

Weekly Legislative Update: **Education**

Issue Team Chair: Catherine Ahl

Contact: cahl@lwvwa.org or 360-697-7924

February 6, 2022

Bills Needing Action This Week

[HB 1664](#) Increases prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools by increasing the number of school nurses. A substitute bill was passed by the House Education Committee and the Appropriations Committee. It is now in the Rules Committee and could be placed on the floor calendar at any time.

⚠ Please contact your two Representatives and ask that they vote for this bill.

[HB 1630](#) Makes it unlawful to carry a firearm onto facilities being used for official meetings of a school district board of directors. This would also apply to city, town, county and other municipality buildings being used for public meetings. A substitute bill, including the issues addressed in HB 1618 regarding elections facilities, was passed by the House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee and is now on the House floor calendar.

⚠ Please contact your two Representatives and ask that they vote for this bill.

[SB 5497](#) Extends voting authority to student members on the state board of education. The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee passed a substitute and is now on the Senate floor calendar ready for a vote.

⚠ Please contact your Senator and ask for a yes vote.

Please read under Bills We Support to see the latest status of other bills.

Bills We Support

[HB 1590](#) Enrollment stabilization funding for local schools to address enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The House Appropriations Committee held a hearing on Feb. 5.

[SB 5563](#) Enrollment stabilization funding for local schools to address enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It passed the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee and was sent to the Ways & Means Committee, which held a hearing on Jan. 31.

[HB 1723](#) Closes the digital equity divide by increasing the accessibility and affordability of telecommunication services, devices, and training. It was passed by the House Community & Economic Development Committee, and a substitute was passed by the Appropriations Committee. It is now in the Rules Committee.

[SB 5537](#) Changes compulsory school attendance to include children five, six, and seven years of age. Washington is the only state that requires school attendance beginning with children who are eight years of age. LWVWA has supported this change for many years. The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee passed a substitute, which just includes six and seven years old, on Jan. 28 and sent it to the Ways & Means Committee.

[SB 5595](#) Increases prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support staff, plus additional increases of the number of school nurses. A substitute bill was passed by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee, which provides that appropriations may only be spent on salaries and benefits for support staff. The Ways & Means Committee held a hearing on Jan. 31.

[SB 5630](#) Expands the program of basic education to include early learning. Early learning would be phased in for three and four year-olds starting in the 2026-27 school year and making it an entitlement by the 2029-30 school year. LWVWA has had a position that basic education should include birth to five years. This is a start.

[SB 5568](#) Concerning preemption of municipal laws restricting the open carry of weapons. Provides that cities, towns, counties, and other municipalities may enact laws and ordinances restricting the open carry of firearms or other weapons at any public meeting; any building or facility owned or operated by a city, town, county, or other municipality; or any permitted demonstration within their respective jurisdictions. This allows jurisdictions to prohibit open carry rather than outlaws them across the state as does HB 1630, but this may be the compromise that can pass both houses. The Senate Law & Justice Committee passed a substitute on Jan. 27 and sent it to the Rules Committee.

Bills we're Watching

[SB 5820](#) Rather than the people electing the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the governor would appoint that official. This would require a constitutional amendment. This bill was heard in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Jan. 21.. LWVWA has no position on this issue.

[HJR 4200](#) Amending the Constitution to allow a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district bonds. LWVWA has no position on school bonds, only levies, but I know a lot of our members are interested in this issue. The House Education Committee passed the

resolution to the Capital Budget Committee, which will hold a hearing and executive session on Feb. 7 at 8:00 am.

Bills We Oppose

[HB 1591](#) Provides access to local enrichment funding for charter schools. Funding for school districts is provided through levies approved by the voters, which doesn't include extra state funding for charter schools. It is in the House Appropriations Committee but not scheduled for a hearing. It still could slip into the House budget as was done last year before it was taken out during negotiations with the Senate.

[HB 1807](#) Addressing the protection of quality civic education and academic discourse. Mandates what can be taught and discussed in civics classes. LWVWA testified against this bill.

How You Can Be Involved

- During the legislative session we will send Action Alerts in the [Legislative Newsletter](#). Please respond to these, which will direct you to an application to facilitate communicating with your legislators on an important vote in committees or on the chamber floor.
- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have education teams to take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out and join.
- You may also express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA issue chairs. We will take your perspectives under considerations as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Catherine Ahl, Education Issue Chair, cahl@lwvwa.org, 360-697-7924