

AAUW WA State Legislative Update 3/11/2022

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Week 9 – SINE DIE EDITION

The 2022 legislative session has come to a close. The short, 60-day session adjourned very late in the evening of Thursday, March 10 as legislators finalized the supplemental budget and delivered their final bills to the Governor for signature. This was the second year that legislators and the public had to navigate working primarily remotely and, while things worked relatively smoothly, everyone agrees that the work is much more challenging when interactions are limited to two dimensions.

The 2022 Legislature found itself flush with higher-than-expected tax revenues and federal covid relief dollars, leading them to make historic investments in the supplemental budget in housing, behavioral health, families, schools, foster care, food, and transportation. Legislators now head back to their districts, back to their other jobs (being a legislator is considered a part-time job), and for all members of the House and ½ of the members of the Senate, a return to the campaign trail in anticipation of fall elections.

As you can see, from the updates below, there is lots of good news. Most of AAUW's priorities fared very well this session. If your legislators supported any of the bills below, now is a great time to reach out to them and express your gratitude. [Legislative emails can be found here.](#)

AAUW-WA 2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

PASSED! **Increasing the Availability of sexual assault nurse examiners education in rural and underserved communities** – [HB 1622](#), 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.

UPDATE: The bill is headed to the Governor for his signature.

PASSED! **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 1517 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. **UPDATE: The bill has been delivered to the Governor for his signature.**

PASSED! Affirm WA Access to Abortion Act – [HB 1851](#) sponsored by Rep Thai, will ensure that qualified licensed health care providers can include abortion services in their practice. This legislation comes at a critical juncture when threats to abortion are intensifying across the country. Thirteen other states already recognize that certain advanced practice clinicians can safely and effectively provide abortion, and providers have already been doing so in Washington under the guidance of two Attorney General Opinions. Passing this legislation would remove legal ambiguity and ensure that providers are not unnecessarily prohibited from offering abortion care when it is within their existing scope of practice. The bill will also modernize the statute’s language to be gender neutral and inclusive. **UPDATE: The bill is headed to the Governor for his signature.**

PASSED! Changes to the Paid Family Leave – [SB 5649](#), sponsored by Senator Robinson, will update the state’s PFML statute by making the following improvements: allowing people to apply up to 45 days in advance of an expected leave; extending family caregiving leaves up to 14 days after the death of the family member for whom the worker was providing care, or after the death of a newborn or stillborn child; allowing people to take medical leave during the first 6 weeks after giving birth without requiring additional medical certification; sunsetting the temporary exemption of workers covered by a collective bargaining agreement; and making public the list of employers with approved Voluntary Plans. The bill was modified substantially in policy committee. The Employment Security Department announced likely cash flow issues in the PFML trust fund in March or April, before the first quarter of payroll premiums come in at the end of April. The trust fund issue undermined the possibility for bipartisan consensus on the modest PFML improvement bill as originally drafted. The new version cuts most of those improvements and creates new accountability measures, including an actuarial study and audit of the PFML program administration. **UPDATE: The bill is now headed to the Governor for his consideration.**

PASSED! Providing Wage and Salary Information – [SB 5761](#), sponsored by Senator Randall, will expand upon current law, by requiring employers to disclose additional information in job postings. Specifically, when posting job openings, an employer would have to disclose the hourly or salary compensation, or a range of the compensation, and a general description of the benefits offered. **UPDATE: SB 5761 is headed to the Governor for his consideration.**

Higher Education Affordability – [HB 1659](#), sponsored by Rep Slatter would make higher education more affordable and accessible for students. It expands the Washington College Grant (WCG) program by modifying the income eligibility thresholds and award levels. The bill will also allow for an additional annual stipend for expenses beyond tuition and fees such as books, lab fees, supplies, technology, transportation, housing, and childcare. **UPDATE: The bill passed both the House and Senate, but the House never had the opportunity to concur in the changes made by Senate before the policy-cut-off and therefor the bill died.**

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We also say goodbye to many legislators who are leaving to run for other office or otherwise retiring from public service as state legislators. These include Senators David Frockt, Reuven Carlyle, Tim Sheldon and Sharon Brown and Representatives Pat Sullivan, Laurie Dolan, Noel Frame, Steve Kirby, Mike Sells, Javier Valdez, Jesse Johnson, Sharon Shewmake, and Bob McCaslin. We heartily thank them for their service and wish them well.