



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



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Exempting I-1433 to death

GOP bills would deny new minimum wage, sick leave to teens, nonprofits, non-Kings

In November, Washington voters approved Initiative 1433 to raise the state minimum wage to \$11 per hour (and \$13.50 by 2020) and allow all workers to earn some paid sick and safe leave. Republican legislators and business groups opposed I-1433. They argued that it would hurt businesses, teenagers, nonprofits, rural counties... you name it. Voters rejected those arguments and overwhelmingly approved I-1433 by a 15-point margin.

Less than three months later, Republicans in Olympia are trying to undermine I-1433 by exempting teenagers, nonprofits, and not just rural counties, but *every county in the state except King County*. These bills are scheduled for Senate committee hearings this Thursday at 1:30 p.m.

SUB-MINIMUM WAGE FOR TEENAGERS -- This draft bill (S-1027.1) would allow employers to pay 85 percent of the minimum wage to 16- and 17-year-olds. Current law says only 14- and 15-year-olds can be paid this sub-minimum wage. (See Washington State Labor Council President Jeff Johnson's column explaining why this is a bad idea.)

EXEMPTING ALL NONPROFIT CORPORATIONS -- SB 5532 would exclude all nonprofits from the minimum wage and sick leave provisions of I-1433. This wouldn't just exempt a handful of small charities, it would exempt more than 50,000 corporations and hundreds of thousands of workers at some of Washington's biggest employers like Providence and MultiCare health facilities.

EXEMPTING MOST OF WASHINGTON -- SB 5530 would immediately cut the \$11 minimum wage back to \$9.53 per hour and deny workers the opportunity to earn paid sick leave in every county except King County. It would be as if I-1433 was never approved in the rest of Washington. (Fun fact: even if you threw out every vote cast in King County, I-1433 still passed.)

These proposals ignore the will of the people, who already heard and rejected arguments for exempting certain workers. They undermine the whole point of I-1433, which is to make Washington a better and healthier place to live and work. All of

Washington. Not just King County.

If you are coming to Olympia for the WSLC Legislative Reception and Lobbying Day that begins this Thursday, Feb. 2, come early and attend these bills' hearings at 1:30 p.m. in the Senate Commerce, Labor & Sports Committee.

It's not too late to register!

Sign up at www.wslc.org to attend the Washington State Labor Council's 2017 Legislative Reception and Lobbying Day on Feb. 2-3. All union leaders, staff, and especially rank-and-file members are invited to attend these events and meet with their representatives and senators to discuss issues important to their unions and the state's labor movement. The \$100 registration fee covers admission, drinks and hors d'oeuvres at the WSLC Legislative Reception starting from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 2 at the Hotel RL Olympia (formerly the Red Lion Olympia), plus lunch and materials for the WSLC Legislative Lobbying Day starting at 8:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 3 at the hotel. Register today!

Some important hearings this week

MONDAY, Jan. 30 at 1:30 p.m. -- Senate Commerce, Labor & Sports hears two paid family leave bills: SB 5032 (Keiser), which is the labor-supported proposal, and SB 5149 (Fain), which falls short of what is needed. SB 5032's House companion, HB 1116 (Robinson), has passed the House Labor and Workplace Standards Committee and is now in Appropriations.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 1 at 1:30 p.m. -- Senate Commerce, Labor & Sports hears SB 5312 Baumgartner), a "ban the box" bill prohibiting certain employers from inquiring about job applicants criminal records until after determining that the applicant is otherwise qualified. Also to be heard: SB 5140 (Cleveland), the labor-supported equal pay bill, and SB 5344 (Fain), which empowers employers more than it does workers.

THURSDAY, Feb. 2 at 8 a.m. -- House Labor and Workforce Standards will hear several bills that would strengthen prevailing wage standards and compliance.

Stay tuned to TheStand.org for details on these and other bills.