

WSLHA Priorities

[HB 1589](#), our fair contracting bill has a hearing on Tuesday in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee! WSLHA Clinical Practice Committee Chair Kendra Holloway and I will be testifying in support of the bill. [SB 5588](#) is the Senate companion bill. Senator Cleveland, Senator Nobles and Senator Short are the sponsors.

We also have a bill number for our **cost-of-living adjustment** (COLA) bill, [HB 1655](#). This bill requires health insurers to include an annual COLA in provider contracts reflecting the Consumer Price Index. Rep. Stonier, Rep. Caldier, and Rep. Reed are the sponsors.

Thursday is WSLHA's **Legislative Day**! We're excited to have WSLHA members and students come to Olympia (or zoom into the morning session) to advocate for our priority bills! The timing is perfect with our hearing on HB 1589 on Tuesday!

General News

We are now three weeks into the 2025 session, with over 1,400 bills introduced. Committees are in high gear with bill hearings and committee votes. At the same time, Majority Democrats are forging a path with the new governor, Bob Ferguson as well as their Republican colleagues, and drawing firm lines with the new Trump Administration.

House Democrats Assert Their Influence

House Democrats in Washington state have made significant changes to a longstanding rule that restricted access to the wings of the House chamber. The new policy now allows access only for the governor, excluding the governor's staff unless specifically invited by a House member. This revision has sparked controversy, particularly after Governor Ferguson delivered an inauguration speech calling for bipartisan reforms, which was well-received by Republicans but notably lacked praise for Democratic accomplishments. House Majority Leader Joe Fitzgibbon defended the rule change, explaining it as a necessary clarification to address overly broad language. Meanwhile, House Minority Leader Drew Stokesbary criticized the move as a direct retaliation against Governor Ferguson.

The rule adjustment was part of a broader overhaul of legislative procedures, which included:

- Reducing the threshold to end debate, allowing a simple majority vote instead of a two-thirds majority.
- Banning "title-only" bills, previously lawmakers would introduce these bills late in the session to create vehicles for last-minute legislation, usually related to the budget.
- Modifying time limits for debates.

Republicans opposed these procedural changes, arguing they infringe on minority party rights, while Democrats argued that the changes were designed to increase legislative efficiency.

Washington State's Early Response to the Trump Administration

Last week, Attorney General Nick Brown filed a lawsuit against President Trump's executive order ending birthright citizenship. A federal judge in Seattle ruled in Brown's favor, issuing a temporary restraining order against the order.

Washington's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal, also took action, issuing guidance to public schools reaffirming that all children, regardless of immigration status, are entitled to an education. The guidance, based on the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in *Plyler v. Doe*, emphasized that denying undocumented children enrollment violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. Reykdal's office further advised schools not to share student information with immigration authorities unless legally required.

This week, Governor Ferguson launched a Family Separation Rapid Response Team in Washington State to address President Trump's immigration enforcement policies. The team, created through Executive Order 25-04, aims to mitigate the effects on children, many of whom are U.S. citizens, when their undocumented parents or caregivers are deported or detained. The team includes members from the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), Washington State Patrol, the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance, the Attorney General's Office, and the Governor's Office. They will collaborate with regional experts on immigration and child welfare to recommend policies that support affected children, including ensuring access to care, education, and stability.