



Seattle judge blocks Trump's birthright citizenship ban giving AG Brown a win **P2**



Law enforcement association awards Larsen 2024 Congressional Member of the Year Award **P5**

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Real Impact

Dr Paul A Stoot named Lynnwood Times' Person of the Year for 2024



Dr. Paul Stoot Sr speaking at the Rise Up Academy Outdoor Performing Arts Amphitheater ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, May 29, 2024. Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

By KIENAN BRISCOE

EVERETT—It with absolute pleasure that the Lynnwood Times staff has named Dr. Paul A. Stoot Sr, founder/CEO of Rise Up Academy, as its Person of the Year for 2024 for his faith-based community service and dedication to providing accessible, and affordable, quality early childhood education especially to underserved communities.

“After being in this community and working in this community for over 30 years, it is quite humbling that [the Lynnwood Times] would come to me in this season of my life and tell me that what I’ve done matters,” said Dr. Stoot Sr. “What I’ve done wasn’t for me. It was for the voiceless young people that we so often overlook.”

Paul A. Stoot Sr. was born and raised in Houston, Texas, to a low-income family. He informed the Lynnwood Times that both of his parents worked multiple jobs to make ends meet, so when he turned 13-years-old he began offering to mow neighbors’ lawns to help pitch

in for groceries. This, he said, is ultimately what fostered his entrepreneurial spirit.

Dr. Stoot Sr joined the United States Navy in 1983 where he served in San Diego for seven years—four on active duty and three on reserve. He entered the aerospace sector shortly after being honorably discharged from the military as an Operation Specialist for General Dynamics Space Division in Southern California.

It had always been a dream of Dr. Stoot Sr’s to join the Boy Scouts of America when he was younger, but his parents could not afford the membership fee. To actualize this dream, Dr. Stoot Sr decided he would begin a Boy Scouts chapter of his own while living in South San Diego. His program was such a success it would later be adopted by the Boy Scouts of America handbook in the 1980’s, and these editions of the handbook even feature photographs of himself and his troop. Dr. Stoot Sr credits his time working as a Scoutmaster for the Boy Scouts as the first time his love for teaching, and

mentoring, children truly took flight.

In 1990 Dr. Stoot Sr accepted a job as a Manufacturing Engineer for The Boeing Company and relocated to Everett, Washington.

Shortly after, being a man of faith who grew up within the church, he began leading church sermons out of a Holiday Inn in South Everett, unable to afford a church of his own until a team of local Deacons believed in his message so much they chipped in to buy what would later become known as the Greater Trinity Academy—the future site of Rise Up Academy.

Dr. Stoot Sr became well known for his energetic and profound spiritual messages, even attracting the likes of Jesse Jackson, former Senator, civil rights activist, and protégé of Martin Luther King Jr. during the 1960’s. Jackson and Dr. Stoot Sr formed a close friendship over the years and would meet up every time Jackson visited Washington State.

Immediately after moving to Everett,

Dr. Stoot Sr noticed a lack of quality early childhood education opportunities there, particularly for low-income BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) families. He informed the Lynnwood Times that he believes the best way to eliminate the achievement gap that exists in our society today is by making a high-quality and innovative Early Childhood Education program accessible for all students, especially for those who would otherwise not be able to afford it.

He founded Rise Up Academy in 1999 out of his old church, alongside his good friend former Seattle Seahawks Safety and NFL Hall-of-Famer Kenny Easley who was the first to donate to Dr. Stoot Sr’s cause in the amount of \$1,000.

Rise Up Academy is an early learning center in South Everett for Preschool to Kindergarten students that also offers after school programs. With 65 enrolled students and a student-teacher ratio of 5-to-1, the school prides itself

Continued **PAGE 8**

Seattle judge blocks Trump's birthright citizenship ban giving AG Brown a win

By MARIO LOTMORE

SEATTLE—Judge John Coughenour, of the U.S. District Court for Western District of Washington and Ronald Reagan appointee, on Thursday, January 22, granted a temporary injunction request by Washington State Attorney General Nick Brown (D) against President Donald J Trump's Executive Order on ending birthright citizenship, calling it "blatantly unconstitutional."

"The Court GRANTS the Plaintiff States' emergency motion for a 14-day Temporary Restraining Order effective 11:00 AM on January 23, 2025," Judge Coughenour wrote in his decision.

Washington State Attorney General Brown's lawsuit was joined by the states of Oregon, Arizona, and Illinois. Other states across the nation filing similar lawsuits include New Jersey, California, Massachusetts, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wisconsin, as well as the District of Columbia.

"Trump's birthright citizenship EO is halted for now," Brown wrote on X. "Today a judge granted our temporary restraining order nationwide, saying he had not seen an order this blatantly unconstitutional in 40 years on the bench. We'll continue fighting for Washingtonians' freedoms."

The Executive Order titled, "Protecting the Meaning and Value of American



Washington State Attorney General Nick Brown speaking to reporters in Seattle about Judge John Coughenour's decision granting a temporary injunction against President Donald J Trump's EO on birthright citizenship. Photo courtesy of the Attorney General's Office.

Citizenship," states that "no department or agency of the United States government shall issue documents recognizing United States citizenship, or accept documents issued by State, local, or other governments or authorities purporting to recognize United States citizenship" to persons born to a mother and father who are unlawfully in the United States or a mother who is lawfully in the US temporarily and whose father is not a lawful US citizen or permanent resident by the time of birth.

Birthright citizenship has been protected by the United States Constitution's 14th Amendment since its adoption in

1868, where it states that "all persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States."

The right was enshrined in the Constitution following the Civil War when approximately four million enslaved people were left stateless. The 14th Amendment was intended to grant citizenship to former slaves after the 13th Amendment abolished slavery in the

United States and its territories. The country has upheld this right throughout history. For example, in the case of the United States v. Wong Kim Ark where the defendant was denied reentry into the United States, where he was born and obtained citizenship, after visiting his family in China. The U.S. Supreme Court, on this matter, argued that Wong Kim Ark indeed was a U.S. citizen by birthright under the "clear words and manifest intent" of the 14th Amendment.

This interpretation of the 14th Amendment, specifically surrounding words "subject to the jurisdiction" has been expanded to include all people born on U.S. soil and not only to the recently freed slaves after the passage of the 13th Amendment.

President Trump's EO is an attempt to eventually have the U.S. Supreme Court revisit the 14th Amendment or for it to be repealed. However, to repeal an amendment, another amendment must be proposed and ratified.

The Article V of the U.S. Constitution requires that an amendment be proposed by two-thirds of the House and Senate, or by a constitutional convention called for by two-thirds of the state legislatures. The proposed amendment is ratified (becomes part of the U.S. Constitution) after at least three-quarters of the states vote to ratifying it.

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Lynnwood Council Leadership Shake-up

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—The young bucks on the Lynnwood City Council outplayed more seasoned Council members to snatch the top leadership positions at Monday’s Business meeting with Nick Coelho, 38, being elected as President and Josh Binda, 25, as Vice President for the 2025 Legislative Session.

Both Councilmen voted last November to pass a 52% property tax increase on residents, support cannabis retailers in Lynnwood, and are advocates for high-density housing. Coelho and Binda have strongly voiced their sentiments in the past for the need of younger representation, now is their time.

The nominees for Council President were Councilmen David Parshall, Nick Coelho and Patrick Decker.

Parshall, 51, a former public high school teacher well-versed in Parliamentary procedures, shared with his colleagues that if voted Council President, he would take a more collaborative approach with weekly leadership updates, provide more outreach opportunities for the public and pledged to remain neutral for the upcoming 2025 City Council races.

He holds a bachelor’s degree in political science, a master’s degree in education, and a Washington State teaching certificate. Parshall was elected in 2024 to the Lynnwood City Council.

Coelho, 38, assumed office in 2024, said

he will work on a more focused agenda that promotes dialogue. To combat gun violence in Lynnwood, he shared that he would like to promote programs to make Lynnwood more “neighborly.”

He is a parks and recreation advocate who owns and operates a local boardgame cafe. Coelho has extensive history volunteering with the Lynnwood Foodbank, Habitat for Humanity, and conservation groups such as the Friends of Scriber Lake. Coelho was first elected to the Lynnwood City Council in 2024.

Decker, 50s, elected in 2021, has the most seniority on the council after Councilman George Hurst. He is employed at Microsoft in the Xbox Gaming Studio Business Group, focusing on Strategic Licensing Agreements.

He pitched to colleagues his extensive legislative experience in budgeting and collaborating with staff, the mayor, and leaders of other cities. He shared that because he self-funded his campaign, he will make data-driven decisions on what’s best for Lynnwood and not special interests nor political parties.

Councilman Hurst motioned to appoint Coelho as Council President, which was seconded by freshman Councilwoman Derica Escamilla, which passed 5-1 with Decker dissenting.

COUNCIL VICE PRESIDENT SELECTION

The nominees for Council Vice President were Councilmen Josh Binda and George Hurst.

Binda, 25, a former Black Lives Matter activist who became the youngest Black American to be elected to office in Washington state in 2021, pitched that he would like to foster a more collaborative environment with open dialogue, similar to what Coelho and Parshall mentioned earlier.

He shared that Lynnwood strength lies with its diversity and that he will promote a council where everyone’s voice is heard. Binda added that as Lynnwood enters a new chapter, now is the time to embrace a “different type of leadership.”

Binda is a self-described progressive who recently made a bid for congress in 2024 to unseat Representative Rick Larsen (D).

Councilman Hurst, 60s, is the former Lynnwood Council President. He was first elected to the City Council in 2015 and re-elected in 2019. During his years on the Council, Hurst has focused on making Lynnwood a safer place to live and work; and his legislative priorities over the years have been focused on addressing housing shortages, controlling government spending, and providing a business-friendly environment.

He shared that he would bring the value of historical knowledge to support Council President Coelho during a time of transition with the recent departure of Altamirano-Crosby.

Councilman Decker motioned to appoint Hurst as Council Vice President which was seconded by Coelho. The

motion failed 4-2 with Hurst and Decker voting in the affirmative. Originally, Coelho abstained but changed his vote to nay.

Councilwoman Escamilla then motioned to appoint Binda as Vice President, which was seconded by Coelho. The motion passed 4-2 with Hurst and Decker dissenting.

BINDA AWARDED LEADERSHIP DESPITE CONTROVERSIES

In a 2024 interview with The Stranger, Binda shared that he is highly critical of what he called Isreal’s ongoing “genocide” against Gaza.

I call it a ‘genocide’ because that’s what it is,” he told The Stranger. He added that he supports Medicare for All, canceling student debt, packing the US Supreme Court, lowering military spending, prioritizing public transit over car infrastructure, and raising the minimum wage during his interview.

Binda is no stranger to controversy telling The Stranger that “as a progressive Black man, right-wing, racist backlash unfairly follows him where he goes.” However, a Snohomish County Judge thought otherwise.

Snohomish County Superior Court Judge Marybeth Dingley on June 27, 2023, found sufficient reason to recall Lynnwood City Councilman Josh Binda for misfeasance, malfeasance, and vio-

Continued PAGE 7

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Automatic License Plate Recognition cameras coming to Lynnwood

By MARIO LOTMORE

LYNNWOOD—For almost 20 years, photo enforcement cameras have been used to improve traffic safety in Lynnwood; now, Automatic License Plate Recognition (ALPR) cameras will be added to the city’s arsenal to combat rising motor vehicle thefts.

At its Monday Business Meeting, the City Council approved the Lynnwood Police Department to enter into a two-year agreement with Flock Safety to lease 25 of its Falcon ALPR cameras to be placed at strategic—high traffic and/or high-crime—locations around the city.

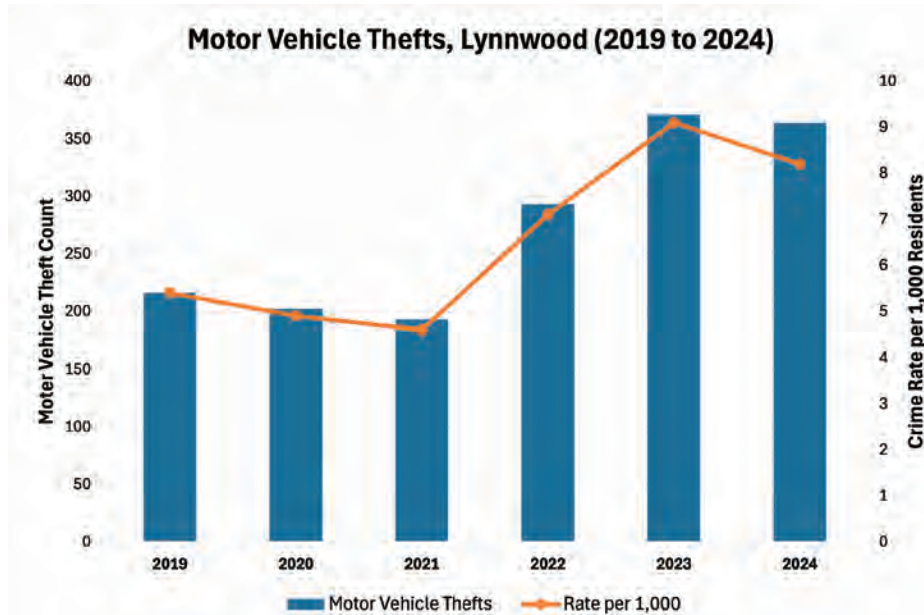
With unanimous votes of 6-0 by council members, the two-year pilot program costing some \$171,153.50, will be paid from its Criminal Justice 105 Fund. A grant awarded June 2024 through the Washington Auto Theft Prevention Authority (WATPA) to fund ALPR cameras in the amount of \$132,700 was also approved to be accepted resulting in a net cost to the city of \$38,453.50 for this pilot program. The cameras should be operational no later than mid-February if not sooner and accompanied by a transparency portal similar to the one used by the Arlington Police Department.

The Flock Falcon ALPR cameras are solar and battery-powered mounted fixed aerial high-definition cameras that utilize a cellular network to scan and record license plates against a “hot list” of reported stolen or “flagged” vehicles 24 hours a day, seven days a week, matched in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) or state crime databases associated with a missing person in an AMBER or Silver Alert.

The license plate scan produces what is called a Vehicle Fingerprint to capture a vehicle’s make, model, color, and plate number according to the company’s website.

Flock Safety cameras apply machine learning to the footage captured to classify vehicles by type such as vans, buses, sedans, SUV, etc. Lynnwood Police shared during the meeting that the cameras will aid in quickly searching Flock’s database during stolen motor vehicle cases.

According to research from the King County Prosecutors Office, video surveillance is 152 more cost-effective than human surveillance saving hundreds of hours canvassing and analyzing video surveillance by paid officers which will now be performed far more efficiently using the Flock Safety platform. After a positive vehicle is identified by the Flock Falcon camera, officers will receive automatic real-time alert via email and/or text of the plate, image of vehicle, and GPS location.



Motor Vehicle Theft data from WASPC compiled by the Lynnwood Times.



Image of Flock Falcon ALPR camera. Source: Flock Safety.

The Flock Falcon ALPR cameras do not have facial recognition technology, don’t track speed, nor aid in parking enforcement. The data collected from the cameras is automatically deleted after 30 days, Lynnwood Police said. These cameras are separate from the current photo enforcement cameras throughout the city of Lynnwood.

The photo enforcement cameras—also called automated traffic safety cameras—are operated by American Traffic Safety (ATS), an Arizona-based company, which takes photos of drivers who violate traffic laws, such as entering an intersection on a red light. The Flock Falcon Cameras are a separate system authorized by the Lynnwood City Council and operated by the Lynnwood Police Department.

A total of 34,849 citations were issued in Lynnwood by the automated traffic safety cameras at the 11 locations in 2023. Now that construction is complete on 196th Street, the number of ci-

tations should increase by at least 2,000 for 2024 as the camera at 44th Street is back up and running.

Besides the automated traffic safety and Flock Falcon ALPR cameras, Lynnwood also has live traffic cameras at 15 locations throughout the city. These cameras record all vehicle and pedestrian traffic at these 15 locations. Authorized city personnel monitor these cameras to conduct traffic operations and are used to support police investigations. The video is typically stored automatically for two weeks before being overwritten.

Flock Safety cameras are in use in more than 5,000 communities across the country, and the company works with over 3,000 police departments. Flock technology currently helps law enforcement solve about 10% of reported crime in the U.S. and communities using Flock Safety LPR have reported crime reductions of up to 70%, the Lynnwood Police reports on its website.

OTHER CITIES USING ALPR CAMERAS

Flock Safety cameras are used by over 70 law enforcement agencies in Washington state including Arlington, Everett, Maryville, Mill Creek, Lake Stevens, and the Snohomish County Sheriff’s Office. The city of Mukilteo is expected to install its Flock Safety cameras within the next few weeks.

Arlington: Flock Safety ALPRs became operational in Arlington on July 5, 2023. The 12 months after installation, APD recovered 109 stolen vehicles, a 109% increase to the 12-month period prior to the cameras being installed. Within the first six months of usage, Arlington PD recovered over \$300,000 in stolen property attributed to the Flock cameras.

Yakima: Since their installation in 2022, Flock Safety LPR cameras have assisted in 688 investigations to date. Officers have utilized the Flock cameras in 392 stolen vehicle recovery cases, 11 homicide cases, 78 hit-and-run cas-

es, 56 assault cases, 52 eluding cases, 24 robbery cases, and 17 fraud cases.

ALPR Camera Privacy Concerns

Unlike the live traffic cameras around Lynnwood, Flock ALPRs will log and retain time and GPS location of vehicles. Using this information, it is possible to for one to deduce a vehicle’s traffic pattern presenting a privacy “invasion” concern. The government is not allowed to put a GPS on a vehicle without a warrant; yet as this technology becomes more widely used throughout Snohomish County and its data shared among law enforcement agencies, holistically, ALPRs can network to locate almost any vehicle in real-time.

Councilman Josh Binda voiced his concerns to Lynnwood Police Chief Cole Langdon during Monday’s meeting on the possibility that the ALPR cameras will be used to as a predatory tool for law enforcement to profile “certain demographics.”

Chief Langdon assured that the cameras only capture images of license plates. He also clarified to Councilwoman Derica Escamilla that the information from the scan provided to the law enforcement does not include the registered vehicle owner’s driving history.

“We recognize it is a powerful technology; this isn’t our first time having access to powerful technology and using it responsibly,” Chief Langdon told council members. “We have systems in place, and we have a fair policy... This technology will enhance our investigative ability and keep us safe and make sure we are holding people accountable, and we can seek justice for those who are victims.”

Prior to the vote, Councilman Patrick Decker emphasized to council that the Flock cameras may pose as a crime deterrent and there may be latent benefits such as its assistance in solving other crimes as those of the Yakima Police mentioned earlier in this article.

Councilman George Hurst moved to approve the WATPA grant in the amount of \$132,700 for the ALPR cameras, which was seconded by Councilman Decker. The motion was approved unanimously 6-0. The motion, which was also unanimously approved by the council to enter into the agreement with Flock to lease the cameras for two years, was presented by Councilman Decker and seconded by Council President Nick Coelho.

WASHINGTON RANKS #3 NATIONALLY PER CAPITA FOR 2023

The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs released its an-

Law enforcement association awards Larsen 2024 Congressional Member of the Year Award

By MARIO LOTMORE

MARYSVILLE—The Washington State Narcotics Investigators Association (WSNIA) presented its 2024 Congressional Member of the Year Award on Friday, January 17, to Representative Rick Larsen (WA-02) for supporting the efforts of Washington’s 16 multi-jurisdictional drug task forces (MJTFs) in combating the opioid and fentanyl crisis. This marks the first time WSNIA has given an award to a federal legislator.

“We asked him for help, and he responded right away,” Lt. David Hayes of the Snohomish Regional Drug Task Force told the Lynnwood Times. “Two years ago, we asked Congressman Larsen for help because the state of Washington had redirected a federal source of funding for multi-jurisdictional task forces. Congressman Larsen was right there to support us by writing a letter to the Governor [Inslee] asking for a plan to restore funding to drug task forces across the state. He then followed up with a federal bill, expanding some spending at the federal level to affect local drug task forces nationwide, not just in the state of Washington.”

Larsen was able to secure \$2.7 million toward drug task force funding from the Washington State Legislature in 2024 in addition to his efforts on federal investment to combat the opioid and fentanyl crisis, including in Byrne JAG funding that supports Washington’s 16 active MJTFs. Last year, Larsen and Rep. Marie Gluesenkamp Perez (WA-03) introduced the End Fentanyl Trafficking with Local Task Forces Act to establish a dedicated federal funding stream to help MJTFs combat opioid trafficking in Washington state and across the country.

“When I found out the state planned to reduce Byrne JAG funding for MJTFs, I worked with members of Washington’s congressional delegation to urge Governor Inslee to ensure this funding would be replaced and that the state would have a long-term plan to fund MJTFs,” Rep. Larsen said accepting the 2024 Congressional Member of the Year Award by WSNIA. “Thankfully, the Governor included state general funding for MJTFs in the 2024 budget. I have already emphasized to Governor Ferguson the need to continue state funding for MJTFs.”

Larsen and his staff last January released an opioid report that analyzed the opioid epidemic in Northwest Washington while presenting several federal policy recommendations they believe could address the issues facing local communities—prevention, interdiction, treatment and recovery.

To support local efforts to combat the drug crisis plaguing families, Larsen introduced the bipartisan PROTECT Act to give Tribal courts and law enforcement more tools and resources to combat the opioid epidemic, the Clos-



Snohomish County Sheriff Susanna Johnson (right), and Lt. David Hayes (center) along with WSNIA members presenting its 2024 Congressional Member of the Year Award on Friday, January 17, to Representative Rick Larsen (third from the right). Lynnwood Times | Mario Lotmore.

ing the Substance Use Care Gap Act of 2024 to award grants to support community-based programs for harm reduction services, and the End Fentanyl Trafficking with Local Task Forces Act of 2024 establishing grants to combat opioid trafficking.

“I could not have introduced these bills without your personal stories, experiences and feedback, and I will need your help to gather more support for these bills and get them across the finish line this Congress. Thank you again for this award. It will serve as a reminder of the work we have done and will continue to do together to combat the crisis, protect our communities and save lives,” Larsen said.

Lt. Hayes shared with the Lynnwood Times that fentanyl and “its derivatives and analogs” are still a leading threat “by far” to Snohomish County residents. However, he added that methamphetamine is making a comeback.

“That stuff will literally drive you crazy before it kills you,” Hayes said referring to the new synthetic makeup of methamphetamine. “P2P meth has been around for a long time. It’s the same kind of meth that the motorcycle clubs used to make. But the base ingredient exchange is completely synthetic and chemical based now....it literally causes meth-induced psychosis.”

Most of the fentanyl sold “on the street” in Snohomish County are now in powder form; not pill anymore, which law enforcement is seeing an increase of what they call additives such as nitazene (linked to overdoses) and xylazine (a powerful sedative).

According to Hayes, fentanyl and meth make their way to Snohomish County mainly through the United States southern border “via transport in a vehicle, car, commercial trucking, and FedEx. Even the U.S. Postal Service is utilized to mail drugs.”

“There’s some fentanyl coming from Canada. They are making fentanyl in Canada, but it’s mostly by and large-

ly coming from the south[ern border],” said Hayes.

“So, we really need to focus on the dealers. We don’t focus on the street-level users very much. We assist some of our local agencies to a lesser degree. But we focus on the drug traffickers that bring all these poisons into the communities,” Hayes told the Lynnwood Times.

This year the drug task force is allocated \$2.7 million in the 2025 budget proposed by outgoing Governor Jay Inslee, which is far from the \$7 million needed for a fully funded program.

“We would like at least \$7 million; that’s what it would take,” Anne Anderson, a lobbyist for the Washington State Narcotics Investigators Association, told the Lynnwood Times.

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Marysville School District takes action on school closures

By **MARYSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

MARYSVILLE—Beginning in May 2024, the Marysville School District has reviewed and studied options for closing two or more schools to begin adjusting the size and number of schools in the district and to address the financial impacts of operating schools that are not at capacity due to declining enrollment over the past 15 years.

This review and study included a deeper look at each school's age and condition, capacity, location, and demographics. In addition, eight community meetings were held to gather feedback on the review results and study that helped create options for school closures. Following this, a committee comprised of community members and school and district employees was formed to finalize the options for submission to the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors participated in

multiple work study sessions to discuss the options and get their questions answered before taking action on the proposed options.

At the regular session meeting of the board of directors last night, January 22, 2025, the board took action on the school closure options. It directed the interim superintendent, Dr. Dave Burgess, to take the following steps for the closure and reconfiguration of schools. This proposed action will adjust school size and configuration to address declining enrollment over the past fifteen years and meet the district's targeted savings of \$2M for the 2025 – 2026 school year and beyond:

- Reconfigure elementary schools to a K – 6 grade structure.
- Close the Liberty Elementary School building.
- Close the Marysville Middle School entity and repurpose the building for Liberty Elementary

School students, staff, and programs. Disperse students to other middle schools.

- Reconfigure Cedarcrest Middle School and Totem Middle School to a 7/8 grade structure.
- Maintain 10th Street Middle Schools as a grade 6 – 8 campus.
- Relocate Legacy High School to a different campus, maintaining its program and status as a school within a school.

In addition, Dr. Burgess was directed to provide bi-weekly updates on the status of the school closure and reconfiguration process and progress and their financial and other impacts on students, families, staff, and the district overall.

“Now that a decision has been made, much more work begins,” said Dr. Burgess. “We can now begin to look at the many details associated with these significant changes in the district. I am confident that we will meet our

guiding principles in this work to minimize disruption to students' education, know the short and long-term impacts, and support our Marysville and Tulalip families during the transition,” he added.

The Board of Directors collectively shared the difficulty of this decision, strives for the least harm to students, and looks to the future to provide additional opportunities to improve academic outcomes and support for students. They recognize that creating a K—6 grade structure is a significant shift, but they also recognize the need to improve opportunities and academic outcomes for not only 6th-grade students but all students while being fiscally responsible.

The district plans to begin the next phase of the school closure work immediately. Between now and March, the board of directors will schedule a community hearing to collect public comment on the closure.

OSPI Superintendent steadfast in commitment to protecting undocumented students from ICE

By **MARIO LOTMORE**

OLYMPIA—Washington State education Superintendent Chris Reykdal releases guidance for school districts on protections for undocumented students. He asks that school districts develop policies for responding to immigration enforcement actions.

According to the press release, Reykdal states that school districts have a “constitutional and moral obligation to provide a free, high-quality public education to all students” and that “state and federal law prohibit public school districts from discriminating on the basis of race, color, or national origin; and state law further prohibits discrimination on the basis of citizenship or immigration status.”

Washington state's sanctuary state law, called the Keep Washington Working Act, largely prevents local police and

school resource officers from assisting federal authorities with civil immigration enforcement.

The guidance to school districts on state and federal protections for immigrant students in Washington's K–12 public schools released by OSPI is as follows:

- **Enrollment:** Do not deny admission or continuing enrollment to a student on the basis of immigration or citizenship status nor treat a student differently to determine their immigration status. Enroll all students, regardless of immigration or citizenship status, in a timely manner.
- **Data & Record Collection:** Do not require or create an impression that birth certificates or social security numbers are required for enrollment or continuing enrollment.

Provide alternative ways for families to verify that a student meets age requirements.

- **Services:** Do not engage in any practices that “chill” or inadvertently “chill” a student's right of access to school and educational services. Provide services to all enrolled students, regardless of citizenship or immigration status. Adopt policies and practices to ensure that undocumented students have access to all aspects of the regular school program.
- **Student Privacy:** Do not require students or parent(s)/guardian(s) to answer questions or provide documentation which discloses their citizenship status. Be aware that schools have no legal authority to enforce U.S. immigration laws. Have a policy in place for responding to immigration enforcement actions impacting your school

campus(es).

“As we monitor the actions of the new federal administration, I want to be clear: Washington state is and will remain a state that is unequivocally committed to supporting all of our students and their families,” wrote State Superintendent Reykdal.

According to <http://migrationpolicy.org>, there are approximately 15,000 undocumented students enrolled in Washington state schools between the ages of 3 and 17. This data was based on 2019 Census estimates. For the 2022-23 school year, the average expenditure per pupil in Washington's public schools is \$18,287 according to OSPI. If the 2019 estimate of undocumented students in the public school system holds for the 2022-23 school year, this would equate to an estimated cost to taxpayers within the state of Washington of \$274 million.

from page 4 **CAMERAS**

nual crime report on Tuesday, July 9, which found that, overall, crime rate across the state is down yet vehicle thefts increased 5.4% compared to the previous year.

Washington State has seen a 112% increase of vehicle thefts since 2019, the WASPC said. The report also shows more juveniles were involved in crimes. More than 20% of those arrested for vehicle theft were juveniles – an increase of 24% since 2022.

In reviewing the data for Lynnwood, since 2019 (pre-pandemic level) motor vehicle thefts have increased 68.5%—from 216 reported incidents (5.4 incidents per 1,000 residents) to 364 reported incidents (8.2 incidents per 1,000 residents) in 2024.

Police Chief Cole Langdon, during Monday's meeting shared the impact to him when his vehicle was stolen. In November of 2023, Mukilteo Council-

man Mike Dixon had his son's car stolen right in front of their home. Both vehicles were eventually recovered but it presented a financial burden.

Fortunately, both Chief Langdon and Councilman Dixon could absorb the financial hit to their pocketbooks but a lot of the victims of car thefts are middle-to-low-income persons. These victims usually live paycheck-to-paycheck where a vehicle theft impacts their ability to travel to-and-from work risking their livelihood.

During the Hyundai and Kia TikTok challenge in 2022 and 2023, thousands of vehicles across the country were stolen for joyrides, usually dangerously, with the perpetrators filming themselves committing various crimes.

Vehicle thefts in Washington has contributed to dramatic increases in insurance premiums of certain vehicles and some car owners have been denied coverage by their insurance carrier.

Since auto thefts often result in a multi-agency response—a car stolen in Lynnwood could be later found in Everett for example—and the vehicle is often found abandoned, it's difficult for police agencies to track suspects to make arrests. However, with the use of Flock ALPR cameras becoming regional, motor vehicle theft arrests should rise then eventually decline as the technology becomes more effective as a preventative than responsive tool.

According to the Puget Sound Auto Theft Task Force (PSATTF), as of the end of November 2024, there have been 26,351 vehicles reported stolen statewide for last year—down 30% from 2023.

HOW TO REDUCE YOUR CHANCES OF BEING AN AUTO THEFT VICTIM

Below are suggestions by PSATTF to lessen your risk of becoming a victim:

- Remove or hide all valuables

- Lock your car
- Don't leave keys or fobs inside
- Don't leave your vehicle running unattended (exhaust in cold months makes these vehicles easy to spot)
- Use anti-theft devices (alarm, kill switch, steering wheel lock)
- Park in well-lit areas

It is encouraged that residents who live in apartment complexes to make it priority to invest in an anti-theft device. Steering wheel locks are strongly recommended for owners of Hyundai and Kia models that are vulnerable to theft as these are a visual deterrent to auto thieves.

PSATTF also suggests placing a GPS tracker, such as an Air Tag or Tile, in the vehicle so that it can be tracked if it is stolen.

Lastly, as the cold weather sets in, drivers should not leave their vehicles running unattended—it only takes seconds for a car thief to steal a running vehicle.

Paine Field Airport awarded \$8.5 million Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grant

By MARIO LOTMORE

EVERETT—The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced on Friday an \$8.5 million Airport Infrastructure Grant to reconstruct 1,600 feet of the existing Taxilane E at Seattle Paine Field International Airport that has reached the end of its useful life.

“Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Paine Field has the funding it needs to invest in a better taxiway, improve safety and create more jobs,” said Rep Larsen, the lead Democrat on the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee. “You cannot have a big-league economy with little league infrastructure, and this critical investment ensures Snohomish County can

keep the momentum going to drive the regional economy and support local jobs.”

Joshua Marcy, Director for Seattle Paine Field Airport, in a statement to the Lynnwood Times, thanked Representative Larsen for securing the much-needed funding.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Federal Aviation Administration for the \$8.5 million Airport Infrastructure Grant and the tireless efforts of Rep. Larsen to support Paine Field and all airports across the country,” said Marcy. “This funding will allow us to reconstruct the remaining 1,600 feet of Taxilane E, which is vital for our key business tenants. By ensuring that our infrastructure meets the highest safety

and operational standards, we are reinforcing our commitment to supporting both our local economy and airport users.”

A total of \$163 million comprising some 64 AIGs were awarded across the country in this round of funding. Other Washington state recipients announced by the FAA on Friday were:

- \$64,600 – Bowerman Field / HQM to conduct a new site selection study for a new fuel farm
- \$544,756 – Bremerton Ntl / PWT for updates to its existing airport master plan study
- \$247,532 – Chehalis-Centralia / CLS to construct a new 235,632 square yard northeast development including Apron, taxiway, terminal, auto parking and north access

- \$1,063,312 – Pangborn Memorial / EAT to acquire one multi-tasking plow and broom snow removal equipment to enhance the airport’s ability to clear the priority areas of the airfield during adverse weather conditions

The grant comes from FAA’s Airport Infrastructure Grant program (AIG), which was established under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to invest in airport runways, terminals, safety and sustainability projects, as well as airport-transit connections and roadway projects. The BIL invests \$15 billion over five years in the AIG program.

from page 3 COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

lation of oath of office.

The court accepted four of five charges brought forth by the Recall Binda Committee.

The charges accepted by the judge include violating Lynnwood Municipal Code (2.94.030.B) by using the city’s email system to send and receive “numerous” emails on behalf of his private business, arranging speaking engagements with school districts, and entering City Council Chambers after hours to film a promotional video promoting these engagements for which he earned at least \$14,000.

The second charge accepted by the judge was Binda failing to file a required Personal Financial Affairs statement with the Public Disclosure Committee (PDC), within a timely manner, violating state law RCW 42.17A.700, in 2021 and in 2022.

The third charge accepted by the judge was Binda violating state laws RCW 42.17A.235 and RCW 42.17A.240

by failing to timely file a Post-General Election Summary Full Campaign Contribution and Expenditure report disclosing contributions and expenditure activities undertaken during his 2021 campaign. Between November 2021 and April 2023 Binda improperly used \$2,742.49 in campaign funds for non-campaign related expenditures in violation of RCW 42.17A.445.

Back in November 2021 the Lynnwood Times obtained PDC files exhibiting Binda recorded almost \$4,848.19 in expenditures towards rent, towing fees, concert tickets, jewelry, laptops, airfare, groceries, dental work, haircuts, and office furniture. Another expense, totaling \$1,563.58 was paid to Versace (an Italian luxury fashion company).

The fourth and final charge accepted by the judge was that Binda knowingly lied to the Lynnwood City Council and the public by stating his private business contracts for speaking tours and appearances had been signed prior to December 2022.

Continued PAGE 8

Op-Ed from the Publisher



Can California’s fire crisis resolve Washington state’s budget crisis?

With Washington state facing a projected budget shortfall of up to \$16 billion over the next four years, would it behoove Olympia to pause the capital gains tax and nix its proposed wealth tax to woo wealthy Californians hit by the fires to relocate to Washington state?

In his final budget address on December 17, 2024, Governor Jay Inslee (D) for his proposed \$70 billion 2025-2027 biennium state budget, presented a \$13.7 billion 1% wealth tax and a \$2.6 billion B&O Tax increase to address the looming state budget shortfall. This no doubt presents a high risk, if passed by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Bob Ferguson (D), of monies and industry leaving Washington to more business-friendly states such as Texas and Florida.

With the fires in California wiping off the map whole cities in some of the wealthiest neighborhoods in the United States, tens of thousands of people are now homeless, and it will take up to a decade to rebuild. Many of these fire victims are uninsured and are now going to be unemployed.

With more than 12,000 structures destroyed and an economic loss between \$60-\$135 billion, many homeowners and landowners will simply walk away. In the coming months the scale of the fires, 58 square miles, will pose mud slides and dust storms, not to mention the impact of millions of metric tons of carbon dioxide and hazardous material released in the air.

California has some of the highest taxes in the United States—a personal income tax up to 12.3%; a higher gas tax of 80-cents per gallon vs 50-cents in Washington; and higher average home prices—\$3.5 million in Palisades, \$3.2 million in Malibu, \$790,742 in Eaton—compared to Clark, King, Pierce, Spokane, Snohomish, and Thurston counties (\$450,000 to \$860,000).

These California Fire Refugees would bring with them special skills, industry, and a lot of money to the Evergreen State. Washington would see a construction and infrastructure boom that would create thousands of jobs and bring in billions in capital to the state.

With California’s leaders failing hundreds of thousands of their residents, leaving tens of thousands displaced, perhaps the Evergreen state can be their new home.

Mario Lotmore, Lynnwood Times Publisher

Lynnwood City Council Vacancy

Lynnwood City Council Position 5, formerly held by Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, is currently vacant, and the City Council is accepting applications from interested community members to fill this vacancy until the certification of the November 2025 election.

To be eligible to be appointed to the Lynnwood City Council from March 2025 until the November 2025 election is certified, candidates:

- Must have continuously resided within the Lynnwood City limits for a minimum of one year prior to your appointment to the council (Use our Do I Live in Lynnwood map to see if you live within Lynnwood City Limits), and
- Must be a registered voter in the city, 18 years of age or over. These are the same minimum state law requirements that apply to all elected Council members

To be considered, your application must be completed, signed, and received electronically or at Lynnwood City Hall, 19100 44th Avenue W., no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 31, 2025. Mailing postmark is NOT acceptable. Additional written information after this date will not be accepted, unless requested by the City Council.

If you require assistance or accommodation regarding the application process or for further information, please contact the City Clerk at 425-478-9243 or by email at cityclerk@lynnwoodwa.gov.

SCAN TO APPLY



Public Transit Made Easy: Zip Shuttle Connects People to Buses, Light Rail, and Beyond

SPONSORED BY COMMUNITY TRANSIT

“When people think about public transit, they often picture buses and light rail,” says Kevin Futhey, a project manager on Community Transit’s Innovative Services team. “But what about those who can’t walk to a stop or access transit easily? That’s where Zip Shuttle comes in.”

SCAN TO APPLY



Community Transit’s Zip Shuttle Service. Source: Community Transit.

Community Transit’s Zip Shuttle Alderwood is an on-demand, shared-ride service that connects people to popular neighborhood destinations and local transit hubs. For people who don’t live near a bus stop, getting to transit can be a hurdle. Zip Shuttle bridges that gap with an affordable service for just \$2.50 or less. Youth 18 and under ride free and wheelchair accessible vehicles are available upon request.

The blue-and-white Zip Shuttle minivans are similar to popular rideshare services like Uber or Lyft, but without the high price tag. Riders can book trips via phone or the app, providing their pick-up and drop-off locations. When the vehicle is nearby, they’ll get a notification to be ready at the pick-up point.

“Our goal is to meet people where they are,” says Futhey. “Along with our Alderwood service, we’ve expanded Zip Shuttle service to Arlington, Lake Stevens, and Darrington because we know that transit access isn’t a one-size-fits-all solution. Each community has unique needs, and Zip helps fill those gaps. These new locations are pilots. We are testing to see how this service works in these communities.”

Community Transit’s board of directors recently voted to lower reduced fares. Starting March 1, Community Transit will lower its reduced fares for eligible riders — including those with an ORCA LIFT pass, Medicare, or disabilities — to just \$1 per ride for both Zip and bus services. A monthly pass will cost \$36.

“Lowering reduced fares is a big step in making transit more accessible,” says Futhey. “For just \$1, seniors and ORCA LIFT cardholders can use Zip or any of our bus services, making it more affordable than ever to leave the car at home.”

Zip Shuttle drivers don’t accept tips, and there’s no surge pricing. When using an ORCA card, riders can seamlessly transfer from Zip Shuttle to other transit connections and their Zip fare will be credited toward their next ride if the transfer is made within two hours.

“Imagine you’re a senior living in Lynnwood, planning a trip to SEA-TAC

airport to visit your grandkids,” says Futhey. “Driving all that way makes you nervous, airport traffic adds stress, and paying for parking isn’t realistic on a fixed income. These aren’t unusual challenges. Starting in March, your roundtrip fare taking Zip and light rail would only be \$2.”

In a recent survey from Community Transit, 42% of Zip riders said they used Zip to connect to other transit options. The survey also showed that a quarter of Zip riders use the service to get to work or school, and two-thirds of riders have used it to run errands.

“So many people have told me how Zip has helped them,” says Lucia Smith, who works in customer care at the Ride Store. “Many of these customers have shared how they appreciate the flexibility of Zip and said that it’s an accessible alternative to our paratransit service. It’s also a great way to get connected with their community.”

Community Transit is also enhancing the Zip Shuttle customer experience. Starting February 1, Alderwood-area riders will be able to book trips through a new app with more user-friendly features.

“The new app will improve the booking process,” says Futhey. “We expect smarter trip pairing, which means we’ll serve more customers, faster. From fare reductions to the new app, we’re listening to what our riders need and making it easier to choose transit.”

Want to learn more? Visit ctzip.org to see where Zip Shuttle can take you or call 1-833-DIAL-ZIP to get started.

from page 3 COUNCIL LEADERSHIP

Many Lynnwood City Council members expressed that they have attempted to mentor Binda including Dr. Julieta Altamirano-Crosby, Shannon Sessions, and George Hurst. State Senator John Lovick (D-Mill Creek), who endorsed Binda’s campaign, also shared that he attempted to mentor Binda several times but “it became increasingly clear that he [Binda] wasn’t going to listen,” he said. Lovick called for Binda’s resignation.

From professing under oath to not knowing how to write a check as an excuse as to why he couldn’t pay his PDC fines in 2023 to now Lynnwood City Council Vice President two years later, Binda may be mastering the art of the political Game of Thrones: stabbing a political dagger against his ally Hurst to clinch the Vice President slot by gaining a new political ally, Escamilla.

from page 1 PERSON OF THE YEAR

on its pupils exceeding standardized tests by its accelerated learning methods.

Over the last 25 years, Rise Up Academy has developed into a highly respected Early Childhood Education center recognized by the Bezos family, Bill Gates Sr., former CEO of Alaska Airlines Brad Tilden, and NBA Hall-of-Famer Lenny Wilkens who was a member of the 1992 U.S. Olympic Dream Team and carried the Seattle Supersonics to a championship victory in 1978 as head coach, to name a few.

Washington Governor Jay Inslee paid a visit to Rise Up Academy in January 2024 seeing firsthand an education curriculum that refuses to let any child “fall through the cracks.”

“Trudi and I have been trying to help for the last four years on this by creating resources for early childhood education,” Governor Inslee said.

And speaking of local professional athletes, Seattle-born NFL running back Terry Metcalf, who played for the Washington Redskins in the 1980’s, helped Dr. Stoot Sr design the curriculum taught at Rise Up Academy.

“If they can pick up a phone and figure it out before I can, then there is a lot they can do,” Dr. Terry Metcalf, said of his curriculum. “We take young children who are underage, based on pub-

lic school criteria, and teach them first and second grade information and they exceed, they excel,”

A former Rise Up student Mariame Toure, whose parents immigrated to South Everett from West Africa when she was younger, struggled in school from an early age. Being a native French speaker and having to learn English alongside her parents, the curriculum taught in public school was difficult for her to understand. She enrolled at Rise Up Academy and, through its program, ended up graduating high school by the age of 16.

“Growing up I’ve always known Dr. Stoot Sr to be someone I can count on and someone who’s really loving, and in particular really there for me and my family,” said Mariame Toure, a former student of Dr. Stoot Sr’s and later a teacher at Rise Up Academy. “Working with him made it even better because I was able to gain a closer relationship [and] got to know his funny side and his personality. He’s really just a great person and someone I can always count on.”

Rise Up Academy, under Dr. Stoot Sr’s leadership, made such an impression on Toure that she ended up returning years later to become a teacher there. Now she’s studying to be a nurse at a University in Spokane.

Another Rise Up student, Dominique Gibson, who is now a volunteer at the learning center, shared with the Lyn-

wood Times her reading level was below average when she began attending Rise Up as a child. The Academy raised her reading level above standard and is now an avid reader. Dominique now gives one-on-one instruction to children for reading at Rise Up.

“It feels like a loving family to give back to an environment where so many people are so caring,” said Gibson about returning to volunteer at an institution which gave her so much. “My favorite part about coming here is the children. They’re nice, they’re lovely, and they’re almost like your younger sibling in a way.”

In July of 2023 Snohomish County approved allocating \$2 million of its American Rescue Plan Act funds to Rise Up Academy to expand its services and serve a larger number of children with high-quality education.

Rise Up also hopes to secure additional federal funding for an expansion that will add two stories to its learning center. The result will be nearly 65,000 square feet making room for affordable housing, early child care, and expanding services from 75 to 165 children.

With a total project cost of the expansion at \$12.5 million and including a \$1 million grant provided by the Washington State Department of Commerce in 2022 and some additional donations, the Board of Directors for Rise Up Academy is about to launch an aggressive capital funding campaign

this quarter to raise the \$9 million still needed. The goal is to break ground when the project is 50-75% funded.

The proposed new Early Learning Facility will be built on the grounds of the existing South Everett campus and include six classrooms from three, a multi-purpose performing arts space to accommodate STEAM learning, an expanded library and technology space, and a new cafeteria.

Currently, 15% of its students are in foster care and 20% have an incarcerated family member. At a cost per pupil of \$1050 per month, approximately 94% of students receive some form of financial assistance.

Rise Up Academy is located in what the county calls extreme “child care deserts” which is a census term to indicate an area has at least 50 children under the age of five that contains either no child care providers, or so few options that there are more than three times as many children as licensed child care slots. Additionally, these areas largely serve families that are at, or below, 65% of the area median income.

Dr. Paul A Stoot Sr, now joins Dr. Steve Woodard (2023), Karina Gasperin, Olympia Edwards, Jesse Hayes (2022), Van Dinh Kuno (2021), and Dr. Chris Spitters (2021) as a Lynnwood Times’ Person of the Year.