

Good morning.

I've come here today to say that I'd like the residents of Washington state to know that my focus in the next 31 days is to work with the Legislature to get the people's business done.

Lawmakers have fundamental tasks they need to complete, including passing a framework for financing the education of our children, passing the state budget, adding money to our mental health services account and doing some more to address the homelessness problem that we are experiencing.

We know, and ought to have confidence that we can accomplish those things for the people of the state. Because we know that even under tougher circumstances, we've been able to do that. Because we've done that during the last three years with significant bipartisan accomplishment.

But even though I remain confident in our ability to deliver for the people of the State of Washington, I do want to make it clear that I am deeply disturbed by the actions of the Senate Republican Caucus.

Senate Republicans are conducting a dishonest, partisan and frankly, scurrilous, political campaign.

Senate Republicans should be ashamed of what they did last Friday.

Senator Hill said that running Secretary Peterson out of her job was the only blunt instrument that they had; the only tool they had. That's nonsense. How about having a little discussion so that our state can move forward? How about a bit of open communication and collegiality?

Senator Hill, when I talk to my grandchildren, I say, "use your words."

We didn't have that cooperation from the Republicans. We just had a scurrilous, underhanded, dishonest campaign last Friday.

Senator Hill or any other senators could have talked to Secretary Peterson about any concerns that they had.

They did not. They chose to sandbag her on the Senate floor, in a Friday-afternoon political ambush.

Same with Senator Schoesler. We had breakfast with leadership last Wednesday. He told me that some members had concerns about some of WSDOT's data, and I pressed him on that. I asked him to provide us any information that he had that he was concerned about. He just shrugged it off. He didn't say anything about running Secretary Peterson away from her duties. He said nothing about that. In a total surprise move, they sprung this on the people of the State of Washington, and significantly damaged our ability to get the job done, in transportation, for the people of this state.

And I guess we know why, now; because of their underhanded strategy.

Was this about 405 tolling? Look, there are improvements in this corridor that need to be made. There is frustration about this tolling effort. That's why last week, WSDOT's leadership, including Secretary Peterson, said that we were going to make changes.

In fact, it's funny -- Thursday's banner headline in the Seattle Times was: "State may lift some 405 tolls." The story said that the Transportation Department, and that Secretary Peterson, supported that move. And this morning, they codified that in a letter that changes are being made in that corridor.

So what was the response of the Republicans, after Thursday, working together, to try to solve these problems? What was their response? To go out the next day and fire the Secretary of Transportation.

We need solutions, not scapegoats. Leadership involves working together to fashion solutions so that our state can move forward rather than just to take cheap shots in an election year.

This morning I heard a new excuse. I heard on the radio that Senator Schoesler said it was because the engineers of the Department of Transportation had to temporarily suspend the operations of the contractor of the Seattle tunnel project, for safety reasons.

So Lynn Peterson is out of a job because she took the obvious, rational, common-sense approach to protect the safety of the people of Seattle from drilling under a fragile viaduct in the biggest city in the state? To make sure there was safety? That's the reason they kick her out of a job?

You bet. Secretary Peterson, until Friday, was turning up the heat on this contractor that has not performed. And it is the right thing to do.

I want a secretary of transportation standing up for the safety of the people of the state. And I think that safety is a window into how dishonest their actions were last Friday.

Does Senator Schoesler think Lynn Peterson dug the 35-foot sinkhole into which we had to put 25 truckloads of concrete to fill, next to a fragile viaduct? That can't be the real rationale.

Now, as disturbing as it was to hear these various half-truths and distortions, it is also disturbing to have seen the Republican senators who know better, have seen this woman's work, sit quietly and passively while watching this decapitation take place, in an unprecedented manner.

Senators like Joe Fain, Steve Litzow and Linda Parlette, just sat on their hands. Senator King, Chair of the Committee for Transportation, in the Republican Caucus, was, and is, in a unique position to have headed this off. It was his committee that reviewed her qualifications last June. And what did they do? They unanimously approved her confirmation. The experts on transportation in the Republican Caucus unanimously approved her confirmation. Not a word of concern about her performance. And now they say that suddenly she's incompetent. Poppycock. Bull feathers. This is an election-year stunt.

It wasn't just last June. You know what the Republican Transportation Chair said about Lynn Peterson just a few days ago, January 13<sup>th</sup>? This person that necessitated taking her out of action last Friday? Let's look at what Senator King had to say about her – a person who had a close-up and personal view of her work during the last three years. What did he say about her on January 13<sup>th</sup>? Here's what he said, and I'm going to quote. This is speaking to Lynn Peterson at the State of Transportation meeting. The person charged with the responsibility for transportation policies in the State of Washington on behalf of the Senate Republican Caucus. This is not a back-bencher. This is the man in charge of their transportation operations of the Senate Republican Caucus. Here's what he said, this January 13<sup>th</sup>, quote:

"I want to thank you and your staff [addressing Lynn Peterson], and all of the people that work in our transportation system. I agree with you whole-heartedly: They do an outstanding job. ... We talk about these things and we get all worked up about some of the problems we have, and some of the challenges

we have. ... And the complexity with which we present the challenges to you, and the way that you respond, I just want to say thank you for that.”

Close quote. Some kind of thank-you from Senator King, who sat there silently and watched his colleagues remove an effective transportation secretary, that he knew was effective three weeks ago.

You know why Senator King said that on January 13<sup>th</sup>? Because it’s the truth. It was the truth on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and it was the truth last Friday.

He didn’t say this cavalierly or off the cuff. This was the state of transportation meeting with the Senate Republican committee.

Here’s why he knew it was the truth. Senator King was in a position to know, and he paid close attention when Lynn led WSDOT to get the Skagit Bridge back up sooner than anyone thought possible. And I was there. People that think there was a chance in heavens to get that done in 27 days. And he saw what this woman did. She marshalled the creativity of the engineers of WSDOT and she got that bridge built in 27 days, a remarkable achievement that people talk about across the United States. And he saw that. And he recognized her talent. He recognized a person who understood how to run a construction process. How to go to your engineers and bring a creative solution to an emergent tragedy that stopped the arterial I-5 economy in the state of Washington. And he saw that and he recognized it. He knew what she did in Oso when a mudslide took so many lives. And she had to rush into this, and mobilize the resources of this department, to get the road open so that community could begin to heal. And for that, those communities are eternally grateful to her.

And I heard great praise for her from Republican Senator Pearson, who thanked her anyway he could imagine, and told me on multiple occasions how much he was appreciative of her leadership. Senator Pearson, who sat there and voted to remove her from office last Friday. Not a really good way to say “thank you”, Senator Pearson.

Curtis King knew that Lynn’s focus on practical design had already saved tens of millions of dollars on transportation projects. And he knew that without Lynn’s work we never would have secured \$15 billion for Connecting Washington to improve people’s lives throughout this state. He recognized a leader. He

recognized a person who could work with both parties. He recognized a person that has perseverance, and even though the Republicans said “no” to a project for two years, she finally helped get people together, and that’s why, on January 13<sup>th</sup>, he said she was doing an outstanding job.

What happened, Senator King? Why couldn’t you address your new-found concerns that sprung up whole-cloth, directly to the secretary? One would think that someone who voted to fire somebody on a Friday afternoon might talk to them on Thursday about their concerns. When asked directly by a reporter the other day on Friday afternoon, “Sentaor King, did you ever express this to the Secretary of Transportation?” You know what his answer was? (And I find it incredible.) He said no. He never raised these issues with her. He went out there and watched his colleagues take her head off in a Friday massacre.

This was obviously a gross abuse of the confirmation process and it was built on a totally false narrative.

Unfortunately it’s not unique. This is what they’ve done in our efforts to get to the bottom of the Department of Corrections situation as well. Rather than ask us directly for information they had to run out and hold a press conference that they said they needed for subpoenas for things we told them we were going to give them and would be happy to do so. We told them we were cooperating and they went and out said “Gee, we have all these mysterious questions we want answered” and they never asked them.

There’s a pattern here. They have other tools to use but they continually rely on the most radical approach, designed to demonize and make headlines and scapegoats rather than helping us find solutions.

What happened after Friday’s vote was disturbing as well. You’ve heard about Senator Schoesler spew that Secretary Peterson was a racist. A man who is now blocking passage of the Voting Rights Act, that will give minority people in the state of Washington the ability to get elected, and the ability of people to actually have a rational vote. The man who’s standing in the doorway of civil rights in this state, calls Lynn Peterson a racist on the floor of the Senate.

Now he says now he regretted it, but I sure haven't heard him apologize yet to someone who worked so hard for this state for three years while the Senate sat on its fingers and did nothing. For three years.

Senator Baumgartner crowed that more heads would roll and Senator O'Ban waxed poetically about a new wind blowing. I will say this, though. There is one Republican senator who acquitted herself with honor, in this effort. And I want to call her out for special commendation. And that Senator is Judy Warnick, who is the only member of the Republican Caucus who told the truth.

You know what she said this was? A poke in the governor's eye. That's what she said this was. And that was the motivation.

Folks, Senate Republicans are out of control at this moment, and they need to pull out of this dive and help us find solutions.

It is my job to work around that and get the people's business done, and I believe we can do this. This is hard, but I know we can do hard things. I'm not saying that it will be easy because good people are getting dragged through the mud for political purposes. It's disturbing to watch.

I have never seen legislators so angry. And it's in part because I've never seen something so low in a quarter-century of public life. So, there's a lot of anger out there right now among senators.

But we need to look to the better angels of our nature. We need to continue to work together. We need to move forward so that we can get this job done at hand. We are going to deliver for the people of the state of Washington. We have a million kids who depend on the House and Senate to produce a framework that can get this financed in the year 2017. We have thousands of families who need help with mental illness affecting their loved ones. And we have a growing number of homeless people who we need to address.

As long as I am governor we will keep our eye on the ball to get these jobs done. We are not going to be dissuaded from believing that if we work together, if we do have motivations based on the good of the people, we can get these things done.

I talked about this in my state of the state address.

I said that looking at what by looking at what we've accomplished together, I believe we've stayed true to the values of the state.

That's what we're going to continue to do. Onward, and upward. And with that, I'm happy to stand for your questions.