm going to be a businesswoman, I'm going to have 50 employees, that I'm going to own a school,” said Sciacca.

Ashley Morga, Operations Manager at Mini Einstein's, first got involved with the early learning center as a parent enrolling her child. She informed the Lynnwood Times it was witnessing, firsthand, how her daughter benefitted from the school that made her want to be a part of Mini Einstein's success.

“She started with the pre-K program but by the time she entered Kindergarten she was beyond ready,” said Morga. “She was bored the first two months of kindergarten because she said ‘Mom I already know all of this.’ She knew her alphabet, she knew her letters, her numbers, basic addition/subtraction, how to read. She could focus on getting to know her new friends, her new teacher, her new environment and wasn't worried about the academics. I still see that in each group that comes out. It's such a well-rounded program.”

Snohomish County is one of the worst areas for child care access in Washington State, comparative to the number of children who need them. An estimated 80% of residents live in an extreme child care desert. According to Child Care Aware, there are 62 slots of child care in the county for every 100 infants, toddlers, or preschoolers which is far

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# Port of Everett has big plans for the Waterfront, here is what to expect over the next 10 years!

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**EVERETT**—The Port of Everett has big plans for the Everett Waterfront over the next ten years, or so, which, upon completion, will include residential housing, hotels, a restaurant row, fresh fish market, amphitheater performance venue, parking, and an entertainment district.

The development project includes a new 1.5 million square foot mixed-use development located on 65 acres at the waterfront in Everett, Washington with waterfront access, recreational amenities and the largest public marina on the west coast with over 2,300 slips and more than 5,000 linear feet of guest dock space.

The development plans include 63,000 square feet of retail and restaurant space, 447,500 square feet of offices, two hotels, 20,000 square feet of marine retail and up to 660 waterfront homes including apartments, condominiums and/or town homes/lofts.

Upon completion the Port expects to support 2,075 family-wage jobs. The project's \$550 million in public/private development investment is also expected to generate \$8.6 million annually in state and local sales taxes; in addition to the temporary construction jobs, sales tax and building permit revenues. Currently the Port's activities support more than 40,000 jobs for the surrounding community.

Fisherman's Harbor recently saw the opening of Hotel Indigo and the Waterfront Place Apartments as well as five new restaurants including Fisherman Jack's and South Fork Bakery - both of which opened within the last year to make up what's called "restaurant row." By the end of the year Rustic Cork Wine Bar, Menchie's frozen yogurt, Tapped Public House, Lazy Boy Brewing, and Hamilton Cellars tasting room are all expected to break ground with openings by Spring 2025.

Just one more tenant space remains available in the A12 building at Fisherman's Harbor, and the Port is seeking to fill the 2,800-square-foot unit with a complementary family-friendly use, such as a pizza place or breakfast spot.

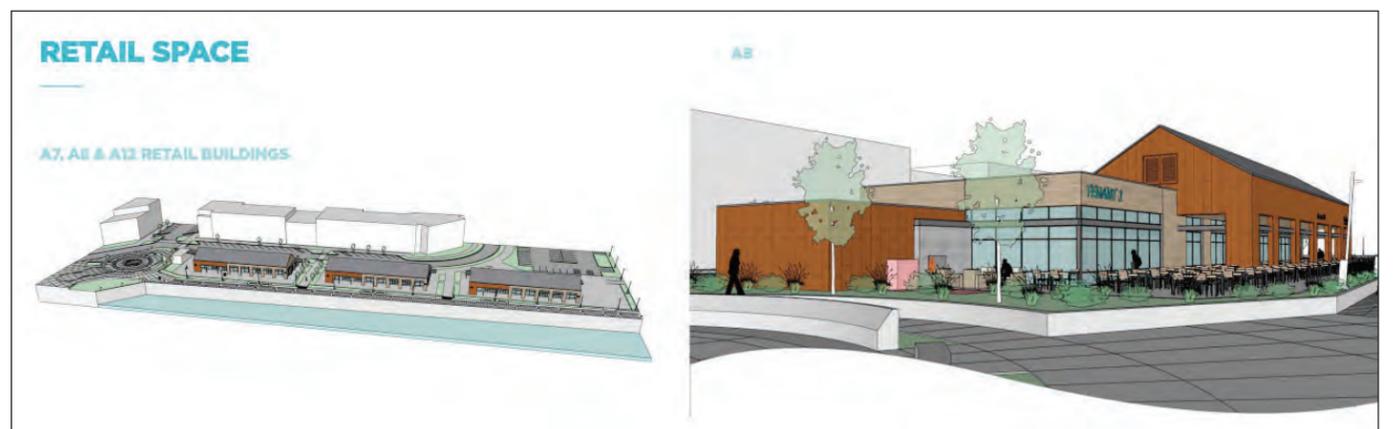
Eventually the plan is to extend restaurant row to connect with Wood's Coffee, Sound to Summit Brewing, and Lombardi's Italian Restaurant,

To honor Everett's history as a fishing town, nearby restaurant row there will also be a year-round fish market called the "Net Shed," named to pay homage to the sheds that used to line the nearby site storing fishing nets back when commercial fishing in the area was at its peak. The fish market will offer year-round fresh caught fish and will likely have additional food options, such as fresh fish-n-chips.

"We just want to make sure that there's this tie to the history since there's all this new development, so that people can feel really connected despite all this change," Cat Soper, Director of External Affairs and Business Development at the Port of Everett, told the Lynnwood Times.



The Boardwalk at the Port of Everett. SOURCE:Port of Everett.



Soper joked it's unlikely that the Net Shed will have flying fish, like Seattle's iconic Pike Place Market, but she did say it will have a similar "throwback vibe" with several art installations that pay tribute to Everett's maritime history.

The Waterfront development project is divided into three phases and is currently straddling both phase one and two. Additionally, before entering its first phase, and any development could begin in general, the Port underwent a rigorous environmental cleanup process over the last decade which included infrastructure improvements to make way for utilities, more fluid traffic, and optimized the strength of the port in order to support the weight of its future developments.

Previous work to prepare for the first phase of the project was by Strider Construction and included importing about 33,000 cubic yards — or about 2,000 dump truck loads — of clean fill dirt known as "preload" to compact the site to prevent settlement after construction and also provide the additional material needed to raise the site.

It also included hardscape demolition, widening a trail, building temporary roads, and realignment of traffic flow and parking lots to support construction.

Phase two is inarguably the Port's largest phase which includes several massive construction projects on its middle site including a new roadway called the Millwright Loop which is scheduled to break ground by the end of 2024 pending permits and likely open by the beginning of 2025. The \$13 million Millwright Loop project is being constructed in partnership with LPC West, who

developed the Vancouver Waterfront in British Columbia, Canada, and will include the construction of roadways, utilities, parking lots, trails, sidewalks and prepare the Millwright District for future development in general.

The Port hopes to introduce more family entertainment-style retail in the Millwright District such as a movie theater, miniature golf, arcade, bowling, as well as small shops, gyms, salons, and other services.

Phase two will complete housing first by the end of 2024, early 2025 (depending on permitting), and should wrap up within the next five to seven years.

Phase three involves building an amphitheater for plays, concerts, and other performances next to the former Everett Yacht Club. This phase is scheduled to start around seven to ten years out, depending on several variables in the second phase.

The Port has about \$300 million in public/private investment to fund these projects with about \$150 to \$200 million of that being Port investment.

The Port carried out a tremendous amount of community engagement in deciding what to bring to the port, to gauge the types of activities the community wished to see the most.

"Really the priority of the project is to create density — to keep the marina operating. The marina was very seasonal so how do you unify the uplands with the inwater so that it creates this one economic unit that is busy year-round? As a voter you would love to see services here and as a visitor you would

love to see services here year-round, but that was never really how it worked because it was really boating season that kept it up and running. It's creating a destination," said Cat Soper. "By density really I mean the residential area, and the office spaces, keeps the daytime activity thriving and then you have the activations for weekend and recreation, so it all works together as this unit."

To date, the project has facilitated more than \$1 billion in public/private investment, with even more investment and amenities on the horizon. Recent Port investments include more than \$50 million in completed projects at the development's Fisherman's Harbor district.

from page 5 **MINI EINSTEIN'S**

below the state average of 79 slots per 100 children.

Even if parents can find child care options in the county it's seldom affordable, costing approximately \$14,000 per year—more than an entire year of tuition at both the University of Washington and Washington State University.

Mini Einstein's Learning Center will use the Department of Commerce funds to add 124 new childcare slots in Snohomish County by purchasing a second building next to its current location at located at 21020 67th Avenue W, in Lynnwood.

The new building is planned to open by Summer of 2024. MELC is currently awaiting a confirmed open date, pending licensing, to accept enrollment and has a waiting list for interested families to join the Mini Einstein's family. For more information call 206-533-8896 or email melclearningcenter@gmail.com.

# American Airlines orders 85 Boeing 737 MAX jets, expands fleet with 737-10 model

By KIENAN BRISCOE

SEATTLE—Boeing and American Airlines announced March 4 that the carrier will further modernize its global fleet with its first order for the largest 737 MAX airplane. American is committing to 115 of the 737-10 model, which includes a new order for 85 jets and a conversion of a previous order for 30 of the smaller 737-8 variant. The airline is also announcing options to purchase 75 additional 737-10 jets in the future.

“Over the past decade, we have invested heavily to modernize and simplify our fleet, which is the largest and youngest among U.S. network carriers,” said American’s CEO Robert Isom. “These orders will continue to fuel our fleet with newer, more efficient aircraft so we can continue to deliver the best network and record-setting operational reliability for our customers.”

With this agreement, American will more than double its 737 MAX order book from about 70 airplanes to more than 150, supporting the airline’s long-term growth strategy with highly efficient jets for its domestic and short-haul international network. The 737-10 will complement American’s current fleet of 737-8 airplanes, allowing the airline to tap into the 737 MAX family’s commonality and flexibility to efficiently meet growing travel demand.

- 737-8: Delivering improvements in fuel, emissions and cost performance, the 737-8 can fly 3,500 nautical miles (6,480 km) and



Boeing-327634-AAL-73710-InFlight-1356046218-1023. American Airlines orders 85 Boeing 737 MAX jets, expands fleet with 737-10 model. SOURCE: Boeing.

seats 162 to 210 passengers depending on configuration.

- 737-10: Offering the best per-seat economics of any single-aisle airplane, the 737-10 can carry up to 230 passengers and offers a range of up to 3,100 nautical miles (5,740 km).

“We deeply appreciate American Airlines’ trust in Boeing and its confidence in the 737 MAX family. American’s selection of the 737-10 will provide even greater efficiency, commonality and flexibility for its global network

and operations,” said Stan Deal, president and CEO of Boeing Commercial Airplanes. “Our team here at Boeing is committed to delivering on this new order and supporting American’s strategic growth with one of the industry’s largest and most modern fleets.”

With firm orders for more than 150 737 MAXs and 25 787 Dreamliners, American will add more than 180 Boeing airplanes to its fleet in the next decade.

As a leading global aerospace company, Boeing develops, manufactures and

services commercial airplanes, defense products and space systems for customers in more than 150 countries. As a top U.S. exporter, the company leverages the talents of a global supplier base to advance economic opportunity, sustainability and community impact. Boeing’s diverse team is committed to innovating for the future, leading with sustainability, and cultivating a culture based on the company’s core values of safety, quality and integrity. Join our team and find your purpose at boeing.com/careers.

## from page 1 RETIREMENTS

ing the legislature this year.

Appointed to fill an open seat in the Washington State House of Representatives in 1995, then-candidate Keiser ran and won her first election in 1996. She served there until 2001, when she was appointed to a seat in the Washington State Senate, where she has been re-elected six times. Since 2018, Senator Keiser has served as President Pro Tempore, presiding over the Senate when the lieutenant governor has been unavailable.

“Senator Karen Keiser has been nothing less than a generational leader on behalf of working people,” Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck released in a statement. “Leaders like Karen do not come around often. She will be deeply missed in the Senate. I wish her well in her retirement.”

Keiser played a pivotal role in implementing the Affordable Care Act (ACA) in Washington state. Below is a list of her accomplishments during her political tenure:

- Expanding and modernizing Washington’s apprenticeship.
- Requiring businesses to provide accommodations for pregnant employees.
- Prohibiting the use of non-disclosure agreements to cover up sexual harassment and other workplace abuse.
- Passing the Employee Free

Choice Act, which prevents employers from requiring workers to attend meetings where employers impose religious and political opinions.

- Making Washington the first state in the nation to implement full overtime protections for agricultural workers.
- Passed the Health Emergency Labor Standards Act, which provides presumptive workers’ compensation coverage for essential workers during public health emergencies.
- Capping out-of-pocket costs for medications such as insulin and epinephrine.
- Establishing a prescription drug affordability board.

“It has been my privilege to serve the people of the 33rd Legislative District and the people of the State of Washington for the last 29 years,” said Keiser (D-Des Moines), the most senior member of the Senate. “I am in awe at the amazing progress we have made together in this institution over the last few decades.”

Senator Billig, who was first elected to the Legislature in 2010, will finish his current term and continue to serve as majority leader until a new leader is selected in November. He was elected majority leader in late 2018 and has served in that role since the 2019 legislative session.

“Senator Andy Billig has been an out-

standing Senate Majority Leader,” Lieutenant Governor Heck released in a statement. “As a former legislative leader myself, I know the realities and pressures of the position. Leader Billig’s tenure will be remembered for significant legislative accomplishments that will leave lasting positive impacts on our state, and for marked civility between the caucuses. I am deeply grateful for his extraordinary service to our state.”

During his 14 years in the Legislature, Billig earned a reputation as a serious policy maker and consensus builder. He quickly became a leading voice on education funding and fought hard to expand access to high quality early learning.

Under his leadership, the Senate passed nation-leading legislation addressing climate change, gun safety, voting rights, affordable housing, reproductive rights and tax reform. He served as one of the “McCleary 8,” the group of legislators who spent 18 months negotiating a new K-12 funding plan in the wake of the state Supreme Court’s McCleary decision.

Below is a list of his accomplishments during her political tenure:

- Led the charge on a package of bills to expand access to the ballot and strengthen campaign finance laws. Billig’s DISCLOSE Act increased transparency laws to shine light on the source of money in elections.

- Championed legislation on sustainable aviation fuels.
- Led early efforts to make remote video testimony available to people across Washington.
- Sponsored and passed landmark legislation to protect the Spokane River.
- Secured many Spokane capital and transportation projects, most notably the University District Gateway bike and pedestrian bridge, the Division Street Bus Rapid Transit Line, and the expansion of the Carl Maxey Center.
- Outside the Legislature, Billig is an award-winning business executive. He is the CEO of Brett Sports, a company that owns and operates four minor league sports teams. He has spent 32 years with Brett Sports, rising through the ranks as general manager, president and now as part-owner and CEO.

“Part of being a good leader is knowing when it is time to step aside and let others lead,” said Billig. “I have been incredibly lucky to have served Spokane in the Legislature and fortunate to have the strong support of my family and so many friends and neighbors throughout our community.”

## WHAT MATTERS TO YOU?

The Lynnwood Times wants to know what issues you would like us investigate. Email [editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com](mailto:editorial@lynnwoodtimes.com).

# Uproar about party declaration on ballot envelope

By KIENAN BRISCOE

Some Washington state voters in uproar about being required to declare a political party (or party declaration) on their upcoming Presidential Primary ballot envelope after Elon Musk, CEO of X, SpaceX, and Telsa) brought attention to the decades-old tradition in a recent X post.

This is the second presidential election which requires voters to select a political party on the outside of their ballot, a decision that was passed by voters back in 2019, but the renewed attention toward the approach seems to be fueled by recent social media trends in which Washington voters took to X (formerly Twitter) to voice their concerns about security, privacy, as well as dissatisfaction with the lack of a third party option—only Republican and Democratic party options are available.

The Secretary of State's Office explained the reason for only having two political party choices is that the Presidential Primary is to help the Democratic and Republican parties select their nominees for the November ballot stating that other political parties can qualify to place presidential nominees on the ballot through a process in state law at RCW 29A.56.600 through 670.

Voters are not required to make the same declaration during a General Election or any other kind of election. Whatever voters declare also does not bind them to making a decision in the state primary, or the general. However, if one does not declare a political party affiliation or vote for the candidate matching the declared party on the outside of the envelope in the Presidential Primary Election, the vote may not be counted.

These concerns made national news headlines after cartoonist Scott Adams (Dilbert) retweeted one voter's post writing "how can this be real?" which roped in multi-billionaire Musk who shared the tweet writing a single question: "What?"

For the Presidential Primary only, state law and political party rules require voters to sign a party declaration on their ballot envelopes for their vote to count, and the voter must mark their ballot for one of that party's candidates, the Washington Secretary of State's Office wrote in a recent press release. This has been a part of Washington's Presidential Primary process since before the state adopted all-mail elections and was the same process used for the 2020 Presidential election.

Party affiliation declarations provided in the Presidential Primary do not become part of a voter's permanent registration, and the declaration does not affect how a voter may participate in future elections. Voters' party declarations are removed from state records 60 days after certification of the Presidential Primary. Selecting a particular party also does not affect a voter's choice or eligibility for future elections, the Secretary of State's Office explained.

Still, the concern about having the party declaration visible on the outside of the ballot has left some voters concerned that this could be a means of election tampering or nefarious targeting voters of a specific political affiliation. The Secretary of State's Office encourages anyone with these concerns to use an official county drop off box.

Political commentator and Emmy-award-winning journalist Brandi Kruse addressed the issue on her pod-

cast [Un]Divided Tuesday, February 27, featuring State Representative Jim Walsh (R-Aberdeen), who also chairs the state's Republican party, to discuss ways that he has been trying to rectify the decision as well as discuss some of the concerns he has heard from his constituents.

"The Presidential primary is not like any other election. It's run under a totally different section of state law, under a totally different set of rules," Representative Walsh explained. "2019 was the last update to the law that affects presidential primaries, that's when the current language of the declaration, having to select a political party [went into effect]. I was against it and actually spoke against it in 2019. We didn't think having to declare a party affiliation was necessary or a good thing. Washington voters are fiercely independent thinking...people don't like having to check one of those boxes."

The law governing the requirement, RCW 29A.56.050, was enacted by Senate Bill 5273, which was sponsored by Senator Sam Hunt (D-Olympia) and cosponsored by 14 others including Senator Marko Liias (D-Edmonds) of Snohomish County and gubernatorial candidate Senator Mark Mullet (D-Isaquah).

Despite Rep. Walsh's opposition in 2019 the majority favored the system. In 2021 Rep. Walsh worked with Representative Skyler Rude (R-Walla Walla) on House Bill 1265, that would have added a third option titled "unaffiliated" which would have allowed voters the ability to vote as they wish on the presidential list. That bill did not pass.

Walsh explained that while the requirement to check a political party is

cemented by state law, the law does not require the declaration to be on the outside of the ballot. He said that is a "bureaucratic rule, that's an agency decision that the Secretary of State, working in conjunction with county auditors has come up with." Walsh's office has attempted to come up with a different system that would protect the privacy of voters, such as including a flap—House Bill-2968—that would conceal the party declaration but was shot down being given the explanation that the current method of disclosing party preference on the outside of the ballot envelope is "easier to process."

"I think that's a major invasion of voter's privacy, and that we have to find another way if that box has to be checked," said Walsh.

Kruse asked Rep. Walsh if the decision would promote political advertising, or party-related mailers, to which Rep. Walsh replied, "short answer: yes," explaining it is a public document for a 60-day window which, he explained, is one of the reasons it's a privacy concern.

"Anyone who asks can get a list of who checked which box," said Walsh. "I think that makes people less inclined to vote."

Washington State does not require voters to register to a political party unlike some states in the country.

Ballot boxes in all 39 counties opened Friday, Feb. 23, for the March 12 Presidential Primary election. Vote-by-mail ballots are being sent to the state's 4.8 million active voters, who may return their ballots to county drop boxes or by mail using the postage-paid envelopes included with each ballot.

## from page 1 INITIATIVES

personal income will help working families and local economies.

"The WAGOP thanks the Democrat legislators and elected officials who've joined us in supporting these critical initiatives. Working together, we will continue to fix what's broken in Washington. This is just the start, of course. There's much more work to do. Other problems to fix. But, for the moment, let's celebrate these significant wins."

"Today, three of six initiatives were passed into law with bipartisan support," Let's Go Washington posted to X after the passage of the three initiatives on Monday. "It's a momentous day for Washingtonians! The work to pass the remaining three continues."

"Six months ago, today's victory was unthinkable to radical progressives," Brian Heywood, founder of Let's Go Washington released in a statement to the Lynnwood Times. "They were quick to categorize all of the initiatives as 'right-wing extremist' policies that didn't have a chance of passing. The 800,000 Washingtonians who signed the initiatives knew they were common sense measures, and the passage of three today proves they are just that. 57% of those that signed the initiatives were Democrats and Independents which is a clear indication that these are bipartisan issues.

"The job's not yet done – every one of the initiatives should have had hearings, but now voters get to decide on the remaining three. The only reason radical progressives did not approve all six common sense initiatives is because of government greed. Backroom deals with union bosses and progressive special interests outweigh real tax relief for working class Washingtonians. We welcome anyone who agrees with us that these measures are clear, common-sense fixes to some of the most pressing issues for our state, and we look forward to seeing all six passed into law in November."

Regarding I-2081, Snohomish County Representatives Julio Cortes (D-Everett), Mary Fosse (D-Everett) and Cindy Ryu (D-Shoreline) joined Alvarado, Berry, Chopp, Farivar, Marci, Mena, Morgan, Ramel, Reed, Simmons, and Walen to vote against establishing a parental bill of rights.

Senator Jesse Soloman (D-Shoreline) and Representatives Julio Cortes (D-Everett), Lauren Davis (D-Edmonds), Mary Fosse (D-Everett), and Shelly Kloba (D-Kirkland) were the only members of the Snohomish County delegation to vote against preventing a statewide income tax on residents.

Representatives Ryu (D-Shoreline) was the only member of the Snohomish County legislative delegation to vote against changing police pursuit laws within Washington state.

All three initiatives were discussed at three separate joint committee meetings last week where testifiers, both in support and opposed, shared their thoughts.

### INITIATIVE FOR PARENTAL RIGHTS

The House Education Committee and Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee held a joint public hearing to discuss Initiative 2081, protecting parental rights, on Wednesday, February 28. The Meeting was chaired by Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos (D-Rainier Beach).

Each of the 15 of the declared rights in the initiative refers to parents and legal guardians of public school children under the age of 18. The definition of public school, as defined by state law, is charter school, common schools, and other schools having a curriculum below the college or university level.

The first right deals with access to materials which would instate the parental right to examine textbooks, curriculum, supplemental material, used in their child's classroom.

The second right would grant the parental right to inspect their child's public school records and to receive a copy within 10 days of a written request. These include academic records, vocational counseling, screening records, medical or health records, discipline and attendance records, and any other

student specific files.

The next five rights refer to medical services and treatment including rights for parents to receive any notification when medical service or medication have been provided to the child that could result in any financial impact, and notification whenever a student is given medical attention that results in follow up care beyond normal school hours.

The sixth right would make it necessary that parents be immediately notified if a criminal action was deemed to be committed against their child; whereas the seventh right requires notification to a parent if any law enforcement officer questioned their child unless the questioning is about whether a parent abused or neglected the child.

The eighth right deals with notification if the child has been removed from campus without parental permission.

The ninth declared right is that the school will not discriminate against a child based on their family's religious beliefs.

The tenth right would allow parents to opt out their children from engagements that may question their child's sexual experience or attractions, religious or political beliefs, and mental or behavioral health of the child or

# Bill passed prohibiting octopus farming in WA

By KIENAN BRISCOE

**OLYMPIA**—Both the Washington State Senate and House of Representatives passed HB 1153 last month that, if signed by Governor Jay Inslee, will prevent octopus farming in Washington State.

Currently Washington State does not have any octopus farms, but this bill would prohibit the creation of one. It would not impact commercial fishing or the sale of octopus, just the farming and cultivation thereof.

The bill, which was sponsored by Representative Strom Peterson (D-Edmonds), with a bipartisan vote of 70-27. It landed on the Governor's desk March 1 where it awaits a final signature. After that the bill will become law within 90 days from when it was approved.

“Octopus farming leads to suffering and sickness for one of the more intelligent and feeling animals in our oceans,” said Rep. Peterson. “It can lead to huge environmental and ecological effects as well. Octopus farming is harmful to the animals and the environment and is unnecessary. It's time to move on.”

The bill applies to aquaculture, which is the culture or farming of fish, shellfish, and other aquatic plants and animals in fresh, brackish, or salt waters. The law would not apply to commercial fishing of octopus, which the state defines as the “harvesting of fish.”

According to the house bill analysis, Commercial aquaculture in Washington State currently includes clams, oysters, prawns, trout, salmon, geoducks, and kelp, among others and occurs in both fresh and marine waters such as streams, rivers, lakes, the Puget Sound, and the coast. Commercial net-pen aquaculture of nonnative fish, such as Atlantic salmon, has been prohibited in Washington State but currently the definition of “private sector cultured aquatic products”, in state law, does not include octopus.

Aquaculture can also apply to the fish and shellfish hatcheries and planting and growing of native aquatic plants to



Colorful tropical underwater theme octopus near the reef Source: Abobe Stock.

restore or enhance the habitat.

Aquaculture is regulated by the departments of Ecology, Fish and Wildlife and Natural Resources, as well as local and tribal governments, and other state and federal agencies.

The bill was backed by Washington Animal Rights Initiative nonprofit, who helped pave the way for a recently introduced California bill, and is behind the bill in Hawaii with Rep. Evslin as well, Executive Director for Washington Animal Rights Initiative, Amanda Fox, informed the Lynnwood Times.

The bill's passing is just one of many victories for Washington State animal rights laws following the passing of HB1012, which would expand shelters for animals during extreme weather events, HB 1097, which would prohibit sale of cosmetic products tested on animals, and HB1961, which intensifies penalties for animal abuse cases.

All three bills were lobbied by Sultan-based animal shelter Pasado's Safe Haven's Legislative Advocacy Department who worked closely with lawmak-

ers, prosecutors, and law enforcement to identify gaps in the state's animal protection laws. Many of Washington's animal protection laws were written over 100 years ago and are extremely outdated, Brenna Anderst, Director of Education and Advocacy at Pasado's Safe Haven, told the Lynnwood Times.

“Animal issues are community issues and by having really clear animal cruelty protection laws in place we're really not just protecting animals, we're protecting our entire community,” said An-

derst. “I think that's been really evident by the support that we've been getting from legislatures.”

Anderst specifically commended Representative Sam Low's involvement in HB 1961, who worked with Pasado's during the interim to get the bill drafted. Rep. Low, an animal lover himself, represents Washington's 39th district where Pasado's Safe Haven's sanctuary is located.

from page 3 **GADD**

cause affidavit, it is clear that the shoulder was marked with the solid line... This court finds that crossing over fully with the vehicle [inaudible] onto the shoulder and driving at least 10 mph over the speed limit on that shoulder is reckless—it is operating the vehicle in a reckless manner—certainly with the disregard for the safety of others.”

Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Darrow successfully argued that video evidence reviewed by Detective Monson indicated that the defendant “thought it was another lane of travel,” hence driving recklessly.

According to Detective Monson's account after watching a video of the incident, Santana crossed over to an unoccupied right lane on I-5, then signaled and entered the shoulder lane fully, continuing to drive forward for some time on the shoulder before hitting Trooper Gadd's patrol vehicle at full speed.

“No doubt, the fact that he had been drinking and consuming marijuana, contributed to his [Mr. Santana's] failure to recognize that the shoulder is not a proper lane of travel,” Deputy Prosecuting Attorney Darrow said. “But he didn't recognize that and so it is certainly reckless, and it is a fair inference he is impaired by the substances he has been using.”

Snohomish County Sheriff's Office confirmed with the Lynnwood Times that, although a blood search warrant was approved and administered, they are still awaiting the results if alcohol and/or drugs were in Mr. Santana's system at the time of the incident.

During the hearing, it was revealed that Mr. Santana has a history of vehicular incidents involving speeding in Washington state.

In 2020, Santana was cited for driving 49 mph over the speed limit; in 2015, he was cited for a speed too fast for conditions; and in 2012, for driving 11 mph over the speed limit.

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# WA state taxpayers can now use free IRS Direct File

By IRS

SEATTLE—The IRS announced on March 4 that eligible Washington state taxpayers can now use IRS Direct File, a new service that provides taxpayers with the choice to electronically file their federal tax return directly with the IRS for free.

Direct File is a mobile-friendly, interview-based service that will work as well on a mobile phone as it does on a laptop, tablet or desktop computer.

People in 12 states, including Washington, are eligible to participate in the 2024 Direct File pilot and will be limited to taxpayers with certain types of income, credits and deductions – taxpayers with relatively simple returns. This new service is available until the

tax filing deadline of April 15, 2024.

“Direct File is a great new resource and additional option for Washington state taxpayers to use to file their federal tax return. And most importantly, it’s free,” said IRS spokesperson David Tucker II. “One of the first steps interested taxpayers should do is to check their eligibility and there is an easy tool on IRS.gov to do just that.”

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Taxpayers participating in the pilot can get help from IRS employees staffing the Direct File customer support function with live chat access. IRS customer service representatives can provide technical support and provide basic clarification of tax law related to the tax scope of Direct File. Questions related

to issues other than Direct File will be routed to other IRS customer support, as appropriate.

### TAXPAYER ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility to participate in the Direct File pilot is limited to reporting only certain types of income and claiming limited credits and adjustments. It includes:

- Income reporting
- W-2 wage income
  - Social Security and railroad retirement income
  - Unemployment compensation
  - Interest of \$1,500 or less

### Credits

- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit

- Credit for Other Dependents

### Deductions

- Standard deduction
- Student loan interest
- Educator expenses

### A NEW ELECTRONIC FILING OPTION

Direct File does not replace existing filing options like tax professionals, IRS Free File, free return preparation sites, commercial software or authorized e-file providers. Taxpayers will continue to have choices, whether they want to use a tax professional, a software product, Free File, free tax preparation services like Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) as well as a paper tax return or Direct File.

## from page 8 INITIATIVES

family members. The eleventh right, somewhat similar, would allow parents the right to opt out their children from instructional topics on sexual activity.

The twelfth right is to receive a copy of the school’s calendar, with revisions, which also must be posted on the school’s website.

The thirteenth right is to receive a list of any required fee and its purpose end use and how economic hardships can be addressed in writing or on the school’s website.

The fourteenth right is to receive a description of the school’s dress code or uniform.

The fifteenth, and final right, is for a parent to be notified of their child’s academic performance if it could result in failure to be promoted to the next grade level and be offered an in-person meeting with teacher to discuss options for academic improvement.

### INITIATIVE AMENDING POLICE PURSUIT LAWS

The Senate Law and Justice Committee and the House Community Safety, Justice, and Reentry Committee held a public hearing on February 28 to discuss I-2113, the police pursuit initiative. A total of 161 people signed up to testify in which 151 were in favor of the initiative; another 5,483 people signed a petition not to testify but shared their stance on the issue—5,300 in support

in I-2113 with 183 either not in support or remaining neutral on the matter.

Statewide Initiative 2113 would amend the state’s current vehicular pursuit statute in two distinct ways; first the evidentiary threshold to engage in a pursuit is modified in that engaging officers would be able to engage in a pursuit if an officer has reasonable suspicion to believe the fleeing motorist has violated the law. Second, the officer may not engage in a pursuit unless the person being pursued poses a serious risk of harm to the safety of others and the safety risks of failing to apprehend or identify the person are considered greater than the safety risks of the pursuit.

If the initiative were to be enacted, all

other requirements for an officer to engage in a pursuit would otherwise remain in effect.

In 2021 the legislature passed engrossed substitute House Bill 1054, sponsored by Representative Jesse Johnson (D-Federal Way), which in part codified statewide vehicular pursuit regulations.

The law prohibited vehicular pursuits unless the pursuing officer had probable cause to believe that a person in the vehicle has committed or is committing a violent offense, a sex offense, or an escape offense, or if the officer has reasonable suspicion the operator of the vehicle is committing a DUI of-

Continued PAGE 11 >>



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from page 1 **ORCHIDS**

Andy Ray, one of the exhibitors and member of the Northwest Orchid Society since he was 18, first got into his hobby at an early age. His father was a horticulture instructor at Garfield High School in Seattle granting him access to a greenhouse all his life. Ray, a Woodinville resident, has his own business called Age Tropical on Instagram where he specializes in carnivorous plants.

Ray began his hobby as an orchid collector and about 90% of his collection is still orchids in both warm and cool climates (his greenhouse is split in two). He got into carnivorous plants about 5 years ago and now grows primarily *Nepenthes*, which are a genus of plants with about 170 species with pitchers at the end of each leaf and digestive fluid inside meant to catch prey.

"It's been a fun change in my hobby, going from orchids to carnivorous plants," said Ray.

Another exhibitor, Lynnwood resident Denny Van Dorn, who specializes in Gesneriads and African Violets, and winner of the Best Gesneriad or African Violet at the Indoor Plant Festival, showcased his *Cattleya* orchids which hails from the highlands of Brazil and is also Brazil's national flower.

"Coming to things like this we get to do connections, and talk with other people have plants that are on sale," said Van Dorn who has been collecting plants since 1972. "It's really handy for people to come in, make connections, get plants, buy a raffle ticket, and get one for free."

Bob Merki and Fiori Cippoletti, exhibitors specializing in cacti and succulents, shared with the Lynnwood Times what draws them to their specific ge-



Cacti at the Northwest Orchid Society's Indoor Plant Festival. Lynnwood Times } Mario Lotmore

nus. Cippoletti said she loves a plant that she can propagate, "frankensteining" different plants into something new and cacti and succulents are the easiest plant to do that with. Though cacti may not be the first thing you think of when thinking of Washington State, Cippoletti shared that it's more important than ever to practice growing them in Washington than anywhere else for conservation reasons.

"As the temperatures change on earth, unless we actually try to grow these plants in different environments, we will lose a lot of these plants because if it was left up to the growers we would only grow what grows really fast and ship really well," said Cippoletti. "So all of these people who have these clubs all over the country, who try and grow plants in their bathrooms or their kitchens - because of the steam and stuff like that - are actually members of conservation."

Cippoletti added that of all the succulents on earth 40% of them come from South Africa and all cacti are succulents but not all succulents are cacti, so it really pays to know what the weather in South Africa is like.

sioned officers. Requirements, under the new law, also specified that officers must coordinate with other jurisdictions that may be affected by the pursuit and were required to end the pursuit as soon as practical.

Finally, the law mandated that for an officer to engage in a pursuit they must have completed an emergency vehicle operator course, an updated emergency vehicle operators training within the previous two years, which includes training on performing the risk analysis of engaging in a pursuit, and to be certified in at least one pursuit intervention option.

#### INITIATIVE PROHIBITING STATE INCOME TAX

The Senate Ways and Means Committee and the House Finance Committee held a joint public hearing to discuss a citizen initiative, I-2111, concerning personal income tax, in the John L. O'Brien building in Olympia Tuesday, February 27. The joint meeting was chaired by Representative April Berg (D-Mill Creek).

There was a total of 181 testifiers in favor of the initiative with 6,008 in favor but had not signed up to testify at Tuesday's hearing. On the other hand, there were 24 opposed to the initiative who had signed up to testify with 649 not testifying in opposition.

Jeff Mitchell, Revenue Coordinator at the Senate Ways and Means Com-

mittee, and Tracey Taylor, staff member with House Finance, began the meeting with a brief on Initiative 2111 which relates to a prohibition on state and local taxes from imposing or collecting income taxes, defined as having the same meaning as "gross income" in the Internal Revenue code.

The Department of Revenue noted that the state of Washington does not tax an individuals' personal income. The initiative is "perspective only," it would not repeal any existing taxes imposed by the state or any municipality. Additionally, a fiscal note found that there would be no impact to state or local revenues.

Steve Ewing, with the Department of Revenue, explained that the initiative would not repeal or otherwise impact any existing taxes or charges it would only limit future taxes on broad-based income such as those imposed by the federal government and by other states.

The Washington State Attorney General's Office and the Department of Revenue were the only agencies who received the fiscal note, both of whom determined there would be no expenditures related to the implementation of the initiative.

#### ABOUT THE INITIATIVES

Let's Go Washington, a conservative group founded by Redmond businessman Brian Heywood, turned in a total of 2,662,310 signatures between late

November through December 28 last year to qualify six landmark initiatives.

Corporation (ODC), the Northwest Orchid Society is a non-profit organization founded in 1947 with the goal of creating a community for orchid growers while promoting and educating people about the hobby. The group welcomes both beginners and experienced orchid growers yearning to learn more about the hobby and meet other like-minded individuals through its monthly meetings, plant raffles, special events, and display tables where members show off their latest blooms.

Monthly meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the University of Washington Botanic Gardens Center for Urban Horticulture in the NHS hall, which often feature renown guest speakers giving lectures on different topics from culture; to breeding programs; to history. Meetings are free and open to anyone.

Also, during these meetings, the society holds an exhibition table where members can display their blooming plants. During the meeting a member does the "plant table walk," points out unusual, interesting, or exceptionally well-grown plants and asks some of the growers for information about their plants and growing conditions.

The society also holds a variety of community events from summer picnics, plant shows, giveaways, and more including maintaining a library of orchid books, videotapes, and periodicals. The Society librarian brings a small selection of items from the library for check-out by members at monthly meetings, though all items are available by arrangement with the librarian. See what's in the library here. If you'd like to check out a book or tape from our Library, please contact our librarian a minimum of two (2) weeks before the next meeting.

At a legislative preview hosted by the Washington State Association of Broadcasters and Allied Daily Newspapers of Washington earlier in January, House Speaker Laurie Jenkins shared her disdain for Let's Go Washington and specifically its founder, Heywood, comparing their efforts to the "Robber Barons" of the 19th century.

According to the Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC), Let's Go Washington has expensed \$6.933 million (\$2.61 per signature submitted) of which approximately \$5 million is directly linked to signature gathering and printing expenses. Heywood has loaned his Let's Go Washington PAC \$4.15 million and contributed an additional \$1.7 million in both in-kind and cash contributions.

The other three initiatives being considered include initiative 2109, which would repeal Capitol Gains Tax, initiative 2124, opting out of longterm care coverage, and initiative 2117 dealing with a so called "hidden gas tax," prohibiting state agencies from imposing any type of carbon tax credit trading, including "cap and trade" or "cap and tax" programs, regardless of whether the resulting increased costs are imposed on fuel recipients or fuel suppliers.

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fense. The pursuit must also be necessary to identify or apprehend the person and the fleeing person must have posed an imminent threat to the safety of others and the safety risks of failing to apprehend or identify the fleeing person must have been considered greater than the safety risks associated with the pursuit.

The law also required supervisory control of the pursuit but made certain exceptions to this requirement for jurisdictions with fewer than 10 commissioned officers.

In 2023 the legislature passed engrossed substitute Senate Bill 5352, sponsored by Senator John Lovick (D-Mill Creek), which modified the regulations on vehicular pursuits. Under this new law, the evidentiary threshold to engage in a pursuit was lowered from probable cause to reasonable suspicion that the person in the vehicle has committed or is committing one of the enumerated offenses. Also, the crimes of vehicular assault and domestic violence assaults were added to the list of crimes for which an officer may initiate a pursuit.

Rather than receive authorization to initiate a pursuit, under the new law, officers were required to notify their supervisor, who then maintains oversight of the pursuit. However, exceptions were made for jurisdictions with fewer than 15, rather than 10, commis-

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