

**Governor's remarks for the  
ESSB 6052 – 2015-17 operating budget bill signing**  
*Remarks as delivered*  
**June 30, 2015**

I'm happy to be joined here by Speaker Frank Chopp, Senate Majority Leader Mark Schoesler and Minority Leader Sharon Nelson, House Minority Leader Dan Kristiansen, Senators Andy Hill and John Braun, Representatives Ross Hunter and Pat Sullivan, and our other legislative friends for the signing of Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6052, the state operating budget for the 2015-17 biennium.

And I'm delighted to be here because, quite frankly, this is a darn good budget for people of the state of Washington.

It's a budget that is forward-thinking, responsible and fair.

It's taken a long time to get here, but the final result is a budget that responds to the fundamental needs of the people of our state.

This budget is the result of compromise and passed with strong bipartisan support in both chambers.

It reflects the key priorities I laid out back in December as well as important priorities brought to the table by both Republicans and Democrats, east and west, rural and urban.

This budget is an amalgam of ideas that represents the totality of our state.

This budget ensures our children will get a better education because we're making an historic investment that provides an additional 1,600 students access to preschool, expands all-day kindergarten statewide and reduces classroom sizes in grades K-3.

The one million children in our public schools are going to benefit from an additional \$1.3 billion payment into our K-12 schools.

Thousands of college students will benefit from cuts to their tuition and expanded financial aid opportunities.

People who enjoy frolicking in our state parks will benefit from restored funding for these beautiful outdoor treasures.

Families with members suffering from mental illness are going to benefit from mental health funding to prevent boarding of psychiatric patients and reduce wait times for those seeking competency restoration.

Our most vulnerable children will be a little more protected as we hire additional child protective and child welfare services employees.

And our state employees will receive their first raise since 2008 along with an enhanced cost-of-living adjustment for teachers for this biennium.

Our economy is rebounding, and so is our ability to invest our people and our programs that have made Washington the most innovative, forward-looking state in the nation.

After years of deep cuts in every part of our budget, we're finally reinvesting in our state.

New revenue was needed, however, to pay for the priorities of all five corners. And we found it in this bipartisan budget.

I have vetoed several sections for technical reasons, and I have vetoed several other sections that you will see in the record.

A lot of people worked many long hours to make this agreement possible.

In addition to our legislative negotiators standing here, I want to personally thank my OFM director, David Schumacher, and my policy director, Matt Steuerwalt, who met with and spoke with legislators on a daily, and oftentimes hourly, basis.

There were numerous staff at OFM and in the House and Senate who have pulled many long days and overnights to make this happen.

As I sign this, I want to say we know who to really thank: the people of Washington state. These are the people build the values that are the foundation of this budget – hope for our children, love for our state’s bounty, and respect for the people who work for us in our communities.

I’ll close by giving the highest praise I can to any budget: This is a Washington budget. And I’m darn happy to sign it.