



Legislative Process 101 & the 2021 Session

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Introduction

- Getting to know you
- Overview - WA Gov't & the Legislature
- The legislative process
- The budget
- 2021 session expectations....
- Q&A



Getting to know you....

- My background
- What motivates me
- "What ticks you off?"



State Government Organization

Legislative Branch

Senate and House of Representatives

Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee	Legislative Evaluation & Accountability Program (LEAP) Committee
Joint Legislative Systems Committee	Office of the State Actuary
Joint Transportation Committee	Redistricting Commission (<i>activated decennially</i>)
Legislative Ethics Board	Statute Law Committee (<i>Code Reviser's Office</i>)
Office of Legislative Support Services	

Executive Branch

Judicial Branch

Supreme Court

Administrative Office of the Courts	Law Library
Office of Civil Legal Aid	Municipal Courts
Court of Appeals	Office of Public Defense
Commission on Judicial Conduct	District and Superior Courts

Commissioner of Public Lands

Insurance Commissioner

Treasurer

Lieutenant Governor

Governor

Attorney General

Superintendent of Public Instruction

Auditor

Secretary of State

Dept. of Natural Resources
- Board of Natural Resources
- Forest Practices Board

Public Deposit Protection Commission
State Finance Committee

Office for Regulatory Innovation & Assistance
Results Washington
Women's Commission
LGBTQ Commission

Office of the Governor

Executive Ethics Board

Office of the Education Ombuds
Office of the Family & Children's Ombuds
Office of the Corrections Ombuds
Equity Office

State Library

Environment and Natural Resources

General Government

Transportation

Health and Human Services

Education

Community and Economic Development

The WA State Legislature

- The only body that can make new laws and change or repeal existing laws.
- Provides agencies with authority/mandates (unless in constitution) and the power to make regulations (rule making authority).

State Constitution



State Laws/Statutes (RCW)



Rules/Regulations (WACs)

Legislative activity can change how we do business!



The Legislative Process

A Note on Pre-Session Work

During the Interim -- The work “during interim” is just as, if not more, important than work during session. Interim agency work examples:

- Implementing previously passed bills and legislative directives
- Vetting proposals for next session – including stakeholder work
- Keeping promises and managing inquiries

Prepping for the next session:

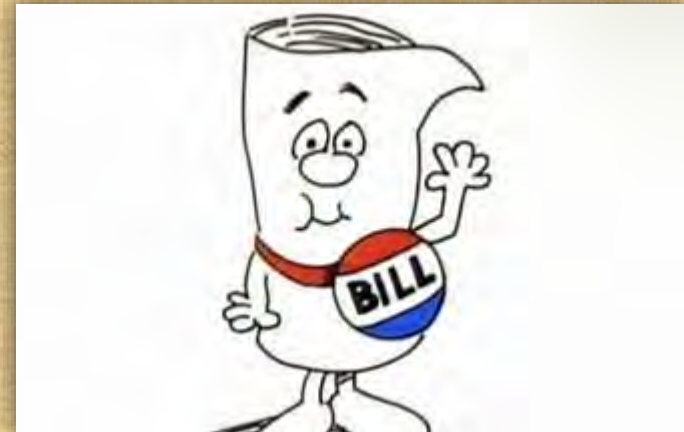
- Agency Request Legislation Process – Quick Overview
- Governor’s Budget and Governor’s Office approval of bills
- Pre-Filing of bills – begins Dec. 1st prior to session

Session Begins

- Opening ceremonies
- Newly elected (or appointed) members are sworn in
- Remaining leadership roles are voted on
- Committees and their chairs are formally solidified
- Cutoff calendar formally adopted
- Odd years are “long sessions” = 105 days
- Even years are “short sessions” = 60 days

How a bill becomes a law...

- The *system is designed to be difficult* to pass a bill
 - Ensures that thoughtful, incremental change with adequate vetting can occur.
 - Includes multiple layers of “filtering” to achieve this.
- Bill is “dropped”
- Bill assigned to a committee for potential consideration
- Bill receives hearing in committee, committee takes executive action or does not take action



How a bill becomes a law...

Tips for Testifying in committee

- Always make sure this is a coordinated effort with your group or agency
- Never make statements you are not 100% sure of – you can always follow up later
- Be willing to work with other stakeholders and the sponsor on language to help resolve any concerns
- Reserve “Oppose” position for the more serious situations
- If you have concerns with a bill or a portion of the bill, let the sponsor know in advance – don’t just show up and trash a bill out of the blue
- Consider how many people will testify if the committee is short on time
- Sometimes just signing in “Support” is good enough and you can follow up with an email to the committee members and staff

How a bill becomes a law...

- If passed out of committee, bill may go to fiscal committee if it has fiscal impact
- Rules Committee – Decides whether bill will go to the floor for a vote
- If “pulled from Rules,” bill may be considered on the floor (parliamentary procedures required)
 - Can be pulled in a “package pull” or alone
 - Members on this committee are pretty influential
- If to floor, may be amended
- If bill passes, transmitted to “opposite” house to go through the same gauntlet



How a bill becomes a law

- If the bill makes it through the opposite house, any changes must be agreed to by originating side
 - Bills can die “in conference” if the sides do not consent to changes made or cannot come to agreement in time
- If a bill passes both houses, then to Governor.
- Governor decides whether to sign, reserve signing, partial veto, or veto



The Budget

- The Governor proposes what they would like to see in the budget based on revenue forecasts.
 - Book 1 and Book 2 – one version without “new” revenue and one with new revenue proposed
 - Generally released in early December in bill form
- The House and the Senate each propose their own version of the budget too, each of them dropping a bill, based on revenue forecasts and usually on the Gov’s budget.
- One house will go first and both usually have a press conference. They alternate budgets as far as who will carry the budget, but having two bills in play preserves options.
- Capital Budget and Transportation Budget are proposed and handled separately.

The Budget

- Hearings are held and then negotiations begin to try to “meet in the middle.”
 - This is true whether it is the Operating Budget, Capital Budget, or the Transportation Budget.
 - Capital Budget and Transportation Budget are more technical and specific to projects.
 - Operating Budget is more for funding new policy pursuits, but “space is limited” as GF-S is very sought after!
- Strategy is important.
- Cutoff dates do not apply to budget bills and bills that are “necessary to implement the budget” or “NTIB.”

Other Process Notes...

- The “regular session” length is set by the state Constitution
 - Odd years are 105 days, even years are 60 days
 - If work is not done during that time, the Governor must call a special session
 - Zombie Bills: All “dead” bills are revived in special sessions!
- All bills introduced in a new biennium that do not pass during the first, long session will be reintroduced and considered “alive” in the following short session.
- Rules for process are set by the body and parliamentary procedures are followed.... But there are ALWAYS exceptions to every rule!
- More specific legislative process overview info available here:
<https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Pages/Overview.aspx>

Adjourning "Sine Die"

- When the Legislature completes its work, it adjourns "Sine Die."
- "Sine Die," from the Latin "without day," means "without assigning a day for a further meeting or hearing". A legislative body adjourns sine die when it adjourns without appointing a day on which to appear or assemble again.
- Both chambers open the doors into the rotunda and gavel to a close at the same time.



Thoughts on the 2021 Session

- **All virtual (!)** – Can you say Zoom fatigue?
 - What this means for the process
 - Impacts to bills and timelines
 - Learning as we go!
- Budget outlook – Revenue forecast and COVID-19 economic impacts
- New faces, adding to lots of new members from the last budget cycle – more women and more diverse than ever!



Resources and More Information

- You can watch all proceedings online: www.tvw.org
- Legislative Website: <https://leg.wa.gov/Pages/default.aspx>
- Legislative Information Center:
<https://leg.wa.gov/lic/Pages/default.aspx>
 - Great tutorial videos and more!
- Sign up for email alerts on committees and other activities to stay informed:
 - <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WALEG/subscriber/new>
 - <https://leg.wa.gov/LIC/Documents/EducationAndInformation/Tutorial-GovDelivery.pdf>
- Budget Universe:
<https://leg.wa.gov/LIC/Documents/Maps/Budget%20Universe.pdf>

Questions?

