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Constitutional amendment passes [\(Back to top\)](#)

[Senate Joint Resolution 8205](#), which I proposed in the 2011 regular legislative session (and for several sessions prior) essentially modifies the state constitution to reflect what has been happening in our voting laws for the last 44 years. The provision that was removed from the constitution by your vote last week was never implemented, and was conflicting with another provision concerning voting and elections.



While about 75% of voters approved it, I was surprised that some people still voted against it. I suspect they must have incorrectly assumed that it would have liberalized the voting laws in the state of Washington, but rather it simply acknowledges that the state has been violating the U.S. constitution for decades ([you can read more about the details here](#)). It was clearly time to make sure the U.S. constitution and the Washington State constitution were in sync and I'm pleased to see it pass.

Lakewood's sewer surcharge proposal

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Because it's now become a matter of public record, I wanted to share with you some information I learned about recently. A constituent of mine brought to my attention an agreement between Pierce County and the Lakewood City Council to place a new "surcharge" (tax) on the use of the sewer lines that run

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beneath the city, and require residents of the city to pay it.



However, the sewer lines are the property of Pierce County, and they are already taxing county residents for the use of the sewer lines. **I decided to ask the state Attorney General for an opinion** on whether Lakewood residents could be taxed and charged by two separate entities for the same thing, and he's now expected to issue a formal opinion on the subject.

I'll let you know what his office says as soon as his opinion is issued, but I wanted to make you aware of the situation. I am considering a bill to prohibit such a surcharge...what would be your advice? You can e-mail me at mike.carrell@leg.wa.gov and let me know.

Ethics complaint dismissed [\(Back to top\)](#)

You may have read in the News Tribune about an ethics complaint filed against me after I included a Department of Corrections employee's salary information in a previous Kitchen Cabinet. **The state Executive Ethics Board has dismissed the complaint on jurisdictional grounds** and I wanted to better explain that to you in light of the fact that the board did not exonerate me.



The fact is that the board has jurisdiction over state ethics law, and the board's dismissal is essentially an admission that I did not violate any state ethics laws when releasing the information. The employee salary data that I shared with you in a prior Kitchen Cabinet was obtained from the Department of Corrections itself. DOC is involved in a lawsuit, and part of that legal process involves something called "interrogatories," or question and answer interviews that are considered on-the-record, and that chart was part of an interrogatory in that lawsuit.

Secondly, I had information that came from the state Office of Financial Management that they had not authorized any **raises** for any Department of Corrections employees. However, some employees were still receiving **step increases** per their bargaining agreement. OFM does not equate step increases with raises. In the case of the individual who filed the ethics complaint about me for revealing her salary information, she had received step increases in pay of more than 30% over 4 years.

To me, it's a matter of semantics to say that someone didn't get a raise when in fact their pay increased significantly due to a step increase. And I'm sure you're aware that many other

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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I need to know where you stand on these and other topics! These are enormous issues coming before the Legislature and I want to know how you feel about them.

Do you support or oppose these issues? **As my Kitchen Cabinet members, I want your advice.**

Please send me an e-mail and let me know where you stand and what you're thinking.

E-MAIL

FORWARD TO A FRIEND

If you know someone in our district who might be interested in receiving these updates, **please feel free to forward this e-mail to him or her.**

areas of state government have not received pay raises or step increases for several years due to the current budget situation. That's why I decided to share this information with you in a Kitchen Cabinet.

Preparing for the special session [\(Back to top\)](#)

As I told you in [a Kitchen Cabinet update last month](#), I'm part of a workgroup that will be looking at the area of Human Services and Corrections too see if there are ways to **prioritize costs**. I met with Democrat Senators Jim Hargrove and Debbie Regala, as well as with Republican Senator Val Stevens last week, and met with them again yesterday to work toward that goal. I'll let you know as soon as I have firm information to share with you.

I need your feedback! [\(Back to top\)](#)

A big priority for me is getting your feedback as often as possible. It is one of the best tools I have to help me better represent you. Please let me know if you think the stories in my Kitchen Cabinet updates are too long, too short, lacking in detail, or mired in confusing "Olympia-speak." **I value your opinion highly and want to create these updates in a format that works best for you.**

As always, if you would like to contact me you can write, phone, e-mail, or stop by. **It remains my honor to serve you in the Washington State Senate.**

Sincerely,



Mike Carrell
28th District State Senator



"I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is the best policy." – George Washington