



2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

of the Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Working people are facing an affordability crisis, driven by skyrocketing housing and healthcare costs, pay that doesn't keep up with the cost of living, and unnecessary barriers to growing good jobs here in Washington. Insufficient investment in healthcare and childcare has worsened this crisis. **In 2025, the State Legislature should avoid deep cuts to programs that make life more affordable, and instead build on past successes, taking bold action to ensure good wages, protect workers on the job, and empower more working people to organize for better pay and working conditions.**

Unemployment Insurance for Striking Workers:

More than 30% of Americans have less than \$400 in savings. Rather than negotiate a fair contract, some employers weaponize this economic instability to force a strike. Washington should join New York, New Jersey and Maine in allowing workers to access unemployment insurance after more than two weeks on strike. This bill will help level the playing field, discourage economic hardship as a bargaining strategy, and promote good-faith contract negotiations.

Public Sector A.I.:

Public employees are seeing unregulated AI integrated into their workplaces. While AI has potential to be a powerful tool, it also poses threats of outsourcing, poor quality tech, and discrimination within AI tools. Under collective bargaining laws, public sector unions cannot bargain on technology in the workplace. However, AI is unprecedented in its scale, impact, and capabilities; its use should be bargainable to protect workers. This bill will exclude AI from the technology clause in management rights.

Child Labor on Job Sites:

A child was seriously injured on a jobsite in 2023. Legislation would tighten the nexus between school credit and workplace experience; increase financial penalties for egregious behavior and /or negligence; and offer clear legislative authority for L&I acceptance and denial of temporary exception requests related to child labor laws.



Minimum Wage and Paid Vacation:

In Washington State, a single adult working full-time needs \$25.60 an hour to afford basic necessities. Too many workers make far below this threshold, pushing people into unsustainable work schedules with no opportunity for needed rest.

Permitting and Siting:

These bills would ease the path to building more of the infrastructure we need for climate resilience and good jobs in WA, including creating exemptions to expedite permitting for upgrades for existing power grid transmission corridors, and continuing to improve state and local permitting processes to increase efficiency.

Child Care Workforce Standards Board:

With over 6,000 licensed facilities, child care in Washington is a scattered workforce; organizing and collectively bargaining one facility at a time makes it difficult to raise standards industry-wide. This bill would create a Child Care Workforce Standards Board to work with L&I and DCYF to set standards for childcare providers in our state, including wages and benefits, staffing levels, safety and professional development. It can also craft holistic solutions that support childcare providers, workers, and the communities they serve, and review public funding.

Fund Collective Bargaining Agreements

Public employees provide essential services that working families and our communities rely on. The legislature should fully fund these workers' collective bargaining agreements and ensure this critical workforce is able to continue serving Washington.

Boldly investing in our communities strengthens our economy, fulfills the everyday needs of working people, and requires the ultra wealthy to pay their fair share to build a prosperous Washington for all of us. **The State Legislature should explore all options to avoid any deep cuts to the critical state and local programs and workforce that working families rely on.**

Our Voice - Our Power - Our Movement

WORKPLACE PROTECTIONS

Personnel Files – Enforces workers’ right to access their own personnel records.

Home Care Provider Background Checks – Updates the required checks for home care providers to improve equity and streamline the process.

Update non-compete laws – Protects workers from unnecessary restraints by employers.

Healthy Starts Act 2.0 – Requires that breaks for pumping milk be paid breaks and exempts lactating people from jury duty.

Public Safety Interest Arbitration Cleanup – This package of bills provides interest arbitration for excluded public safety employees who have limited availability to withhold their labor.

Third Party Administrators – requires “good faith and fair dealing” for all injured workers.

Time-Loss Formula | Worker's Comp – The legislature should ensure the full value of family sustaining health insurance for injured workers when calculating time loss.

Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) Job Protection – Extends job protections for workers of employers with 50 or fewer employees.

Streamlining ILWU PFML Premium Payments – Allows dockworker’s earnings for work performed under their CBA to be aggregated for the purposes of applying the social security wage cap.

Responsible Bidder – Updates the contractor criteria on projects funded by state money.

PAY EQUITY

High-Hazard Prevailing Wages – Current federal data has proven a flawed, erratic, and unenforceable basis for wages. Washington should use its own tried-and-true prevailing wage standards instead.

Child Care Provider Wages – Fully funds subsidy rates to provide quality care and livable wages.

Salary Survey for Ferry Workers – Ensures wages for ferry workers are competitive by updating the maritime salary survey.

Prevailing Wage Escalator – Eliminates existing wage freezes on public works projects.

Wage replacement for workers left out – takes steps to provide a supplemental wage replacement benefit for workers not currently covered due to their immigration status.

COLA for Plan 1 Retirees – Funds Cost-of-Living Adjustments for plan 1 retirees.

HEALTHCARE

Emergency Supply of Insulin – Caps out-of-pocket cost at \$10 for a 30-day emergency supply of insulin.

Healthcare Trust for Nursing Home Workers – Funds high-quality healthcare for nursing home workers, often left behind due to low wages and costly health benefits.

Fertility Services – Requires insurance plans to include fertility coverage.

Healthcare mergers – Increased transparency and oversight of mergers, acquisitions and contracted affiliations between healthcare entities.

WORKERS’ RIGHTS

Student Worker Collective Bargaining – Creates a framework for student workers to collectively bargain at certain regional universities.

DOC Community Corrections Unit – Creates a standalone contract for community corrections workers.

Bargaining/Retiree Healthcare – Allows state employees to bargain over certain supplemental benefits, like retiree healthcare.

Consolidate Ferry Captain Bargaining Units – Consolidates the Masters, Mates and Pilots Union bargaining units.

Simplify Ferry Worker Service Credit Reimbursement – Streamlines the process allowing reimbursements to be provided solely by the union for represented union members on authorized unpaid leaves of absences.

Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) Omnibus – Give PERC authority to close costly loopholes & prevent delays in the fair resolution of workplace issues.

Washington Call Center Jobs Act – Retains call center jobs in Washington, leveraging state grants, loans, tax preferences, and public transparency to penalize companies who move their WA workforce overseas where worker exploitation is common.

Cannabis Ag Worker Organizing Protections – Extend collective bargaining rights to agricultural workers in the cannabis industry

HEALTH & SAFETY

Protect Bus and Rail Operators – Increases criminal penalties for assaults on bus and rail operators.

Dept. of Corrections (DOC) PTSD Coverage – Extends presumptive coverage of PTSD to DOC workers.

Driver Safety Course – Adds specific training on driving in work zones to driver education programs

Workplace Violence in Healthcare – Adds reporting requirements, including common cause analysis, for safety/workplace violence committees in hospitals to prevent violent acts.

Autonomous Vehicles – Requires human safety operators.

HOUSING

Housing Access and Stability – Incentivizes more housing near transit resources, and stabilizes rents for working families.

On-time Rent Credit Reporting – Establishes a pilot for landlords to report on-time rent payments to credit bureaus.

VOICE

Labor Voice on Higher Ed. Boards – Expands the statute to add a labor trustee on community college and regional 4-year Boards.

ED.

PreK-12 – Funds additional classified staff positions and increases compensation for the lowest-paid staff in schools, including paraprofessionals and food service workers.