

## WSCA Legislative Update

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The Washington State Legislature opened the 105-day session last week under *almost* normal circumstances, after having operated in a mostly-remote fashion the past two years. This year, masks are encouraged if not required in most offices and access to some offices is restricted by security, preventing lobbyists and the public from casually dropping by. Some aspects of remote sessions are here to stay, including remote hearing testimony.

Legislative Democrats are emboldened by 2022 General Election results, saying the results prove voters agree with their agenda on many big issues. In a recent interview, Speaker Laurie Jinkins said “People have spoken in terms of the majorities they sent back to the legislature...Washingtonians have said they trust Democrats to lead.” Historically, the party of presidential power tends to lose seats in a midterm election, but this was not the case for the Washington State Legislature.

The Democrats, who control both the House and Senate by comfortable margins, will be working Governor Jay Inslee on a bold agenda for the 2023 session that includes the following issues:

- **Gun Violence Prevention** - In a recent news interview, Senator Jamie Pedersen said “It’s clear what we have done on guns is not troubling the voters,” calling the election results “yet another affirmation of our approach.” This year, Democrats have introduced bills to ban the sale of assault-style semiautomatic rifles, require a permit to purchase a firearm, make gun makers and sellers liable for selling weapons used in crimes, and other measures.
- **Drug Possession** - After the Washington State Supreme Court struck down the state’s felony drug-possession law (the Blake Decision) during the 2021 legislative session, lawmakers passed a quick fix to classify possession as a misdemeanor but refer people to treatment before charging them. That law sunsets in July. Most lawmakers agree that treatment is needed for people with substance abuse issues, but some members hope for stiff criminal penalties, while others will seek to decriminalize drug possession.
- **Housing and Homelessness** - Governor Inslee has proposed the state raise \$4 billion to build affordable housing by issuing bonds outside the state’s debt limit, which will require legislative and voter approval. Additionally, there are proposals to allow more units on residential lots, intensify transit-oriented development, eliminate design review boards on residential construction, and cap the amount landlords can raise rent each year.
- **Workforce Issues** - Republicans and Democrats agree there is a workforce crisis, given nearly every sector is experiencing staffing shortages due to baby boom retirements and the covid-era resignations. Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig recently said “If you look at law enforcement, we have a workforce issues; if you look at early learning, we have a workforce issue.” Expect more legislation to expand apprenticeships, provide retention bonuses, change licensure requirements etc.
- **Abortion** - In 1991, Washington voters passed Initiative 120, codifying Roe into state law. 32 years later, Senate Democrats have introduced a bill to amend the constitution to further protect access to abortion and contraception in a post-Roe world. Supporters claim an amendment would offer stronger protections because it is easier for the Legislature to repeal a statute than a constitutional amendment. Amending the constitution in Washington requires a two-thirds majority in each chamber and voter approval.
- **Budget** - As lawmakers prepare to write the 2023-25 budgets, they do so with increased revenue and a few uncertainties that will play out during session. First, the state is now collecting the new capital

gains tax, which is expected to generate hundreds of millions of dollars per year for early learning and childcare. Though, the state Supreme Court will hear arguments on January 26 that could possibly strike down the law, creating a large hole in budget expectations. Second, the Department of Ecology will hold the first of four annual auctions for carbon emission allowances on February 28, which officials anticipate will earn the state approximately \$480 million this year. Legislators will need to agree on how to spend these early proceeds.

This session will see 21 brand-new legislators and 9 members who have served previously or are moving from the House to the Senate. Committee hearings this week mostly focused on getting this large group of new members up to speed with work sessions on various agencies and topics. We can expect committees to dive into more bills starting next week.

### **Upcoming Dates**

February 17 - Policy committee cutoff - house of origin

February 24 - Fiscal committee cutoff - house of origin

March 8 - Floor cutoff - house of origin

March 29 - Policy committee cutoff - opposite house

April 4 - Fiscal committee cutoff - opposite house

April 12 - Floor cutoff - opposite house

April 23 - Sine Die

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - SHR 1 and Virtual J.A. Cherberg - 1/16 @ 1:30pm**

- [SB 5054](#) - Public Hearing - Promoting and facilitating the use of professional learning communities.

#### **Education (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 1/17 @ 4:00pm**

- [HB 1113](#) - Public Hearing - Reviewing reprimands for professional educators.

#### **Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - SHR 1 and Virtual J.A. Cherberg - 1/18 @ 1:30pm**

- [SB 5019](#) - Exec Session - Concerning classified staff providing student and staff safety.
- [SB 5257](#) - Public Hearing - Ensuring elementary school students receive sufficient daily recess.

#### **Education (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 1/19 @ 8:00am**

- [HB 1207](#) - Public Hearing - Preventing and responding to harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination in schools.

#### **Postsecondary Education & Workforce (House) - HHR B and Virtual JLOB - 1/20 @ 8:00am**

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- [HB 1069](#) - Exec Session - Adopting the mental health counselor compact.

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>
<a href="#">HB 1069</a> <b>Mental health counselor comp</b> Adopting the mental health counselor compact.	H Postsec Ed & W	Leavitt
<a href="#">HB 1071</a> <b>School resource officers</b> Securing schools by authorizing funding for a school resource officer in every school.	H Education	Walsh
<a href="#">HB 1113</a> <b>Prof. educator reprimands</b> Reviewing reprimands for professional educators.	H Education	Harris
<a href="#">HB 1146</a> <b>Dual credit program notice</b> Notifying high school students and their families about available dual credit programs and any available financial assistance.	H Education	Paul
<a href="#">HB 1207</a> <b>Harassment/schools</b> Preventing and responding to harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination in schools.	H Education	Senn
<a href="#">HB 1230</a> <b>School websites/drug info.</b> Requiring school districts and other public education entities to make information from the department of health available.	H Education	Callan
<a href="#">HB 1238</a> (SB 5339) <b>Free school meals</b> Providing free school meals for all.	H Education	Riccelli
<a href="#">HB 1239</a> <b>Educator ethics &amp; complaints</b> Establishing a simple and uniform system for complaints related to, and instituting a code of educator ethics for, conduct within or involving public elementary and secondary schools.	H Education	Santos
<a href="#">HB 1273</a> (SB 5243) <b>High school and beyond plans</b> Concerning high school and beyond planning.	H Education	Berg
<a href="#">HB 1308</a> <b>Graduation pathway options</b> Concerning high school graduation pathway options.	H Education	Stonier
<a href="#">HB 1328</a> <b>Schools &amp; families/funding</b> Increasing funding to schools and families for students not meeting academic standards.		Stokesbary

<a href="#"><u>HB 1354</u></a>	<b>School volunteers/conviction</b> Concerning parental involvement through volunteering in schools after a criminal conviction.		Stonier
<a href="#"><u>SB 5019</u></a>	<b>School safety staff</b> Concerning classified staff providing student and staff safety.	S EL/K-12	Wellman
<a href="#"><u>SB 5048</u></a>	<b>College in high school fees</b> Eliminating college in the high school fees.	S Higher Ed & Wo	Mullet
<a href="#"><u>SB 5054</u></a>	<b>Prof. learning communities</b> Promoting and facilitating the use of professional learning communities.	S EL/K-12	Wellman
<a href="#"><u>SB 5219</u></a>	<b>Counseling compact</b> Enacting the interstate counseling compact for licensed mental health counselors.	S Health & Long	Muzzall
<a href="#"><u>SB 5243</u></a> (HB 1273)	<b>High school and beyond plans</b> Concerning high school and beyond planning.	S EL/K-12	Wellman
<a href="#"><u>SB 5248</u></a>	<b>Tutoring &amp; extended learning</b> Using COVID-19 relief funding on high quality tutoring and rigorous extended learning programs.	S EL/K-12	Braun
<a href="#"><u>SB 5257</u></a>	<b>Elementary school recess</b> Ensuring elementary school students receive sufficient daily recess.	S EL/K-12	Nobles
<a href="#"><u>SB 5339</u></a> (HB 1238)	<b>Free school meals</b> Providing free school meals for all.	S EL/K-12	Nobles