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# WSLC Legislative Report



Washington State Labor Council report and voting record from the 2014 session of the State Legislature

## GRIDLOCK AGAIN

In 2013, two erstwhile Democrats traded control of the Washington State Senate to Republicans in exchange for better job titles and bigger offices.

In 2014, the real consequences of those partisan political machinations are clearer than ever. Progressive policies and job-creating infrastructure investments supported by both Gov. Jay Inslee and the Democratic-controlled House were blocked by Senate Republicans. They killed dozens of House-approved labor-backed bills on everything from

wage theft to electricians' certification, in most cases without a public hearing.

For a second straight session, Senate Republicans refused to allow a vote on a desperately needed House-approved transportation package. GOP leaders talked (a lot) about "reforming" transportation first, but never produced a proposal their own caucus could support.

Right up to the session's final day, Senate Republicans obstructed efforts to create jobs, blocking a school construction bill that had passed the House on a

bipartisan 90-7 vote.

Instead, Senate Republicans spent the 2014 session launching aggressive attacks on labor standards and public employees. Pushed by national right-wing groups, these bills had little chance of passage in blue Washington. It was all about election-year posturing.

As you'll read throughout this *WSLC Legislative Report*, voters in Washington state didn't ask for it, but in 2014 they got another bitter taste of Washington, D.C.-style political gridlock.

## Democratic House advances Shared Prosperity Agenda

*But Republican Senate blocks hearings, votes*

In contrast to the low expectations some legislators and pundits established for the short 60-day session in 2014, the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO supported a substantive set of budget and policy goals. This "Shared Prosperity Agenda to Rebuild the Middle Class" embraced the values of Washington's working families in four main policy areas: addressing wage theft, approving paid safe and sick days, closing loopholes in the Affordable Care Act, and raising the state's minimum wage.

"It is clear that gains from the economic recovery are not being shared by everyone in this state and income inequality has emerged as a priority issue in Washington and nationally," said WSLC President Jeff Johnson in January. "This agenda takes concrete steps to address pressing issues and challenges faced today by middle-class families and low-income workers."

By the session's end in March, the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives had approved many of the bills included in the agenda. But the Republican-controlled Senate not only refused to vote on these important bills, they refused in most cases to even allow public hearings on them.

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## Senate GOP, Tom just say 'no' to progress, jobs

The highlight of the 2014 legislative session was Feb. 26 when Gov. Jay Inslee signed the "DREAM Act" into law. This creates the opportunity for children of undocumented immigrant workers to receive State Need Grants to attend public institutions of higher education. This law is a win for everyone—allowing children of immigrants to follow their educational dreams and allowing our state to benefit from the incredible creativity, talent, and productivity of these young people.



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN  
**Jeff Johnson**

Apart from that, the session can be summarized by **NO transportation package, NO capital budget, NO voting rights act, NO paid sick days, NO increased minimum wage, NO protections against wage theft...**

Why so unproductive? Why weren't tens of thousands of jobs created? Why weren't income inequality and fair voting rights addressed? Because Sen. Rodney Tom (D-Medina) and the Republican majority controlling the State Senate are out of step with our values.

The first bill passed by the House Democratic Caucus was the DREAM Act, passed on Day 1 of the session. The first bill passed by the Senate Republican Caucus aimed to reduce injured workers' benefits. This contrast in priorities was just the first of many that distinguished Democrats in the House who stood up for working people and Republicans in the Senate who mostly stood in the way

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## Another year of Senate inaction on transportation

By JOE KENDO

If there was one thing that business, environmentalists, transit advocates, and the labor movement agreed upon this session, it was the need for a balanced, comprehensive transportation package.

Last year, this broad-based support led the House of Representatives to pass a compromise proposal to ensure safer roads and bridges, fewer traffic jams, local funding options for mass transit, improved freight and workforce mobility, sound environmental permitting

standards, and thousands of family-wage jobs in a construction sector that has yet to recover from the Great Recession. But the Senate dithered in 2013, adjourning without voting on the plan or making a proposal of its own, despite two special sessions.

In the interim, Senate Transportation Committee Co-Chairs Curtis King (R-Yakima) and Tracey Eide (D-Federal Way) took the transportation conversation on the road, holding 10 town-hall meetings billed as Majority Coalition listening sessions, ostensibly to see what

people really wanted. Those needs were made clear: safe roads, sturdy bridges, good jobs, and adequate transit. No one was clamoring to cut prevailing wages or decrease apprenticeship opportunities. Yet, those right-wing ideological demands kept creeping into the ever-changing list of "reforms" sought by Senate Republicans in exchange for transportation investments.

Compromises were made, negotiation sessions occurred *ad nauseam*, and

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# Tom, Senate GOP say ‘no’ to progress

Continued from Page 1

of workers receiving a share of the prosperity.

Jobs were killed because Tom and the Republican majority refused to vote on a transportation package and a capital budget. Despite a labor, business and environmental coalition that supported a comprehensive transportation package, including the mostly federally funded Columbia River Crossing, the Senate hid behind ideological diversions like so-called “reforms” of prevailing wage and apprenticeship standards and phony financing which would have defunded education by diverting sales taxes on construction projects away from the general fund. Most House Democrats and Rep. Hans Zeiger (R-Puyallup) voted for a comprehensive transportation package during the 2013 session. **More than 75,000 jobs were sacrificed because Senate Republicans dithered.**

Jobs were also killed because Tom and the Republican majority refused to vote on a capital budget, Sen. Karen Keiser (D-Des Moines) heroically tried to pull the House capital budget to the

floor for a vote on the session’s last day, but was stymied by Republican opposition. The last time there was no capital budget was 1996. **Thousands of jobs were sacrificed.**

Fair voting laws were killed by Tom and the Republican majority even though HB 1413 passed the Senate Government Operations Committee with a positive vote by its Chair Pam Roach (R-Auburn). It would have given local communities the option of replacing at-large voting with district-based voting so that there would be a greater opportunity for communities of color to vote for and be represented by elected officials of color. Under-representation of Latino elected officials is a pernicious problem in the City and County of Yakima, where candidates of color often lose because of their surname to inferior, less-qualified candidates.

The Shared Prosperity Agenda died in the Republican Senate. The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO and our community allies drafted a set of bills that addressed the decline of the middle class and increasing income inequality. Seven bills were chosen that would serve as pillars for protecting the middle class and providing a pathway for low-income workers to reach the middle class (see Page 1 article). Paid

Safe and Sick Leave and four anti-wage theft bills passed the House, but were blocked in the Republican Senate.

While we give credit to the House Democrats for passing five of the Shared Prosperity bills, they unfortunately fell short of mustering the support to pass a fair and simple minimum wage bill, phasing in a \$12 minimum wage over three years, and to close an Affordable Care Act loophole that allows large corporations to dump workers onto Medicaid, forcing all of us to pay for this coverage through our tax dollars. No doubt we have some work to do in the House to convince folks that income inequality is real and is hurting families, communities, our economy, and our state’s general fund.

Adding insult to injury, a bill lowering wage standards in our infrastructure loan program passed on the session’s final day. The Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) program makes infrastructure loans/grants to public entities for projects that entice private-sector development. Until HB 1260’s passage, contractors were required to create jobs that paid at least the median county private-sector wage—the premise being that workers should be paid a wage that allows them to be self-sufficient and that the public gets the best return on their tax dollar.



PRESIDENT’S COLUMN  
**Jeff Johnson**

# Bills aim to cut costs at injured workers’ expense

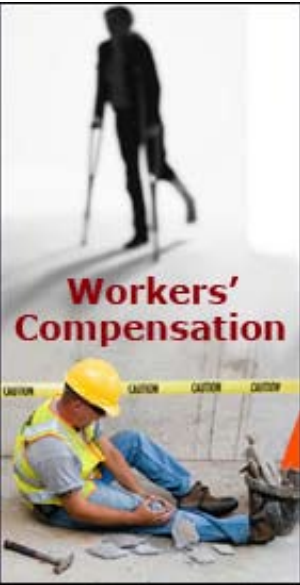
By JOE KENDO

The 2014 legislative session saw a number of attacks aimed at the safety net for injured workers—attacks that reduce benefits, that allow for aggressive case management, and that could destabilize the financial health of the Washington’s workers’ compensation system.

**LUMP-SUM BUYOUTS**—Three years ago, the legislature enacted sweeping changes to our workers’ compensation system. Instead of examining what 2011 changes worked, the Republican-controlled Senate attempted to double-down on one aspect that has not worked: the lump-sum buyouts they call “structured settlements.”

Buyouts are strongly opposed by the WSLC and advocates for injured workers because employers negotiate these settlements at times of financial desperation—when families have lost their income and are likely to be facing extreme hardship. Struggling families, especially those of younger workers, can’t anticipate their future expenses and may agree to buyouts for pennies on the dollar that aren’t in their long-term financial interests.

SB 5127, as introduced in 2013, expanded buyouts currently limited to workers 55 and older to workers



as young as 40. In 2014, dissatisfied with that held-over language, Sen. Janéa Holmquist-Newbry (R-Moses Lake) amended the bill to remove the age restriction entirely. It passed the Senate 27-22 (see Vote #1), but lost four votes from Democrats who supported it last year but couldn’t stomach the 2014 version.

Thankfully, the bill died in the House Labor and Workforce Development Committee chaired by Rep. Mike Sells (D-Everett).

**RETRO AUTHORITY**—SB 5112, a bill supposedly limited to allowing employers in Retrospective Rating groups to schedule and initiate independent medical examinations (IMEs), was another hold-over from 2013.

Retro employers get refunds of a portion of their workers’ comp premiums based on good safety records in the previous year. When injured workers seek medical treatment, Retro employers have every incentive to challenge the necessity of those treatments because those costs impact not only their premium rates, but also their refunds. Currently, the Department of Labor and Industries acts as a check against these negative impulses. However, as written, SB 5112 would have circumvented L&I’s role as a trusted third-party mod-

erator and empowered employers to force unnecessary IMEs. Injured workers are under enough duress. Harassing and unnecessary medical examinations would only further harm families, and add costs to the state. That’s right; under SB 5112 the public would be on the hook for nearly \$1,000 in unnecessary medical costs every time a Retro employer demands an IME.

SB 5112 passed the Senate 26-22 along caucus lines (see Vote #5), but it was stopped in the House.

**GROUP SELF-INSURANCE**—Group self-insurance is a failed industrial insurance model that allows small- and medium-sized businesses to self-insure in groups. In Washington, only large, stable, and financially healthy employers are allowed to self-insure, and for good reason. In New York, California and elsewhere, self-insured groups with hundreds of employers in each group have collapsed, leaving injured workers twisting in the wind and individual employers on the hook for tens of thousands of dollars in liabilities despite never having experienced a claim.

SB 6179, sponsored by Sen. John Braun (R-Centralia), would have allowed Washington businesses in the same industry to self-insure as a group, but would also have allowed employers to enter and exit those groups, thereby removing any kind of fiscal predictability and stability from their funds.

It passed the Senate 26-23 (along caucus lines), but was put down after a hearing in the House.

The WSLC Legislative Report is an annual publication of the

## Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

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# Bills aim to improve, undermine ACA

By TERESA MOSQUEDA

Washington state is well on its way to creating affordable, accessible health care for the uninsured and underinsured as a result of the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA). But questions remain about how to ensure the affordability of coverage, prevent low-income families from churning on and off of coverage, and require that everyone—including large corporations—do their part to keep Washingtonians covered.

In 2014, the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO and the Healthy Washington Coalition prioritized health care policies to address these issues. These bills would have advanced health care reform implementation, ensured greater accountability, and expanded coverage for the most vulnerable, but they never made it to the governor's desk. They included legislation to:

■ **Build the Basic Health Option** — The ACA recognized that low-wage workers who earn between 138% to 200% of the federal poverty level may struggle to afford paying up to 6% of their income on health coverage through the exchange. That's why it created the Federal Basic Health Option, a provision championed by U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), allowing states to create a state-run option for these low-wage workers and also provide coverage to lower wage documented immigrants not eligible for Medicaid.

SB 6231 and HB 2594, sponsored by Sen. Karen Keiser (D-Des Moines) and Rep. Marcus Riccelli (D-Spokane), would have created the blueprint for this Basic Health Option. The House bill was eventually



scaled down to a study, but both bills suffered the same fate: dying in the Republican-controlled Senate Health Care Committee.

■ **Create employer shared responsibility to cover Medicaid families** — Some large corporations are taking advantage of a loophole in the ACA. By cutting employee hours under the threshold for health requirements, these companies dump low-wage employees onto Medicaid or force them to seek taxpayer-subsidized coverage through the exchange. The ACA was intended to cover the uninsured, not allow large multi-million-dollar corporations to create more uninsured.

HB 2588, sponsored by Rep. Eileen Cody (D-West Seattle), would have charged a fee to large companies that do not provide health coverage to their low-wage workers on Medicaid. HB 2588 would help cover the cost of the state's portion of Medicaid, increase Med-

icaid provider reimbursement rates, and invest in underserved areas of the state. The bill had an impressive hearing, but failed to make it out of the House Health Care and Wellness Committee.

The WSLC fought to advance these and other progressive health care policies, while also defending consumer protections and regulatory authority, which were under attack by conservative legislators.

For example, Sen. Randi Becker (R-Eatonville) introduced SB 6458 to eliminate the elected office of the State Insurance Commissioner and replace it with a non-elected board. This was a transparent attempt to block rule-making activities and would have weakened consumer protections and public accountability.

Republicans also continued to try to undermine the ACA and block efforts to cover the uninsured. SB 6474 (Sen. Ann Rivers, R-La Center) and SB 6354 (Sen. Bruce Dammeier, R-Puyallup) would have created unnecessary and burdensome requirements on community organizations that serve as "Navigators" to help enroll uninsured workers and families. This would have disproportionately harmed the lowest income uninsured families who are most likely to get help from in-person assisters in the Navigator program.

The WSLC anticipates more attacks in 2015 on the ACA and our state's regulatory protections for health insurance consumers. We will call out and defend against those attacks, and continue pushing for greater affordability, corporate responsibility, and continuity of coverage for all Washingtonians.



WSLC Government Affairs Director Teresa Mosqueda gives participants some tips for lobbying legislators.

## WSLC Legislative Lobbying Day a success

The annual WSLC Legislative Conference got a makeover in 2014. Instead of having lawmakers come to the Olympia Red Lion Hotel to brief members of WSLC-affiliated unions on the status of proposed legislation, the members went to them.

Union leaders, staffers and rank-and-file members met for breakfast and lobbying training on Feb. 7 at the WSLC's Olympia office building. After learning about some pressing legislative issues facing labor, WSLC delegates walked to the Capitol campus to lobby their own legislators on these issues. Afterwards, they returned to the WSLC office for lunch, report-backs and a discussion with legislative leaders.

TVW's *The Impact* tagged along with some "first-timers" from USW Local 12-591 in Anacortes to see what it was like for them to be lobbyists for a day. Check out that report at: [www.thestand.org/?p=29844](http://www.thestand.org/?p=29844)

Based on the positive feedback, the new and improved Legislative Lobbying Day was a great success.



Members of USW Local 12-591 in Anacortes discuss refinery safety with Sen. Kevin Ranker (D-Orcas Is.) on Legislative Lobbying Day.

Many of the rank-and-file union members who participated said that getting the opportunity to do some citizen lobbying at the Capitol was a great experience that they will encourage

others at their unions to do in future years. So make plans to attend the 2015 WSLC Legislative Lobbying Day and recruit some members of your union to join you!

## Senate blocks the Taxpayer Protection Act

Tax dollars should be spent in the most effective and efficient ways. The public deserves to know what the government is spending their tax dollars on. But right now, those basic rules that apply to state agencies don't apply when Washington state outsources public services to private contractors.

State agencies have strict reporting requirements in the delivery of public services, making information available for review and inspection by the taxpayer. But private contractors delivering outsourced public services are not required to make information available for review and inspection. This lack of oversight leaves the state and taxpayers vulnerable to fraud and abuse.

The Taxpayer Protection Act (HB 2743), sponsored by Rep. Sam Hunt (D-Olympia), would improve cost-effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of any proposed outsourcing of public work. Under the bill:

■ Agencies would conduct a cost analysis of any proposed outsourcing of work traditionally done by state employees before entering into a contract.

■ Contracts would include terms that include a cancellation clause, performance objectives, employment and wage information, and a waiver of basic financial information of the contract. Contractors who have committed fraud or other crimes in the previous five years will be barred from entering into agreements for work with the state.

■ Agencies must monitor contracts to ensure they are meeting performance objectives and standards. If these terms are not being met, the state will have the ability to terminate the contract.

HB 2743 passed the House 53-44, but died in the Senate Government Operations Committee chaired by Sen. Pam Roach. (R-Auburn).



# Votes that didn't happen

Lots of bills that would have had a major impact for Washington's working families never get a vote. But you can tell who supports the good, bad and ugly bills by checking the list of sponsors. Here are some of those bills and the legislators who signed on as co-sponsors. (Democrats are listed in **bold**.)



■ HB 2672—**Raising the state minimum wage** to \$12 an hour over the next three years and then resume annual increases to adjust for inflation.

SPONSOR: Rep. **Jessyn Farrell** (D-Seattle)

CO-SPONSORS: Reps. **Mike Sells, Cindy Ryu, Tami Green, Chris Reykdal, Derek Stanford, Gerry Pollet, Zack Hudgins, Mia Gregerson, Brady Walkinshaw, June Robinson, Steve Bergquist, Sam Hunt, Jake Fey, Marcus Riccelli, Kristine Lytton, Steve Tharinger, Joe Fitzgibbon, David Sawyer, Gael Tarleton, Laurie Jenkins, Roger Goodman, Mary Helen Roberts, Jim Moeller, Roger Freeman, Luis Moscoso, Eileen Cody, Sharon Wylie, Sherry Appleton, Timm Ormsby, Hans Dunshee, Cyrus Habib**

■ HB 2422/SB 6235—**Restoring voter-approved cost-of-living adjustments** for teachers and other educational employees that have been suspended for six years.

SPONSOR: Rep. **Hans Dunshee** (D-Snohomish) and Sen. **Steve Hobbs** (D-Lake Stevens)

CO-SPONSORS: Reps. **Kathy Haigh, Steve Bergquist, Larry Haler, Dick Muri, Monica Stonier, Brian Blake, Brady Walkinshaw, Marcus Riccelli, Sherry Appleton, Cyrus Habib, Tana Senn, Gael Tarleton, Chris Reykdal, David Sawyer, Larry Seaquist, Jake Fey, Sharon Wylie, Roger Goodman, Mia Gregerson, June Robinson, Mike Sells, Jim Moeller, Cindy Ryu, Luis Moscoso, Steve Kirby, Steve Tharinger, Dean Takko, Sharon Tomiko Santos, Joe Fitzgibbon, Sam Hunt, Roger Freeman, Jessyn Farrell, Dawn Morrell, Gerry Pollet, Derek Stanford, Tami Green, Kevin Van De Wege, Zack Hudgins, Tina Orwall, Kristine Lytton, Laurie Jenkins, Timm Ormsby, Reuven Carlyle, Jeff Morris, Cary Condotta, Rith Kagi, Eric Pettigrew, Chris Hurst, Eileen Cody, Drew Hansen, Brad Hawkins, and Mike Hope.**

Sens. **Brian Hatfield, John McCoy, Rosemary McAuliffe, Tracey Eide, Maralyn Chase, Karen Keiser, Bob Hasegawa, Sharon Nelson, Steve Conway, David Frockt, Karen Fraser, Andy Billig, Annette Cleveland, Mark Mullet, Christine Rolfes, Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Kevin Ranker, Adam Kline, Jeannie Darneille, Jamie Pedersen, James Hargrove, and Don Benton**



■ SB 6053—**Prohibiting payroll deduction** of membership dues for public-sector unions and making it easier for members to opt out of dues not only for religious reasons, but for any “personal belief.”

SPONSOR: Sen. **Jim Honeyford** (R-Sunnyside)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. **Ann Rivers** and **John Braun**

■ SB 6183—Requiring public-employee **collective bargaining sessions to be open meetings**.

SPONSOR: Sen. **John Braun** (R-Centralia)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. **Rodney Tom, Randi Becker, Jan Angel, Barbara Bailey, Tim Sheldon, Michael Baumgartner, Jim Honeyford, Sharon Brown, and Janéa Holmquist Newbry**

■ SB 6244—Widening the filing window for **petitioning to decertify unions**, effectively tripling the amount of time organized workers would have to spend defending against decertification campaigns.

SPONSOR: Sen. **Mike Hewitt** (R-Walla Walla)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. **Curtis King** and **Jim Honeyford**

■ SB 6300—Creating new administrative and **reporting burdens for public-employee unions**.

SPONSOR: Sen. **Randi Becker** (R-Eatonville)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. **Ann Rivers, John Braun, and Jan Angel**

■ SB 6307—**Repealing and preempting employment laws** enacted by local governments, such as SeaTac's voter-approved \$15 minimum wage and Seattle's paid sick leave ordinance.

SPONSOR: Sen. **John Braun** (R-Centralia)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. **Janéa Holmquist Newbry, Jan Angel, Barbara Bailey, Randi Becker, and Jim Honeyford**

■ SB 6495—Establishing a **sub-minimum “training” wage for teenagers** that's 85% of the minimum wage for adults.

SPONSOR: Sen. **Janéa Holmquist Newbry** (R-Moses Lake)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. **Michael Baumgartner, Jan Angel, Linda Evans Parlette, and John Braun**

■ SB 2614—Establishing a **sub-minimum “training” wage for new hires** that's 75% of the minimum

## HOUSE VOTE DESCRIPTIONS

**1** ESHB 1817 (Hudgins)—**DREAM Act** to allow all students, including children of immigrants, to compete for state-based financial aid for higher education. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 71-23, Jan. 13)

**2** HB 1348 (Reykdal)—Allowing community and technical colleges to use local funds for part- and full-time **faculty step increases in pay**. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 63-34, Jan. 24)

**3** SHB 1413 (Moscoso)—**Washington Voting Rights Act** empowering local governments to voluntarily change their voting systems to district-based elections. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 53-44, Mar. 7)

**4** ESHB 1313 (Jenkins)—Requiring businesses with at least five employees to allow their employees to earn and accumulate some **paid safe and sick leave** over time. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 52-45, Jan. 29)

**5** HB 2332 (Sawyer)—Wage theft bill **increasing damages** employers must pay for stealing or illegally withholding workers' wages. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 53-45, Feb. 11)

**6** HB 2331 (Sells)—Wage theft bill requiring timely, **certified payroll reports** so workers can ensure they are being properly paid. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 54-44, Feb. 13)

**7** 2SHB 2333 (Ryu)—Wage theft bill **protecting workers from retaliation** when they seek to be paid lawfully earned wages. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 53-45, Feb. 13)

**8** HB 2334 (Riccelli)—Wage theft bill to prevent deliberate **misclassification** of employees as independent contractors. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 51-45, Feb. 14)

**9** HB 2527 (Ormsby)—Setting **prevailing wage rates based on collective bargaining agreements** in specified trades. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 59-37, Feb. 17)

**10** SHB 1260 (Warnick)—**Weakening wage standards** for Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) grants to local governments. “Right” vote: NO (Passed 53-44, Mar. 13)

wage for the first 680 hours of work, or 17 weeks for full-time employees.

SPONSOR: Sen. **Liz Pike** (R-Camas)

CO-SPONSORS: Sens. **Matt Manweller** and **Chad Magendanz**



■ SB 5935—**Making Washington a so-called “right-to-work” (for less) state**.

SPONSOR: Sen. **Michael Baumgartner** (R-Spokane)

CO-SPONSORS: None

■ SB 6392/HB 2690—Requiring **unemployment insurance recipients to do community service** (you know, like criminals).

SPONSORS: Sen. **Michael Baumgartner** (R-Spokane) and Rep. **Jeff Holy** (R-Cheney)

CO-SPONSORS: None in the Senate.

Reps. **Matt Shea, Dave Hayes, Chad Magendanz, Jason Overstreet, David Taylor, Matt Manweller, Terry Nealey, Jay Rodne, Leonard Christian, Elizabeth Scott, Cary Condotta, Jesse Young, and Hans Zeiger**



Members of AFT Washington, the Washington Education Association, and the United Faculty of Washington State lobbied their legislators to support HB 2422/SB 6235, restoring cost-of-living adjustments for educational employees. Since the legislature suspended the voter-approved COLAs six years ago, inflation has eroded their wages' buying power by 16.5 percent.





**1** 2ESSB 5127 (Holmquist Newbry)—**Expanding lump-sum buyouts** in workers’ compensation by removing age restrictions. “Right” vote: NO (Passed 27-22, Jan. 29)

**2** SB 6523 (Bailey)—**DREAM Act** (renamed REAL Hope Act in Senate) to allow all students, including children of immigrants, to compete for state-based financial aid for higher education. “Right” vote: YES (Passed 35-10, Jan. 31)

**3** SJR 8213 (Roach)—Amending the State Constitution to require a **two-thirds supermajority vote to raise taxes**. “Right” vote: NO (Failed 25-21, Feb. 5—requires a two-thirds majority vote)

**4** SSB 6179 (Braun)—Authorizing **group self-insurance** in workers’ compensation. “Right” vote: NO (Passed 26-23, Feb. 14)

**5** SB 5112 (Holmquist Newbry)—Granting **Retrospective Rating** employers more control over injured workers. “Right” vote: NO (Passed 26-22, Feb. 17)

**6** SB 5158 (Braun)—Creating “**good-faith**” **defense** for employers that violate minimum wage and overtime pay laws. “Right” vote: NO (Passed 25-23, Feb. 17)

**7** ESSB 5246 (Litzow)—Requiring school districts to link **teacher evaluations** to student test scores. “Right” vote: NO (Failed 19-28, Feb. 18)

**8** ESB 6220 (Braun)—**Cutting liquor reselling fees** for supermarkets, big-box stores and certain other retailers. “Right” vote: NO (Passed 26-23, Feb. 6)

**9** SHB 1260 (Warnick)—**Weakening wage standards** for Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) grants to local governments. “Right” vote: NO (Passed 39-10, Feb. 13)

# SENATE

● — “Right” vote    ○ — “Wrong” vote    E — Excused    (Democrats are listed in bold.)

Senator	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2014 %	LIFE-TIME
Angel	26	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	19
Bailey	10	○	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	13
Baumgartner	6	○	●	●	●	●	E	○	○	○	0	12
Becker	2	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	13
Benton	17	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	27
<b>Billig</b>	<b>3</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	89	98
Braun	20	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	0
Brown	8	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	5
<b>Chase</b>	<b>32</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	89	98
<b>Cleveland</b>	<b>49</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Conway</b>	<b>29</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	100	99
Dammeier	25	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	14
Dansel	7	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	11
<b>Darneille</b>	<b>27</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	100	89
<b>Eide</b>	<b>30</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	88	85
Ericksen	42	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	15
Fain	47	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	16
<b>Fraser</b>	<b>22</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	100	95
<b>Froct</b>	<b>46</b>	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	88	88
<b>Hargrove</b>	<b>24</b>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	78	68
<b>Hasegawa</b>	<b>11</b>	●	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	100	98
<b>Hatfield</b>	<b>19</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	89	71
Hewitt	16	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	11
Hill	45	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	13
<b>Hobbs</b>	<b>44</b>	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	75	64

Senator	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	2014 %	LIFE-TIME
Holmquist Newbry	13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	14
Honeyford	15	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	7
<b>Keiser</b>	<b>33</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	89	95
King	14	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	15
<b>Kline</b>	<b>37</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	89	94
<b>Kohl-Welles</b>	<b>36</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	100	93
<b>Liias</b> <sup>1</sup>	<b>21</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	100	97
Litzow	41	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	15
<b>McAuliffe</b>	<b>1</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	89	90
<b>McCoy</b>	<b>38</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	100	93
Mullet	5	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	56	75
<b>Nelson</b>	<b>34</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	89	95
O'Ban	28	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	21
Padden	4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	7
Parlette	12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	14
Pearson	39	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	15
<b>Pedersen</b>	<b>43</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	89	80
<b>Ranker</b>	<b>40</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	100	94
Rivers	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	15
Roach	31	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	38
<b>Rolfes</b>	<b>23</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	100	88
Schoesler	9	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	11
<i>Sheldon</i>	<i>35</i>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	27
<i>Tom</i>	<i>48</i>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	44

1. Liias also voted “right” on House Vote #1 before being appointed to serve in the Senate.

See House Vote Descriptions on Page 4.

# HOUSE

Representative	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2014 %	LIFE-TIME
<b>Appleton</b>	<b>23</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	100	99
<b>Bergquist</b>	<b>11</b>	●	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Blake</b>	<b>19</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	88
Buy	42	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	11
<b>Carlyle</b>	<b>36</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	68
Chandler	15	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	10
<b>Chopp</b>	<b>43</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	89
Christian	4	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	0
<b>Clibborn</b>	<b>41</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	80
<b>Cody</b>	<b>34</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	95
Condotta	12	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	13
Dahlquist	31	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	22
DeBolt	20	●	○	○	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	13	15
<b>Dunshee</b>	<b>44</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	92
Fagen	9	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	14
<b>Farrell</b>	<b>46</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Fey</b>	<b>27</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Fitzgibbon</b>	<b>34</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	98
<b>Freeman</b>	<b>30</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Goodman</b>	<b>45</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	96
<b>Green</b>	<b>28</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	93
<b>Gregerson</b> <sup>2</sup>	<b>33</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	90
<b>Habib</b>	<b>48</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Haigh</b>	<b>35</b>	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	50	84
Haler	8	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	24
<b>Hansen</b>	<b>23</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	97
Hargrove	47	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	13
Harris	17	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	32
Hawkins	12	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	10
Hayes	10	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	20	35
Holy	6	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	10
Hope	44	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	22	29
<b>Hudgins</b>	<b>11</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	94

Representative	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2014 %	LIFE-TIME
Hunt, G.	2	*	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	11	11
<b>Hunt, S.</b>	<b>22</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	98
<b>Hunter</b>	<b>48</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	75
<b>Hurst</b>	<b>31</b>	●	E	E	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	25	67
<b>Jenkins</b>	<b>27</b>	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	85
Johnson	14	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	13
<b>Kagi</b>	<b>32</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	89
<b>Kirby</b>	<b>29</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	98
Klippert	8	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	11
Kochmar	30	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	40	35
Kretz	7	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	12
Kristiansen	39	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	12
<b>Lytton</b>	<b>40</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
MacEwan	35	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	15
Magendanz	5	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	10
Manweller	13	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	15
<b>Moeller</b>	<b>49</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	90
<b>Morrell</b>	<b>25</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	93
<b>Morris</b> <sup>2</sup>	<b>40</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	79
<b>Moscoso</b>	<b>1</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
Muri	28	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	30	30
Nealey	16	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	11
Orcutt	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	14
<b>Ormsby</b>	<b>3</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	99
<b>Ortiz-Self</b>	<b>21</b>	*	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Orwall</b>	<b>33</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	94
Overstreet	42	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	10
Parker	6	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	10	15
<b>Pettigrew</b>	<b>37</b>	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	89	88
Pike	18	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	0	5
<b>Pollet</b>	<b>46</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	100
<b>Reykdal</b>	<b>22</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	98
<b>Riccelli</b>	<b>3</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	90	95

Representative	Dis.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2014 %	LIFE-TIME
<b>Roberts</b>	<b>21</b>	●	●	●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	100	93



# Lots of talk, little action on education

The 2014 legislative session started out promising for education, but ended disappointingly. Republicans in the Senate, in spite of rhetoric about the need for public education funding, failed to come through with any meaningful commitment, kicking the \$4.5 billion can demanded by the *McCleary* decision to fully fund basic education by 2018 down the road to the next biennium.

One of the biggest disappointments for education this session was the failure to fund cost-of-living pay increases for K-12 and community/technical college teachers and some staff. Again. This is the sixth straight year that our public educators have seen no cost of living adjustments (COLAs). The House passed HB 2422, which would have “unsuspended” the COLA; they later proposed funding it by closing four tax loopholes. Senate Republicans couldn’t bring themselves to close even one tax loophole, and instead, tried to add 18 to the 650 already existing. HB 2422 died without a hearing in the Senate. Teacher salaries continue to decline, basic education continues to be underfunded.

The session did hold one very bright spot—the passage of Washington State’s DREAM Act, which removes barriers to state financial aid from immigrant students aspiring to college. A small amount of money (\$5 million) was appropriated to assist. (See story at right.)

In searching for a silver lining, credit can also be given to the legislature for creating a study group to identify possible standards for para-educators and the professional development they will need to meet those standards. Para-educators will be part of the work group.

But, there is not much else to brag about this session. The American Federation of Teachers and Washington Education Association strongly advocated for HB 1348 to increase collective bargaining rights for two-year faculty by allowing colleges to use local funds for bargaining regular step increases. This would give the colleges some ability to retain great faculty, and fund steps faculty earn from experience and continued education. HB 1348 was shepherded

through the House on a 63-34 vote (see Vote #2) by Rep. Chris Reykdal (D-Olympia), but the Senate again proved to be where good bills go to die as Sen. Janéa Holmquist Newbry (R-Moses Lake), who chairs the Commerce and Labor Committee, failed to move the bill.

A similar fate befell HB 1536, the bill to add a labor representative to community college boards of trustees. It sailed through the House on a 58-39 vote, but died without a hearing in the Senate.

Once again, this session saw the K-12 system embroiled in fights over teacher/principal evaluations. The U.S. Dept. of Education (DOE) and Secretary Arne Duncan threatened to pull our state’s waiver from the federal No Child Left Behind Act if the Legislature did not mandate the use of a federally required test in the evaluation system. The test is given once a year, with scores coming back in August long after students have left. So, even if testing did measure teacher or principal effectiveness (a dubious proposition with no actual research to back it up)—this one is too late to do so anyway. The legislature did the right thing and did not change the law. Republican leaders in the Senate ordered a vote on SB 5246 to require the evaluations, but it failed 19-28 (see Vote #7). It remains to be seen if the DOE will do the right thing and extend the waiver. It’s a shame that so much energy was devoted to this struggle that fails to benefit a single student, while adequate funding for our state’s public education system remains elusive.

Our legislature has the ability and the authority to create a stellar public education system. The House made an effort, the Senate failed. Teachers will once again see their effective wages decline, tuition rates are frozen but still increasingly out of reach, and progress toward fully funding basic education as mandated by the State Supreme Court has been stalled again. The Republican majority in the Senate appears bent on preventing meaningful progress. The session ended on time, candidates can begin raising money for their races. The next step is up to us.



Secretary  
Treasurer's Column  
**Lynne Dodson**

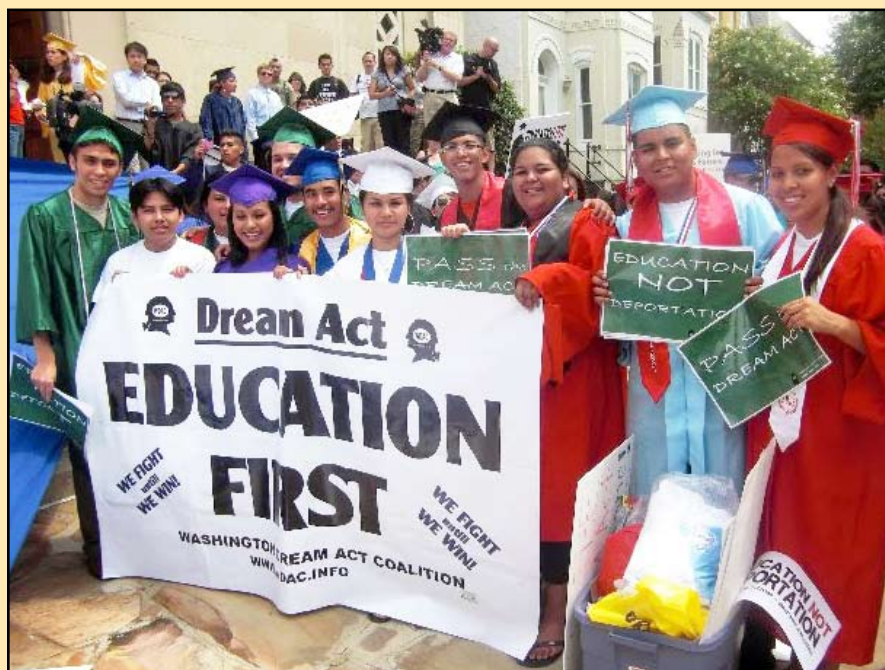


Photo courtesy of the Washington DREAM Act Coalition

## DREAM Act passes

In 2013, the House of Representatives passed HB 1817, sponsored by Rep. Zack Hudgins (D-Tukwila), also known as the Washington DREAM Act, on a 71-23 bipartisan vote. The bill would allow all high school graduates in the state, including the sons and daughters of immigrants, to compete for state-based financial aid to pursue their dreams for higher education. Delegates representing unions around the state have repeatedly approved Washington State Labor Council resolutions in support of the DREAM Act.

But it died last year in the Republican-controlled Senate, even though Majority Leader Rodney Tom (D-Medina) professed to support it. Sen. Barbara Bailey (R-Oak Harbor), the committee chairwoman who quashed the bill in 2013, not only refused a committee vote, she also canceled a hearing for which more than 100 students had traveled to Olympia.

So in 2014, the House made it clear that it wanted action, voting on the very first day of the session Jan. 13 to pass HB 1817 again, this time on a 71-23 vote (see Vote #1). After enduring public criticism for killing the bill last year, the Senate agreed to vote on the DREAM Act this time, but not before trying to take credit for the idea

as their own. A nearly identical version—SB 6523 sponsored by none other than Sen. Bailey—appeared Jan. 31 was dubbed the “REAL Hope Act” and easily passed 35-10 (see Vote #2).

The House quickly concurred with the new version and Gov. Jay Inslee signed it into law at a joyous ceremony surrounded by students.

### THE DREAM BECOMES REAL

“This bill simply allows all children in Washington to be treated the same. All young adults who are committed to the communities, who graduate from our high school, who get into our state colleges and are already paying state tuition should be allowed to compete for the opportunity to get help with that tuition.”

— DREAM Act sponsor  
Rep. Zack Hudgins

## Bipartisan capital budgets pass House, die in Senate

In the *McCleary* decision, the state Supreme Court laid out clear goals for the Legislature to meet with regard to class size and full-day kindergarten by 2018. But even if the Legislature came up with the revenue to fund it (which they haven’t yet), many school districts lack the space to accomplish those goals. For example, last year the Mukilteo school district turned down state funding to expand access to full-day kindergarten simply because they did not have the space.

This year, House leaders from both parties stepped up with a creative plan to give school districts the space they need to meet these *McCleary* goals—and to create some desperately needed construction jobs—all without raising taxes.

HB 2797, sponsored by Rep. Hans Dunshee (D-Snohomish) and Rep. Drew MacEwen (R-Union), would sell \$700 million in bonds backed by lottery revenue to construct classrooms for full-day kindergarten, as well as K-3 class size reduction.

“Reduced class sizes and all-day kindergarten play a critical role in a child’s success,” Dunshee said. “In order to accomplish these goals, new classrooms must be in place before teachers can show-up for work. Across the state, schools struggle to



find the space. This plan gives them the classrooms they need and creates 7,000 jobs at the same time.”

The bill easily passed the House on a bipartisan 90-7 vote, but following the 2014 session’s recurring theme, the Senate took no action. Senate Republican leaders echoed concerns from State Treasurer Jim McIntire that the bonds could hurt the state’s credit rating, even though four other states sell lottery-backed bonds and continue to enjoy strong credit ratings.

But it wasn’t just the school construction bill

that failed in the Senate, they also denied a vote on a supplemental capital budget that included everything from dam repair work in Moses Lake to toxic cleanup in Port Angeles. Like the school construction bill, it had passed the House on a strong bipartisan vote, 92-4.

On the final day of the session, Sen. Karen Keiser (D-Kent) made a procedural motion to try to force a floor vote on it, but Sen. Rodney

Tom and Republicans held firm and refused.

“Today the Legislature failed to pass a capital budget for the first time since 1996,” a frustrated Sen. Keiser said afterwards. “We had a strong, bipartisan capital budget proposal from the House that could have passed and would have built vital infrastructure and created 2,500 family wage jobs for Washingtonians. But Senate Republicans blocked it... It’s time for Republicans to stop talking about jobs and actually do something about jobs.”



# Anti-union ideology in the Senate

By JOE KENDO

It's no secret around Olympia that corporate interests want to weaken the ability of workers to speak out and represent their interests on the job, at the Capitol, and in their communities. When workers organize with their neighbors to fight for better wages and benefits, healthier environments, and decent public services, big business and the Tea Party get nervous because they see a challenge to their power and influence.

The 2014 session witnessed a slew of proposed legislation attacking public workers and their unions—legislation that would have forced these unions to deal with distractions rather than supporting public servants and strengthening the social safety net. The bills were all pushed by the Freedom Foundation, a right-wing think tank that refuses to disclose its donors, and in some cases were pulled from the playbook of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), a corporate-funded “bill mill.”

Some of the 2014 bills aiming to hamstring public employee unions included:

■ SB 6300, sponsored by Sen. Randi Becker (R-Eatonville), would have required public employee unions to frequently file cumbersome new financial reports to the state that require details far beyond anything expected of private-sector unions or the businesses that have a multitude of tax breaks heaped on them every year. A union's finances are not a big secret—members can simply go to a union meeting, where detailed financial reports are made available.

■ SB 6053, sponsored by Sen. Jim Honeyford (R-Sunnyside), would have prohibited payroll deduction of membership dues for public-sector employees and would have blown open the definition of a religious objection to any alleged personal belief, no matter how outrageous or patently disingenuous.

■ SB 6244, sponsored by Sen. Mike Hewitt (R-Walla Walla), attempted to widen the filing window for decertification petitions, effectively tripling the amount



*Do these folks look like the enemy? WFSE/AFSCME Local 1671 members visited Olympia Feb. 3 to thank Rep. Laurie Jenkins (D-Tacoma), second from left, for sponsoring legislation to expand state interpreter services.*

of time organized workers would have to spend defending against decertification campaigns, which are often supported by third-party anti-union groups.

■ SB 6183, sponsored by Sen. John Braun (R-Centralia), would have made state employee bargaining sessions open meetings. This would ensure that negotiations become about grandstanding and posturing instead of workers and employers coming together to agree on a contract that sets fair rules and fair wages.

Nothing about these bills empowered public servants to make their lives better or to promote mutual respect between employers and their workers. The sole intent was to make it harder for public unions to exist.

Once again, the labor community came together and defended against these attacks. City employees, nurses, fire fighters, public health advocates, maritime workers, and state employees all showed up to educate lawmakers on how unions actually work. They explained the processes already in existence for workers with bona fide religious objections to exempt themselves from union membership, and instead contribute to worthy charities in lieu of dues. They spoke eloquently about how a union's budget and spending decisions are democratically prioritized, and how members hold their representatives accountable for these fiscal decisions. They highlighted the ridiculousness of bar-

gaining in public, when no other similar negotiations are conducted under those conditions—negotiations like those between Senators and Representatives when considering a transportation package, for example.

Listening to the testimony given by these bills' supporters might lead someone to think that these efforts were all about protecting workers. But these bills did not make it easier for workers to improve their lives and working conditions.

People are not taking to the streets because they are respected too much or because their retirements are too secure. People are forming unions and demanding better lives because their communities are at risk due to rising income inequality, retirement insecurity, and a lack of good family-wage jobs.

There were a lot of opportunities for legislators to address these real concerns of middle-class families. In the House, legislators passed bills enabling all workers to earn paid sick and safe leave and took bold action to address wage theft. But in the Senate, Republican leadership—enabled by “Democratic” Sens. Rodney Tom and Tim Sheldon—spent more time taking potshots at the people who perform public services than they did addressing real issues. The 2014 legislative session could not have provided a starker contrast between these two competing visions for public policy.

## ‘Good faith’ defense bill indefensible

At a time when the rest of the nation is talking about raising the minimum wage, the Republican-controlled Senate is trying to create new loopholes for not paying it.

SB 5158, from Sen. John Braun (R-Centralia), would create a new “good-faith” defense for employers that fail to pay minimum or overtime wages. Businesses would get away with underpaying employees if they got erroneous departmental “advice” about their legal obligations. It's not the employees' fault that their company violated the law, but they are the ones who wouldn't get paid. SB 5158 would incentivize employers to seek interpretations of the law that suit them.

As they did last year, “Democratic” Sens. Rodney Tom (D-Medina) and Tim Sheldon (D-Potlatch) again joined a united Republican caucus to pass the bill 25-23 (see Vote #6). This year, the bill was granted a hearing in the House Labor and Workforce Development Committee, but it failed to advance.

## Wage standards curbed in CERB bill

At the end of the 2014 session, the legislature approved a bill that would have done real and needless harm to workers on public-works projects.

Through the Community Economic Revitalization Board, our state grants and loans money to local jurisdictions for infrastructure projects intended to promote business development and job creation. Like all state-funded public works, contractors on CERB projects adhere to wage and benefit standards that ensure construction workers are making livable wages.

HB 1260, a bill intended to streamline and clarify the CERB funding process, was amended by Sen. Brian Hatfield (D-Raymond) to strip CERB's wage standard. After the House refused to concur with that amendment, a “compromise” was reached to remove the wage standard from half of the CERB distributions.

The Washington State Labor Council made the case to legislators that, at a time of growing income inequality, it makes no sense to be stripping wage standards from any taxpayer-funded projects. Now is a time to be looking for ways to boost wages and consumer spending, not cutting them.

The new version of HB 1260 stripping half of the wage protections was approved anyway. It passed the Senate

### BUILDING TRADES ISSUES

39-10 (see Vote #9) and the House concurred 53-44 (Vote #10). Subsequently, three Democrats—Reps. Mia Gregerson, Jeff Morris and Sharon Tomiko Santos—submitted entries in the official House journal that they intended to vote “no.” But in the end, it passed anyway.

The WSLC and other advocates for preserving wage standards urged Gov. Jay Inslee not to sign HB 1260, and he vetoed the legislation.

### Electrician apprenticeship

Last year, more than 200 construction workers were killed by electrocution. The best way to improve electrical safety on a worksite—or anywhere else, for that matter—is to make sure electricians have the best training possible, and that means apprenticeship.

HB 2500, sponsored by Rep. Chris Reykdal (D-Olympia) would promote apprenticeship and improve worker and public safety by requiring completion of an apprenticeship program to receive a journey-level or residential specialty electrician certificate of competency. This is already the law in Idaho and Oregon. HB 2500 passed the House 54-40, but after contractors complained that

apprenticeships are no better than any other form of training, it was killed in the Republican-controlled Senate Commerce and Labor Committee.

### Prevailing wage rates

Construction contractors on public projects have long complained that prevailing wage rates, as determined by surveys of employers and unions, don't accurately reflect the “going” wages and benefits in particular trades. HB 2527, sponsored by Rep. Timm Ormsby (D-Spokane), offered a simple solution that has been adopted in nine other states. It would establish collectively bargained wage rates and benefits—as agreed to by employers and unions in the trades and industries that have such agreements—to be the prevailing wage rates. These rates are not set by the employer, nor are they set by the union. They reflect the true value of labor, as agreed by both parties.

The House saw this logic and passed HB 2527 on a 59-37 vote (see Vote #9). The Senate Commerce and Labor Committee amended the bill to turn it into a pilot project for just a handful of construction trades, but the amended HB 2527 was never granted a Senate floor vote and died.



# Shared Prosperity

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Here’s how each issue played out:



A shocking number of workers are denied the wages they are owed for the work they perform. Unscrupulous employers pay less than what was agreed, force workers to perform duties off the clock, cheat state and local governments out of legally required taxes and insurance contributions, and sometimes, simply withhold pay all together.

All four bills introduced in 2014 to protect workers from wage theft passed the House, but were denied votes and killed in the Senate. They were:

■ **HB 2332** (Rep. David Sawyer, D-Tacoma) would have made employers that willfully steal or illegally withhold wages liable for triple damages, rather than double, in a civil action. It passed the House 53-45 (see Vote #5), but was never heard in Senate Commerce and Labor Committee chaired by Sen. Janéa Holmquist Newbry (R-Moses Lake).

■ **HB 2331** (Rep. Mike Sells, D-Everett) would require employers to file timely certified payroll reports so that workers can ensure they are being properly paid. It passed the House 54-44 (see Vote #6), and was granted a hearing but died in Holmquist Newbry’s Senate committee.

■ **HB 2333** (Rep. Cindy Ryu, D-Shoreline) would have protected workers from being fired, having hours cut, or otherwise retaliated against when they seek their lawfully earned wages. It passed the House 53-45 (see Vote #7), but was never heard in Holmquist Newbry’s Senate committee.

■ **HB 2334** (Rep. Marcus Riccelli, D-Spokane) would have addressed worker misclassification by clarifying the definition of independent contractors. It passed 51-45 (see Vote #8), but was never heard in the Senate.



We all get sick. But not all of us can stay home when we are contagious. An estimated 1 million workers in Washington state do not have access to paid sick days. Many of them work in the restaurants, grocery stores, medical centers and other service-



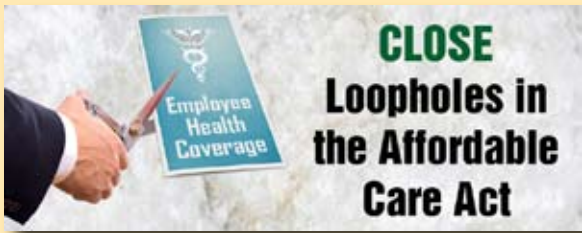
oriented jobs that involve interacting with the public. When they are sick, they work anyway or they will lose wages—and perhaps even their job.

A growing number of cities, including Seattle, Portland, San Francisco and New York City, are taking action to protect public health and approve minimum paid sick days standards so no one has to choose between their job and their family’s health.

HB 1313 would have required businesses with at least five employees to allow their employees to earn and accumulate some paid sick leave over time.

“No working family should be forced to leave a sick child at home or go to work with the flu for fear of losing their paycheck,” said HB 1313 sponsor Rep. Laurie Jenkins (D-Tacoma).

Strongly supported by the Washington Work and Family Coalition, which includes the WSLC and many other labor and community groups, HB 1313 passed the House 52-45 mostly along party lines (see Vote #4). It was granted a public hearing in the Senate Commerce and Labor Committee but died there.



Some big employers are exploiting the Affordable Care Act by shifting the cost of providing health coverage onto taxpayers. By cutting employee hours under the threshold for health requirements, these large companies dump low-wage employees onto Medicaid or force them to seek taxpayer-subsidized coverage through the state health exchange.

HB 2588, sponsored by Rep. Eileen Cody (D-West Seattle), would have helped cover the state’s Medicaid costs, increased Medicaid provider reimbursement rates, and invested in underserved areas of the state, by imposing a fee on large corporations that do not provide health coverage to low-wage workers on Medicaid. It had an impressive hearing, but failed to make it out of the House Health Care Committee.



No one who works full time should have to live in poverty. That was the message of the 1998 campaign to establish a state minimum wage that automatically adjusts for inflation. Washington voters in every county of the state approved that initiative by an overall 2-to-1 margin and it has served us well compared to other states and the federal government, which have allowed their minimum wages to stagnate and lose value over the years. However, studies indicate that, even at \$9.32, our minimum wage isn’t enough for full-time workers to meet basic needs.

Rep. Jessyn Farrell (D-Seattle) and 32 other House Democrats introduced HB 2672 that would have raised the state minimum wage for adults to \$12 an hour over the next three years and then resumed annual increases to adjust for inflation. Dozens of low-wage workers and other supporters attended the bill’s hearing and it was approved by the House Labor & Workforce Development Committee. However, it was referred to House Appropriations, where it died.

# Transportation

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press conferences were held, but once again in 2014, not once did the Senate take a vote on investing in Washington’s transportation needs.

Last year, the House of Representatives passed a transportation package to inject \$10 billion into our local economies. But this year in the Senate, Republicans failed again to deliver the votes to move a package—any package—forward.

Instead of investing in our state’s communities, Majority Leader Sen. Rodney Tom (D-Medina) and his Republican caucus dithered. Instead of securing the safety of our bridges, King insisted on playing games with transportation sales tax revenues. Instead of creating 75,000 to 100,000 living-wage jobs, the Republicans on the Senate Transportation Committee insisted on eroding prevail-



ing wages, pay that would help parents send their kids to college and help young families buy their first homes.

In the end, it’s hard to tell what exactly the Senate leadership wanted. Some doubt they ever intended to come to an agreement, given their apparent inability to take a vote on new fuel revenue to pay for these roads and bridges. While the negotiations failed to produce an agreement, they did provide an informative insight in to the real priorities of the so-called Majority Coalition Caucus controlling the Senate. In exchange for governing, the MCC demanded:

Number of State Senate votes in 2013-14 on...

**Cutting benefits for injured workers: 8**

**Investing in our transportation infrastructure: 0**

■ Diverting sales taxes on transportation projects away from the general fund, making it even more difficult to fund education at a level demanded by the Supreme Court’s *McCleary* decision.

■ Eroding prevailing wage standards on public works projects.

■ Reducing apprenticeship utilization on transportation projects, making it much harder for younger workers to gain the training they need to replace an aging construction workforce.

■ Underfunding multi-modal transportation options for communities where new roads would not solve problems

with gridlock and mobility.

■ Raiding funds intended for environmental clean-up projects.

These kinds of proposals would do nothing to put the state on the right track for future economic growth, and this style of negotiating is a far cry from what it takes to govern responsibly.

Tom and his Republican majority promised practical, goal-oriented governing when they seized power. But what we got was more D.C.-style game-playing and a Tea Party do-nothing approach to governance.

Washington state needs transportation investment. It needs long-term freight mobility planning, robust multi-modal transportation options, new roads, and adequate maintenance of the infrastructure that already exists. These kinds of investments are proven to create jobs, to make Washington a more competitive place to do business, and a healthier place to live.

The House did its part, but once again the Senate Republican leadership failed to do its part.