

Legislative Planning Committee 2015 End of Session report

2015 Legislative Session

Recently enacted bills that may impact libraries, library employees, or retirees

Below is a summary of state legislation tracked by the WLA Legislative Planning Committee. Copies of the bill text, bill histories, fiscal notes and legislative staff analysis is available on the state legislature's bill Information page <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/>

Members of the Legislative Planning Committee perused these bills in their original, amended, and adopted formats to evaluate their likely or potential impact to libraries in general. Please consult your library legal counsel for interpretation or analysis specific to your library.

2015 WLA bill readers:

Patty Reyes, Chair, WLA Legislative Planning Committee

Nancy Ledebor, WLA President, Spokane County Library District

Marilynne Gardner, Seattle Public Library

John Sheller, King County Library System

Patrick Rowe, Spokane County Library District

A great session for school libraries & youth

SB 5294 School library & information technology programs.

Pro library measure that changes the name of School Library Media Programs to School Library Information and Technology Programs, and outlines ways teacher-librarians may collaborate with their schools to accomplish certain goals.

Garnering support for this was a feature of WLA Library Day, and helped in large part by testimony from Carolyn Logue and Sharyn Merrigan, of the WLA interest group WLMA (Washington Library Media Arts Association.)

Effective Date: 7/24/2015

SSB 5721 Adding a public library representative to the state Early Learning Opportunities Council.

In 2014 the legislature established the Early Learning Opportunities Council to advise the Governor on "school and community passed programs that extend learning and enrichment for students beyond the traditional school day, week, or calendar [year]."

The original council makeup did not include a public library representative, yet those of us in the field know that summer reading & learning, story times, after school tutoring, gaming and book club programs can have a profound impact on the lifelong learning of our patrons. SSB

5721 corrects that omission and gives public libraries the credit and responsibility we have earned in state level efforts to support and expand early learning opportunities for our youngest patrons.

Effective Date: 7/24/2015

And a good session for our State Library & Heritage Center Funding

ESSB 6052 Final appropriations bill

Microsoft IT Academy funded at \$1.5 million through FY 2017 so Washington public libraries can continue to offer patron access to the full range of Microsoft Academy training materials. An additional \$400,000 is provided for predesign work to determine necessary program space for the State Library in Tumwater and additional archive space.

State 2015-17 Omnibus Operating budget – backfilling State Library 14E Shortage

\$2.4 million is provided from the General Fund to supplement insufficient revenues in the Heritage Center Account (14E) to maintain services at the state library.

HB 2195 Modifying auditor’s fees for Heritage Center Account

Increases the surcharge collected by county auditors or recording officers from \$2 to \$3. The state Office of Financial Management estimates this will generate increasing amounts to the Heritage Center (14E) account over the next ten years, ranging from \$1.45 to \$3 million per year through 2021.

Retirements and benefits

HB 1168 Retiree return to work

Restores provisions allowing retirees of the state Public Employees’ Retirement System (PERS) who return to work in positions covered by other state administered plans to receive PERS benefits for the first 867 hours of the employment year.

Effective Date: 7/24/2015

SB 5466 Public Employee benefits eligibility

Clarifies Washington State Public Employees’ Benefits Board (PEBB) administered benefit eligibility to conform to federal standards, such as extending PEBB benefits to dependent children up to the age of 26, in compliance with the Affordable Care Act. Extends recognition of domestic partner benefits to equalize both same-sex and opposite-sex partner eligibility. Conforms eligibility standards from use of the term “half-time” to use of “80 hours per month” in determining part time benefit eligibility; further defines the term “academic year” to allow it to apply to either quarter or semester academic terms.

Effective Date: 7/24/2015

Elections

SHB 1919 Timing of special elections

Clarifies the timing of special elections and the length of time prior to the election public libraries and other jurisdictions must present their “resolution for special election” to their county auditor:

The deadline for presenting a resolution to the county auditor calling for a special election is 60 days before an election on the second Tuesday in February or the fourth Tuesday in April. The certification deadline for the February and April elections is 10 days before the date of the election.

Effective Date: 7/24/2015

Miscellaneous library related tax policy

HB 2263 Permitting a city or county to create a Cultural Access Program & housing related services

This confusing and seemingly convoluted legislation allows cities in Washington, plus counties with a population of 1.5 million or less, to impose *either* a sales & use tax *or* a property levy tax to establish and fund a Cultural Access Program (CAP). In defining the tax’ authorized usage, the bill states

“the primary purpose of the organization receiving the funding must be the advancement or preservation of science or technology, the visual or performing arts, zoology, botany, anthropology, heritage or natural history.”

The bill further establishes parameters for cities and counties to implement a 0.1 percent sales and use tax in order to fund housing and related services, primarily for affordable housing or mental or behavior related health services for “vulnerable people.”

Effective Date 10/9/2015

ESB 6013 Charity supporter tax relief

Increases the “use tax” exemption amount for items purchased or received from a nonprofit organization or library from \$10,000 to \$12,000; and extends the expiration date of this tax relief from 2017 to 2020.

Effective date 10/9/2015