

Capitol News

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WSLHA Priorities

[HB 1001](#), the **audiologist/speech language pathologist licensure compact** bill, is eligible to be voted on by the House. It could happen as early as this week!

[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**. It is scheduled for a hearing in the House Appropriations Committee on Wednesday.

The Legislature is considering several bills dealing with **special education funding**.

- [HB 1436](#) removes the 13.5% cap on how many students a school district can receive state funding for and increases the special education multiplier.
- [SB 5311](#) increases special education cost multipliers over a 4-year period and increases the funding cap from 13.5% to 15%
- [HB 1109](#) increases the reimbursement for initial evaluations and IEPs during the summers of 2023, 2023, and 2025.

WSLHA is also watching [HB 1305](#). Among other provisions, this bill makes several timeline changes to requirements related to initial student evaluations for special education and to development and implementation of individualized education programs. Concerns are being raised that the increased timelines may not be achievable given the current caseloads of school-based providers. This bill is a work in progress.

General News

With only two weeks until the first cutoff deadline, legislative committees are in high gear with public hearings and executive sessions. Bills must be voted out of their policy committees by February 17th. Nearly 1500 bills have been introduced so far, although the pace is slowing. Bills that have not been introduced yet have a slim chance of making it through the policy committee deadline.

The practice of doxing (the publication of an individual's personal identifying information without consent and with malicious intent) was highlighted this week with a hearing on HB 1335. The bill follows legislation in six other states by prohibiting doxing. The bill also includes a civil cause of action for violations. Supporters point to the doxing of nurses, teachers, and public officials. There was no opposition expressed at the hearing.

Both House and Senate committees heard testimony this week on the bipartisan “Right to Repair” legislation. Under HB 1392/SB 5464, cellphone, computer, and tablet manufacturers must make available the same documentation, parts, tools, and patches to certified independent repairers and owners that they provide their authorized repairers. In committee, legislators heard support from repairers, school districts and environmentalists. Technology industry representatives testified in opposition, saying the bill could cause safety, privacy, and security risks and that manufacturers have already expanded opportunities for independent repairs.

The House Appropriations Committee heard HB 1258 on Wednesday, which increases statewide tourism funding by increasing and reinvesting the existing sales tax on tourism-industry sales such as rental cars, hotel nights, and restaurants. Supporters pointed to lagging group convention and business travel, which has previously accounted for two thirds of travel business to Washington. Washington’s tourism agency is currently the least funded in the United States. There was no opposition in committee.

On Friday morning, the House State Government and Tribal Relations Committee heard HB 1541. The policy, known as the “Nothing About Us Without Us bill” implements membership requirements for statutory entities (task forces, work groups, and advisory committees) tasked with examining policies that directly and tangibly affect a particular underrepresented population. The phrase “nothing about us without us” has historically resonated with the disability rights community in advocating for full and direct participation in all decisions that impact their lives.