

February Legislative Update

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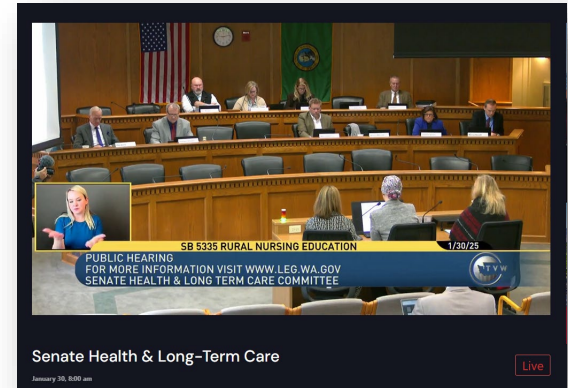
Board Staff Legislative Portfolio

- Staff are tracking almost 400 bills this session!
 - Approximately 1,800 NEW bills have been introduced since the beginning of Session.
- Workforce Board legislative site includes:
 - List of bills and status.
 - Budget requests and links to decision package write-ups.
 - Follow along at <https://wtb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/>.

2025 Legislative Session

The Workforce Board advises the Governor and Legislature on workforce development policy to shape strategies and create and sustain a high-skill, high-wage economy. The budget requests below showcase some of the agency's top priorities.

Agency Budget Requests	T&P Legislative Agenda	2025 Legislative Tracker	Tuition	Partner Endorsements
Workforce Board Tracked Bills Bill Status Report Updated 2/11/2025				
Bill No.	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor
HB 1016	Veteran/employer incentives	Providing employer tax incentives for the support of veterans and military families.	H Finance	Albarino
HB 1020	Academic reengagement	Increasing the accessibility of academic reengagement opportunities for eligible students.	H Education	Shawes
HB 1021	Military family reeducation	Promoting educational stability for children of military families.	H Education	Shawes





2025 Session Bill Themes – Overview

Board staff are seeing the following themes in bills we are monitoring this year:

- Access to Work-Based Education and Training
- Expanding Social Program Access
- Strengthening Worker Protections
- Expanded Student Financial Aid Supports
- Intersection of Education Policy and Health/ Behavioral Health Policy
- Supporting Military Personnel and Spouses

Note: Bills highlighted in this presentation do not indicate a position on any legislation.



See Our Bill Handout for More Info!

- Board staff have prepared a handout to be shared in chat for this meeting with bill status information.
- Intended to be a leave-behind for follow-up after the meeting.
- Information on many of the bills shared today is highlighted in that document.

Bill #	Comp. Bill	Bill Short Title	Original Sponsor	Board Staff	Staff Summary	Latest Committee Hearing Date/Time
SB 5402	1568	Financial aid eligibility	Hansen / Paul	Joe	This bill would allow more people to qualify for the Washington College Grant (WCG). It would increase eligibility for the maximum WCG award from 55% median family income (MFI) up to 70%. It would also increase WCG awards for students between 71%-100% of MFI. It would entitle WCG students who are receiving the maximum WCG award, but who are not College Bound Scholarship recipients, to a \$500 Bridge Grant. Students would use the grant for expenses outside of tuition and fees. <i>NOTE: The Committee heard Proposed Substitute SB 5658 on 2/10 - which, if passed, would combine three bills - 5402, 5562, and 5568.</i>	Feb 06 Executive action taken in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development at 1:30 PM.
SB 5442	1495	College promise pilot	Riccelli / Hill	Coral	Under the bill, WSAC must establish a College Promise Pilot Program in Eastern Washington. Promise scholarships help pay for all or part of a postsecondary education. WSAC will partner with a non-profit who will provide up to \$5,000 for eligible students to attend a postsecondary institution. Eligible students must have graduated high school in Eastern Washington, enrolled in a postsecondary program, be low income, and participate in a mentoring program at the non-profit. These bills appropriate \$500,000 in FY 26 and \$1 million in FY 27. The bills require a private match for any state funds for the College Promise Pilot Program.	Feb 03 Public hearing in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development at 10:30 AM.
SB 5525		Layoffs	Cleveland	Liz	Significant HB 1313 but applies to companies with 50+ full-time workers. It requires 60 days' notice before layoffs and provides 120 days of health coverage for employees in companies with 100+ workers. Employers must notify affected workers and ESD. ESD would enforce and investigate worker remedies. The bill creates exceptions for unexpected business problems. Penalties include back pay and fines. HB 1313 focuses on coverage and transparency, while SB 5525 emphasizes health benefits.	Feb 14 Executive action taken in the Senate Committee on Labor & Commerce at 8:00 AM.
SB 5562		Students/apprenticeships	Hansen	Joe	This bill changes the Washington College Grant (WCG) allocation to exclude tuition and fees for students in approved registered apprenticeship programs that otherwise pay for the cost of tuition and fees. WSAC would establish statewide transfer and articulation policies by July 1, 2026, to ensure efficient credit transfer for students in approved apprenticeship programs. Would require approval of credits for related supplemental instruction within one year of the program's registration. It would require credit or course equivalencies for registered apprenticeship programs by the 2028-29 school year. <i>NOTE: The Committee heard Proposed Substitute SB 5658 on 2/10 - which, if passed, would combine three bills - 5402, 5562, and 5568.</i>	n/a

A sample of workforce system bills of interest. Bill inclusion does not signify support/opposition. List is not exhaustive. Summaries last updated 2/13 for the 2/18/25 Workforce Board meeting. Page 6 of 7
When companion bills are included, the one that has advanced the most in the process is used as primary for status purposes.
For the full list of bills the Workforce Board is tracking, see <https://www.wfb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/>

Please contact me if you'd like more information on any bills before the Legislature.



Theme: Access to Work-Based Education/Training

- **HB 1414 – CTE Careers Work Group** – OSPI/LNI work group on recommendations to increase # of youth completing CTE programs and certifications.
- **1722 – Secondary Career Education** – Directs DOH, LNI, and the Fire Marshall's office to review processes for training.
- **5358/1280 – CTE 6th Grade** – Funding and program changes to allow 6th grade CTE connected to an aligned program of study.



Theme: Expanding Social Program Access

- **1020 – Academic Reengagement** – Lowers the age for youth to access academic reengagement programs like Open Doors.
- **1130 – Development Disabilities Waiver Use** – Prioritizes high-needs DDA customers.
- **1263/5232 – Essential Needs Program Uses** – Expands Cash Assistance eligibility for individuals in the Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Program.
- **1463 – Cash Assistance Time Limits** – Extends TANF benefit time limits for those with demonstrated financial hardship.
- **5681/1493 – DDA Employment Services Age** – Allows DDA to engage IEP customers at age 19 instead of 21.



Theme: Strengthening Worker Protections

- **1155/5437 – Noncompetition Agreements** – Proposing a ban on non-compete agreements.
- **1181 – Labor Standards** – Increasing the minimum wage and expanding paid leave.
- **1313/5525 – Mass Layoffs** – Updating layoff process requirements.
- **1644 – Working Minors** – Enhancing workplace safety for youth.
- **5101 – Worker Leave/Hate Crimes** – Requiring paid leave options for those affected by hate crimes.



Theme: Expanded Student Financial Aid Supports

- **1136/5164 – Student Navigational Support** – FAFSA completion supports focused on high-poverty schools.
- **1568/5402 – Modifying Financial Aid Eligibility** – Lowers the threshold to receive the WA College Grant and funds Bridge Grants of \$500 for qualified students.
- **1657 – Washington 13 Free Guarantee** – Funds up to 45 credits of the first year specifically at a CTC professional technical program, including registered apprenticeship.
- **5210/1151 – Ninth Grade Success Grants** – Support teams for students at early risk of not completing HS.
- **5543/1554 – College Bound Scholarship** – Program expansion for high school equivalency recipients. SBCTC Request bill.



Theme: Intersection of Education Policy & Health/BH

- **1259 – Behavioral Health/Schools** – Provides BH supervision options while working in K-12.
- **1634 – Comprehensive BH Supports for Students** – Network for state/regional providers to support and coordinate activities related to student BH needs.
- **5126/1547 – Student Mental Health Network** – Strengthening state and regional coordination and provision + grant program for identifying at-risk students for BH support. OSPI Request bill.
- **5369/1663 – Youth Mental Health/Schools** – Opens up access to increased use of Social Workers in K-12.



Theme: Supporting Military Personnel & Spouses

- **1016 – Veterans/Employer Incentives** – Tax incentives for employers of veterans or their spouses.
- **1073 – National Guard Retention** – Program to review National Guard retention needs and bonus levels to encourage reenlistment.
- **1102 – Veteran Support and Services** – Expanding eligibility for recently discharged veteran services.
- **1161 – Veteran Employability** – Creates a SBCTC program in one CTC to support veterans leaving correctional facilities, including navigation services and connecting with ESD and local WorkSource offices.
- **1166 – DOC Reentry Education** – Addresses barriers to allow incarcerated individuals to purchase and use laptops for educational purposes.
- **1335 – Military Spouse Employment** – Adds military spouses to the list of protected classes from employment discrimination.
- **5420/1738 – Veteran Benefits Access** – Expands the definition of military veterans and service members to additional uniformed occupations for the purpose of accessing military benefits.

A Selection of Workforce Bills of Interest

For more bill summaries, see our legislative tracker handout, provided electronically.



To review our Legislative activities online:
<https://wtb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/>



1273 – Dual Credit Program Access

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Paul

Status: House Education – Exec Session 2/17.

- Legislature Goal: Expanding dual credit opportunities and statewide articulation agreements, especially in CTE dual credit.
- Grant-funded pilot program (SBCTC lead, with OSPI) in three regions of the state to increase CTE dual credit and credential attainment in prof/tech programs.
 - Grant funds can support: Catalogue of dual credit programs, aligning CTE dual credit with postsecondary pathways, and TA/PD for developing and awarding dual credit.
- SBCTC, w/ OSPI, will report to the Legislature with recommendations for state dual credit policies (12/10/26 & 8/10/29).



1414 – CTE Careers Work Group

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Connors

Status: House Education – Exec Session Scheduled 2/18

- Directs OSPI, with LNI, to convene a work group focused on examining barriers to training, certification, and employment for 16-17 y/o students who have completed CTE programs.
- The work group should make recommendations on barrier removal for categories of work for minors who have a license from another agency, hour restrictions, and other training and employment barriers.
 - Workforce Board is named to the work group.
- Report due from OSPI to the Legislature (12/1/25 and 10/1/26).



1595 – Economic Development Plan

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Ryu

Status: House Appropriations – Not yet scheduled.

- Directs the Department of Commerce to develop a five-year economic development plan, including long-term, measurable goals.
 - First plan is due 11/30/25, with recommendations for legislation by 6/30/26.
- Advisory Committee membership includes the Workforce Board, key industry sectors, Governor's commissions, ESD, and others.
- Emergency clause: Takes effect 5/5/25.



1926 – Home Care Aide Testing

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Timmons

Status: House Postsecondary Education & Workforce –
Public Hearing Scheduled 2/18, Executive Session 2/19.

- Allows Home Care Aide testing to occur at a training site as well as at a testing site.
- Removes requirement for certification within 200 days after hire; directs DOH/DSHS to establish new rules.
- Report due 9/1/26 with a rec on moving certification testing for home care aides to their training programs, as well as easing application processes.



5335 – Rural Nursing Education

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Slatter

Status: Senate Ways and Means – not yet scheduled.

- DOH is directed to establish a Rural Nursing Education Program, including access to distance education and training.
 - The Legislature funded a rural nursing workforce initiative in 2023 – this bill uses the lessons learned and puts it into statute.
- Establishes program selection criteria, including intention to serve in a rural area.
- Consultation requirement – includes local Workforce Development Councils.
- Report due 11/1/26, and every two years thereafter.



5682 – Customized Training Program

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Warnick/Rep. Salahuddin

Status: Senate Ways and Means – Public Hearing 2/18.

- SBCTC's Customized Employment Workforce Training Program (CTP) is due to expire 7/1/26. The bill would extend the date to 7/1/31.
 - CTP provides employer loans for training programs to skill up employees.
 - Legislative tax preference stated an intent for the Legislature to extend the program if it was meeting certain goals around repayment and completion (confirmed in 2023).
- Requires a report 12/31/28 on program usage and expansion efforts.

QUESTIONS?

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