



Washington State Legislature 2026 Overview

WA State Senior
Citizens Lobby
Day - Feb 19, 2026

Karen Tvedt



2026 Session

- Short session: 60 days; today is Day 39 of the 60 days; 21 days to go.
- Chamber of origin cutoff was this week-Tues, 2/17
- Next cut-off is Feb 25, when bills must have passed the policy committee of the opposite chamber.
- Bills must have passed both chambers by Mar 6.
- Revenue forecast was Feb 16; House & Senate budget proposals expected this weekend.
- After Mar 6-primarily floor action, bill reconciliation and budget negotiations



Status of Legislation



- As of 2/18/26: in addition to bills from last year
 - House has introduced 856 bills;
 - 198 have passed the House
 - Senate has introduced 722 bills
 - 210 have passed the Senate

Key Issues:

- Democracy & Elections
- Environment
- Health care
- Immigrants
- Budget and Revenue

About the Budget

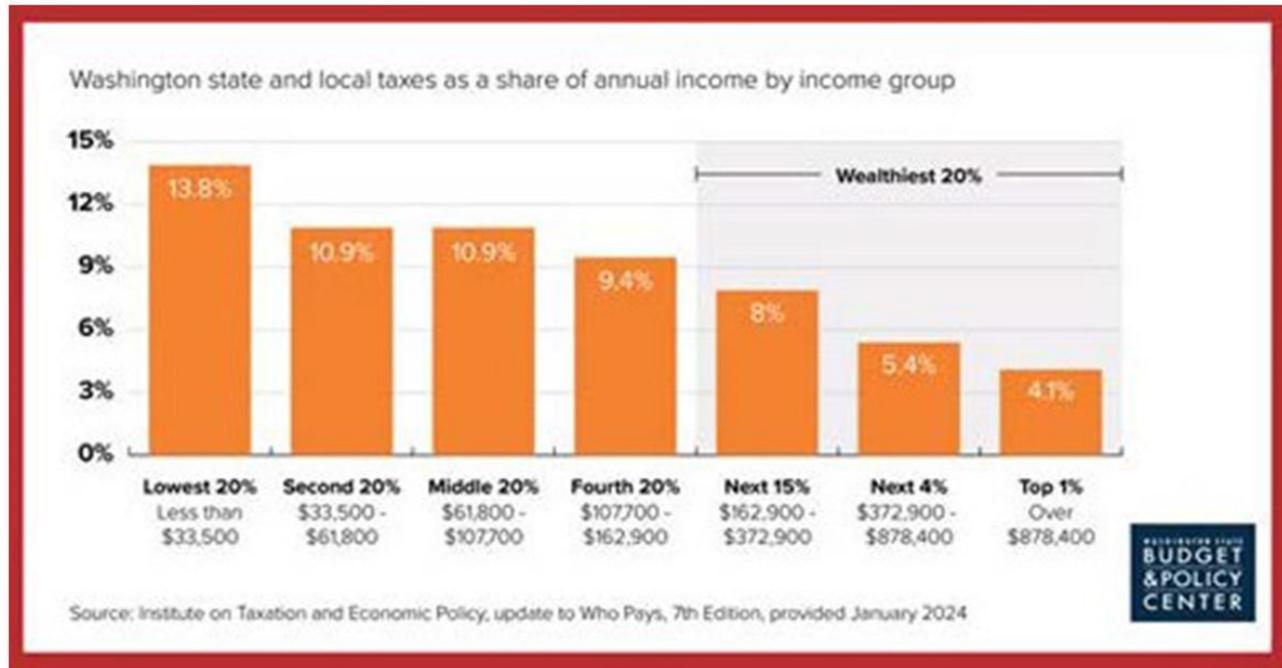
- Going into session, we faced a revenue shortfall of \$2.3 billion--- and growing budget needs
- Governor's Dec budget proposal noted
 - Revenue projections down-\$390 million
 - Federal funding & policy changes
 - Increasing caseloads/enrollments
 - Budget demands/existing program
- Among Governor's proposals were:
 - Delay in assisted living & nursing home rate increases
 - Limit Apple Health Expansion
 - Shift working families tax credit expenditures to climate commitment account

About the Budget

- Bills with fiscal impact have been discouraged and/or reworked to reduce costs
- Feb 16 revenue forecast somewhat improved from Nov-higher actuals B&O, utility, REET, use taxes
 - up by \$847 million for 25-27
 - \$438 million more than assumptions in 25-27 budget
- Expect to see House and Senate supplemental budget proposals shortly...Senate and House have budget hearings on 2/23 (SB 5998 & HB 2289); executive sessions on 2/25.
- Once again, revenue bills are being considered...to address current and future revenue challenges.

A reminder about how Washington's tax structure compares

Now WA has the 2nd most regressive state tax structure



Proposed Budget/Revenue Bills

SB 5754 - Creating the Washington state public bank. If established, a state public bank would reduce financing costs for the state, local governments and tribes who elected to join. *Died in Senate Ways & Means Committee.*

SB 5862 – COLA for Plan 1 retirees. Would provide a one-time COLA for retirees in the teachers' and public employees' systems. *Passed the Senate and has been referred to the House Appropriations.*

ESSB 6027 – Modifying certain funding and exemptions related to affordable housing and related services.

Amends authorized uses of sales tax to support additional affordable housing and services, including emergency and transitional housing. *Second substitute (with this new title) passed the Senate, public hearing House Finance 2/26 at 8am.*

Proposed Budget/Revenue Bills

SB 6162 - Concerning property tax reform. Would support seniors using amendments to the Property Tax Reform Program to partially address the cost of living and property values driving up assessments that seniors have outgrown their ability to pay. *Passed the Senate and referred to House Finance.*

SB 6346 - Millionaires' Tax. Would make the state's tax structure more equitable and generate significant new revenue to support badly needed services by establishing a 9.9% tax on income that exceeds \$1 million annually. *Passed the Senate; public hearing House Finance 2/24 at 8am.*

SB 6173 - Creating an apple health employer assessment. Would establish assessments on private sector employers with more than 100 employees with one or more concurrently enrolled in Medicaid. Assessments used to cover the cost of Apple Health. *Bill scheduled for executive session in Senate Ways & Means on Feb. 19.*

Other Bills- Health Care

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SB 5981 –Access to discounted medications and services; protecting the 340B drug pricing program. *Passed the Senate; public hearing in House Health Care & Wellness 2/20; executive 2/25.*

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HB 2242-Access to preventive services. Allows state Insurance Commissioner and DOH to determine which preventative services must be covered by insurance carriers. *Passed the House; public hearing in Senate Health & Long-Term Care 2/19; executive 2/20.*

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SB 5845 Timely payment requirements for health carriers. Companies required to pay “clean” claims for care within 30 days. *Passed the Senate; public hearing in House Health Care & Wellness 2/18*

Other Bills-Elder Caregiving

- HB 2384 Regulatory oversight of continuing care retirement communities. Would require actuarial analysis as part of CCRC registration application if life care contracts offered. *Passed the House; hearing in Senate Health & Long-Term Care 2/20, 8 am.*
- SB 5968 Improving regulatory efficiency by integrating executive order 25-03 concerning permitting and licensing processes. *Passed the Senate; hearing House State Government & Tribal Relations 2/20, 8 am. Executive session 2/24 at 11:30.*
- SB 6019 Improving functioning of home care rate statutes. *Passed Senate; hearing in House Appropriations 2/18.*
- SB 6161 Information on dementia risk reduction and dementia diagnosis in DOH materials and websites. *Passed the Senate. Referred to House Health Care & Wellness.*

Other Bills of Interest—still moving in opposite chamber

- SB 5400 Supporting Local News Journalism
- HB 1916 Protect Voters from Mass Registration Challenges
- HB 1710 Preclearance Requirements for Election Changes
- HB 2238 Statewide Food Security Strategies
- HB 2338 Community Scaled Weatherization Projects
- SB 5906 Protect Washingtonians in Sensitive Public Spaces
- SB 5855 Use of Face Coverings by Law Enforcement



What's Next

- Policy bills that may not have passed may be called back as “necessary to implement the budget”
- Policy committee work on bills passed in opposite chamber until Feb 25
- About Feb 22 – House & Senate budgets released; hearings-2/23; executive sessions-2/25
- Feb 25 – Policy committee cutoff
- Mar 2 – Fiscal committee cutoff
- Mar 6 – Cutoff for passing bills from opposite chamber
- Mar 6-12 – Budget negotiations, reconciliation of bills passed in both chambers but different versions
- Mar 12 – Sine die, budget adoption

Thank You!

