



Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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We must attract, retain the best faculty

But the Freedom Foundation engaged in effort to kill faculty bargaining bill

OLYMPIA -- This week's WSLC Legislative Update begins with the following important message from Karen Strickland, President of AFT Washington:

This year's legislative session looks very promising for faculty who teach in our community and technical colleges. EHB 1237, a bill that would allow local funds such as tuition and fees to be accessible for bargaining wage increases, is in the Senate Rules Committee and is expected to be voted off the full Senate floor soon. EHB 1237 is part of the WSLC Shared Prosperity Agenda and will likely pass this year thanks to several staunch labor allies in the Senate and House, i.e. Sen. Karen Keiser (D-Kent) and Rep. Mike Sells (D-Everett), determined lobbyists Bernal Baca and Wendy Rader-Konofalski, and the collective voice of Labor.



Karen Strickland

EHB 1237 doesn't solve all the problems that have resulted from the state's disinvestment in the community and technical colleges over the last several decades. There remains a huge wage gap between part-time and full-time faculty, an over-reliance on part-time faculty, below-market salaries for classified and professional/exempt staff, and tuition that is simply too high. But this bill does begin to improve faculty salaries which have stagnated since 2009, making it difficult to attract and retain teachers in general and nearly impossible in certain fields.

Notable in the fight for EHB 1237 is the fact that the Freedom Foundation has joined certain college presidents and lobbyists for the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (which has no official position on the bill) in a public effort to kill it. Since the bill requires no state funding and actually enhances the transparency of the college's local funds — characteristics the right wing usually salivates over — it is clear that their true interest is to weaken collective bargaining at every opportunity.

Standing together with our labor family, it ain't gonna happen!

CALL TO ACTION — Please call the Legislative Hotline at 1-800-562-6000 and urge your Senator to pull EHB 1237 from the Senate Rules Committee so it can get a floor vote — and to vote YES! Don't let the Freedom Foundation and company derail this important legislation to make sure our community and technical colleges can attract and retain quality teachers.

WA Voting Rights Act ready for House vote

One of the first policy bills to pass the Senate this year was the Washington Voting Rights Act (SB 6002) which, after five years of being blocked from a vote by Senate Republicans, passed the Senate on a 29-19 vote on Jan. 19. But given the hectic pace during this short 60-day session and the logjam of other bills similarly blocked from consideration in recent years, the WVRA has yet to get its floor vote in the House, where it has repeatedly passed in previous years.

That could — and should — change very soon. SB 6002, which creates a path to change discriminatory local voting systems without the need for costly lawsuits, has been pulled from House Rules Committee and could be voted upon at any time.

Meanwhile, city leaders are weighing in to express their strong support for the WVRA. Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and eight members of the Seattle City Council sent a letter to the Association of Washington Cities (AWC) and state legislators this week, reminding all of their strong support of the bill. The letter reads:



Jenny Durkan

As a member of AWC, the City of Seattle would like to reiterate our support for the passage of the Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA). It is important that Washington State takes this important step that advances justice through participating in one of our most sacred civic duties: voting.

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The WVRA seeks to improve the process and impact of voting through fair and equitable representation; this is particularly important for historically marginalized communities – specifically African-American communities and other communities of color – whose vote has been explicitly disenfranchised from access to the democratic process. We believe it is the duty of any city to encourage eligible residents to participate in local elections. Ensuring fair representation of one’s vote is what will get more communities and voters to the polls. Additionally, this legislation will help local municipalities avoid costly litigation under the federal Voting Rights Act. The WVRA is legislation that will help cities and their voting residents alike, and the time for change is now.

We are thrilled that the Senate passed SB 6002 on January 19, 2018. We urge the House to take action to advance these critical protections and make sure that Washingtonians are not disenfranchised.

The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO looks forward to a floor vote on a clean WVRA and strongly urges all State Representatives to support it..

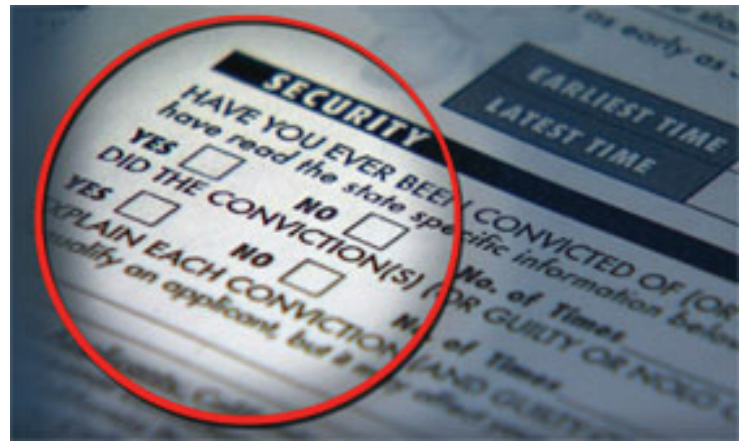
What’s moving, and what still needs to

Today (Friday, Feb. 23) is the deadline for bills not related to the budget to pass the policy committees in the opposite house. Monday is the cutoff day for bills to pass fiscal committees. Here is a status report on some of the bills that advanced this week — and one that still needs to:

■ **DREAM ACT 2.0** (HB 1488, Rep. Drew Hansen, D-Bainbridge Island) — This would ensure that undocumented students brought to the U.S. and Washington state as children can continue their college educations, even if President Trump succeeds in his effort to kill the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. HB 1488 would allow undocumented students who meet certain criteria to continue to qualify for the state’s College Bound Scholarship program, even if DACA ends. Passed the House 56-42; passed Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development on Thursday.

■ **DISCLOSE ACT** (SB 5991, Sen. Andy Billig, D-Spokane) — Dark money (secret political spending) in our elections is poisoning our politics. The Legislature should make sure that political money spent through front groups is publicly disclosed. SB 5991 passed the Senate 32-17; passed House State Government Committee on Wednesday.

■ **ELECTRICAL APPRENTICESHIPS** (SB 6126, Sen. Rebecca Saldaña, D-Seattle) — This legislation supported by the IBEW requires completion of an apprenticeship program to receive a journey level electrician certificate of competency. It passed the Senate 44-5; passed House Labor and Workforce Standards on Thursday.



■ **FAIR CHANCE ACT** (HB 1298, Rep. Lillian Ortiz-Self, D-Mukilteo) — When formerly incarcerated persons have fulfilled their debt to society, they should be able to secure work. By “banning the box” and waiting until after an interview to ask about criminal history, they will have a fair chance to make their case to potential employers. HB 1298 passed the House 52-46; passed Senate Labor & Commerce on Wednesday; referred to Senate Ways & Means.

■ **HANFORD OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE** (HB 1723, Rep. Larry Halder, R-Richland) — Hanford workers are exposed to unknown combinations of dangerous chemicals and radioactive materials. By adopting a presumption in our workers’ compensation law that certain cancers and other illness are due to exposure to these hazards, the people of Washington will commit to helping these heroic men and women. Passed House 76-22; passed Senate 35-14; House concurred with changes on Monday.

■ **HOSPITAL WORKER BREAKS AND OVERTIME** (HB 1715, Rep. Marcus Riccelli, D-Spokane) — Healthcare facilities should ensure that nurses and healthcare technical workers are guaranteed access to the breaks and overtime they have earned. This will ensure those providing the best care are healthy, rested, and less prone to mistake-causing fatigue. Passed the House 56-42; passed Senate Labor & Commerce on Wednesday; referred to Senate Ways & Means.

■ **LEGAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATION REFORM** (HB 1783, Rep., Jeff Holy, R-Cheney) — By breaking the prison-to-debt-to-prison cycle, the Legislature can help formerly incarcerated people secure a productive future, and pay restitution to victims. Changing how the costs of jail and prison are paid and calculated can be the difference between recidivism and reform. Passed the House 86-12; passed Senate Law & Justice; scheduled for public hearing in Senate Ways & Means on Saturday.

■ **TAXPAYER ACCOUNTABILITY ACT** (HB 1851, Rep. Laurie Dolan, D-Olympia) — This bill would introduce some common-sense standards to increase transparency and accountability when a state agency considers outsourcing public work. Passed the House 52-45; Senate Committee on State Government, Tribal Relations & Elections held a hearing on Monday but **HAS YET TO ADVANCE THE BILL.**