Capitol News

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# WSLHA Bills of Interest

* [SB 5753](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5753&Initiative=false&Year=2021) makes changes to **boards and commissions** at the Department of Health, including the Board of Hearing & Speech (BOHS). This bill increases the compensation for BOHS members and clarifies its definition of a quorum. This bill has passed the House and will return to the Senate for a concurrence vote on the House amendment.

# General News

Last week began with marathon sessions for lawmakers on the fiscal committees to meet that day’s fiscal committee cutoff deadline. Beginning Tuesday, legislators pivoted to (in-person and virtual) floor action to meet yesterday’s opposite house of origin cutoff (Senate bills out of the House; House bills out of the Senate). However, bills that are deemed “necessary to implement the budget” or NTIB are exempt from this cutoff.

Speaking of the budget, we are in Dr. Seuss’s “waiting place.” Budget writers spent last week negotiating the final supplemental budget, with the rest of us waiting to see the final result, hopefully early this week. Legislators are scheduled to adjourn on Thursday.

This week, legislators will focus on bills that have passed both chambers but with different language. A bill must pass both the House and Senate in the same form to move forward. Of course, many bills are changed by the opposite house. When this happens, the two chambers must agree on the final version. Typically, the house of origin accepts the opposite house’s amendments and agrees to “concur” in the amendment and the bill has passed the Legislature.

When there is disagreement between the chambers, the house of origin can ask the opposite house to recede from their amendment. If the opposite house agrees, the bill has passed the Legislature. If the two houses cannot resolve their differences, they can establish a conference committee where members from each house meet to discuss the differences. If they agree on bill language, the conference committee presents a report for adoption by both chambers. A conference report cannot be amended on the floor. If both chambers adopt the conference report, the bill has passed. Note that this session’s final supplemental budget will be offered to the House and Senate via a conference report.

Once a bill has finally passed the Legislature, it is sent to the Governor for his action. After the Governor reviews the bill, he may decide to sign it, veto part of it, or veto all of it. If the Governor vetoes part or all of it, the Legislature may vote to override the veto. For most bills, the Governor has 20 days after the Legislature adjourns to take action.

Much speculation exists leading up to the cutoffs about what which bill will be the last of the day, the “5 o’clock bill” in each chamber. Any measure, if started before 5pm, can continue after the deadline. The House Democratic leadership picked the Attorney General’s request high-capacity magazine bill, SB 5078 which would prohibit the sale, manufacture, and distribution of ammunition magazines with more than 10 rounds. The debate on the bill stretched over 3.5 hours, with House Democrats putting down numerous amendments from their Republican colleagues. At 11pm the bill passed unamended 55-42. It now goes to Governor Inslee for signature.

The passage of SB 5078 capped a monumental week for gun violence prevention advocates. On Tuesday night the Senate passed two bills, HB 1630 which prohibits weapons in certain locations and HB 1705 that concerns untraceable homemade “ghost guns.” HB 1630 heads to the Governor’s desk and HB 1705 must return to the House for concurrence.

In the Senate, Democratic Leadership picked the Attorney General’s request HB 1616 for their 5 o’clock bill. HB 1616 doubles the charity care given by hospitals in Washington. A floor amendment was adopted that requires the Office of the Insurance Commissioner, in consultation with the Health Benefit Exchange, to study, analyze, and report on enrollment in high deductible plans.

Finally, last Tuesday, Douglas County Superior Court Judge Brian Huber ruled the Capital Gains tax unconstitutional. Last year’s SB 5096 established the capital gains tax as a funding source for early learning and K-12 education. Attorney General Bob Ferguson immediately signaled the state’s plan to appeal this ruling.

**Important Dates:**

March 10 – Sine Die