January Legislative Update

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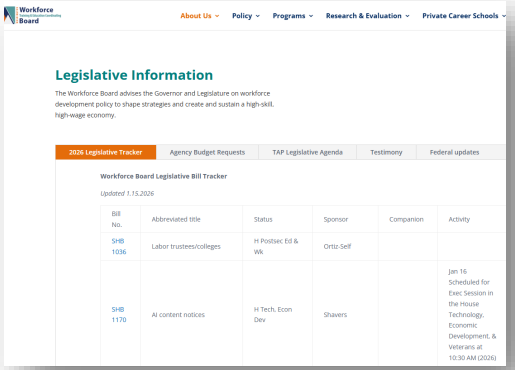
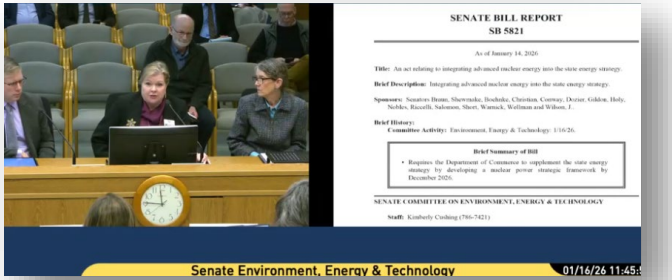
Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

Board Staff Legislative Portfolio

- Staff are tracking almost 300 bills this session!
  - Almost 1100 NEW bills have been introduced since the beginning of Session.
- Workforce Board legislative site includes:
  - List of bills and status.
  - Link to testimony from our staff.
  - Budget requests and links to decision package write-ups.
  - Follow along at https://wtb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/.





Gov's Budget – Board Leg Agenda (1/3)

- **Support initiatives** that respond to **changes in federal programs** to support Washington residents in **meeting expanded work requirements** and remain enrolled in critical basic supports to receive food (SNAP) and healthcare (Medicaid). (*Includes No Wrong Door & WIT replacement projects.*)
  - Funding for DSHS, Health Care Authority, and Health Benefits Exchange to develop a work requirement verification hub.
  - No Wrong Door project buildout not able to be funded. However…
    - Specific language for DSHS to collaborate on the hub with the Workforce Board, among other partners. Language for the other two agencies called for collaboration with "other workforce development partners."
  - Increase of $3M in funding for WorkSource Integrated Technology (WIT) project.

Gov's Budget – Board Leg Agenda (2/3)

- **Preserve investments** in postsecondary programs and associated student supports. (*Includes Economic Security for All (EcSA) and Community Reinvestment Project (CRP)*).
  - EcSA: Additional $1M for FY27.
    - Fund source change from ESD Administrative Account to WIOA Reserve funds for FY27.
  - CRP: Current funding is $60M for the 25-27 biennium.
    - Potential legislative interest for ongoing funds at $50M/biennium.
    - CRP-focused legislation – see slide 8.
    - Current open competitive funding opportunities: Legal aid for post-conviction relief, intermediary support for local teams, and reentry grants.
- **Restore funding** for discrete programs that meet specific industry needs such as **Core Plus and wraparound supports for state registered apprentices**. (No change)

Gov's Budget – Board Leg Agenda (3/3)

- **Support initiatives** that help to **inform secondary students about their options for multiple pathways** to education and career opportunities. (*Includes High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) Portal expansion & financial aid for Passport to Careers program.*)
  - OSPI request for an expansion of HSBP Portal to additional school districts not funded.
    - Governor's budget funded staff support at OSPI to provide technical assistance and professional development (279K).
  - Automatic eligibility for WA College Grant for Passport to Careers recipients.
    - No fiscal impact. Governor's office approved agency request legislation for implementation (see slide 10).

2026 Session Bill Themes – Overview

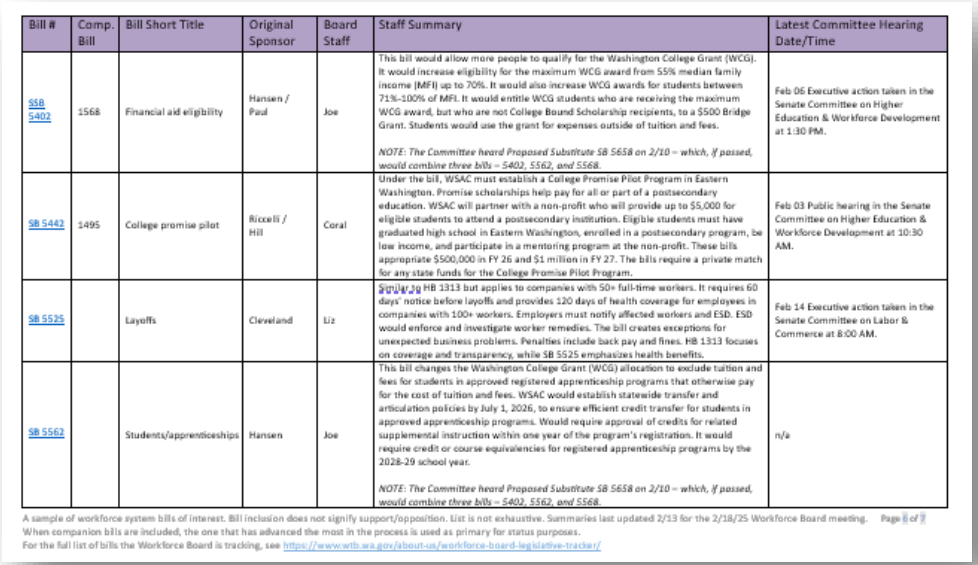
Board staff are seeing the following themes in bills we are monitoring this year:

- Poverty Reduction & Worker Supports
- Workforce-Education Alignment
- Financial Aid, Affordability, & Access
- Bills that Include CETWAC Recs
- Healthcare Workforce Changes
- K-12 to Postsecondary Transitions
- Live Presentation Sales Tax Relief

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 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
SSB 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. *NOTE: The Committee heard Proposed Substitute SB 5658 on 2/10 – which, if passed, would combine three bills – 5402, 5562, and 5568.*	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	Similar to 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. *NOTE: The Committee heard Proposed Substitute SB 5658 on 2/10 – which, if passed, would combine three bills – 5402, 5562, and 5568.*	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.wtb.wa.gov/about-us/workforce-board-legislative-tracker/

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

Theme: Poverty Reduction & Worker Supports

- 2264 (Berry) – Concerning unemployment insurance benefits for workers separated from employment as a result of employer-initiated layoffs or workforce reductions.
- 2276/6019 (Rule/Cleveland) – Improving the functioning of home care rate statutes.
- 2364/6255 (Gregerson/Lovelett) – Concerning the legislative-executive poverty reduction task force.
- 2450 (Couture) – Maintaining food assistance for certain individuals affected by federal eligibility requirements.
- 2523/6275 (Reeves/Nobles) – Concerning the community reinvestment program.
- 6205 (Braun) – Increasing accountability for the distribution of grants for economically disadvantaged people.
- 6212 (Nobles) – Creating a families with children benefit pilot program.

Theme: Workforce-Education Alignment

- 1493/5681 (Paul/Cortes) – Concerning the age at which clients of the developmental disabilities administration may receive employment and community inclusion services.
- 2098 (Reed) – Adjusting higher education funding.
- 2311/5931 (Ybarra/Warnick, WSAC Request) – Concerning workforce education investment accountability and oversight board administrative changes.
- 2438 (Bergquist) – Establishing the supporting our early education degree seekers scholarship.
- 5658 (Hansen) – Concerning the workforce education investment account.

Theme: Financial Aid/Affordability & Access

- 2458/6217 (Reed/Boehnke, SBCTC request) – Expanding access to the WA College Grant to students enrolled in eligible postsecondary nondegree credential programs.
- 2474 (Pollet, WSAC request) – Concerning postsecondary education consumer protections in the event of school or program closures.
- 2567/5828 (Street/Nobles) – Concerning the WA College Grant and college bound scholarship program for students attending private four-year not-for-profit institutions of higher education in WA.
- 2586/5963 (Timmons/Nobles, WSAC Request) – Modifying funding for passport to careers program and eligibility for WA College Grant.

Theme: Bills Including CETWAC Recs

- 1673/5466 (Ramel/Shewmake) – Improving reliability and capacity of the electric transmission system in WA state.
- 2251 (Fitzgibbon) – Concerning climate commitment act accounts.
- 2418 (Duerr) – Concerning permit review processes.
- 2469 (Chase) – Establishing a task force to conduct a feasibility study to address the creation of a state-owned, public bank.
- 2492/6282 (Nance/Nobles) – Requiring state registered apprenticeships in the building and construction trades to provide behavioral health and wellness training.
- 2496/6010 (Sterns/Shewmake) – Concerning tribal consultation conducted by the energy facility site evaluation council.

Theme: Alt. Pathways to Healthcare Licensure

- 1306/5185 (Reed/Saldaña) – Establishing a pilot program that creates a pathway to physician licensure for international medical graduates.
- 2286/6060 (Rule/Orwall) – Concerning alternative routes to social worker licensure.
- 6146 (Chapman) – Advancing oral health equity and protecting access to preventive dental care.

Theme: K-12 to Postsecondary Transitions

- 2570/6052 (Ybarra/Boehnke) – Establishing a statewide digital transcript data-sharing environment.
- 5841 (Boehnke) – Concerning the completion of postsecondary financial aid applications.
- 5969 (Cortes) – Reducing duplication between high school and beyond plans and individualized education program transition plans.
- 6089 (Slatter) – Increasing coordination and alignment throughout the P20W system.

Theme: Live Presentation Sales Tax Relief

- 2101/5980 (Dufault) – Exempting live presentations from retail sales and use tax.
- 2121 (Walsh) – Exempting nonprofits and schools from certain sales and use taxes on services.
- 2130 (Orcutt) – Repealing new taxes imposed by Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 5814 during the 2025 regular legislative session.
- 2208 (McClintock) – Exempting health care continuing education classes from retail sales and use tax.

QUESTIONS?

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WASHINGTON Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board