



# OLYMPIA UPDATE

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**Olympia Update No. 9 • April 2, 2008**  
**Governor's Budget Vetoes**

## **Gregoire vetoes child care funding, safety**

Gov. Christine Gregoire surprisingly used her red pen Tuesday on the state higher education budget, marking out more than \$1 million in child care supplemental budget funding won in the Legislature last month by university student lobbyists.

Half of the \$1 million was earmarked to care for children of students attending four-year institutions including Washington State University. The governor made more vetoes to the higher education budget Tuesday than had been done by a state executive in many years.

**A second surprise veto eliminated new mental health counselors approved by the Legislature for WSU and other four-year institutions.** The mental health counselor appropriation of \$77,000 was the last surviving portion of a \$3 million request sought by WSU to upgrade campus safety in the wake of violent incidents at Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University. The governor said campus safety efforts must now be considered in the 2009 Legislative session that convenes next January.

**Other vetoed WSU budget enhancements approved by the Legislature in the session ending March 13 include funding for the Renton Small Business Development Center (\$50,000) and the Urban Integrated Pest Management program for public school districts (\$145,000.)**

The veto actions occurred on Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2687, the 2008 supplemental operating budget, a tune-up to last year's biennial budget. She eventually signed the bill Tuesday, but only after marking out many items.

**The vetoes to a supplemental budget that already contained historically small enhancements were part of a strategy by the governor to achieve an overall state biennial budget reserve of \$850 million.** Some economists believe that a slowing of the state economy, particularly in real estate excise tax collections, could leave the 2009 legislative session with a deficit to continue the current budget.

*Surviving WSU enhancements that were not vetoed include a \$1.6 million technical correction for WSU, a Vancouver deaf education program, additional funding for the UW-WSU William Ruckelshaus Center, community technology grants, and greenhouse gas emissions program. Additional funding for the university star researcher program was also signed. WSU's 2007-2009 budget was revised in the final supplemental to \$503.4 million, \$2.8 million in additional*

*program enhancements. The \$2.8 million is more than the \$1.8 million proposed by the governor and compares with \$3.1 million passed by the Legislature, \$4.5 million originally proposed by the Senate, and \$2.1 million originally proposed by the House. The final budget leaves in place the base biennial 2007-2009 budget passed by the Legislature last year, considered among the best higher education budgets in state history.*

### **Child Care Was ASWSU's Priority**

**The million-dollar child care budget veto Tuesday was initially seen as an April Fool's joke by student lobbyists**, who were very optimistic after witnessing Gov. Gregoire sign the enabling legislation for child care funding (Substitute House Bill 2582) last week. Once appropriations are made in the budget (ESHB 2687,) the enabling legislation provides for a new process of allocating funding to universities based on matching support from student government service and activities fees. WSU supported the enabling bill in legislative committees but urged that without additional funding in the budget, the effect could actually be a slight drop in small state funding provided to care for the children of university students. There had been no signals from the governor or her staff since the signing of the enabling bill.

In her veto message, the governor reaffirmed support for the new process. "However, expanding...the programs from \$100,000 per year to \$1.1 million should be evaluated in the biennial budget process when it can be reviewed in context with existing child care programs," Gregoire said in her veto message. In other words, proposals of that magnitude should be considered next year.

"It's unbelievable," said Chris Reigelsperger, who worked in Olympia this session for the Associated Students of Washington State University. Reigelsperger said additional funding for child care centers was the highest priority of ASWSU and President Kasey Webster this session. Reigelsperger is a graduating WSU senior communications and said like him, most of the student lobbyists who make up the Washington Student Lobby will not be back in Olympia next year. But he predicted the student lobby's next class of students will make it an issue in 2009. The Olympian newspaper reported today that the \$1 million child care veto was part of \$15 million in total funding passed by the Legislature in the supplemental budget budget that was vetoed yesterday. The governor's budget office reported today that vetoes to higher education account for about \$3 million. Other higher education funding passed by the Legislature but now nixed by the governor's budget vetoes include University of Washington fellowships in overseas trade offices, a UW state climatologist, UW Hood Canal oxygen levels, The Evergreen State College sex offender data study, Western Washington University's program for mentoring middle and high school students, and adult literacy education for the community colleges.

### **No campus safety funding until 2009**

**There was much discussion about campus safety this session following incidents at Northern Illinois University.** There has been considerable media attention about legislation passed on campus safety (Substitute Senate Bill 6328) but it is doubtful any legislative actions will result in any changes on the campuses in the coming year. The governor herself proposed the largest safety appropriation to the Legislature last December when she suggested one-time investments to the universities including \$1.8 million in improvements to WSU, much of it for electronic warning systems. But the Legislature made none of those one-time investments and opted for smaller permanent funding items. They eventually settled on a new mental health counselor for each campus, which the governor vetoed.

“My budget proposal funded critical equipment and technology to warn students at all campuses,” the governor wrote in her veto message. “Instead, these provisos fund one mental health counselor for each institution regardless of size...I ask each four-year institution and the state Board of Community and Technical Colleges to develop prioritized lists of possible investments and any legislation required to make student safety a priority in the 2009 session,” Gregoire said.

WSU has been working on a package which includes permanent funding to expand university police staffing. WSU will submit it to the 2009 Legislature. The campus safety bill (Senate Bill 6328) that was signed by the governor requires each institution to submit a self-study to its Board of Regents by Oct. 30.

### **No Renton Small Business Development Center**

The veto reverses the Legislature’s decision for counseling and technical assistance centers through Renton Technical College, part of the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) operated by WSU. Additional offices were added in last year’s budget and there was no WSU request for the supplemental session. However, the Senate proposed the Renton Center in the budget, a proposal that is now vetoed.

### **\$145,000 Vetoed for IPM in Schools**

The veto deletes WSU assistance to school districts and the Washington State School Director’s Association in implementing integrated pest management programs. The program, which was not a request of the university, deals with a comprehensive approach to weed and pest control at public schools, sometimes using alternatives to chemicals. The issue was raised in the legislature by Assistant Majority Whip Jamie Pedersen, D-Seattle. Pedersen chose to work through self-supporting programs in WSU Cooperative Extension. Pedersen’s legislation, however, died in the Senate Rules Committee while \$145,000 in funding was tucked into the final conference committee budget only to be vetoed by the governor. The funding level was well below costs estimated by WSU.

### **Transfer Bill Vetoed**

In other developments Tuesday, student lobbyists were also disappointed that the governor vetoed Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 2783, relating to transfer of students between institutions of higher education. “While the legislation focuses on the right problems, efforts already exist at the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and the state Board for Community and Technical Colleges in this area,” the governor said. The bill’s goals for a web-based advising system can be created without the bill, the governor said. WSU worked on the bill and believed it had been improved through the legislative process but took no position on the final measure.

For a complete list of bills tracked by WSU and any action by the governor, go to:  
<http://www.olympia.wsu.edu/Status.aspx>

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