Capitol News

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# WSLHA Priority Bills

* [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).** The Compact facilitates the practice of audiology and speech-language pathology by securing a privilege to practice in a member state or through telehealth. We expect that this bill will be heard on January 31st.
* [HB 1854](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1854&Initiative=false&Year=2021) requires **insurance coverage for hearing aid**s for both children and adults. We expect a hearing on this bill next week.

# Other Bills of Interest This Week

[HB 5848](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5848&Initiative=false&Year=2021) licenses **music therapists**. WSLHA has opposed this bill in the past because it does not specifically prohibit music therapists from providing communication disorder services. WSLHA is working with ASHA on testimony and amendments that would address our concerns. WSLHA will be testifying at the hearing on Wednesday.

[HB 1889](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1889&Initiative=false&Year=2021) relates to insurance **network adequacy** and is being heard on Monday in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. This bill requires the Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) to review and approve provider networks prior to use, review health carriers' provider networks submitted with health plan filings, and actively monitor carriers' provider networks throughout the plan year for compliance with network access requirements. It also requires OIC to review and enforce (instead of consider whether) network access requirements.

[HB 2004](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2004&Initiative=false&Year=2021) allows a medical provider to provide its own **language interpreter**, and to be reimbursed the cost, if the state’s contracted interpreter fails to show at a medical appointment. It’s being heard on Thursday in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee.

**General News from Last Week**

The incredible pace of legislative work continued during week two of the session, with no signs of letting up. Already, more bills have been introduced this session to date than in all of last session. It seems legislators are intent in doing 105 days of work in 60 days. With the first cutoff looming (all bills must pass their policy committee by February 3rd), the pace will only get more intense.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is annually one of the busiest days on campus, with busloads of constituents travelling from every corner of the state to meet with their legislators. Not so this year. The Senate and House quietly passed resolutions on Monday honoring Dr. King, with the capitol largely closed.

The House continued the fast-tracking of their long-term care fix. On Wednesday, the House passed HB 1732, delaying implementation of Washington Cares until July 2023 and HB 1733, establishing exemptions for certain employees. Both bills eventually passed with bipartisan support. However, during debate House Republicans attempted to bring up their own long-term care bills through procedural motions, including a bill that would repeal the underlying program, but these motions failed. Both bills now go to the Senate where the goal is for them to pass the Senate and be delivered to the Governor by the end of the week.

On Friday, January 21 the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee heard two bills related to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). SJR 8212 amends the state Constitution to change the Superintendent position from an elected position to an appointment by the Governor. SB 5820 implements SJR 8212 should the voters pass it. Senator Reuven Carlyle, prime sponsor of these bills, testified in support of these measures citing a lack of accountability of the current de-centralized K-12 system.

On Friday, SB 5909 will be heard in in the Senate State Government & Elections Committee. This bill gives the leaders of the Legislature the power to terminate a governor’s state of emergency proclamation and emergency orders. The bill also makes permanent the Bicameral Legislative Unanticipated Revenue Oversight Committee that gives the Legislature involvement in the allocation of federal funding.

**Important Dates:**

February 3 – House of Origin Policy Cutoff

February 7 – House of Origin Fiscal Cutoff

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