



Greetings and welcome:

Over the last several weeks, my office has made great strides on several initiatives to strengthen the voting process, to protect our generous citizens from charities scams, and to preserve Washington's proud history and heritage through a timeless landmark.

The 2005 Vote: Most Washingtonians will cast ballots from home

Election administrators and voters across Washington are preparing for the State's General Election November 8 and in many cases new rules and voting equipment. Several, consequential measures will appear on the ballot ranging from the gas tax to smoking to medical malpractice.

As you prepare to cast your ballot, I remind you to be keenly aware of the series of election reforms now in place. Find out if your county is one of 28 in the State now voting entirely by mail. The dramatic shift follows my executive-request legislation that allows counties of any size to conduct all-mail elections.

Remember to sign your name on your ballot return envelope carefully and clearly. Your county may have new voting equipment. And, if you vote at the polls, remember to bring your valid identification such as a driver's license or state ID card.

85th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage

Next Tuesday marks a pivotal milestone that led to one of the world's most inclusive democracies. On November 2, 1920, American women voted for the first time. The victory followed a 70-year battle for equal rights during which women were taunted, arrested and jailed.

While the number of women who vote has climbed since, women and Americans overall are participating at all-time lows. In 2004, the United Census Bureau reports that only 64 percent of Americans (of voting age) voted. In Washington State, 68 percent participated.

Washington's democracy has such a proud history. I hope this milestone motivates us to get involved in the elections process and encourage our friends and neighbors to do the same.

Exercising your right to vote honors those who turned over their lives to this important privilege.

Securing Washington's Heritage

My office is hard at work on a remarkable opportunity to better protect our State's legacy for future generations.

I've proposed moving the State Library and the State Archives into a new home on the Capitol Campus we're calling the Heritage Building. This important landmark will be specifically designed to meet the needs of these two vital services of state government. It will connect our citizens to Washington's rich history of government, science, education, literature and cultural diversity under one roof. The Heritage Building will invite visitors to relive history through colorful displays and interactive exhibits from the millions of pages and images in our collections.

Today our library and archives are full, with collections spread between four separate locations. Offsite storage facilities are currently used for overflow. These facilities do not meet security or environmental requirements for housing or preserving our history, and make public access difficult.

I welcome your support and assistance toward celebrating and safeguarding Washington's heritage.

Promoting childhood critical thinking

The Washington State Library and Paul G. Allen Family Foundation have combined resources to heighten childhood critical thinking.

The Allen Foundation has donated a quarter of a million dollars to the State Library. The money will pay for Washington's active involvement in the national program, "Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library".

Through the program, trained library staff members will directly instruct and model pre-reading skills that children must learn to develop. The project provides parent brochures, early learning library collections and training kits.

The State Library strives to meet the information needs of all citizens of the state of Washington through developing, supporting, and promoting libraries of all kinds.

Learn more at www.secstate.wa.gov/library and www.pgafoundations.com

Give, but Give wisely

Protect your charitable donations over the holidays by staying informed. Watch for our annual financial report on commercial fundraisers. The information provided will be useful when you make the personal and emotional decision to give to back to your community.

The Commercial Fundraiser Activity Report reveals how much of the total revenue raised by these solicitors is actually returned to or retained by the charity. Commercial fundraisers soliciting in Washington are legally required to register with the Secretary of State and disclose certain financial information. The information is provided to the public each year in the Commercial Fundraiser Activity Report.

Look for the report online at www.secstate.wa.gov/charities November 29th.

Web Award

For the second straight year, Family Tree Magazine selected the Office of Secretary of State's Historical Records web site as one of the top 95 Best Sites for researching ancestors.

Washington History: Historical Records Search secstate.wa.gov/history/search.aspx has been chosen by the magazine which surveyed sites of state archives, libraries, genealogical, historical societies and researchers.

Letters about Literature

Invitations that could land some Washington children at the nation's Capitol have arrived in 3,000 schools across the state.

State Librarian Jan Walsh and I personally invite all young readers to compete and possibly win an all-expense paid trip to Washington D.C.

The trip to Washington D.C. will be awarded to the national winner of Letters About Literature, a writing contest for readers in grades four through twelve.

To enter, school-age readers write a personal letter to an author, explaining how his or her work shaped their perspective on the world or themselves. Young readers may select authors from any genre-fiction or nonfiction.

Washington State judges will select the top essayists in the state. State winners are invited to a celebration ceremony at the State Capitol in Olympia and receive a \$50 Target gift card. Six national winners will each receive an expenses-paid trip to the nation's capitol to read their letters during the National Book Festival in the fall of 2006. In addition, they'll receive a \$500 Target gift card redeemable at any Target Store or online at target.com. Target is the presenting sponsor of Letters About Literature.

Learn more at www.secstate.wa.gov/library/ .

With the 2005 General Election just days away, I urge you to vote and to encourage your family and friends to participate. Watch for our special financial report on commercial fundraisers November 29th.

Thank you for your ongoing support and feedback.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sam Reed". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sam Reed
Secretary of State