



King County

Dave Upthegrove

Councilmember, District 5

Metropolitan King County Council

Voter access, juvenile justice alternatives among top priorities in Upthegrove budget proposal

The King County Council Budget Committee has approved the 2016 supplemental county budget, including funds to increase voter access to election drop boxes and materials, and support a host of youth violence prevention and juvenile justice programs.

“Increasing voter access, reducing youth violence, and addressing the racial disparities in the juvenile justice system are long-standing Council priorities,” said Dave Upthegrove, Chair of the Council’s Budget and Fiscal Management Committee. “It was important to me to ensure that these Council priorities were funded when I drafted this proposal and I was pleased to see it receive unanimous support.”

Increased Voter Access

Upthegrove’s proposal includes an additional \$350,000 for 30 new ballot drop-off locations bringing the countywide total to 40, and \$350,000 to expand voter outreach to Limited English Speaking communities.

“Our system works best when everyone participates,” Upthegrove said. “King County is one of the most diverse counties in the nation and we have a responsibility to provide access to everyone in our democracy.”

The new drop box locations are still to be identified and King County Elections is in the process of assessing the feasibility of a variety of options, including public libraries.

The County’s program for outreach to Limited English Speaking communities is also expanded to reach Spanish and Korean speakers under the proposal. At the direction of the Council, all elections materials will be translated into Spanish and Korean, in addition to the currently provided Chinese and Vietnamese. The Department of Elections will also begin working with community-based organizations to increase awareness and voter registration.

Juvenile Justice

Upthegrove’s proposal also includes over \$460,000 in new funding for youth mentoring, community-based alternatives to detention, and earmarks surplus funds associated with replacing the Children & Family Justice Center for investment to limit youth incarceration.

“It is time to put our money where our mouth is when it comes to investing in our kids and providing positive alternatives to detention,” said Councilmember Upthegrove.

The funding for juvenile justice will be directed and distributed through a competitive process to youth mentoring, alternatives to detention, and community-based programs that will help at-risk youth stay enrolled in school, be competitive in the employment market, and provide support for families throughout their contact with the juvenile justice system.