

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

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

April 9, 2023

The **early care and education bills we support continued to move** forward this week. Two have passed both chambers including [HB 1106](#) and [HB 1199](#). These bills were amended in the Senate and now return to the House for “concurrency.” If the House does not concur with the Senate amendments, it can ask the Senate to “recede” from its amendments. If the Senate does not agree to recede, either chamber can ask for a “conference committee” to work out their differences. If they agree, the bill goes to the Governor for signature; if they can’t agree, the bill fails.

Three bills need to be forwarded to the floor for passage including [SB 5225](#); [SB 5316](#); and [HB 1525](#) (see our [legislation grid](#) for details). [HB 1550](#) passed Senate Ways & Means on April 4 and was referred to Rules. As amended, the League **now opposes this bill**. We will be watching closely if it passes the Senate and is referred back to the House for concurrence.

Both the **Senate and House Operating Budget Proposals** are positive in what they propose for early care and education. 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.

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@lwvwa.org if you have questions.