

Weekly Legislative Update: **Early Care and Education**

Issue Chair: Karen Tvedt
Contact: ktvedt@lwvwa.org

April 2, 2023

The **early care and education bills we support** continue to move forward through the legislative process including [SB 5225](#); [SB 5316](#); [HB 1106](#); [HB 1199](#); [HB 1525](#) (see our [legislation grid](#) for details). Several are scheduled for executive session in either Senate Ways & Means or House Appropriations on April 4, the last day to move bills out of fiscal committees.

Similarly, [HB 1550](#) is scheduled for executive session in Senate Ways & Means on April 4 at 10 am. As discussed last week, this bill moved to **our oppose column** after it was replaced by a striking amendment in the Senate prior to public hearing. The bill in its current form is now opposed by many in the early care and education community as not being responsive to the intent of the original bill.

Both the **Senate Operating Budget Proposal** ([PSSB 5187](#)) and **House Operating Budget Proposal** ([PSHB 1140](#)) are positive in what they propose for early care and education. While neither includes everything advocates wished for, and there are differences between them, here is some of what they include:

- Significant rate increases for child care home and center providers, pre-k programs (ECEAP) and home visitation services for vulnerable young families. This should make it easier for programs to hire and retain workers and improve access for families who receive state assistance. The House ECEAP rate increase proposal is less than that of the Senate (\$39.927 million vs. \$59.381 million).
- Expanding the number of children served by ECEAP (the Senate is more generous than the House); funding for tribal early learning grants to provide culturally appropriate early learning for tribal children (the Governor's and Senate budget proposals include \$10.279 million while the House includes \$5.14 million for this purpose); and expanding supports for child care providers serving children with complex needs (the Governor's and Senate budget proposals include \$15.396 million while the House includes \$12.316 million). On the other hand, the House proposes funding for some items not included in the Senate proposal, e.g., \$8.867 million for ECEAP services for children with complex needs.
- Generally, the Senate proposal includes funding for early care and education bills that started in the Senate, i.e., [SB 5225](#) and [SB 5316](#) while the House proposal includes funding for bills that started in the House, e.g., [HB 1525](#).

How You Can Be Involved

Now that each chamber has adopted its proposed budget, key budget leaders will negotiate their differences and develop a final budget for adoption by each chamber. This will happen near the end of the legislative session. Your input on bills and the budget remains very important. Contact Karen Tvedt, ktvedt@lwwa.org if you have questions.