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Sen. Christine Rolfes Earns 2014 Torch of Leadership Award

Kitsap Democrat Was Instrumental in Education Gains This Legislative Session

Sen. Christine Rolfes is the winner of AWSP's 2014 Torch of Leadership Award. Rolfes, a Democrat representing the 23rd Legislative District, was chosen for her commitment to K-12 education during the 2014 legislative session.

"As evidenced by the bills she has introduced, Senator Rolfes clearly cares about all kids and the schools who serve them," notes AWSP Government Relations Director Jerry Bender.

Rolfes was the prime sponsor on several education bills this past session, including Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 6552 (student hour and grad requirements), Senate Bill 6093 (background checks/DEL cards), Senate Bill 6161 (K-12 educators/professional development), and Senate Bill 6532 (beginning teachers salaries). In addition the E2SSB 6552, both SB 6161 and SB 5038 (enhancing the basic education allocation formula for principals, assistant principals, and other certificated building-level administrators), which she co-sponsored last year, directly support AWSP's [2014 Legislative Platform](#).



As the prime sponsor of E2SSB 6552, she worked closely with the Majority Coalition Caucus to get the bill passed. The bill brings a historic change to graduation requirements, requiring 24 credits for high school graduation, adds a focus on Career and Technical Education (CTE), and adds flexibility in the amount of contact time required for students to earn their 24 credits.

Rolfes, Minority Floor Leader for the Senate Democrats, serves on the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education (Assistant Ranking Minority Member), Rules, and Transportation Committees. Prior to serving in the Senate, Rolfes was a member of the House of Representatives since 2007. She served two terms on the Bainbridge Island City Council before winning statewide office.

Rolfes has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from the University of Virginia and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Washington and lives on Bainbridge Island with her husband Leonard, and their two daughters, who attend their local public schools. "People tend to have strong feelings about how to improve education. But the reality is, what works on paper doesn't necessarily work in the classroom," Rolfes said. "It's important to listen to the voices of the professionals who help students get over the day to day hurdles to achieve their potential. I am grateful to be recognized for the work we've accomplished together and look forward to our continued work on ample funding and academic improvements."

AWSP Legislation Committee Chair Charlene Milota stated, "In reviewing the candidates for this award, Senator Rolfes stood out as an effective legislator who made a difference in 2014 for the one million plus students in Washington state." AWSP will officially honor Rolfes in October 2014 at its Fall Legislation Committee meeting. AWSP founded the Torch of Leadership Award in 2009.

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