

Capitol News

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The first week of the 2023 session is in the books, and it was a busy one. Committees got underway with work sessions, bill hearings, and even voting bills out of committee. There are already almost 800 bills introduced between the House and Senate.

Governor Inslee gave his State of the State Address on Tuesday before a joint session of the House of Representatives and the Senate. He focused on the challenges facing the state in housing and homelessness, behavioral health, education, and climate.

The House and Senate fiscal committees held hearings on the Governor's 2023-25 budgets, with hundreds of testifiers weighing in. As lawmakers prepare to write their own 2023-25 budgets, they do so with increased revenue and a few uncertainties that will play out during session. For example, the state is now collecting the new capital gains tax, which is expected to generate hundreds of millions of dollars per year for early learning and childcare. However, the state Supreme Court will hear arguments on January 26th that could possibly strike down the law, creating a large hole in budget expectations.

WSLHA Priorities

[HB 1001](#), the **audiologist/speech language pathologist licensure compact** bill, was heard in the House Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee last Friday. Bethany Davis, WSLHA Past President, testified in support of the bill. It is scheduled for a vote out of that committee this Friday.

This compact would allow for easier licensing across state lines for SLPs and audiologists by granting a "privilege to practice" in all states that are members of the compact. So far, 23 states have joined, including Idaho. You can find out more information about the compact [here](#).

[HB 1222](#) is the WSLHA priority legislation that **mandates large group insurance plan coverage** (employers with more than 50 employees) **for hearing instruments and the services necessary to fit them**. HB 1222 is being heard on Wednesday.