

WAADAC Legislative Report

January 15, 2026

Melissa Johnson, Lobbyist

Welcome to the first week of the 2026 legislative session! Lawmakers have returned to Olympia for a fast-moving 60-day short session shaped by several powerful forces: a sharpened progressive edge following the 2025 special elections; a deeply challenging budget environment; and the early shadow of the 2026 election cycle. Together, these dynamics create an atmosphere of urgency, narrow timelines, and heightened political stakes. As fiscal pressures intensify and policy priorities collide, legislators will face difficult tradeoffs and high-stakes negotiations that will define the remainder of the biennium and set the tone for the year ahead.

Hearings on the Governor's supplemental budget opened the week, highlighting the financial woes lawmakers face in balancing the state's two-year budget. Governor Ferguson gave his first State of the State address, calling for "bold action" on making the state's tax system fairer, addressing the housing crisis, and investing in infrastructure. He took an optimistic tone despite the state's budget challenges.

Policy committees packed their agendas, knowing there's not enough time to hear all the bills introduced thus far, let alone the bills that remain alive for consideration from the 2025 session. With less than three weeks to the policy committee cutoff on February 4th, the clock is ticking (loudly).

Upcoming Events

Law & Justice (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 1/19 @ 10:30am

- [SB 5993](#) - Public Hearing - Prohibiting interest charges for new and unpaid medical debt. (Remote Testimony Available).

Ways & Means (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 1/19 @ 4:00pm

- [SB 5988](#) - Public Hearing - Establishing fee authority for accreditation services provided to opioid treatment programs by the department of health. (Remote Testimony Available).

Law & Justice (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 1/20 @ 8:00am

- [SB 5906](#) - Public Hearing - Establishing data and personal safety protections within areas of public accommodation for all Washington residents. (Remote Testimony Available).

Health & Long-Term Care (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 1/20 @ 10:30am

- [SB 5845](#) - Public Hearing - Modernizing and clarifying timely payment requirements for health carriers. (Remote Testimony Available).

- [SB 6071](#) - Public Hearing - Standardizing overpayment recovery requirements. (Remote Testimony Available).

Early Learning & Human Services (House) - HHR D and Virtual JLOB - 1/20 @ 1:30pm

- [HB 2429](#) - Public Hearing - Supporting children and youth behavioral health. (Remote Testimony Available).

Health Care & Wellness (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 1/20 @ 1:30pm

- [HB 2437](#) - Public Hearing - Establishing fee authority for accreditation services provided to opioid treatment programs by the department of health. (Remote Testimony Available).

Postsecondary Education & Workforce (House) - HHR C and Virtual JLOB - 1/20 @ 1:30pm

- [HB 2148](#) - **Exec Session** - Creating the pay it forward program.

Ways & Means (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 1/20 @ 4:00pm

- [SB 6173](#) - Public Hearing - Creating an apple health employer assessment. (Remote Testimony Available).

Business, Trade & Economic Development (Senate) - SHR 2 and Virtual J.A. Cherberg - 1/21 @ 8:00am

- [SB 6031](#) - Public Hearing - Enhancing public safety and enforcement of crimes that impact insurance. (Remote Testimony Available).

Civil Rights & Judiciary (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 1/21 @ 8:00am

- [HB 2548](#) - Public Hearing - Strengthening health care market standards. (Remote Testimony Available). (If measure is referred to committee.)

Labor & Workplace Standards (House) - HHR D and Virtual JLOB - 1/21 @ 8:00am

- [HB 2405](#) - Public Hearing - Establishing a pilot program for posttraumatic stress disorder treatment and research. (Remote Testimony Available).

Health Care & Wellness (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 1/21 @ 1:30pm

• [HB 2261](#) - Public Hearing - Ensuring transparency in credentials and communications between patients and health care professionals. (Remote Testimony Available).

• [HB 2283](#) - Public Hearing - Establishing a medical loss ratio of at least 90 percent for health plans. (Remote Testimony Available).

• [HB 2168](#) - **Exec Session** - Facilitating the rapid sharing of overdose mapping information for overdose prevention.

Postsecondary Education & Workforce (House) - HHR C and Virtual JLOB - 1/21 @ 1:30pm

• [HB 2286](#) - Public Hearing - Concerning alternative routes to social worker licensure. (Remote Testimony Available).

• [HB 2098](#) - Public Hearing - Adjusting higher education funding. (Remote Testimony Available).

Business, Trade & Economic Development (Senate) - SHR 2 and Virtual J.A. Cherberg - 1/22 @ 8:00am

• [SB 6031](#) - **Exec Session** - Enhancing public safety and enforcement of crimes that impact insurance.

Law & Justice (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 1/22 @ 10:30am

• [SB 5993](#) - **Exec Session** - Prohibiting interest charges for new and unpaid medical debt.

• [SB 5906](#) - **Exec Session** - Establishing data and personal safety protections within areas of public accommodation for all Washington residents.

Finance (House) - HHR A and Virtual JLOB - 1/22 @ 1:30pm

• [HB 2100](#) - Public Hearing - Enacting an excise tax on large operating companies on the amount of payroll expenses above the minimum wage threshold of the additional medicare tax to fund services to benefit Washingtonians and establishing the Well Washington fund account. (Remote Testimony Available).

Health & Long-Term Care (Senate) - SHR 4 and Virtual - 1/23 @ 8:00am

• [SB 6094](#) - Public Hearing - Concerning facilities licensed to provide pediatric transitional care services. (Remote Testimony Available).

State Government & Tribal Relations (House) - HHR E and Virtual JLOB - 1/23 @ 8:00am

- [HB 2198](#) - Public Hearing - Improving regulatory efficiency by integrating executive order 25-03, concerning permitting and licensing processes, into chapter 43.42A RCW. (Remote Testimony Available).

State Government, Tribal Affairs & Elections (Senate) - SHR 2 and Virtual J.A. Cherberg - 1/23 @ 10:30am

- [SB 5968](#) - **Exec Session** - Improving regulatory efficiency by integrating executive order 25-03, concerning permitting and licensing processes, into chapter 43.42A RCW.

<u>Bill Details</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sponsor</u>	<u>Priority</u>	<u>Position</u>
HB 1496 (SSB 5254)	Health care information Strengthening patients' rights regarding their health care information.	H HC/Wellness	Berry	
HB 2097	County B&O tax Authorizing counties to impose a business and occupation tax.	H Finance	Scott	
HB 2098	Higher education funding Adjusting higher education funding.	H Postsec Ed & W	Reed	
HB 2100 (SB 6093)	Payroll expense tax Enacting an excise tax on large operating companies on the amount of payroll expenses above the minimum wage threshold of the additional medicare tax to fund services to benefit Washingtonians and establishing the Well Washington fund account.	H Finance	Scott	
HB 2106	Health carrier modif. notice Requiring carriers to provide substantive notice to health care providers and health care facilities about significant contract modifications.	H HC/Wellness	Simmons	
HB 2121	Nonprofits, schools/taxes Exempting nonprofits and schools from certain sales and use taxes on services.	H Finance	Walsh	
HB 2127	Physician assistants/title Changing the legal title for physician assistants to physician associates.	H HC/Wellness	Marshall	
HB 2130	New 2025 taxes repeal Repealing new taxes imposed by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5814 during the 2025 regular legislative session.	H Finance	Orcutt	

<u>HB 2148</u>	Pay it forward program Creating the pay it forward program.	H Postsec Ed & W	Reed
<u>HB 2168</u> (SB 5933)	Overdose mapping information Facilitating the rapid sharing of overdose mapping information for overdose prevention.	H HC/Wellness	Manjarrez
<u>HB 2198</u> (SB 5968)	Permitting and licensing Improving regulatory efficiency by integrating executive order 25-03, concerning permitting and licensing processes, into chapter 43.42A RCW.	H State Govt & T	Richards
<u>HB 2208</u>	Health continuing ed./tax Exempting health care continuing education classes from retail sales and use tax.	H Finance	McClintock
<u>HB 2261</u> (SB 6166)	Health care credentials Ensuring transparency in credentials and communications between patients and health care professionals.	H HC/Wellness	Marshall
<u>HB 2283</u> (SB 5953)	Medical loss ratio Establishing a medical loss ratio of at least 90 percent for health plans.	H HC/Wellness	Rule
<u>HB 2286</u> (SB 6060)	Social worker licensure Concerning alternative routes to social worker licensure.	H Postsec Ed & W	Rule
<u>HB 2289</u> (SB 5998)	Operating budget, supp. Making 2025-2027 fiscal biennium supplemental operating appropriations.	H Approps	Ormsby
<u>HB 2331</u>	Pediatric care rates Preventing reductions in access to pediatric primary care and behavioral health services.	H Approps	Penner
<u>HB 2340</u>	Nursing assistants/SUD prg. Applying substance use disorder monitoring program provisions to nursing assistants.	H HC/Wellness	Simmons
<u>HB 2394</u> (SB 6031)	Insurance crimes Enhancing public safety and enforcement of crimes that impact insurance.	H ConsPro&Bus	Goodman
<u>HB 2405</u>	PTSD treatment and research Establishing a pilot program for posttraumatic stress disorder treatment and research.	H Labor & Workpl	Schmidt
<u>HB 2429</u>	Youth behavioral health	H EL & Human Svc	Callan

Supporting children and youth behavioral health.

<u>HB 2437</u> (SB 5988)	Opioid treatment prg. fees Establishing fee authority for accreditation services provided to opioid treatment programs by the department of health.	H HC/Wellness	Lekanoff
<u>HB 2546</u> (SB 6071)	Health carrier overpayments Standardizing overpayment recovery requirements.		Simmons
<u>HB 2548</u>	Health care market standards Strengthening health care market standards.		Taylor
<u>SB 5845</u>	Health carrier payments Modernizing and clarifying timely payment requirements for health carriers.	S Health & Long-	Slatter
<u>SB 5867</u>	Mobile pregnancy application Partnering with a mobile pregnancy application to improve maternal and infant health.	S Health & Long-	Muzzall
<u>SB 5875</u>	School liability/WLAD Concerning school district liability for violation of the Washington law against discrimination.	S Law & Justice	Wellman
<u>SB 5881</u>	Enhanced medicaid payments Providing enhanced medicaid payments to providers and hospitals.	S Ways & Means	Muzzall
<u>SB 5906</u>	Data and personal safety Establishing data and personal safety protections within areas of public accommodation for all Washington residents.	S Law & Justice	Hansen
<u>SB 5918</u> (HB 2147)	School operating costs Providing funding for school materials, supplies, and operating costs.	S EL/K-12	Wellman
<u>SB 5953</u> (HB 2283)	Medical loss ratio Establishing a medical loss ratio of at least 90 percent for health plans.	S Health & Long-	Slatter
<u>SB 5968</u> (HB 2198)	Permitting and licensing Improving regulatory efficiency by integrating executive order 25-03, concerning permitting and licensing processes, into chapter 43.42A RCW.	S State Gov/Trib	Krishnadasan
<u>SB 5980</u>	Live presentations/sales tax Exempting live presentations from retail sales and use tax.	S Ways & Means	Torres

<u>SB 5988</u> (HB 2437)	Opioid treatment prg. fees	S Ways & Means	Robinson
	Establishing fee authority for accreditation services provided to opioid treatment programs by the department of health.		
<u>SB 5993</u>	Medical debt interest	S Law & Justice	Alvarado
	Prohibiting interest charges for new and unpaid medical debt.		
<u>SB 5998</u> (HB 2289)	Operating budget, supp.	S Ways & Means	Robinson
	Making 2025-2027 fiscal biennium supplemental operating appropriations.		
<u>SB 6031</u> (HB 2394)	Insurance crimes	S Business, Trad	Lovick
	Enhancing public safety and enforcement of crimes that impact insurance.		
<u>SB 6059</u> (HB 2466)	Social workers board	S Health & Long-	Orwall
	Creating the Washington state board of governors for licensed social workers.		
<u>SB 6060</u> (HB 2286)	Social worker licensure	S Health & Long-	Orwall
	Concerning alternative routes to social worker licensure.		
<u>SB 6071</u>	Health carrier overpayments	S Health & Long-	Cleveland
	Standardizing overpayment recovery requirements.		
<u>SB 6094</u>	Pediatric transitional care	S Health & Long-	Riccelli
	Concerning facilities licensed to provide pediatric transitional care services.		
<u>SB 6166</u> (HB 2261)	Health care credentials	S Health & Long-T	Muzzall
	Ensuring transparency in credentials and communications between patients and health care professionals.		
<u>SB 6173</u>	Apple health employer assess	S Ways & Means	Alvarado
	Creating an apple health employer assessment.		