



forward



Advocacy News

Week 10

We have just finished week 10 of the legislative session. Things have certainly picked up again, but it is still the calm before the storm waiting for the release of the budgets.

Budget

The Washington State Revenue Forecast Council released their March Revenue Forecast. This latest revenue forecast is quite positive! Expected revenue for the next four years is expected to increase by \$3.3 billion with \$1.34 billion this biennium and \$1.95 billion in the next. Much of this increase comes from stronger than expected retail sales as well as strong residential real estate transactions. This increased revenue returns the state to where it expected to be before the pandemic hit. For this biennium alone, increased revenues combined with reserves brings the state to a net surplus of nearly \$3 billion.

This increased revenue comes at the same time the state is set to receive nearly \$4.3 billion in federal relief. Because of the higher than expected revenues and the federal relief funds, the legislature's budget proposals are now expected to be released next week with committee hearings already scheduled for the end of next week. The Senate budget is expected to be released Thursday with the Ways & Means committee scheduled to hear public testimony on Friday beginning at 1:00pm. The House budget is expected to be released the following Monday. The Appropriations Committee hearing is likely to be scheduled on Tuesday, the 30th.

With the higher than expected state revenue and federal relief funds, we are continuing to push the legislature to close the gap in underfunding and make significant investments in Medicaid long-term care providers' rates. We continue to meet with key legislators to discuss different options and spending levels for increasing Medicaid funding, as well as one time spending on infection control improvements and perhaps even HVAC replacement and opportunities to convert to private rooms in skilled nursing. Over the next few weeks, as the budgets are released, we will seek your help to secure these Medicaid rate improvements, as well as spending of federal relief funding on long term care COVID related matters. Please watch for action alerts.

[HB 1111](#) - Concerning investment income tax deductions. This bill seeks to eliminate the Business & Occupation tax deduction for nonprofit organizations on their investment income. If passed, this legislation would subject income derived from an investment to either a 1.5% (businesses with taxable income of less than \$1 million) or 1.75% (businesses with taxable income of \$1 million or more) tax on the interest earned. This bill has been dormant since it was first introduced and was just recently scheduled for public hearing. This past Monday, the 15th, the bill was heard in the House Finance Committee where most of those testifying, testified in opposition to this bill. LeadingAge Washington signed in opposition to the bill and submitted written comments raising a number of concerns with the bill as written and have asked that the tax deduction be restored for senior living and care organizations. We are currently running an advocacy campaign on this legislation and encourage

you to register your concerns [HERE](#) where you will have an opportunity to send a message to the members of the House Finance Committee. The bill has not yet been scheduled for executive action from committee.

Policy

[ESHB 1120](#) - **Concerning state of emergency operations impacting long-term services and supports.** This bill was scheduled for executive action today, but the committee could not get to it. There are currently three proposed amendments as expected, one that would shorten the return to compliance period from the SNF Staffing requirements waiver from 18 months to 12 months after the end of the state of emergency. We expect it to be rescheduled for executive session early next week.

[SB 5294](#) - **Concerning the creation of statewide epidemic preparedness and response guidelines for long-term care facilities.** We have learned this bill will not be scheduled for a hearing in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee due to time constraints. As a compromise Representative Cody and Senator Cleveland have decided to incorporate the workgroup and report in this bill into HB 1218 as a new section.

[SHB 1218](#) - **Improving health, safety, and quality of life for residents in long-term care facilities.** This bill is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care on Monday. We expect the hearing to be on a substitute bill which would include the incorporation of the provisions in 5294. LeadingAge is neutral on the underlying bill, as amended in committee, having succeeded in addressing a number of concerns we initially had with the bill.

[HB 1141](#) - **Increasing access to the death with dignity act.** This bill is scheduled for executive action today in the Health & Long Term Care Committee.

[SB 5191](#) - **Regulating unfair business practices and prohibiting predatory price increases during states of emergency.** This bill was scheduled for executive session on March 18th but no action was taken.

[HB 1124](#) - **Concerning nurse delegation of glucose monitoring, glucose testing, and insulin injections.** This bill was passed out of committee and now waits to be pulled on the Senate floor calendar.

[SB 5160](#) - **Addressing landlord-tenant relations by providing certain tenant protections during and after landlord access to state rental assistance programs.** This bill is scheduled for executive session on March 25th. We hope this bill continues to move quickly with no additional amendments so we can continue to advocate for the termination of the Governor's Eviction Moratorium Proclamation. SB 5160 excludes limits on rent increases and exempts long term care settings from the eviction provisions. The bill does contain an emergency clause making it effective immediately upon signature by the Governor.

Sincerely,

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