WSLHA Legislative Report

January 6, 2022

Melissa Johnson, Lobbyist

# Upcoming Events

**College & Workforce Development (House) - Virtual - 1/12 @ 8:00am**

* HB 1659 - Public Hearing - Making higher education more affordable and accessible for students by bridging the gap between cost and need to reduce barriers, improve opportunity, and advance economic security. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
	1. This bill provides financial support through grants to low-income students to cover higher education expenses beyond tuition and fees, such as books, lab fees, supplies, technology, transportation, housing, and child care.
	2. Recommendation: sign in support
* HB 1736 - Public Hearing - Establishing a state student loan program. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
	1. Recommendation: sign in support

**Health & Long Term Care (Senate) - Virtual - 1/12 @ 8:00am**

* SB 5496 - Public Hearing - Concerning health professional monitoring programs. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

**Health Care & Wellness (House) - Virtual - 1/12 @ 8:00am**

* HB 1688 - Public Hearing - Protecting consumers from charges for out-of-network health care services, by aligning state law and the federal no surprises act and addressing coverage of treatment for emergency conditions. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
* HB 1708 - Public Hearing - Concerning facility fees for audio-only telemedicine. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
* HB 1741 - Public Hearing - Addressing affordability through health care provider contracting. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

**Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - Virtual - 1/12 @ 10:30am**

* SB 5563 - Public Hearing - Concerning enrollment stabilization funding to address enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

**Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - Virtual - 1/14 @ 8:00am**

* SB 5487 - Public Hearing - Concerning small school district consolidation incentives for infrastructure enhancement and modernization. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

**Labor & Workplace Standards (House) - Virtual - 1/14 @ 8:00am**

* HB 1763 - Public Hearing - Concerning injured workers' rights during independent medical examinations. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Capitol News

January 9, 2022

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The 2022 session begins on Monday, January 10th. This is a short, 60-day session. The House and Senate have revised their session plan and will now conduct all business remotely, including floor sessions, and will revisit this plan throughout session. All House and Senate committee hearings will be conducted virtually, like last session.

Despite the time constraints inherent in a short session, over 560 bills have been prefiled to date. Policy committees have between 8 to 12 hearings between now and the first policy committee cutoff on February 3rd. It suggests that many of these bills will die before even receiving a hearing. The schedule gets even tighter for those bills that cross over to the opposite house. There are only 9 days for hearings on bills that have passed one house. It will be a fast session!

The Legislature will prioritize several issues this session, including policing laws, the Long Term Care Trust, transportation, and affordable housing. COVID response is also at the top of the list.

# The Legislature’s [website](http://leg.wa.gov/) contains information on legislators’ backgrounds, committee assignments and presentations from hearings. TVW’s [website](http://tvw.org/) will show all committee hearings and floor sessions throughout the session.

# WSLHA Priority Bills

WSLHA has two priority bills this session:

* **HB 1043** 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.
* **HB 1854** requires **insurance coverage for hearing aid**s for both children and adults.

# Upcoming Events

This week, the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee is holding two work sessions. On Wednesday, they will hear a COVID update from the Department of Health. On Friday, there will be a work session on health and housing.

## High Priority Bills

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| **Bill Details** | **Status** | **Sponsor** | **Position** |
|  |
| [**HB 1043**](http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?Year=2021&BillNumber=1043) | **Audiology & speech compact** | H HC/Wellness | Leavitt | Support |
| Concerning the audiology and speech-language pathology interstate compact. |
|  |
| [**HB 1854**](http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?Year=2021&BillNumber=1854) | **Hearing instruments coverage** | H Prefiled | Wicks | Support |
| Requiring coverage for hearing instruments. |