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)**.** **It was voted out of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee last Wednesday.** It is now in the House Rules Committee, one step closer to a vote by the full House of Representatives.
* [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. This bill was heard on Wednesday but was **not voted out of committee** before the cutoff deadline. While lawmakers are supportive of this policy, there remain questions as to the state’s fiscal responsibility for a new insurance mandate. Work will continue on this issue after session ends.

# Other Bills of Interest This Week

* [HB 5848](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5848&Initiative=false&Year=2021) , the bill that licenses **music therapists**, was voted out of the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee last Wednesday and is now in the Senate Rules Committee. WSLHA negotiated language in the bill that prohibits music therapists from evaluate, examine, instruct, or counsel individuals suffering from disorders or conditions that affect speech, language, communication, and swallowing. We also negotiated language that requires consultation with the client’s health care team before providing services. This includes reviews with the client’s IFSP or IEP team.
* [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 passed the Senate last Wednesday**.

**General News from Last Week**

Thursday’s deadline for bills to pass the House of Origin policy committee has now passed and for the first time this session, the **list of bills still alive is much shorter**. The Legislature quickly pivoted to the fiscal committees, where they face a Monday deadline for bills to pass. Then another quick pivot to fulltime floor action on Tuesday. Lawmakers only have one week to advance bills before the House of Origin cutoff on February 15th.

On Wednesday, the Senate unanimously approved changes to the **redistricting process** while the House approved final congressional and legislative maps for the next 10 years. The Senate bill, SB 5560, is a response to what turned out to be a chaotic and secretive redistricting process last year. The bill requires that the Redistricting Commission make any plan publicly available for 72 hours prior to voting to approve it and that any amendments to that plan to be debated and voted on in open session. It also requires at least 24 hours to pass after any amendments to a redistricting plan are adopted before a vote on final approval and that the Commission's submission of a plan to the Legislature include maps and census unit descriptions.

Meanwhile, in a strong bipartisan vote, the House approved HCR 4407, **the new district maps**. A lawsuit has been filed over the maps by a Latino civil rights organization, claiming the proposed boundaries violate the Voting Rights Act by not allowing a majority Latino district in Yakima. The Senate must vote on HCR 4407 by February 8th.

Another lawmaker, **Rep. Mike Sells announced this week that he will not seek re-election**. Sells has represented the 38th district for 17 years and is chair of the House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee. Rep. Liz Berry, current Vice Chair, is rumored to be vying to be the next chair of that committee, a position Sells held for 10 years.

On Monday, February 7th, the Senate will double the number of senators allowed on the floor from 15 to 30. Under a new plan that received unanimous approval by the Senate Facilities and Operations Committee, floor action will continue to be conducted in a hybrid format but now with **most members participating in-person** and some participating remotely. In-person meetings are still banned under the Senate plan and members of the public, including lobbyists, will not be allowed in the Senate facilities. Credentialled members of the press will continue to occupy the galleries. No changes have been announced for the House, which currently allows the presiding officer and two lawmakers from each caucus on the House floor, with the rest voting remotely.

**Important Dates:**

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

March 10 – Sine Die