



Association of Senior Referral
Professionals of Washington

Legislative Report 2024

Heidi Sheldon, Options For Seniors LLC

Policy Round Up For 2024

This year, the legislative session was 60 days. This so-called “short” session is the second part of the two-year legislative cycle in Washington. In 2023, the legislature passed the state operating budget for July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2025, in a 105-day “long” session.

Policy Round-Up For 2024

HB 1859 – Residents Rights Legislation: This legislation would have imposed federal nursing home regulations onto community-based settings. We defeated the legislation this year, but we expect it to return. The deal breakers were the 90-day timeline for appealing discharge notices and the lack of resources for focused case management. DSHS did work to draft alternate language, but thanks to your support and collaborative lobbying efforts with the Adult Family Home Council and Leading Age Washington, this bill did not advance out of committee. Nearly 5000 people registered their positions on the bill – 70 percent were opposed to the legislation.

HB 2114 - Rent Caps Legislation: This legislation impacts independent residents in mixed AL/AL seniors housing. The bill is very controversial – the Senate version of the bill died, and the House version is now in the Ways and Means Committee, where it has not yet advanced to executive action. The legislation limits rent and fee increases to 7 percent during any 12-month period and prohibits rent and fee increases during the first 12 months of a tenancy for tenants subject to the Residential Landlord-Tenant Act, regardless of the length of their lease, with certain exemptions. The legislation establishes fee increase notice requirements, tenant lease termination provisions, limits on move-in fees, security deposits, and late fees, and requires parity in terms between month-to-month and longer-term rental agreements. There are remedies and enforcement mechanisms under the Consumer Protection Act and through private cause of action.

SB 5640 – Work Group on Independent Residents Rights in Assisted Living: The legislation establishes a living residents' rights work group to recommend a bill of rights for nonresidents residing in an assisted living facility. The legislation passed the Senate but did not move to the House; however, the bill is referenced, and funding is provided in the Senate budget, so this could be classified as “Necessary to Implement the Budget” and may still be alive. WHCA is a referenced stakeholder in the work.



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Income tax

[Initiative 2111](#) would prohibit Washington State and its local governments from imposing taxes on personal income. In the Senate, 38 lawmakers voted for the initiative, and 11 – all Democrats – voted against it. In the House, it passed 76-21.

“This initiative is designed to do one thing, which is to codify in law the state’s longstanding tradition of not having a tax based on personal income,” Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair June Robinson, D-Everett, said. The proposal will not change any current laws. Washington does not have an income tax, and there are no serious proposals in the Legislature to impose one.

The 2025 legislative session is a 105-day-long session, where a 2-year operating budget must be adopted. The Governor’s Office leads the process and is required to release a proposal in December of each year. The news out of Olympia hasn’t been good in recent weeks—the Governor’s Office of Financial Management is warning of a \$10-12 billion budget deficit going into the 2025-2027 biennium. Immediate state government travel and hiring freezes have been put in effect. According to Pat Sullivan, OFM director, the budget situation is dire. Thus, Governor Inslee's office will develop two budgets for release in December. One budget will contain draconian cuts, and the other will include a tax package to support current spending. We understand that Governor-Elect Ferguson will also release a budget—and the House and Senate will also prepare plans for release in early spring.

The Legislature is in town this week for Legislative Committee Days. This precursor to the 2025 session, which begins on January 13, is intended to help brief legislators on issues of key importance. The House Appropriations Committee will meet at 4 p.m. to review 2025-27 state operating budget development. Here’s the [staff presentation](#).

The writing is on the wall—if we are to avoid rate cuts on senior care and housing, legislators **must** hear from their constituents regarding critically important funding and policy measures, especially during a change in the Governor’s Office and with new leadership in the Legislature.

- **Medicaid Funding for July 1, 2025-June 30, 2027:** We continue to press the urgent need for an annual rebase for skilled nursing facilities, and continued funding of the assisted living Medicaid rates methodology—and it will be a heavy lift in a tough budget time. Due to a one-time rate add-on structure for the first year of the biennium, the impacts of an annual rebase won’t be recognized until the out years, yet if successful, this policy change would go a long way toward systematic repairs to help the system come closer to meeting cost growth. ***This is a time when budget cuts are likely to be proposed, and we must marshal every resource to fight against this threat.***



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- **Eliminating Barriers to the LTC Workforce:** The Department of Health cannot keep up with timely testing and certifying of home care aides; the additional FBI fingerprint background checks requirement delays certifying. This year, moving testing to community-based assisted living training programs and eliminating burdensome fingerprint requirements are priorities.
- **Playing Defense Against Troubling Proposals:** We are already hearing about legislation to establish separate certification requirements for providers specializing in delivering dementia care in assisted living—and the fight regarding extending federal nursing home residents rights standards to Washington’s community-based care settings is likely to continue. While these measures may be well-intentioned, we understand the negative impact on providers and will work to represent your interests in these discussions.

It is up to each of us to ensure that our legislators protect funding and care for Washington's vulnerable citizens who require care. Please take the time this month before the session starts in January to contact your legislators and start a conversation about the need to fund Long Term Care for Seniors in the State of WA.

How to contact your Representatives:

Step 1 - Follow this link: [Washington State Legislature](#)

Step 2 - Verify your legislative district and your address

Step 3 - Your legislator names should show up – click on your senator

Step 4 - Enter your contact information

Step 5 - Enter your bill position and comment

Step 6 - Send your comment