

January 18, 2021

## Work begins in 105-day legislative session

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The first week of the 2021 legislative session is in the rear-view window. Thank goodness!

For the first time, lawmakers convened in Olympia for the start of session with a capitol ringed in chain-link fencing while hundreds of Washington National Guard, Washington State Patrol officers, and local law enforcement patrolled the perimeter and hallways of the Legislative Building. Organizers who had initially announced their plans to enter and occupy the capitol building by January 11 canceled their events. Small crowds gathered, but the unrest didn't mirror what we saw played out on national news in Washington, DC. For the time being, the fence and patrols will remain, although most lawmakers left the grounds when proceedings concluded on January 11.

The major business of Day 1 was to adopt rules to allow the 2021 legislative session to be conducted using a virtual platform. With the exception of a few legislators in the Capitol building during floor sessions, legislative committees, caucuses, and voting sessions will take place remotely over Zoom and Teams. Here are the links to the [House](#) and [Senate](#) session plans for operating under COVID.

Other events of the week included Democrat Gov. Jay Inslee delivering a [State of the State taped address](#); House and Senate budget committees taking hours of testimony on the Governor's proposed spending plans for 2021-23 and the fiscal year that ends June 30, 2021; and policy committees conducting public hearings on bills introduced in the first few days of session. Committees are accepting "live" and written testimony that will become part of the record, and positions of Pro, Con, or Other can be made too – all through the new [Senate](#) or [House](#) remote Committee Sign-In portals.

On the Governor's proposed budgets, OFM Director David Schumacher provided an [overview](#) at the beginning of the Senate Ways & Means and House Appropriations committees; Jen Masterson, OFM senior budget analyst, offered the [overview](#) on the proposed capital budget investments. Schumacher's review is about 30 minutes long and worth listening to, as he explains proposed spending, revenue and transfers as well as what has happened to state revenues since the Legislature adjourned last March. Masterson provides a shorter, but no less interesting, overview of the state of the capital budget. In addition, *Olympian* reporter Sara Gentzler wrote a great [article](#) on the supersized capital budget proposal. Here are the overviews by OFM leadership:

- [Senate Ways & Means Committee, January 12](#)
- [House Capital Budget Committee, January 13](#)

- [House Appropriations Committee, January 14](#)

An interesting [overview](#) of K-12 policy and funding was also conducted by House Education Committee staff. The 90-minute, four-part presentation, offers a solid review of the history of changes to education policy over the past 30 years, in particular, and includes Q&A with committee members.

### *Early action initiatives*

This year, “early action” is being used to describe bills lawmakers would like to get to the Governor’s desk for signature before February 1. Included in this list are:

- [HB 1093/SB 5091](#), the 2<sup>nd</sup> supplemental budget;
- [SB 5128](#), a potential fix that would allow districts with reduced bus ridership to keep 70 percent of the district’s estimated (and budgeted) allocation for the school year along with extending certain transportation activities (e.g., food and homework delivery, hotspots, home visits) to count when tracking transportation expenditures. The bill also would create a process for districts to apply to OSPI to recoup up to 30% of allowable costs. During testimony on Friday before the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee, some technical issues were raised and Chair Lisa Wellman, D-Mercer Island, said a proposed substitute was being considered. Hear the bill description and testimony [here](#).
- [HB 1121](#), a State Board of Education request bill to grant the agency authority to issue credit waivers to high school graduation requirements in times of emergency and when other conditions are met.

Lawmakers also are combing through the most recent federal stimulus funds and trying to get them out the door quickly in areas such as business recovery, rental assistance, and increased support to local public health districts. The goal, according to one legislator, is to “stop the bleeding,” and address issues in the near term to help the individuals, businesses, and local entities most impacted by the pandemic.

## **Lessons learned in week 1**

The Senate has been using remote testimony for several sessions, but only by request and under certain conditions, so senators had a little more experience operating a public hearing by Zoom. House committees did a remote testimony pilot during the 2020 session and have conducted several mock public hearings to get up to speed on the technology. However, nothing truly prepared committee chairs and technical staff for the real thing. For the most part, testimony went smoothly, although it was slower, there were often wait times before speaking, a few frozen screens, and the occasional, “Can you hear me now?” While committee members can see themselves (and the people in the waiting room who will testify) when in gallery view in Zoom, the public only sees what is shown on TVW, which is the person speaking.

As a reminder from last week, participating virtually can be one of three ways: signing up to testify “live” via a Zoom link; providing written testimony which will become part of the official

record and be available to committee members; and stating a position (with no comments). To participate “live,” people will be allowed to sign up as soon as the bill has been scheduled for a public hearing; **signups will close** one hour prior to the committee hearing. Signing up does not guarantee testimony. Submitting written testimony through the portal is allowed up to 24 hours after the public hearing.

- Here are the [Senate remote portal](#) and the [House remote portal](#).
- All committee meetings will be televised by TVW and can be found on the day of at [www.tvw.org](http://www.tvw.org) or in the TVW archives.

Following this week’s committee hearings, here are some things we learned about the new system:

- After signing up for “live” testimony, you will be emailed a unique link to the committee meeting.
- For the most part, committees asked speakers for shorter testimony (with a clock counting down in the background), so prepare a two-minute, 90-second, and 60-second version of testimony.
- When you are in the waiting room, make sure your video and audio are off, but be ready for when they call you to turn both on. When finished speaking, turn your mic and video off.
- Don’t disconnect from the hearing until after the chair has asked committee members if there are any questions and dismisses you from the hearing.
- Even if you have a link to testify, the committee time may run out. House committee meetings are capped at 1 hour and 45 minutes; Senate committee meetings are 2 hours. This time includes committee staff briefings on the bills up for public hearing, the time getting testifiers “on deck,” and the time lapses before people start speaking. The good news? If you don’t testify live, you can submit it through the “written testimony” link up to 24 hours after the committee hearing starts.
- Submitted or “written” testimony is limited to 5,000 characters, including spaces and lines.

We’ll continue to offer more lessons learned as the weeks unfold.

## Getting to know your legislator

[Rosters](#) for the 67<sup>th</sup> legislature have been published for the House and Senate. These rosters include the member’s name, link to their legislative homepage, email and phone number, and legislative assistant names. Using this link, you can sort members by chamber, by committee, and by caucus. Bookmark it for easy access.

Don’t know who your legislators are? Click [here](#), and input your street address, city and ZIP. Your legislators’ names, legislative district and contact information will pop up.

## WSPTA Legislative Priorities (all bills may be accessed [here](#))

Washington State PTA adopts a [two-year platform](#). Delegates at the 2020 Legislative Assembly adopted five issues as the highest priority issues, and other adopted positions are listed as “Also Supported.” The WSPTA Advocacy Committee is developing videos and one-pagers for members’ use in advocacy efforts this session.

This past week, the following Washington State PTA members testified (with links to their testimony):

- Heidi Bennett on preserving funding, [Senate Ways & Means](#), [House Appropriations](#).
- DaleAnn Baker in support of \$50 million in seismic funding, [Senate Ways & Means](#), [House Capital Budget](#).
- Mike Uehara-Bingen in support of funding for additional school counselors, [Senate Ways & Means](#).
- Manuela Slye in support of SB 5044, training educators on anti-racism and anti-discrimination, [Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education](#).

In addition, WSPTA provided written testimony on [HB 1091](#), the Governor’s clean fuels standard, and signed in as Pro on several bills aligned with the dismantling racism resolution.

## The Week Ahead

*(Schedule subject to change, all bills can be founded through [this link](#))*

### **Monday, January 18**

#### **Law & Justice (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/18 @ 9:30am**

- SB 5051 - Public Hearing - Concerning state oversight and accountability of peace officers and corrections officers. (Remote testimony.) (Support/Medium)

#### **Consumer Protection & Business (House) - Virtual, - 1/18 @ 1:30pm**

- HB 1064 - Public Hearing - Requiring the disclosure of high-speed internet access availability in the seller's disclosure statement. (Remote testimony.)

#### **Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/18 @ 1:30pm**

- SB 5037 - Public Hearing - Establishing transparent school opening metrics tied to COVID-19 prevalence. (Hearing is on the Proposed Substitute.) (Remote testimony.)
- SB 5147 - Public Hearing - Exploring alternative school calendars. (Remote testimony.)

### **Tuesday, January 19**

#### **Education (House) - Virtual, - 1/19 @ 8:00am**

- HB 1121 - Exec Session - Concerning the emergency waiver of graduation requirements.

#### **Environment & Energy (House) - Virtual, - 1/19 @ 8:00am**

- HB 1099 - Public Hearing - Improving the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework. (Remote testimony.)

### **Housing, Human Services & Veterans (House) - Virtual, - 1/19 @ 8:00am**

- HB 1181 - Public Hearing - Establishing programs and measures to prevent suicide among veterans and military members. (Remote testimony.)

### **Public Safety (House) - Virtual, - 1/19 @ 8:00am**

- HB 1054 - Exec Session - Establishing requirements for tactics and equipment used by peace officers. (Support/Monitoring)
- HB 1092 - Exec Session - Concerning law enforcement data collection. (Support/High)

### **Environment, Energy & Technology (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/19 @ 10:30am**

- SB 5126 - Public Hearing - Concerning the Washington climate commitment act. (Remote testimony.)

### **Law & Justice (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/19 @ 10:30am**

- SB 5066 - Public Hearing - Concerning a peace officer's duty to intervene. (Remote testimony.)
- SB 5135 - Public Hearing - Concerning unlawfully summoning a police officer. (Remote testimony.)

### **Appropriations (House) - Virtual, - 1/19 @ 3:30pm**

- HB 1166 - Public Hearing - Expanding access to the homeless and foster care college students pilot program. (Remote testimony.)

## ***Wednesday, January 20***

### **Consumer Protection & Business (House) - Virtual, - 1/20 @ 8:00am**

- HB 1212 - Public Hearing - Promoting the fair servicing and repair of digital electronic products to increase access to appropriate and affordable digital products, support small businesses and jobs, and enhance digital connectivity in Washington state. (Remote testimony.)

### **Environment, Energy & Technology (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/20 @ 8:00am**

- SB 5141 - Public Hearing - Implementing the recommendations of the environmental justice task force. (Hearing is on the Proposed Substitute.) (Remote testimony.)

### **State Government & Tribal Relations (House) - Virtual, - 1/20 @ 8:00am**

- HB 1016 - Exec Session - Making Juneteenth a legal holiday.

## ***Thursday, January 21***

### **Finance (House) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 8:00am**

- HB 1058 - Public Hearing - Modifying the sales and use tax for cultural access programs by allowing the tax to be imposed by a councilmanic or commission authority and defining timelines and priorities for action. (Remote testimony.) (Support/Low)

### **Children, Youth & Families (House) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 10:00am**

- HB 1213 - Public Hearing - Expanding accessible, affordable child care and early childhood development programs. (Remote testimony.)

### **Consumer Protection & Business (House) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 10:00am**

- HB 1064 - Exec Session - Requiring the disclosure of high-speed internet access availability in the seller's disclosure statement.

### **Environment, Energy & Technology (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 10:30am**

- SB 5112 - Public Hearing - Requiring broadband internet access service providers to provide virtual private network service. (Remote testimony.)

### **Law & Justice (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 10:30am**

- SB 5051 - Exec Session - Concerning state oversight and accountability of peace officers and corrections officers. (Support/Medium)
- SB 5066 - Exec Session - Concerning a peace officer's duty to intervene.
- SB 5089 - Public Hearing - Concerning peace officer hiring and certification. (Remote testimony.)
- SB 5135 - Exec Session - Concerning unlawfully summoning a police officer.

### **Education (House) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 1:30pm**

- HB 1085 - Public Hearing - Promoting a safe learning environment for students with seizure disorders. (Remote testimony.)
- HB 1113 - Public Hearing - Concerning school attendance. (Remote testimony.)

### **Environment & Energy (House) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 1:30pm**

- HB 1091 - Exec Session - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions by reducing the carbon intensity of transportation fuel. (Support/Medium)

### **Higher Education & Workforce Development (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 1:30pm**

- SB 5194 - Public Hearing - Providing for equity and access in the community and technical colleges. (Remote testimony.) (Support/Medium)
- SB 5215 - Public Hearing - Increasing the maximum Washington college grant award at independent institutions of higher education. (Remote testimony.)

### **Public Safety (House) - Virtual, - 1/21 @ 1:30pm**

- HB 1071 - Public Hearing - Concerning bias-based criminal offenses. (Remote testimony.)

### ***Friday, January 22***

### **Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/22 @ 8:00am**

- SB 5184 - Public Hearing - Establishing a building point of contact in all K-12 public schools for students in foster care. (Remote testimony.)
- SB 5237 - Public Hearing - Expanding accessible, affordable child care and early childhood development programs. (Remote testimony.)

### **Environment & Energy (House) - Virtual, - 1/22 @ 10:00am**

- HB 1084 - Public Hearing - Reducing statewide greenhouse gas emissions by achieving greater decarbonization of residential and commercial buildings. (Remote testimony.)

### **State Government & Elections (Senate) - Virtual, - 1/22 @ 10:30am**

- SB 5105 - Public Hearing - Implementing the recommendations of the office of equity task force. (Remote testimony.)