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Jan 30*2014

Update:

Session is moving into the period of time right before the policy deadline hits. This means bills are being rapidly pushed through committee hearings and often having executive hearings in the same meeting. This leaves us at a chaotic time for bill tracking and testimony, which has the WSA lobby team dividing up to make sure all of the bills are covered as often as possible. Many bills have been coming up in meetings with legislators that could in some way be of interest to students and that list is being compiled analyzed and divided between the lobby team. Many of the bills are dormant, meaning they are sitting in committee without getting a hearing and have very little movement without someone lobbying on them and many of them have some interesting ideas that could benefit students and are worth being worked on. Below is a small list of the newest bills we are analyzing this week.

When it comes to topics discussed with legislators we continue to hit all of our bases both with WWU and the WSA agendas. I am making sure to continue the conversation about Carver Academic Facility and have been working with Sherry whenever I can to continue to push that to be a capitol budget line item. We are still totally unclear as to where the capitol budget stands or if one will even happen this session at all. When looking at Dedicated Revenue there have been a few bills that

are being worked on by the lobby team assigned that for the WSA. I discovered a bill in one of my meetings that talked about the R&D tax loophole being altered and funds being put towards higher ed. It's a heavy lift but the WSA team is keeping an eye on that bill for if it gets a committee hearing. Voter Access bills have been my WSA priority and we have moved both HB 1267 and HB 1279 through the House Gov Ops committee, Rules committee, and the House floor vote. We also avoided any undesirable amendments, which was close on the floor vote. HB 1267 has a chance of making it through the Senate in my opinion. This bill moves the voter registration deadlines around and gives more time to register people to vote. The Secretary of State and the Auditors Association support it. We haven't been able to get a meeting with Senator Roach who chairs the Senate Gov Ops committee so I am asking Western Votes to put some pressure on her to give these bills a hearing. HB 1279 is going to have a rough time in the Senate as it is not well liked by Republicans in general. You of course have heard about the Dream Act becoming a new bill through the Senate Republicans, which is all very strange and exciting, and I personally can't wait to see what happens with it. Veterans was being used as a bargaining chip and Democrats were saying the only way they would vote for in state tuition for vets was if the Republicans would vote for the Dream Act. Veterans in the House has not moved much at all and we expect the Senate to take the major steps with a Vet bill that will move more quickly. I am keeping an eye on HB 2400 which is the Campus Compact bill that seems to change every time I read it so I am waiting to see how the bill ends up looking when it is more stable before taking anymore steps on it. Things are moving very quickly and are unpredictable as you can see from what happened

with the Dream Act. I feel like progress is being made as much as is possible and we are doing some great work down in Olympia.

HB 2537

HB 2236

SB 5955

SB 5173

SB 5026

SB 5028

SB 5027

HB 2697

Testimonies:

HB 1278

Chair Hunt, Members of the Committee, thank you for your time and consideration. For the record my name is Matthew Bobbink and I am here representing the almost 15,000 students of WWU as well as students all across the state as a representative of the WSA. The students of Washington States Higher education institutions are here before you today to speak in favor of this bill and what it sets to accomplish. As students we represent a very diverse statewide demographic that has faced the issue of low representation and turnout in Washington elections. We consider it a worthy attainable goal to increase voter

involvement in our state. Washington has one of the most modern and forward thinking voting systems in the country, yet our turnout rates do not always reflect this. Washington State has expressed a commitment to creating an accessible and convenient electoral system. This bill furthers that goal of accessibility. The state currently reimburses counties at a prorated rate for state primaries and general elections held in odd numbered years when state officers or measures are voted upon as well as primary or vacancy elections held to fill a US senate or representative seat. Expanding this current program to include the much more popular even year elections is a positive step to increasing voter turnout, thus more accurately representing Washingtonians. The students of Washington State stand together to say it is the duty of an active and responsible government to remove any barrier, impediment, or deterrent to the right and responsibility of every eligible citizen, which is to vote. We urge you to support this bill to better our voting system.

HB 1279

Chair Hunt, members of the committee. Thank you for your time and consideration of this topic. My name is Matthew Bobbink and I represent the almost 15,000 students of Western Washington University as well as students across the state as a representative with the Washington Student Association. As students of our states higher education institutions we greatly value our ability to contribute our voices through our civic duty, namely voting. This bill, if enacted, would help to fill a gap in our voter registrations. 70% of Washingtonians register to vote through the Department of Licensing, because of this staggeringly large majority we must

take into account who it is utilizing the convenient and efficient system in place at our states DOLs. Generally youth visit the DOL at two points, once when they are receiving their driver's license, which occurs at 16-17, and once when they turn 21 to renew their license. This of course leaves out those that are old enough to register to vote. By enacting this program you would be insuring that all age ranges are being efficiently processed and served equally and our fellow citizens who are now old enough to vote are not skipped over by the system that Washingtonians overwhelmingly utilize when registering to vote. In Washington we have in place a program allowing 17 year olds to register to vote if they will turn 18 by the next election. This bill would simply implement a more modern and efficient version of what that former program aimed to achieve. It has been shown that voting is a matter of habit and the earlier that habit is instilled the more likely it is to be continued throughout that individual's life. By beginning that feeling of civic engagement at an early age we are instilling the sense of civic duty we hold so highly that will continue throughout these young peoples lives, thus ensuring a more broad and represented voting public for the future. This program also has precedent and is currently practiced in 8 states including the District of Columbia and has shown to be highly effective. As students, citizens, and voting constituents we strongly support this bill and ask that you merely allow us access to the same system and convenience that the vast majority of this states voting public utilizes. Thank you for your time and consideration, at the committees request I will take any questions and provide any information or assistance I can.