

Capitol News

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Melissa Johnson, WSLHA Lobbyist

General Overview. The Legislature's roster is finally complete this week, with appointments being made for the last of the open seats. Rep. Emily Alvarado (D-34) transitioned to the Senate, with Brianna Thomas (D), a senior advisor to Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, filling her House seat. Thomas previously ran unsuccessfully for Seattle City Council. Meanwhile, Janice Zahn (D), a Bellevue City Councilmember and Port of Seattle employee, succeeded Rep. Tana Senn (D-41), who now serves as the Secretary of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Results Washington. Governor Bob Ferguson announced this week the appointment of former journalist Jesse Jones as the new director of Results Washington, the agency tasked with improving government performance. Results Washington was established by Governor Jay Inslee in 2013 through executive order and works with state agencies to set measurable goals, gather performance data, and conduct regular public reviews to enhance efficiency. Jones, a nationally recognized, award-winning investigative reporter, has spent over three decades in journalism, including work in high profile issues such as exposing ticket scalping practices, advocating for free credit freezes, and investigating real estate contracts that locked homeowners into decades-long commitments—efforts that contributed to changes in Washington state law.

WSLHA Priorities

Our fair contracting bill has a number! It's [HB 1589](#), with Representatives Bronoske, Macri, Shavers, Pollet, and Reed as sponsors. Senator Cleveland will be introducing a companion bill soon.

Over the last several weeks, WSLHA, along with our coalition partners, has been working with the Insurance Commissioner's Office (OIC) and the Attorney General's Office (AGO) on the bill language pertaining to group contracting. Both the OIC and the AGO have identified concerns around antitrust violations and implementation challenges with that provision. As a result, the group contracting provision has been removed from the bill.

As introduced, HB 1589 has the following elements:

- A requirement that an insurer must offer a provider a meaningful opportunity to negotiate the terms of the contract
- Any negotiations must be done in good faith
- Network adequacy (no ghost networks)
- Insurer must provide a primary contact
- Insurer must provide a new contract with the changes clearly identified from the previous contract
- Health benefit managers are also subject to these requirements
- No all-or-nothing clauses
- No requirement to accept discounted rates

Stay tuned for a hearing date for HB 1589. Our cost-of-living increase legislation should also be introduced this week.