



Washington legislative update – March 2021

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For the next few weeks, Washington lawmakers will be moving to “floor action,” a term used to describe the process when the two houses convene to vote on bills recently passed out of committee.

The first in a series of deadlines for lawmakers was Feb. 15, when all policy bills were required to be voted out of committee to continue.

Feb. 22 marked the deadline for all bills impacting the budget to be voted out of the appropriate fiscal committee. The budgetary committees include the House Finance, Appropriations, Capital Budget and Transportation Committees and the Senate Ways & Means and Transportation Committees.

March 9 marks the cutoff deadline for bills to move out of their house of origin – House or Senate. Bills that do not make the cutoff deadlines are considered “dead” for the remainder of the session. The deadlines do not necessarily apply to measures considered “necessary to implement the budget.”

As we move into the final 60 days of the 105-day session, SPEEA continues working to ensure our priorities move through the legislative process and problematic bills do not.

Update on key state bills

Growing Washington’s Manufacturing Workforce (HB 1170): This bill establishes a goal for Washington to become the state with the highest share of its workforce employed in manufacturing and research and development occupations. HB 1170 also creates a manufacturing council to advise and consult the legislature and state agencies on growing the manufacturing workforce. As requested by SPEEA, the House amended the bill to include an equal representation of labor, business and geographic regions on the advisory council. The bill passed out of the policy and fiscal committees with bipartisan support and is currently awaiting a full vote on the House floor.

Public Broadband Access (HB 1336): If passed, this bill allows public utility districts, port districts, cities, towns and counties to provide retail telecommunications services (broadband) to underserved communities. With few market incentives, many Washingtonians still do not have access to essential internet services.

As a result of the pandemic, this access issue has become even more disruptive as individuals and students work remotely. Increased access to broadband infrastructure is also critical to recruiting new aerospace suppliers and advanced manufacturing companies to the state. HB 1336 passed the House and will soon begin the voting process in the Senate.

Worker Protection Act (HB 1076): Championed by the Washington State Labor Council (WSLC), AFL-CIO and its affiliates, this bill expands workplace safety enforcement by allowing employees to file lawsuits against employers who violate workplace safety laws. HB 1076 would make it easier to enforce existing workplace standards and protect workers from safety violations and employer retaliation. The bill has passed the policy and fiscal committee cutoffs and is waiting for a “pull” from the House Rules Committee, so it can go to a full vote of the House before the March 9 deadline.

2021 legislative deadlines

- **Feb. 15** – Deadline for bills to pass out of policy committees.
- **Feb. 22** – Deadline for bills to pass out of fiscal committees. Bills impacting the state budget typically must be heard by both a policy committee and a fiscal committee.
- **March 9** – Deadline for bills to pass their house of origin (House or Senate).
- **March 26** – Deadline for bills to pass out of the policy committees in the opposite house.
- **April 2** – Deadline for bills to pass out of the fiscal committees in the opposite house.
- **April 11** – Deadline for bills (not related to the budget) to pass the opposite house.
- **April 25** – Session ends (Sine Die).

