



Washington State Legislative Session Report – Snohomish County

February 25th (Week 7)

General Update

The past week was packed with every type of session activity.

The flurry started with budget proposals being released. This kicked off with the Senate releasing their operating budget proposal on Sunday afternoon, and then all of the remaining House and Senate budget proposals were released in the following two days. Below are links to the pages for the respective bill proposals. Budget bills themselves can be tricky to read, so the agency detail is a helpful document that provides high level summaries. However, don't forget that language matters! There can be specific directives in the budget bill (called proviso language) for how funding is to be used. Sometimes there is also language directing an agency to do something 'within existing resources', which means they won't get additional funding to do that work. Items that don't have funding tied to them won't show up in the agency detail. So many hours are spent digging through all the documents to find items they requested, and also looking for other items of interest.

Senate Budget Proposals

Operating Budget: [Click here](#)

Capital Budget: [Click here](#)

Transportation Budget: [Click here](#)

House Budget Proposals

Operating Budget: [Click here](#)

Capital Budget: [Click here](#)

Transportation Budget: [Click here](#)

As the chambers pass their respective budget proposals, budget leads then start the work of negotiating final compromise budgets by the time session adjourns on March 7th.

In addition to the activity around budgets, it was also a packed week of committee hearings. With opposite house policy cutoff on Wednesday, February 21st, the week was full of policy hearings and executive sessions to move bills out of committee by that cutoff. Just [454 bills](#) made it past the opposite house policy cutoff.

After Wednesday's policy cutoff, attention quickly shifted to fiscal committees. Opposite house [fiscal cutoff](#) is tomorrow (Monday, February 26th), which means there were just five days to hear and move bills referred from policy committee to a fiscal committee. Senate Ways & Means Committee convened on Saturday, while the House worked on the floor.

Once we get past today's fiscal cutoff, focus for the rest of the week will turn to floor action where both chambers will work to pass bills off the floor by Friday March 1st, which is opposite house floor cutoff. There are just four days to debate, potentially amend, and pass bills off the floor by Friday's cutoff, so it is anticipated that there will be long days on the floor, potentially running late into the night.

As we pass each cutoff, more bills fail to meet their deadlines and are considered "Dead" so there are fewer bills that are "Alive" and moving through the process. Here are the numbers of bills that have made it past each cutoff so far this session (this does not include resolutions, memorials, gubernatorial appointments, or bills in Rules X File):

- Number of bills alive after [House of Origin Policy Cutoff](#): 1,259
- Number of bills alive after [House of Origin Fiscal Cutoff](#): 746
- Number of bills alive after [House of Origin Floor Cutoff](#): 532
- Number of bills alive after [Opposite House Policy Cutoff](#): 454

First Bill Signing

Governor Jay Inslee [signed](#) the first bill of the 2024 Session, [EHB 1964](#) Enhancing prorate and fuel tax collections by improving taxpayer compliance, providing additional enforcement mechanisms, and protecting confidential taxpayer information.

Initiatives

Last week House Speaker Laurie Jinkins and Senate Majority Leader Andy Billing [announced](#) they would hold hearings on three of the six initiatives, and those hearings are now officially scheduled for this week and can be watched on [TVW](#).

- [Initiative 2111](#) relating to limiting the ability of state and local governments to impose an income tax, will be heard in a Joint Hearing by the Senate Ways and Means and the House Finance Committees Tuesday, February 27th at 12:30 p.m.
- [Initiative 2081](#) concerning parental rights and their children's public school education, will be heard in a Joint Hearing by the Senate Early Learning and K-12 and the House Education Committees Wednesday, February 28th at 8 a.m.
- [Initiative 2113](#) relating to vehicular pursuits by police officers, will be heard in a Joint Hearing by the Senate Law and Justice and the House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry Committee Wednesday, February 28th at 9 a.m.

Legislators can vote to pass the initiatives, pass an alternative that would appear side-by-side on the ballot with the original, or allow them to go directly to the fall ballot.

The three remaining initiatives will not be heard by the legislature and are expected to be on the fall ballot for voters' consideration.

- [Initiative 2109](#) – Repeal of the Capital Gains Tax
- [Initiative 2117](#) – Repeal of the Climate Commitment Act

- [Initiative 2124](#) – Repeal of the Long-Term Care Tax

Looking Ahead

The week will start with fiscal committees having marathon meetings to pass bills out of committee by fiscal cutoff. After that, the rest of the week will be focused on floor action as we work towards Friday's opposite house floor cutoff.

Upcoming Key Dates:

- February 26th - Opposite House Fiscal Cutoff
- March 1st - Opposite House Floor Cutoff
- March 7th - Sine Die

Electeds & Elections

After 16 years in the House of Representatives, and 8 years in the Senate, Senator Sam Hunt (D-Olympia) announced his intention to retire from the legislature and not seek reelection. Senator Hunt represents the 22nd District.

Representative Jessica Bateman (D-Olympia) announced she will run for senate seat vacated by Senator Hunt.

Representative Jacquelin Maycumber (R-Republic) announced she will run for the 5th Congressional House seat vacated by Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rogers who announced she is retiring from congress after nearly two decades.

Session Primers:

As we go through session, we will periodically do brief primers on things related to session and the legislative process. We often use jargon and things move very quickly, so our goal with these primers is to help you better understand what is going on in Olympia as we go along. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out!

A Primer on the X-Files

You may have seen activity on some bills late this week saying they have been moved to the House or Senate Rules 'X' File. After certain cut-off dates, the Rules Committee sometimes places bills in the x-file if they are no longer available for consideration (aka dead). Bills placed in the x-file are removed from all calendars and daily status sheets.

Issue Updates & Key Legislation

Rep Leavitt introduced [HB 1956](#), which addresses fentanyl and other substance use prevention education. It was voted out of the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on

Feb 21st. It had a public hearing in Ways and Means on Feb 24th. The current version of the bill directs the Department of Health to develop, implement, and maintain a statewide drug overdose prevention and awareness campaign to address the drug overdose epidemic through 2029. Tasks the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) with developing and updating age-appropriate substance use prevention and awareness materials for school and classroom use aligned with the statewide campaign. Requires OSPI to adjust the state health and physical education learning standards for middle and high school students to add opioids to the list of drugs included in drug-related education. It is scheduled for executive session on Feb 26th. ***Snohomish signed in support.***

Sen Kuderer introduced [SB 5804](#), which concerns opioid overdose reversal medication in public schools. It was amended and voted out of the House Committee on Education on Feb 19th. The current version of the bill requires all school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools, not just school districts with 2,000 or more students, to obtain and maintain opioid overdose reversal medication in each school and to adopt a related policy. Directs the Washington State School Directors' Association to update a model policy that meets specified guidelines. Makes available to all public schools a grant program for purchasing opioid overdose reversal medication and training personnel to administer the medication. It has been referred to House Rules for further consideration.

Rep Orwall introduced [HB 2088](#), which extends liability protections for responders dispatched from mobile rapid response crisis teams and community-based crisis teams. It had a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Law and Justice on Feb 19th and executive session on Feb 20th. The current version of the bill grants limited immunity from civil liability to certain entities for providing crisis stabilization services and operating mobile crisis teams. It has been placed on the Senate second reading calendar and awaits further action. ***Snohomish signed in support.***

Sen Dhingra introduced [SB 5853](#), which extends the crisis relief center model to provide behavioral health crisis services for minors. It had a public hearing in the House Committee on Human Services, Youth and Early Learning on Feb 20th and was amended and voted out of committee on Feb 21st. It had a public hearing in Appropriations on Feb 23rd. The current version of the bill authorizes 23-hour crisis relief centers to serve nonadult clients, and establishes guidelines for centers serving this population. Aligns the definition of "mental health professional" for purposes of provisions governing treatment of minors with the definition applicable to the treatment of adults, and makes other changes to incorporate references to these centers and similar facilities in current law provisions. It is scheduled for executive session on Feb 26th. ***Snohomish signed in support.***

Sen L. Wilson introduced [SB 5906](#), which implements a statewide drug overdose prevention and education campaign. It had a public hearing in Appropriations on Feb 23rd. The current version of the bill requires the Department of Health to develop and maintain an ongoing drug overdose prevention campaign and conduct a feasibility study for an overdose prevention

hotline and provide a report to the legislature. It has been scheduled for executive session on Feb 26th.

Sen Dingra introduced [SB 6251](#), which coordinates regional behavioral crisis response services. It had a public hearing in the House Committee on Health Care and Wellness on Feb 20th and was amended and voted out of committee on Feb 21st. It had a public hearing in Appropriations on Feb 23rd. The current version of the bill authorizes behavioral health administrative service organizations (BHASOs) to develop protocols for optimizing crisis response in the regional service area, which must be submitted to the Health Care Authority. Requires the Department of Health (DOH) to seek recommendations from BHASOs to determine which 988 contact hubs best meet regional needs and authorizes BHASOs to recommend 988 contact hubs. Requires 988 contact hubs to enter data-sharing agreements with regional crisis lines that include real-time information sharing. Modifies the circumstances in which the DOH must revoke a 988 contact hub's designation. It has been scheduled for executive session on Feb 26th. ***Snohomish signed in support.***

Sen Dingra introduced [SB 6308](#), which relates to timelines for implementation of the 988 system. The bill was amended and voted out of House Appropriations on Feb 22nd. The current version of the bill extends timelines related to the development of platforms for an integrated 988 crisis response system. It will be referred to Rules for further consideration.

Sen Dingra introduced [SB 6228](#), which relates to substance use disorder treatment. It had a hearing in the House Health Care and Wellness Committee on Feb 20th and was amended and voted out on Feb 21st. It had a public hearing in the Appropriations Committee on Feb 23rd. The current version of the bill has multiple components:

- Directs behavioral health agencies to submit policies to the Department of Health (Department) related to the transfer or discharge of a person without the person's consent and requires the Department to adopt a model policy based on the policies that it receives.
- Requires certain health care providers, hospitals, and behavioral health agencies to provide patients seeking treatment for opioid use disorder or alcohol use disorder with education related to treatment options, including any available pharmacological treatments.
- Requires the length of an initial authorization for inpatient or residential substance use disorder treatment approved by the Public Employees Benefits Board (PEBB), private health insurers, and Medicaid managed care organizations to be no less than 14 days from the date of admission.
- Requires the PEBB, private health insurers, and Medicaid managed care organizations to reimburse hospitals and psychiatric hospitals that bill for opioid overdose reversal medications dispensed or distributed to a patient and for the administration of long acting injectable buprenorphine.
- Directs the Health Care Authority (Authority) to convene a work group of commercial health carriers, Medicaid managed care organizations, and behavioral health agencies to

develop recommendations for streamlining the requirements and processes for the authorization and reauthorization of inpatient or residential substance use disorder treatment.

- Directs the Authority to conduct a gap analysis of nonemergency transportation benefits for Medicaid enrollees.
- Directs the Authority to contract with organizations to: convene focus groups to make recommendations on improving experiences and outcomes for civil commitment patients, and develop a proposal for a statewide network of secure, trauma-informed transport for civil commitment patients.
- Requires the Authority to contract for the development of a training program for licensed social workers and other personnel who practice in an emergency department with responsibilities related to involuntary civil commitments and requires the staff to complete the training every three years.

It has been scheduled for executive session on Feb 26th. ***Snohomish signed in support.***