



Catholic School Legislative Bulletin – 2017, No. 6

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Weekly Summary

Last week the House released its 2017-2019 operating budget. The House budget increases some spending for social services, and contains \$3 billion in tax increases. The revenue increases would come mainly from a capital gains tax and increasing the business & occupation (B&O) tax rate on large companies. Similar to the Senate's operating budget, the House budget provides \$1.8 billion in K-12 funding over the next two years in order to comply with the requirements of the McCleary decision to fully fund K-12 basic education by 2018 without reliance on local levy dollars.

The Senate has passed its operating budget, and after the House has passed its budget, serious negotiations will commence to resolve the differences between the two budgets. When a budget is agreed upon and passed by both Chambers, it will be sent to the Governor.

The Senate also released its capital budget for the next two years. Of particular interest to WSCC was the amount allocated for the Housing Trust Fund (HTF). The Senate budget includes less than \$100 million for the HTF, whereas participants at Catholic Advocacy Day asked for \$200 million. The Senate unanimously passed its capital budget on March 30.

Early this week another major cutoff date looms - Tuesday, April 4. If those bills assigned to one of the fiscal committees (Appropriations in the House and Ways & Means in the Senate) are not passed by the end of the business day on April 4, they will likely be dead for the 2017 session (unless they are considered to be necessary to implement the budget (NTIB)).

Note: Bills that are amended in committee are usually considered as substitute bills and are designated by the addition of "S" before their number, eg. SSB 5234 or SHB 1234. If a bill is amended in two Committees, it is designated with the addition of a 2 before the S, e.g. 2SHB 1234. Bills that are amended while being considered on the floor of a chamber are designated by the addition of "E" (engrossed) before their number, e.g., ESSB 5234 or ESHB 1234, or even 2ESHB 1234.

Updates on Legislation Still Alive

Financing of Early Learning Facilities – [2SHB 1777](#): The bill would create the Early Learning Facilities Revolving Account (ELFRA) to provide grants and loans for the planning, renovation, purchase, and construction of early learning facilities. 2SHB 1777 would also establish prioritized criteria for ELFRA awards to school districts and other eligible organizations. After passing the House, 2SHB 1777 was heard by the Senate Ways & Means Committee on March 30

and passed on March 31. An almost identical bill, [SSB 5753](#), died in the Senate Rules Committee.

Siting of Schools and School Facilities – [ESHB 1017](#): On March 28, ESHB 101, which passed the House, was substantially amended and passed the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee. The bill now states that the Growth Management Act prohibits a county from authorizing the extension of public facilities and utilities to serve a school sited in a rural area that serves students from a rural area and an urban area unless specific requirements are met. On March 29, ESHB 1017 was passed by the Senate Rules Committee and is awaiting a vote by the entire Senate.

Paraeducators – [ESHB 1115](#): Following passage by the House earlier this month, ESHB 1115 was amended and passed by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 28 to the Senate Ways & Means Committee which passed it on March 30. The bill would provide the minimum employment standards for a paraeducator who works in the special education program, the basic education program, the learning assistance program, the federal disadvantaged program, and English language learner programs. ESHB 1115 would also require school districts to begin implementing the paraeducator certification for paraeducators working in the programs. Other provisions in the bill would cover standards for training paraeducators. A similar bill, [SB 5070](#), was amended and passed by the House Education Committee on March 28. The House Appropriations Committee heard the bill on April 1 and is scheduled to vote on it on April 3.

School Nutrition Programs - [ESHB 1508](#): The bill would require high-needs schools, beginning in the 2018-19 school year, to offer **breakfast after the bell** to each qualifying student and provide adequate time for students to eat. All public schools are encouraged to offer breakfast after the bell even if not required to do so. The bill would also direct districts with school lunch programs to begin eliminating lunch copays for qualifying students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 and to complete the copay phase out in the 2020-21 school year. On March 27, ESHB 1508 was amended and passed by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee. In amending the bill, the Senate committee removed the requirement that breakfast items served in a breakfast-after-the-bell program contain less than 25 percent (by weight) added sugar. The bill is scheduled to be heard by the Senate Ways & Means Committee on April 3.

Basic Education Funding: The 2012 Washington State Supreme Court *McCleary* decision has driven the legislative budget debate for five years, and the deadline has arrived. *McCleary* requires the state to fully fund K-12 basic education by 2018 without reliance on local levy dollars. Legislators in both chambers are trying to resolve differences between the House and Senate bills. The main components of each are how to fund basic education (including salaries of teachers and school workers) and address levy inequities. The Senate bill, [SB 5607](#), passed the Senate by a 25-24 margin and was heard by the House Appropriations Committee on Feb. 6. The House bill, [ESHB 1843](#), passed the House on Feb. 22 by a 50-47 vote and is now before the Senate Ways & Means Committee. With each side's education funding plans passed, closed-

door negotiations are proceeding between the House and the Senate. An agreement is not expected until late in the session or even in a special session.

Legislature Passes Levy Cliff Legislation: [ESB 5023](#) was signed by the governor on March 15 and will become effective on July 23, 2017. It avoids a pending crisis for many local public school districts by allowing school districts to continue to collect locally levied property taxes at current levels through 2019. Without its passage, school districts were facing termination of local levy authority in January 2018 that could result in considerable lost revenue used primarily for salaries of teachers.

Improving Quality Early Learning Opportunities - [2SSB 5107](#): This bill would encourage school districts and nonprofit organizations, in addition to local governments, to collaborate with the Department of Early Learning (DEL) when establishing and strengthening early learning programs. In addition, it would direct DEL to create a local pathway to high quality early learning to help local governments, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and early learning providers use additional local or private funds, or both, to expand access, increase quality, and extend hours for existing early care and education programs. 2SSB 5107 was passed by the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee on March 28 and is scheduled to be heard by the House Appropriations Committee on April 3.

Legislation Not Making Previous Cutoffs

Lead in Drinking Water in Schools – [SSB 5745](#): This bill would have required public water systems to replace lead-containing service lines to public schools and early childhood programs by July 1, 2020, and would have mandated the State Board of Health to adopt rules on state-wide testing for lead in drinking water and drinking water fixtures at public schools. SSB 5745 died on the Senate floor calendar.

Interschool Athletic Activities – [SB 5583](#): The bill would have mandated that any proposed rules, policies, and amendments to be applied by the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) or other such voluntary nonprofit entity and any proposed repeal of any rules and policies must be proposed and made available to the Legislature and the public by January 1st of the year of the proposed adoption or repeal. The rules, policies, and amendments could not have been adopted or repealed until after the end of the regular legislative session of that year. The bill died in the Senate Rules Committee.

Credit Requirements for High School Graduation - [HB 1509](#): This bill would have eliminated, for the graduating classes of 2019 onward, the twenty-four credit graduation requirement and would have established a twenty-one credit requirement for graduation with delineated credit requirements by course type. The bill died in the House Appropriations Committee.

Pope Renews Call for “A World without Nuclear Weapons”

Pope Francis has sent a message to the first session (March 27-31) of the “United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination.” The following are a few excerpts:

“International peace and stability cannot be based on a false sense of security, on the threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation, or on simply maintaining a balance of power. Peace must be built on justice, on integral human development, on respect for fundamental human rights, on the protection of creation, on the participation of all in public life, on trust between peoples, on the support of peaceful institutions, on access to education and health, on dialogue and solidarity.

“In this context, the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative. ... Achieving a world without nuclear weapons involves a long-term process, based on the awareness that “everything is connected” within the perspective of an integral ecology (*Laudato Si'*, 117, 138).

“This Conference ... is an exercise in hope and it is my wish that it may also constitute a decisive step along the road towards a world without nuclear weapons.” To read the entire text of the Holy Father’s message, [click here](#).

USCCB Chair Opposes Environmental Executive Order

President Donald J. Trump issued an Executive Order on March 28, 2017, that rescinds and weakens numerous environmental protections, and effectively dismantles the Clean Power Plan (CPP), the national program designed to reduce carbon emissions from power plants by 32% in relation to 2015 levels by the year 2030. Fossil fuel-fired power plants are the largest pollution emitting sector, making up just under one-third of U.S. total greenhouse gas emissions.”

"The USCCB, in unity with Pope Francis, strongly supports environmental stewardship and has called consistently for 'our own country to curtail carbon emissions,'" said Bishop Frank J. Dewane of Venice, Florida, chair of the Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development, in response to the order. "This Executive Order places a number of environmental protections in jeopardy and moves the U.S. away from a national carbon standard, all without adopting a sufficient plan for ensuring proper care for people and creation."

Bishop Dewane also said, “Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato si'*, focuses on both the 'the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.' With this recent order, the Administration risks damage to our air, our waters and, most importantly, our people, particularly the poor and vulnerable, without proposing a concrete and adequate approach to meet our stewardship obligations as a nation."

The Washington State Catholic Conference (WSCC) is the public policy voice of the Catholic Bishops of Washington State.