

AAUW WA State Legislative Update 1/15/22

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Week 1

The 2022 Legislative session commenced on Monday, January 10 and given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 session looks much like that of 2021 – a virtual session with a limited number of lawmakers on site at the Capitol, and committee hearings being fully remote. For those working on campus, testing, masking and distancing protocols are all in place. As of Monday morning, five senators had announced that they have tested positive for Covid.

Members were sworn in on Monday and on Tuesday, Governor Inslee delivered his [State of the State address - click to view...](#) Given that it is a short 60-day session, legislators began holding hearings on the very first day. Under consideration this session, are both bills that were held over from 2021 as well as many newly introduced bills. Before adjourning on March 10, legislators will also need to pass a two-year supplemental state budget. Governor Inslee released his budgetary proposal in mid-December and the House and Senate will release their own proposals in the coming weeks.

Curious how to engage in the 2022 virtual session? [Click to learn more about how to access the legislature remotely...](#)

AAUW-WA 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Creating programs to encourage sexual assault nurse examiner training. [HB 1621](#), sponsored by Rep. Mosbrucker, would require the Department of Health to establish a stipend program for licensed nurses training to become certified sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs). The bill also requires DOH to establish a hospital grant program to increase access to certified SANEs for hospitals without sufficient access. [A sexual assault nurse examiner is a registered nurse specifically trained to provide evidentiary examinations of sexual assault victims. In addition to other services, SANEs provide medical assistance while also assessing, documenting, and preserving evidence for potential prosecutions.] HB 1621 is an attempt to address the acute problem of many counties not having SANE nurses available to offer services to sexual assault survivors.

The bill was heard in House Health on January 10 and it is scheduled for executive action on January 19.

Increasing the Availability of sexual assault nurse examiners education in rural and underserved communities. [HB 1622](#), also sponsored by Rep Mosbrucker, would require the WA State University College of Nursing to establish a sexual assault nurse examiner (SANE) online and clinical training program, and a regional SANE leader pilot program. Of note, currently the only entity that offers SANE training in the state is Harborview Medical Center in Seattle.

The bill was heard on January 10 and passed out of committee on January 13.

Keep Our Care Act. [SB 5688](#)/HB 1809, sponsored by Senator Randall and Rep Simmons respectively, would ensure that health entity mergers and acquisitions improve, rather than harm, access to affordable quality care. Our state has seen a proliferation of hospital mergers over the past 10 years, and they often have negatively impacted cost, quality and access to necessary health care, particularly access to reproductive and end of life care. SB 5688 would give the AG's office the tools it needs to ensure that future health system mergers and other transactions improve access to care. Specifically, the bill would prohibit a health entity consolidation that diminishes access to affordable quality care and would ensure AG oversight of all mergers. It also would allow for community input through public notification of proposed consolidations and the opportunity for public input and comment.

SB 5688 will be heard on Tuesday, January 18 at 10:30 am in Senate Law and Justice. [If you want to sign in as supportive of the bill, click here...](#)

Creating Teaching Endorsements in Computer Science. [SB 5389](#), sponsored by Senator Wellman, was introduced in the 2021 legislative session. In 2021, the bill passed out of its policy committee but didn't move out of Senate Ways and Means. If the bill is to progress this session, there will need to be a public hearing in Ways and Means. The endorsement created by SB 5389 would allow current teachers to be qualified to teach computer science. These specialty endorsements will allow greater accessibility to computer science courses and skills to underserved communities.

The bill is in Ways and Means. A hearing date has not yet been set.

Concerning Protections and Services for Indigenous Persons who are Missing Murdered or Survivors of Human Trafficking. [HB 1571](#), sponsored by Rep Mosbrucker, builds off legislation passed both in 2017 and 2018, addressing the ongoing tragedy of missing and indigenous persons. Information provided during the public hearing indicates that the indigenous population of WA makes up less than 2% of the population while at same time accounting for almost 80% of the MIP in this state. HB 1571 would create new protections and services for missing and indigenous persons including changes to the duties and responsibilities of coroners and medical examiners; creation of grant programs, and changes to the duties of law enforcement. [Click here for further info about the bill...](#)

HB 1571 was heard on January 13 and is scheduled for executive action on January 20.