

Capitol News

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Drama unfolded in the Senate on the last working day of the 2017 legislative session. Senate Republicans, in an attempt to show that Senate Democrats did not have the votes to support new revenue, brought two tax measures to the Senate floor late last week. SB 5111, Governor Inslee's request legislation imposing a capital gains tax, and SB 5113, Governor Inslee's B&O tax proposal both failed in a 0-48 vote. Senate Democrats decried this as a political stunt and voted against both measures. But this fight is not over; Senator Rossi has introduced SB 5929, essentially the House Democrats' tax measure, and it is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on Wednesday.

For all practical purposes, the 2017 legislative session ended Friday, with a skeleton crew returning to the Capitol on Sunday to officially adjourn sine die. They have spent this week completing the business of passing bills that were amended by the opposite chamber. Of course, they haven't completed their work on the operating budget or K-12 funding. In fact, negotiations on the operating budget have yet to begin. Governor Inslee has called them back into a 30-day special session beginning on Monday.

In a special session, bills that haven't made their way through the legislative process will revert to the Rules Committee of their house of origin. Then, the house of origin must pass the bill again and send it to the opposite chamber, where it will be referred to a committee. The House and Senate typically reach agreement on which bills will be addressed during a special session.

Bills that have passed both the House and Senate are sent to the Governor for his signature into law. If a bill was delivered to him by April 17th, he has five days to sign the bill. Bills delivered after April 17th must be signed into law 20 days after adjournment (excluding Sundays).

The Legislature has taken action this week on HB 2143, the bill that expands the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship to students in advanced degree programs in health care fields. The bill was heard in and passed out of the Senate Ways & Means Committee and is now in the Senate Rules Committee. It will likely be considered during the special session.

Negotiations on the K-12 education reform bills are scheduled to ramp up during the special session. PTWA is continuing its advocacy on the years of service issue as legislators contemplate salary models during negotiations.

Updates will resume during the special session, once there is news to report on legislative activity around the budget and bills related to the budget.

Upcoming Events

Ways & Means (Senate) - SHR 4, - 4/26 @ 3:00pm

- SB 5929 - Public Hearing - Concerning investing in Washington families by improving the fairness of the state's excise tax system by narrowing or eliminating tax preferences, imposing a business and occupation tax surcharge while eliminating tax liability for small businesses, enacting an excise tax on capital gains, modifying the real estate excise tax, making administrative changes, and implementing marketplace fairness in Washington.

WSLHA High Priority Bills

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor	Position
ESHB 1843 (SB 5623)	Basic education program	Fulfilling the state's paramount duty for all children through equitable and responsible investments in the state's basic education program and reductions to local effort contributions.	S Ways & Means	Sullivan	
ESB 5023 (SB 1059)	Schools/Excess levies	Delaying implementation of revisions to the school levy lid. (REVISED FOR ENGROSSED: Changing provisions relating to school district excess levies.)	C 6 L 17	Wellman	
SB 5177	Hearing loss training	Requiring long-term care workers to be trained to recognize hearing loss.	Del to Gov	Bailey	
2SSB 5179	Hearing instrument coverage	Requiring coverage for hearing instruments under public employee and Medicaid programs.	H Approps	Bailey	Support
SSB 5607	Education	Concerning education.	H Approps	Braun	