WSLHA Legislative Report

February 13, 2022

Melissa Johnson, Lobbyist

# WSLHA Priority Legislation

* [HB 1043](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1043&Initiative=false&Year=2021) is the bill that establishes Washington as a member of the Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology **Compact** (ASLP-IC). **It is eligible for a vote by the House**.

# Other Bills of Interest

* [HB 5848](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5848&Initiative=false&Year=2021) , the bill that licenses **music therapists**, is eligible for a vote by the Senate.
* [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. It is scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee.

**General News from Last Week**

The legislative session has reached the **halfway point**. Both the Senate and House now allow twice as many members on the floor with just a few voting remotely. Lawmakers are now spending long days and nights in caucus and voting on the floor to meet Tuesday’s deadline for bills to be voted out of their house of origin.

On Tuesday, Senate and House Democrats unveiled their $16 billion, 16-year “Move Ahead Washington” **transportation revenue package**. This package focuses on funding for transit, ferries, highway preservation and maintenance, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Significantly, this package includes the unusual transfer of $2 billion from the state’s general fund, thus impacting the availability of those funds for operating budget requests.

On Thursday, Governor Inslee announced that the outdoor **mask mandate** will end on February 18th. He also foreshadowed a press conference coming this week where he is expected to announce a date to lift the indoor mask mandate, most likely in March. That same day, Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal announced he plans to recommend to Inslee and the Department of Health that the mask mandate for K-12 students be dropped, and the mask mandate decision returned to local public health officials. The Washington Education Association, however, urged a cautious approach, citing staffing shortages resulting from current exposures.

The much-anticipated state **revenue forecast** will be released on Wednesday. This will give budget writers the most up-to-date revenue information, allowing them to put the final touches on their supplemental budgets. We can expect these budgets to be released soon after the forecast release.

**Important Dates:**

February 15 – House of Origin Floor Cutoff

February 24 – Opposite House Policy Cutoff

February 28 – Opposite House Fiscal Cutoff

March 4 – Opposite House Floor Cutoff

March 10 – Sine Die