

Notes on Meeting with Senators Murray and Cantwell's Staffers

13th of August 2019 Questions? Please ask Holly at holly@hollybrewer.com

This is the latest of our monthly meetings with the staffers. We have been meeting with them regularly since January 2017. The meeting is open to everyone. Join us next time!

More information: <http://sadfor.us/> / <https://www.facebook.com/groups/511177286061628/>

The senators are in a [5 week State Work Period](#) until September 6th. They will not be having town halls because they find it more productive to have meetings with set groups across the State about specific issues – healthcare with hospitals, affordable housing with homeless groups. Our group responded that all sorts of people want to hear from them – not just these niche groups. Also, they could have teletown halls on Facebook and AMAs on Reddit.

Many times when they have new bills they spend their State Work period talking in the State about the bill and its power – and getting feedback and personal stories from people to support it in the Senate. Local offices also give them stories and tell them about issues that they can use to write bills.

Senator Murray – A Summary of her Latest Work

From Kate, kate.baungartner@senate.gov

In the State, Sen. Murray has been working on:

- Protecting unions

- Veterans' health benefits

- She opened an affordable housing facility in Yakima YakimaHerald.com

She is closely watching:

- this administration's lawsuit in appellate court to take away:

 - Coverage of pre-existing conditions

 - Children being covered by their parents' insurance until they are 26

 - The preservation of essential benefits in health care coverage

Actions at the southern border

She supports investigations into impeachment. [Newsweek](#) [Murray.Senate](#)

Senator Cantwell – A Summary of her Latest Work

She is closely watching:

- The threat to the Endangered Species Act

- Mnuchin's statement about indexing capital gains tax to inflation, which would benefit the wealthy and again increase the deficit. [The Hill](#)

- The threat to develop in Bristol Bay, threatening valuable salmon runs. [Spokesman](#)

In the Senate

She has introduced S. 2130, the [Equal Pay for Team USA Act](#). It ensures that all athletes are paid equitably across sex and racial lines, especially in the Olympics.

She has introduced bipartisan legislation with Sen. Collins to prevent this administration appointing Administrative Law justices using a selection process closer to the president. [S. 2348](#) [NYTimes](#)

The bipartisan legislation to [reauthorize the coastguard](#) is moving forward. It will help Orcas and help us react to tsunamis.

There is a bill in the Senate Finance Committee (which Sen Cantwell is in) that aims to reduce the cost of prescriptions. It is bipartisan and has passed the committee – and will head to the Senate when it is back in session. [Cantwell.Senate](#) It includes measures to address drug shortages, protect Medicaid Part D and stop Pharmacy Benefit Managers from profiting highly.

Sen. Cantwell has introduced a bill that focuses on green buildings. [Cantwell.Senate](#)

In the State

Sen Cantwell has been looking at the affordable housing crisis. She has a bipartisan bill to address this: and she is seeking to promote it (and edit it?) according to the feedback that she gets about it in WA. [S. 1703](#): Affordable Housing Credit Improvement Act of 2019

It “would help build more than 9,700 new affordable housing units in Washington over ten years, in addition to the hundreds of units built each year through the program. The bill will also provide more than 11,000 jobs and add over \$1 billion to the Washington economy in wages and business income.”

“Across the United States, the expanded Affordable Housing Tax Credit would produce roughly **1.9 million new affordable housing units** over the next decade, an increase of more than 550,000 units more than would be built without the legislation. The bill increases the total number of affordable housing units built by:

Increasing the amount of credits allocated to each state by 50% over current levels, resulting in the production of more than 384,000 more affordable homes in the next 10 years than would otherwise be created; and,

Stabilizing the value of the 4% Affordable Housing Tax Credit – which is used for new construction that uses additional subsidies or the acquisition cost of existing buildings. This will create more certainty for ongoing and new projects and increase affordable housing production by more than 66,000 units.

Expanding and reforming “recycling” of multifamily housing bonds, allowing states to maximize the available resources of private activity bonds by recycling multifamily bonds for affordable housing, resulting in 100,000 additional affordable housing units.” [DelBene.House](#)

General Chat

Sen Murray strongly opposes **Scalia’s proposal as the next Secretary of Labor**. [RollCall](#) [HELP.Senate](#)

When it comes to **gun control bills**, both senators are ready to act. Kate said unequivocally that Sen Murray was ready to go to DC tomorrow to vote on them. [HR 8](#) is the background checks bill that passed the House. There are numerous other bills on gun control that the House voted through – that are now blocked in the Senate by Moscow Mitch. In the Senate, the related bills are [S. 42](#) & [S. 1924](#). Both of our senators are cosponsors on S. 42, but not Jaime’s bill, S. 1924.

(If you want to donate to his Dem. Competitor, [donate to Amy McGrath](#). Her stunning [campaign video](#).)

I-940 was legislation is now law. It concerns **de-escalation training** for law enforcers and similar issues (like holding officers more accountable). [BellevueReporter](#)

We wanted to know what similar actions are being taken across the country. Mainly, law enforcement units enact this kind of training and policymaking locally.

We don't want **Seattle police to continue to train in terror tactics and surveillance in Israel**
[SeattleWeekly](#) Please sign the petition against this. [Secure.EveryAction](#)

One participant said that when she calls Sen. Murray's office **she always get the answering machine** – and a cheerful message saying that she is glad to hear from constituents, lol. They have a new phone system, so that should be fixed now.

People voiced strong concern about **Moscow Mitch's obstructionism** – and said that the way Congress works needs to be amended so that corrupt individuals like him cannot stop legislation and nominations that help people from getting through. He has obstructed since 2015. He has had a stronghold on the nomination of judges – notable 2 Supreme Court justices, Kavanaugh and Gorsuch (after stopping Obama's nomination, Merrick Garland); and he is stopping legislation concerning: election security, censuring the president, gun control, immigrant's rights, and many more. He is the most powerful person on the planet right now. [AmericanProgress](#)

(If you want to donate to his Dem. Competitor, [donate to Amy McGrath](#). Her stunning [campaign video](#).)
(The grassroots effort to unseat him - he is up for re-election in 2020 – [DitchMitchFund](#))

The Stop Cruelty to Migrant Children Act is cosponsored by 37 Dem Senators, including ours. No Republicans. Senator Murray is on the [Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee](#), which has under it the Department of Health and Human Services, and under that the Office of Refugee Resettlement, which is responsible for the treatment of refugees and immigrants. Sen. Murray speaking about this: [YouTube](#). He statement: [Murray.Senate](#).
(Why are the families being separated? [TheGuardian](#))

The House has released a [Progressive NDAA](#) (from Rep. Adam Smith), and our senators [voted for](#) Moscow Mitch's bill. The bills now need to be reconciled. The main difference is the development of low yield nuclear weapons on submarines. The Republican argument is that the Russians are already making them. [News.USNI](#) We already have them, but they say we need them for second strike (we'd be dead then.) These nukes are 20 miles away from Seattle, at Bangor on the Kitsap peninsula. The danget of low yield nukes is that if another country sees them coming they have 12 minutes to respond – and no way of accurately determining how much power the nukes have – enough to destroy a city? A bus stop? A country? How would they know?

Can they perhaps discuss such bills between WA senators and Reps in future?

Folks from [Kids for Peace](#) attended and brought their questions.

There was a question about the details in [S. 2355 – End Racial and Religious Profiling Act of 2019](#). We don't know the details. Both of our senators are cosponsors.

Sen. Cantwell has serious concerns about and is paying attention to the attack on the [Endangered Species Act](#) (of 1973)

(Send a message to protect it: [NRDC](#))

Both of our senators are watching the attacks on the Public Charge Rule, that would mean that folks applying for residency could lose the right if they apply for benefits. [PBS](#)