



SENATOR

Paul Shin

E-Newsletter - 21st District, Edmonds

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21st Legislative District

September 8, 2009

Dear Neighbors,

I hope all of you enjoyed the recent Labor Day holiday and are looking forward to a pleasant and productive autumn. There are quite a few different issues being discussed at the state and national level that I want to share with you. While the Legislature is not in session during the summer, I spend quite a bit of time monitoring important debates and gearing up for the next legislative session in January. These issues include fostering the global health industry and debating national healthcare reform, plus unemployment and the 2010 Census.

As these efforts continue, I look forward to updating you. As always, if you have any thoughts or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Shin".

Sen. Paull H. Shin

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The growing global health care industry

Recently I met with my fellow colleagues from the [Legislative Committee on Economic Development and International Relations](#) to study global health as a sector of the state's economy. We discussed these issues with doctors and non profit leaders in the industry. Specifically we focused on food safety, sanitation issues, attracting and retaining organizations that work on global health issues to Washington, educational opportunities, product development and more – with the focus of all being on the business and economic impacts of the industry in our state.

To read more about global health care, read my recent blog [here](#).

Health care reform hits home

As I'm sure you've seen, health care reform is shaping up to be one of the most important federal public policy issues of our time. Whichever reform proposal Congress passes, it will be up to states to implement the new rules.

To that end, committee chairs in both the Senate and the House of Representatives have begun hosting town hall meetings on health care reform in cities across the state.

They've answered questions from hundreds of people about current federal options and what the Legislature has done over the last decade to address the problem. Some of those solutions included requiring insurance companies to adopt uniform standards and forms to reduce administrative costs, and our state's first-in-the-nation Health Technology Assessment program that established an independent, clinical committee to determine which medical treatments are safe and effective and provide good value to patients.

Not everyone agrees on how to overhaul the system, but most agree changes are necessary because of skyrocketing health care costs. Since 2000, average family premiums have increased by 103 percent in our state. Family premiums now average \$13,216 a year — about equal to the annual income from a minimum wage job.

'Shared work' solutions can forestall layoffs

This recession has taken a heavy toll on jobs in our state, but some companies are avoiding layoffs with the help of the Employment Security Department.

The state's Shared-Work Program lets employers temporarily reduce the work hours of full-time employees by up to 50 percent while workers collect partial unemployment benefits to replace some of their lost wages. The employees receive more income than with unemployment benefits alone, and they aren't forced to look for new jobs in this tough economy. Businesses, meanwhile, benefit by cutting payroll costs while keeping their skilled workers until the economy improves.

Here in Washington, about 2,000 businesses and 42,000 employees are participating in the program. In a recent survey, 56 percent of participating employers said the Shared-Work Program has helped them survive the recession, and another 22 percent felt it probably had. Eighty-eight percent said they'd recommend it to other employers.

To learn more about the program, visit <http://www.esd.wa.gov/uibenefits/faq/shared-work.php> or call 800-752-2500.

The 2010 Census

Many of the federal funds that come to our state, as well as our representation in Congress, hinge directly on the results of the national Census that is taken every 10 years—in this case, April 1, 2010.

So why should you care? Every person counted means thousands of dollars for our local community. Here's how it works.

By law, \$435 billion in federal funding will be distributed according to Census counts. That's \$1,400 per person, per year. For each person who isn't counted, our community will lose \$14,000 in federal funds for the next decade. That adds up fast — for example, for 100 local people missed, we would lose \$1.4 million.

Census numbers also determine how many congressmen represent each state, as well as congressional, state, and school district boundaries. Depending on the count, some Pacific Northwest states could gain or lose a representative and the political clout that goes with it.

This year's Census form is easy — 10 questions, 10 minutes. Not since the first Census in 1790 have so few questions been asked. Questions basically ask for name, gender, address, age, date of birth, race, ethnicity and if the home is owned or rented. All answers are kept private. The Census Bureau does not share information with anyone else — not even federal agencies. Not even the President can get information about an individual home. What's more, every Census employees must take a lifetime oath to safeguard information, punishable by \$250,000 and/or five years in prison. The information is kept private for 72 years.

Counting everyone is no small task. To get the word out, the Census relies on thousands of workers and volunteers. So when the Census staffer comes by, do your part and answer those quick questions. Our community will be healthier for it!

For more information, go to: www.census.gov