



2024 Legislative Session Final Report

WFSE members spoke up for their jobs, families, and communities during the 2024 Legislative Session. We lobbied elected officials in their offices and testified in front of committees to elected leaders urging them to act on vital legislation.

134 WFSE member lobbyists, including 58 *new* member lobbyists, took part in our member lobbying program for the first time! 153 personalized letters were written to our legislators and 95 legislator appointments were attended by WFSE members.

Our members proved, yet again, that no workforce has more at stake in the decisions made by elected officials than state employees. The Legislature has control over our wages, benefits, and pensions. They adopt a state budget that determines the funding level for the services we provide. They consider countless bills every year that can have an impact on everything from our working conditions to our job security. As individuals we are powerless, but through our union we have a voice.

KEY BILLS ADOPTED

- [HB 2246](#) (Bateman) – Increases the state employee vacation leave accrual cap from 240 to 280 hours for annual carryover or cash out upon separation from state service. [WFSE priority]
- [SB 5778](#) (Keiser) – Protecting the rights of workers to refrain from attending meetings or listening to their employer’s speech on political or religious matters- including union busting conversations. [WFSE priority]
- [SB 6060](#) (Nguyen) – Concerning the acceptance of electronic signatures by PERC for new union organizing petitions. [WFSE supported]
- [SB 6109/HB 2447](#) (C. Wilson/Senn) – Increasing court regulations on imminent risk to children in a home where fentanyl poses an immediate danger; mandating Superior Court trainings on DCYF work, child welfare law, and synthetic opioids; and providing services to families struggling with substance use disorder. [WFSE priority]
- [HB 1985](#) (Timmons) – Providing a one-time COLA to members of PERS 1. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 2013](#) (Volz) – Paying out pension benefits until the end of the month in which the retiree dies. [WFSE supported]
- [HB 2311](#) (Davis) – Supporting first responder wellness and peer support, in part by the creation of a task force including WFSE represented Community Corrections Officers. [WFSE supported]

- [HB 1949/SSB 6106](#) (Leavitt/Conway) – Including in the public safety employees' retirement system specified competency restoration workers at department of social and health services institutional and residential sites that serve civilly committed residents or serve patients under not guilty by reason of insanity findings. [WFSE priority]
- [SHB 2348](#) (Street) - Authorizes counties that establish hospitals to use county money, levy taxes, and issue bonds to pay, finance, or refinance capital expenses related to the hospital. This bill will allow UW/Harborview to continue its renovations and seismic retrofits and will allow the proposed respite beds to come online. [WFSE priority]

KEY BILLS NOT ADOPTED

- [HB 2283/SB 6124](#) (Volz/Holy) – Expanding the state employee shared leave system to include the ability to share leave in case of a natural disaster. [WFSE priority]
- [SB 5995](#) (Saldana) – Transferring the licensing and certification of DSHS medical interpreters from DSHS to the Department of Licensing. [WFSE priority]
- [SB 5810](#) (Saldana) – Clarifying the collective bargaining unit for medical interpreters by clarifying “appointments.” [WFSE priority]
- [HB 2407](#) (Couture) – Would have increased protections for DCYF caseworkers by mandating the agency provide a secondary individual to accompany in the field upon request, and by providing de-escalation training to caseworkers. [WFSE priority]
- [HB 2114/SB 5961](#) (Alvarado/Trudeau) – Would have improved housing instability for tenants subject to the landlord-tenant act and the manufactured/mobile home landlord-tenant act by limiting rent and fee increases, requiring notice of rent and fee increases, limiting fees and deposits, establishing a landlord resource center and associated services, authorizing tenant lease termination, creating parity between lease types, and providing for attorney general enforcement. [WFSE priority]
- [HB 2323/SB 6212](#) (Peterson/Shewmake) – Would have permitted landlords to report on-time rent payments to consumer reporting agencies if requested by a tenant. [WFSE priority]
- [HB 1873](#) (Ortiz-Self) – Would have added social service workers at the Office of Public Defense, duplicating DCYF work and providing conflicting opinions to families. [WFSE opposed]
- [I 2109](#) (Initiative submitted to the Legislature via signatures) – Would have repealed the capital gains tax, which provides billions in funding for the state and ensures the wealthy pay their fair share. This will be on the ballot in November. [WFSE opposes]
- [I 2117](#) (Initiative submitted to the Legislature via signatures) – Would have repealed the Climate Commitment Act, restricting billions in funding for the state and threatening transportation infrastructure. This will be on the ballot in November. [WFSE opposes]

ADDITIONAL VICTORIES

- [SB 6060](#) (Nguyen) – Successfully prevented Freedom Foundation efforts to also allow digital signatures for decertification.
- [HB 2311](#) (Davis) – Successfully lobbied for WFSE CCOs to be included in the first responder wellness task force.

- [HB 2020](#) (Timmons) + [HB 1899](#) (Volz) both passed, providing state relief for Medical Lake fire survivors and mandating Washington create a public infrastructure assistance program to assist in future disasters.
- [Executive Order 24-01](#) – An Executive Order was issued on Artificial Intelligence legislation, which states that by December 2024, the Office of Financial Management in collaboration with WaTech, Washington’s Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board and **organizations that represent state government employees**, will assess the impact of generative AI on the state workforce, develop strategies to mitigate any negative impacts, and support programs that help workers develop the skills and knowledge they need to successfully use generative AI and report their findings to the Governor.
- [HB 1950](#) (Slatter) - In addition to all employees and new hires, state agencies must provide the Public Service Loan Forgiveness materials to separated employees upon separation from the state agency and certify employment for any current or former employee who request employment certification by providing a partially completed manual PSLF form to the appropriate agency contact or by submitting a request through the federal PSLF online help tool. A state agency must send notice to submit a PSLF employment certification to any current employee that has previously had employment certified by the agency, one year after the last certification.

CORE ISSUES

COMPENSATION

- DCYF SSS2 Assignment Pay – Before this legislative session, WFSE worked with OFM and DCYF to come to a settlement on maintaining 10% assignment pay for currently employed SSS2s. WFSE ensured this increase in compensation was funded in the operating budget.

PENSIONS

- [SB 6311](#) (Mullet) - Would have used savings from investment returns in the state’s pension systems to fund transportation projects. [Opposed; did not pass]
- [SSB 6106](#) - Funding is provided for implementation of SSB 6106 (DSHS workers/PSERS), which expands membership in the Public Safety Employees' Retirement System to specified workers of the Department of Social and Health Services. [Passed]

HEALTH CARE

- [HB 2481](#) (Volz) - During the month that a retired participant in the Public Employees' Benefits Board health coverage program dies, the Health Care Authority (HCA) must waive the payment of premiums. The HCA must enroll any eligible surviving dependents in the same plan effective on the first day of the month in which the death occurred, and require those survivors to pay the applicable premiums. [WFSE supported; passed]

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

- [SB 6194/HB 2325](#) (Stanford/Fitzgibbon) – Detailing the conditions for state legislative employees to begin collectively bargaining. [Passed]
- [SB 5808](#) (Van De Wege) – Granting certain public safety telecommunicators interest arbitration. [Passed]

RACIAL JUSTICE

- [HB 1905/SB 5894](#) (Mena/Nobles) – Washington’s equal pay protections currently include gender. This bill adds race, color, national origin, among many other circumstances, to the Equal Pay and Opportunities Act. [Passed]

CLIMATE CHANGE

- [SB 6058](#) (Nguyen) – Facilitating linkage of Washington’s carbon market with the California-Quebec carbon market. [Passed]

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- [HB 1987](#) (Low) - Specifies that revenue from the local sales and use tax for public facilities in rural counties may be used to finance the construction of affordable workforce housing infrastructure or facilities. [Passed]
- [SHB 1892](#) (Leavitt) - Creates the Workforce Housing Accelerator Revolving Loan Fund Program within the Department of Commerce to administer loans to eligible organizations to assist with the development of housing for low-income households. [WFSE supported; passed]
- [ESHB 1998](#) (Gregerson) - Requires a city or county planning under the Growth Management Act to allow co-living housing on any lot located within an urban growth area that allows at least six multifamily residential units and prohibits them from imposing certain regulations or restrictions on co-living housing. [Passed]

LABOR

- [HB 1893/SB 5777](#) (Doglio/Keiser) – This bill would have provided 4 weeks of unemployment insurance for striking workers when the strike lasts longer than 14 days. This balanced the playing field between employers and their employees, preventing them from “starving out” striking workers asking for dignity at work. Unfortunately, the Senate declined to pass the bill. [Failed]
- [SB 5924](#) (Kuderer) – This bill would’ve allowed employees a private right of action in instances in which employers, current and former, refuse to provide a copy of a personnel file or written reason for discharge within 21 days. Unfortunately, this bill did not pass the fiscal deadline in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. [Failed]

- [HB 2084](#) (Fosse) – This bill will strengthen construction trainings and pathways to registered union apprenticeships in correctional facilities, creating union jobs and reentry support for incarcerated Washingtonians. [Passed]

AGENCY HIGHLIGHTS

ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS

- \$3,928,000 to address the projected unemployment insurance appeals backlog.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

- \$801,000 to continue the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative (SAKI) unit, which conducts activities such as testing backlogged kits, collecting DNA as required from felons, and supporting unresolved sexual assault related investigations. The SAKI unit was previously supported through federal grant funding, which expires in Sept. 2024.
- \$150,000 to enforce the Foreclosure Fairness Act and protect vulnerable borrowers. The Foreclosure Fairness Account (FFA) did not have sufficient revenue to support increased costs.

DCYF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

- \$1,484,000 to fund the WFSE-DCYF MOU to provide assignment pay to SSS2s. (Sec. 227 (41))
- DCYF + DSHS to develop a new facility at Lake Burien to place dependent youth with complex behavioral health, substance abuse, or developmental disability needs. (Sec. 227 (44))

DCYF JUVENILE REHABILITATION

- \$5,446,000 for Green Hill School HVAC Upgrades (future projected costs \$11,000,000)
- \$500,000 for Echo Glen Academic School Walkway Roofing & Lighting
- \$12,554,000 for Echo Glen Secure Facility Improvements (future projected costs \$800,000)
- \$17,934,000 for contracted security guards to enhance security until the fence construction is complete at Echo Glen.
- \$1,870,000 to staff and operate Echo Glen Cottage 11 that is anticipated to open April 2024.
- \$784,000 to staff and operate Echo Glen Cottage 5 that is anticipated to open July 2024.
- \$878,000 to staff and operate Echo Glen Cottage 8 is anticipated to open July 2024.
- \$400,000 is provided to JLARC for an audit of the juvenile rehabilitation system. A preliminary report is due by June 30, 2025, and will evaluate staffing ratios, training needs, programming, treatment and services, recidivism, best practices on security measures, and more.

CORRECTIONS

- The final operating budget funded the DOC Community Corrections Workload Study at 45 FTEs (dollar amount)
- \$270,000 for third-party experts to examine local government jail rates to ultimately make recommendations on jail rates with the goal of increasing the available beds for community correction usage. (Sec. 223 (3)(L))
- \$4,000,000 is provided to offset increased service delivery costs for residential treatment through the Drug Offender Sentencing Alternative program provided by American Behavioral Health Systems.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE TRAINING

- \$50,000 to study establishing a regional law enforcement academy on the Kitsap Peninsula. (Sec. 218 (26))

ECOLOGY

- \$1,070,000 to implement [SSB 6039](#) pertaining to incentivizing geothermal exploration for potential use as a source of clean energy.
- \$1,787,000 to implement [SSB 6058](#) pertaining to linking carbon markets with California and Quebec.
- \$300,000 is provided, beginning January 2025, to contract for a study of the extent to which carbon dioxide removal is needed to meet Washington's statutory greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets.
- \$2,00,000 is provided to communicate with the public in multiple languages on the use and benefits of Climate Commitment Act (CCA) funding, as well as how communities can access CCA grant funding. Effective January 1, 2025.
- \$409,000 is provided for increased support of the various climate-related policies that DOE is responsible for implementing. Funding is for staffing and contracted resources for activities such as IT systems, communications and rulemaking, energy-intensive trade-exposed (EITE) advisory group, offset protocol workshops, and subscriptions for energy-related data. Funding is effective on January 1, 2025.
- \$338,000 for data evaluation, stakeholder engagement in coastal communities, and collaboration with federal and Tribal entities on potential offshore wind development. Effective on January 1, 2025.

EMPLOYMENT SECURITY

- \$3,928,000 to cover the cost of the increased workload at the Office of Administrative Hearings associated with processing a backlog of unemployment insurance appeals.
- \$14,234,000 to backfill declining federal funding revenue for the state's unemployment insurance program.

- \$3,863,000 to implement [SHB 2467](#) (LTSS Portability), which allows individuals who have left Washington to elect to continue participation in the Long-Term Services and Support Program (LTSS) under certain circumstances.
- \$5,655,000 to increase the PFML program's capacity to process claims and respond to customer inquiries in a timely manner.
- \$409,000 to implement [SHB 2102](#) (PFML benefits/health info.), which requires health care providers to provide a certification of a serious health condition required for PFML benefits within seven days of receiving patient authorization.
- \$7,305,000 for staff to complete the remaining components of the PFML program, including, but not limited to, the collection of overpayments, cross-matching of eligibility with other programs, and elective coverage for tribes.
- \$100,000 to develop training on filing claims and navigating the UI system for apprentices and apprentice advocate groups.
- \$4,404,000 for two grants awarded by the USDOL to provide for disaster relief employment and training services for people living in Clark, Cowlitz, and Spokane counties affected significantly by the health and economic effects of opioid use, addiction, and overdose.

HORSE RACING COMMISSION

- \$1,350,000 in supplemental funding to keep the agency solvent.

LABOR AND INDUSTRIES

- [HB 1927](#) (Bronoske) - Relating to reducing the number of days that a worker's temporary total disability must continue to receive industrial insurance compensation for the day of an injury and the three-day period following the injury.
- \$4,084,000 for increased costs associated with developing the procurement strategy for replacing the workers' compensation computer system.
- \$75,000 to study registered apprenticeship programs between community and technical colleges; report due Nov. 15, 2024.

PARKS AND RECREATION

- \$1,295,000 for vehicles and equipment, including trucks ordered but not received during the 2021-23 biennium and a snow groomer at Mount Spokane State Park.
- \$462,000 for a facility assessment and ongoing property maintenance of the 110-acre Bear Creek Lodge property adjacent to Mt. Spokane State Park.
- \$450,000 in one-time funding for grounds and facilities maintenance costs as State Parks develops a cost-recovery model with the Fort Warden Public Development Authority to pay for campus maintenance and consider lease modifications necessary to support the PDA.
- \$700,000 to relocate HQ from a leased Tumwater location to the Department of Ecology state-owned facility in Lacey, includes planning and design, tenant improvements, moving costs, and procurement of new office equipment.
- \$550,000 to collect and analyze ecological data, complete post-fire restoration, and conduct an Environmental Impact Statement at Gingko State Park, and purchase survey equipment.

- \$307,000 to replace 19 automated pay stations that are no longer operational with a newer, more reliable model.
- \$2,100,000 for conversion of motored equipment to electrification, energy assessments of historic buildings, and an assessment of climate change impacts on coastal parks. Funding is effective on Jan. 1, 2025.
- \$500,000 to construct new employee housing at seven park locations throughout WA.
- \$188,000 to conclude the outward facing State Parks website project.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

- [ESHB 2003](#) (Connors)/[SB 5967](#) (Frame) – Creates a leasehold excise tax exemption when public lands are used for affordable.
- Wildfire Reforestation on DNR-Managed Lands: \$7.5 million CCA provided for post-wildfire reforestation of the forestlands managed by the DNR (effective January 1, 2025).
- Wildfire Reforestation Grants: \$2.5 million CCA provided to administer grants for post-wildfire reforestation (effective January 1, 2025).
- Geoduck Monitoring: Fully funded \$524,000
- Forest Treatments & Fire Prevention: \$10 million CCA funding provided for forest treatments in areas that have the greatest potential to prevent wildfires and protect air quality.
- DNR Conservation Corps: Fully funded with 1.817 million with ALEA
- Post-Fire Debris Flow Program: Partially funded at \$322,000, short \$643,000
- Fire Suppression: Funded \$21.143 million

SECRETARY OF STATE

- \$148,000 to implement [HB 1962](#), which makes the methods of transferring a voter registration address that are currently only available to persons moving within a county available to persons moving from one county to another.
- \$81,000 Election Security Breaches Funding is provided for additional intrusion detection systems as required under [SB 5843](#).
- \$125,00 provided to design forms for voters to complete incomplete ballot declarations in various languages as required in [ESSB 5890](#).
- \$125,000 to develop a preservation plan for artifacts at Lakeland Village as required under [SSB 6125](#).
- \$741,000 for additional information technology staff to support the divisions and systems.
- \$137,000 for additional costs incurred to certify 2024 initiatives to the Legislature.
- \$500,000 to expand voter education and elections information.

DSHS DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- \$1,260,000 to hire 70 FTEs across DSHS/DD, including 54 case managers and supervisors, to reduce the caseload ratio to 66 by FY 2027 (from 2023-25 total is 2,230,000; over the course of 4-years the full total is \$9,059,000).
- \$12,318,000 Lake Burien RTF - Complex Needs funding is provided for a residential treatment facility to support youth with complex needs. This includes children with

developmental disabilities and behavioral challenges, requiring tailored care and structured support environments.

DSHS AGING AND ADULT SERVICES

- \$1,000,000 to develop and implement training on emergency preparedness for climate related events, accessible in multiple languages. (Sec. 204 (40))

DSHS MENTAL HEALTH

- \$20,510,000 for an additional 30 beds at Western State Hospital. (Sec. 202 (31))
- \$9,316,000 for an additional 8 beds at Eastern State Hospital. (Sec. 202 (32))
- \$134,964,000 for DSHS to operate 72 behavioral health beds at the Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health Facility. (Sec. 202. (29)(a))

DSHS ECONOMIC SUPPORT SERVICES

- \$1,565,000 for DSHS to hire additional public benefit specialists to help reduce call center and lobby wait times. (Sec. 205 (32)(a))

DSHS SPECIAL COMMITMENT CENTER

- \$518,000 to shift staff from the total confinement facility on McNeil Island to the Special Commitment Center's community operations to address increasing court orders for Less Restrictive Alternatives (LRAs).

TRANSPORTATION

- \$700,000 to provide asbestos abatement and facility updates to the Corson Ave regional facility
- \$4,000,000 allocated throughout the budget for existing fleet repair cost increases

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Operating Budget: [SB 5950](#)

Transportation Budget: [HB 2134](#)

Capital Budget: [SB 5949](#)