Capitol News

January 16, 2021

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**Last Week’s Highlights**

# Last week, the legislative session opened with heightened security measures to ensure the safety of legislators as they convened for their first and only in-person meeting of the session. The House and Senate passed rules to allow lawmakers to convene remotely and to allow committee hearings to take testimony via Zoom. With hearings on the Governor’s budgets last week, with over one hundred testifiers per hearing, committee staff are the unsung heroes, as they worked extremely hard to ensure all committee hearings went smoothly.

WSLHA’s Audiology-Speech-Language Pathology **interstate compact bill has a bill number, HB 1043!** Rep. Mari Leavitt and Rep. Skyler Rude are the primary sponsors, with 12 additional legislators signed on as co sponsors: Reps. Dufault, Kloba, Ryu, Ortiz-Self, Dolan, Wylie, Harris, Simmons, Goodman, Bronoske, Kirby, and MacEwen. WSLHA is now working to get the bill a hearing.

The bipartisan **Senate Special Committee on Economic Recovery** released its final report last week. This committee was established last May to analyze how the pandemic-related closures have affected our regional economies and how to help businesses recover. Health care recommendations include telehealth reimbursement parity; improving Cascade Care; public health investments; addressing health inequities; and continuity of insurance coverage regardless of employment status. The full report is available [here](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDEsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTAxMTQuMzMzMDk2NzEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3NlbmF0ZWRlbW9jcmF0cy53YS5nb3YvZnJvY2t0L3dwLWNvbnRlbnQvdXBsb2Fkcy9zaXRlcy8xNC8yMDIxLzAxL1NDRVItUmVwb3J0LnBkZiJ9.JJt4JIxJAHjz9T1frLiSPlOdFdBmH0w5n5eO7rnFmAc/s/1088366581/br/93110363644-l), with the [meeting agendas](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDIsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTAxMTQuMzMzMDk2NzEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3NlbmF0ZWRlbW9jcmF0cy53YS5nb3YvZnJvY2t0L3dwLWNvbnRlbnQvdXBsb2Fkcy9zaXRlcy8xNC8yMDIxLzAxL1NDRVItUmVwb3J0LUFwcGVuZGl4LUFnZW5kYXMucGRmIn0.-a-pNhFtPPwEZN5moioQxb-9NlHq3_s0yrXHJZdkLP8/s/1088366581/br/93110363644-l) and [presentation materials](https://lnks.gd/l/eyJhbGciOiJIUzI1NiJ9.eyJidWxsZXRpbl9saW5rX2lkIjoxMDMsInVyaSI6ImJwMjpjbGljayIsImJ1bGxldGluX2lkIjoiMjAyMTAxMTQuMzMzMDk2NzEiLCJ1cmwiOiJodHRwczovL3NlbmF0ZWRlbW9jcmF0cy53YS5nb3YvZnJvY2t0L3dwLWNvbnRlbnQvdXBsb2Fkcy9zaXRlcy8xNC8yMDIxLzAxL1NDRVItUmVwb3J0LUFwcGVuZGl4LU1hdGVyaWFscy5wZGYifQ.8NfMcQOm6agrJZos7-ip0kKh82VtCSeROi5f-SU0FuQ/s/1088366581/br/93110363644-l) available as appendices.

**Upcoming Events**

On Monday at 9am, the Senate Labor, Commerce & Tribal Affairs Committee will hear **SB 5115**, the Health Emergency Labor Standards Act (HELSA). This bill addresses **worker protections during a pandemic**. It creates a presumption for worker’s compensation coverage for frontline workers (which include employees of hospitals, clinics, and health care provider offices) and whistleblower protections, among other provisions.

On Monday at 1:30pm, the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee will hear **SB 5052**, legislation creating **health equity zones** to address significant health disparities identified by health outcome data. That committee will also conduct a work session on health equity work in the public and private sectors.

Also on Monday at 1:30pm, the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee will hear SB 5037, a bill establishing COVID **school re-opening metrics**.

At 4pm on Monday, the Senate Ways & Means Committee will hear SB 5021, **protecting retirement wages for public employees** from the impact of COVID-19 related furloughs.

On Wednesday at 8am, the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee will hold a **work session on insurance coverage.**

All committee hearings and House and Senate floor action can be viewed on TVW’s [website](http://tvw.org/).