



WFSE members spoke up for their jobs, families, and communities during the 2023 Legislative Session. We lobbied elected officials in their offices, testified in front of committees, and sent over 1000 postcards to elected leaders urging them to pass our contracts and take action on vital legislation.

New members got involved; 71% of our member lobbyists this year were taking part in our lobby program for the first time.

Our members proved, yet again, that no workforce has more at stake in the decisions made by elected officials than state employees.

For an updated version of this document and more information, visit wfse.org or scan below:



2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

Updated 5/17/23

Note: *Our lobbyists are still looking through the final budget for items that will impact our members. This document will be updated as more information becomes available.*

2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION REPORT

KEY BILLS ADOPTED

- [HB 1122](#) (Doglio): Allows Washington Management Service employees whose jobs are classified in salary bands 1 and 2 the ability to collectively bargain and join a union. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 1187 \(Hackney\)](#): Ensures communication between an employee and their union steward who represents them at work is private and can't be used against them at work or in court. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 1533 \(Mena\)](#): Makes it easier for WFSE members and other public employees who have been victims of domestic violence and stalking to have their vulnerable personal information redacted from public records requests. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5015 \(Fortunato\)](#): Reestablishes the state Productivity Board, allowing state employees to bring their ideas to the board that they believe would improve state work and government. If the ideas work, there's an opportunity for financial rewards. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5217 \(Dhingra\)](#): Allows workers to file workers compensation claims for certain ergonomic-related injuries and musculoskeletal disorders- if employees are injured on the job due to long term, repetitive motion at work, it may now be covered. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5304 \(Saldana\)](#): Protects the testing and certification standards of DSHS spoken language interpreters, keeping them in-agency and not allowing them to be done by private groups. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5350 \(Conway\)](#): Provides a benefit increase to PERS/TERS plan 1 retirees. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5385 \(Lias\)](#): Increases the bid limits to \$90,000 for maintenance and repair work done at higher education institutions, protecting public employee work from outsourcing. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5440 \(Dhingra\)](#): Provides much needed reforms to our state's systems that work with people to restore their ability to be competent enough to stand trial by creating alternative programs to help ease issues with overworking and backlogs. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5454 \(Cleveland\)](#): Allows direct care nurses who have gotten PTSD from work to get workers compensation as a result. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 1580](#) (Callan): Creates support systems between all potentially involved agencies for children in crisis who have not family support and are in extended hospital visits instead of mandating DCYF take responsibility with foster care. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 1200](#) (Alvarado): Requires local, school district, and higher ed employers to provide union bargaining representatives certain information of employees and new hires in the bargaining unit within in a time period or be opened to lawsuits. This opens the door to future state employee protections. [WFSE supported]

KEY BILLS NOT ADOPTED

- [HB 1151](#) (Stonier): Would have mandated insurance companies cover fertility services under any plans. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 1566 \(Bateman\)](#): Would have allowed state employees to retain up to 280 hours of vacation leave annually instead of the 240 currently allowed. [WFSE supported]

- [SB 5273 \(Valdez\)](#): Would have required all public employers to provide bargaining representatives certain information of employees in the bargaining unit in a timely manner or face court action. The companion bill, HB 1200, was passed by the legislature but excludes state agency employees. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 5694 \(Hunt\)](#): Would have allowed the Office of Financial Management the ability to use the state salary survey as tool for bargaining salaries during the contract bargaining every 2 years with unions and the state. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 1397 \(Walsh\)](#): Would have mandated 5 years of random UAs, resulting in skyrocketing caseloads for child welfare workers. [WFSE opposed]
- Section of the operating budget that would have allowed for the Office of Financial Management to return to the bargaining table with DCYF social workers to negotiate up to 10% more assignment pay for employees in the field in addition to what currently exists in the CBAs. [WFSE supported]

ADDITIONAL VICTORIES

- A WFSE-supported change to [HB 1777, Sec. 4\(2\)](#), providing job protection and training to WFSE members who perform the maintenance and repair of state energy equipment.
- WFSE defeated a draft part of the budget that would have begun the closure of our state's Residential Habilitation Centers (RHCs) [[SB 5187, Sec. 203 \(1\)](#)]

CORE ISSUES

COMPENSATION

- All WFSE-negotiated collective bargaining agreements for 2023-25 were funded and supported by the legislature.
- The budget created a salary survey workgroup with the Office of Financial Management and affected unions with the goal of improving the state salary survey and how it affects job descriptions and pay. [[SB 5187, Sec. 135 \(9\)](#)]

PENSIONS

- All state employee pension plans were fully funded in the operating budget and supported by the legislature.
- [SB 5350](#): Provides a 3 percent benefit increase to PERS/TERS plan 1 retirees. [WFSE supported]

HEALTH CARE

- The WFSE collective bargaining agreement related to state employee health care costs was passed and funded by the legislature, which maintains the previous status of healthcare for employees and ensures all non-union employees receive the same healthcare. [[SB 5187, Sec. 908](#)]

- [HB 1222 \(Orwall\)](#): Requires insurance companies to cover hearing instruments, such as hearing aids and implants. [WFSE support]

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- [HB 1122 \(Doglio\)](#): Allows Washington Management Service employees whose jobs are classified in salary bands 1 and 2 the ability to collectively bargain and join a union. [WFSE priority]
- [SB 5238 \(Saldana\)](#): Expands higher education institution collective bargaining rights to employees who are also undergraduate students at public universities.

OUTSOURCING

- [SB 5385 \(Lias\)](#): Increases the bid limits to \$90,000 for maintenance and repair work done at higher education institutions, protecting public employee work from outsourcing. [WFSE priority]
- A WFSE-supported change to [HB 1777, Sec. 4\(2\)](#), providing job protection and training to WFSE members who perform the maintenance and repair of state energy equipment.

STATE REVENUE

- Although there were several bills introduced, the legislature failed to pass any new revenue laws aimed at making Washington’s tax system more fair and equitable by making the wealthy pay their fair share.
 - [HB 1628 \(Chopp\)](#): Would have updated the state real estate excise tax (REET), to increase the supply of affordable housing. The legislation failed to generate enough support and died in the House Rules Committee. [WFSE support]
 - [HB 1670 \(Ormsby\)](#): Would have removed an old and restrictive 1% property tax restriction on local governments, allowing them to better fund public services. [WFSE support]
 - [HB 1795 \(Street\)](#): Would have changed the state’s estate tax by updating deductions that can be taken and changing the rates. [WFSE support]
 - [SB 5486 \(Frame\)/ 1473 \(Thai\)](#): If passed, the bill would have established a 1% wealth tax on the richest Washingtonian’s assets such as stock income. [WFSE supported]

RACIAL JUSTICE

- [HB 1474 \(Taylor\)](#): Creates the “covenant homeownership account”, which aims to start fixing the racist history of property ownership due to racially restrictive real estate covenants in Washington State where people of color were not allowed to own property. This bill sets up a fund via County Assessments that will, via small grants, assist BIPOC Washington residents with costs associated with home purchases, such as closing costs and down payments.
- \$11,700,000 for the Tubman Center for Health and Freedom provided in the Capital Budget, a community health center focused on meeting the needs of marginalized and BIPOC communities.

- [HB 1048 \(Mena\)](#): Enhances the Washington Voting Rights Act, making voting easier for Washington’s tribes and allowing for any costs to be reimbursed if someone who challenges an election under the Voting Rights Act is found to be correct and the government can fix something as a result of that challenge.

CLIMATE CHANGE

- [HB 1181 \(Duerr\)](#): Updates the goals of Washington’s Growth Management Act (GMA), adding climate change and resiliency as a goal, updating the mandatory elements to include climate, and adds climate change to the list of elements that counties must consider when planning growth and development.
- [HB 1170 \(Street\)](#): Requires the Department of Ecology to update the Integrated Climate Change Response Strategy every 4 years so it remains modern, and to add climate resiliency funding opportunities.
- [HB 1216 \(Fitzgibbon\)](#): Establishes an Interagency Clean Energy Siting Council, increasing coordination across agencies when looking for where to put clean energy sites, especially for rural and underserved communities.
- [HB 1176 \(Slatter\)](#): Establishes the Washington Climate Corps, creating state service jobs that focus on addressing and educating on climate change.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- [HB 1110 \(Bateman\)](#): Will increase the supply of affordable “missing middle housing” by allowing more diverse housing options such as duplexes, triplexes, and quadplexes in communities that have historically only allowing single houses on one plot of land. [WFSE support]
- [HB 1625 \(Pollet\)](#): If passed, the bill would have allowed local governments to plan and adopt programs to stabilize and control rent increases. HB 1625 died in the House Housing Committee.
- [HB 1337 \(Gregerson\)](#): Requires cities to allow for the building of Accessory Dwelling Units. (ADUs) in cities with high growth and allows cities and counties to offer developers tax and financial incentives to build ADUs.

LABOR

- [HB 1055 \(Stokesbary\)](#): Allows 911 operators and other public safety telecommunicators join the Public Safety Employees Retirement (PSERs) pension plan. [WFSE support]
- [HB 1068 \(Bronoske\)](#): Allows an injured worker to make an audio and video recording of an independent medical examination, and to have one person of the worker's choosing present during the examination. [WFSE support]
- [HB 1491 \(Orcutt\)](#): Prohibits employers from searching an employee's vehicle in employer's parking areas. [WFSE support]

- [HB 1762 \(Doglio\)](#): Protects warehouse employees by clarifying quota systems and enforcing that meal breaks and rest breaks are required at risk of a violation to the company. Additionally allows L&I to investigate company violations of this law.

AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

- The operating budget funds \$34,000 to implement [SB 5236](#), hospital staffing standards for nurses. [WFSE Support]

ATTORNEY GENERAL

- The operating budget funds \$2,916,000 for a Youth Risk hotline for the public to report threats of abuse, rape, cyberbullying, or other risks. (Sec. 126 #6)
- The operating budget funds \$204,000 to implement [SB 5236](#), hospital staffing standards for nurses. [WFSE Support]
- The operating budget funds \$100,000 for the Attorney General and Insurance Commissioner to study ways together to make health insurance more affordable. (Sec. 126 #33)

DCYF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

- The operating budget mandates a tracking report to be given to the legislature and DCYF Oversight Committee on caseloads and staff turnover, with attention to staff impact in each specific region. (Sec. 227, #5)
- The operating budget provides \$862,000 for DCYF to develop and manage strategies for making visits for parents/guardians and children in temporary out of home care more efficient and reliable. This could include mileage reimbursements for the guardians of children, transportation contracts, or less supervised visits when possible. (Sec. 227 #8)
- The operating budget provides \$4,616,000 to increase travel reimbursements for employees who go to families' homes for work. (Sec. 227 #10)

DCYF JUVENILE REHABILITATION

- The operating budget added \$21 million and 98 full time employees to address policy changes and staffing shortages throughout the agency including in juvenile behavioral health, community reentry, juvenile rehabilitation services up to age 25, and community transition services.
- \$1.5 million is provided for additional solitary confinement, the Prison Rape Elimination Act, and security staffing at Echo Glen.
- \$900K is provided for additional Prison Rape Elimination Act staffing at Green Hill School.
- There is \$16.7 million no longer funded given the closure of Naselle Youth Camp in FY 2023.

CONSOLIDATED TECHNOLOGY (WATECH)

- \$8,666,000 provided to implement the enterprise cloud computing system, the new cloud IT program, per the 2020 Washington State Cloud Readiness Report. (Sec. 155 #13)
- \$3,498,000 to implement the recommendations of the Cloud Transition Task Force to help agencies prepare to use the cloud and train state staff. (Sec. 155 #14)

\$3,000,000 to modernize old technology and implement new technology solutions to improve the state's technology health portfolio. (Sec. 155 #18)

CORRECTIONS

- The operating budget provides an additional \$10.2 million in new programs/support and 59.7 full time employees for DOC community corrections.
- [SB Bill 5134 \(C. Wilson\)](#): Provides new funding for reentry services & supports, including dedicated reentry corrections specialist staff for discharge plans when inmates are released, and gives each released inmate \$300 for "gate money" to help them leave corrections safely. [WFSE support]
- WFSE secured \$2.9 million for staffing to help convert the Bellingham Reentry Center from a contractor-run facility to a state-run facility, creating more state jobs.
- \$2.7 million was also dedicated for supervision staffing to convert the Helen B. Ratcliff Reentry Center from a contractor-run facility to a state-run facility. DOC took on operations and began accepting incarcerated individuals again in November 2022.
- WFSE's advocacy resulted in \$1.3 million and 10.5 full time employees to expand training resources for the agency's community corrections program.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING

- [HB 1132 \(Goodman\)](#): Adds peace officers with limited authority to who is subject to Criminal Justice Training Commission requirements. WFSE DOC members are exempted from this requirement.
- \$150K is provided for the CJTC to develop a plan and recommendations to further increase organizational ability to train in order to include meeting the needs of all personnel. The first report is due November 15, 2023 and a final report is due September 30, 2024.
- \$9.5 million is provided for an additional four basic law enforcement academy classes per year at two new proposed regional training academy (RTAs) locations. This includes one RTA in Pasco and one new RTA in Skagit County, and the four additional classes per year will be split between the two new RTA locations. This will expand the CJTC staffing by 8 full time employees.
- An additional \$4.7 million and 4 full time employees are provided for another two basic law enforcement academy classes per year at one new proposed regional training academy in Clark County.
- \$960K is provided for additional administrative staffing to support operational needs at the CJTC.

ECOLOGY

- \$640,000 for the Department of Ecology jointly with the Office of Financial Management and the Environmental Justice Council to develop a process to track and report on the money Washington spends from Climate Commitment Act accounts that provide direct benefits to vulnerable communities. (Sec. 302 #13)
- \$500,000 for the department to conduct an analysis how to source water for irrigation needs for agriculture in case of the removal of the Lower Snake River Dams. (Sec. 302 #21)

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

- WFSE advocated for and the legislature provided \$12 million and 59 full time employees to create a dedicated team to process and resolve the unemployment insurance overpayment caseload backlog and provide workload relief.
- WFSE helped secure an additional \$21.2 million in funding to bridge the Employment Security Department's (ESD) gap in federal funding revenue to the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program for the 2023-25 biennium.
- One-time funding of \$15.4 million and 13.5 full time employees are provided to complete the second phase of the Long-term Services and Supports Trust (LTSS) information technology system.
- \$3.1 million in new funding and 11.3 new full-time employees are provided for the Paid Family and Medical Leave and Long-Term Services and Supports Trust programs to increase outreach to underserved communities; evaluate data; manage the finances; and ensure all Washingtonians with questions get them answered.

HIGHER EDUCATION

- [SB 5385 \(Lias\)](#): Increases higher education bid limits, protecting public employee work from outsourcing. [WFSE priority]
- \$85.7 million is provided to institutions of higher education (excluding TESC) for employee compensation costs to make up for the gap in student tuition revenue and employee compensation costs.
- \$2.3 million is provided to establish bachelor's and master's degrees in social work at the WSU Tri-Cities campus to address mental and behavioral health workforce shortage needs across the state.
- The legislature provided \$300K to support the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies and \$100K to support the Labor Archives at the University of Washington.
- \$4.6 million is provided to fully launch the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Eastern Washington University.
- \$694K is provided to establish a Master of Social Work program at Western Washington University on the Peninsulas.
- \$988K and 4.5 full time employees is provided to the Evergreen State College to support student enrollment and retention, including new student advising, underserved student support, and Native Pathways Program support.

- \$24K is provided for the costs of the Criminal Justice Training Center to use classroom and office space at Central Washington University's Lynnwood campus.
- \$5.2 million is provided to implement Second Substitute House Bill 1559 (Postsecondary student needs), contribute to the hiring of a benefits navigator per CTC campus, and for a food pilot at 4 college districts.
- \$3.6 million is provided to increase the number of openings in nursing programs at community and technical colleges by 200 in the 2023-25 biennium. A coordinated progress report with the Student Achievement Council is due to the Legislature by June 1, 2023, and a final report is due by December 1, 2024.

HORSE RACING COMMISSION

- WFSE worked tirelessly to secure \$1,150,000 in funding from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund to secure jobs at the Horse Racing Commission.

INTERPRETERS

- [SB 5304 \(Saldana\)](#): Protects the testing and certification standards of DSHS spoken language interpreters, keeping them in-agency and not allowing them to be done by private groups. [WFSE priority]

LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

- \$500,000 to research the high injury rates of the janitorial workforce, including identifying potential risk factors that increase injury based on job-related strain. (Sec. 220 #2)
- \$5,200,000 to continue the growth of behavioral health apprenticeship programs via grants. (Sec. 220 # 12)

PARKS AND RECREATION

- \$2,395,000 for additional staff and technical support for tribal and community concerns while construction projects are completed.
- WFSE fought for the significantly greater number of \$7,500,000 for parks maintenance, which ended up in the final budget, a massive victory for our Parks and Recreation Department.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- \$1,200,000 to explore workforce housing on state trust lands, increasing state employee affordable housing capacity.
- \$2,365,000 to bolster a statewide natural resources workforce to support the health and resiliency of Washington's forests.

- \$10,000,000 to address the backlog in maintenance and repair of recreation lands.

SECRETARY OF STATE

- \$616,000 for SB 5015, which re-establishes the state Productivity Board, allowing state employees to bring their ideas to the board that they believe would improve state work and government. If the ideas work, there's an opportunity for financial rewards. [WFSE priority]
- \$16,000,000 for cyber security efforts, including the hiring of additional staff and conducting security and threat assessments.
- \$1,766,000 for staff dedicated to maintenance and operations of the voter registration and election management system.
- \$150,000 for grants to businesses and nonprofits that provide outreach and education to Washington's juvenile rehabilitation facilities.
- \$352,000 to establish a Washington State Library Branch at the Green Hill School
- \$8,000,000 in the capital budget for the library archives planning and construction.

DSHS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- The Capital Budget provides \$175.9 million in funding for the construction of a 120-bed skilled nursing facility on the grounds of the Fircrest RHC campus.
- The Capital budget also included maintenance project funding for state RHCs including \$5.3 million for Yakima Valley School window replacement, \$5.8 for Lakeland Village infrastructure upgrades, and \$3.8 million for Rainier School roof repairs.
- \$7.8 million and 22 new FTEs for the implementation of [SB 5440](#) (competency restoration), which requires DSHS to create a program for individuals found incompetent to stand trial due to an intellectual or developmental disability, traumatic brain injury, or dementia to receive services and supports in community-based settings. This was a WFSE supported bill.
- \$4.5 million funding is provided to operate Klamath Cottage at Rainier School as a short-term transition option for individuals with developmental disabilities who are ready to discharge from an acute care hospital or state hospital and do not have an immediate community placement alternative available. This includes 24.5 FTE, mostly in WFSE's bargaining unit.
- WFSE/Action DD led on getting \$104,000 for a contract through 2024 with the Ruckelshaus center for a progress report on the recommendations in the [December 2019 report](#), "Rethinking Intellectual and Developmental Disability Policy to Empower Clients, Develop Providers and Improve Services."
- The budget also includes the anticipated \$67.3 million budget reduction as a result of the decertification of the Program Area Team (PAT) C and the transition of approximately 60 individuals from Rainier school to other settings.

DSHS LONG TERM CARE

- \$6.7 million and 7 full time employees are provided to implement [SB 5440](#) (competency evaluations), which requires DSHS to create a program for individuals found incompetent to stand trial due to an intellectual or developmental disability, traumatic brain injury, or dementia to receive services and supports in community-based settings.

DSHS MENTAL HEALTH

- Both the state Operating (\$42 million) and Capital/Construction (\$630 million) budgets provide historic new investments in our state hospitals.
- \$58 million for behavioral health operations and bed capacity expansion at Maple Lane (additions include Chelan and Baker cottages), including 206 new FTEs.
- The operating budget provides \$15.7 million to restore the civil ward at Western State Hospital previously used for the Specialized Treatment Assessment and Recovery (STAR) ward. This funding includes 62 full time employees – many of which will be WFSE bargaining unit members.
- The Capital Budget provides \$613 million for the construction of a new forensic ward at Western State Hospital. Additional funding is provided for infrastructure improvements at Eastern State Hospital, and new funds for mental health facilities improvements at Maple Lane to increase bed capacity. WFSE has been working closely with the Governor’s office for several years to site, design, and fund new state-operating mental health facilities.
- \$13.2 million is provided for provided to implement a violence reduction and prevention strategy at the state hospitals.
- [SB 5440 \(Dhingra\)](#): Provides new reforms to the state competency evaluation and restoration system. The budget includes \$9.3 million for the agency to implement SB 5440 for additional forensic navigators, clinical intervention specialists, siting work, and medication reimbursement (30 new FTEs).

TRANSPORTATION

- WFSE fought to get the entire Move Ahead WA state appropriation account dedicated to obsolete and in-need-of-repair equipment replacement, for a total of \$20,000,000.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Operating Budget: SB 5187 [overview](#), [agency details](#), and [bill text](#): UPDATED 5/1/2023

Transportation Budget: HB 1125 [agency and program summaries](#), and [bill text](#): UPDATED 5/1/2023

Capital Budget: SB 5200 [summary](#) and [bill text](#): UPDATED 5/1/2023

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