

## Regarding WILD

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To: Joshua Kurz <kurzj@wwu.edu>; AS VP for Governmental Affairs <ASVP.Gov@wwu.edu>

Cc: AS President <aspres@wwu.edu>

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Hello Mr. Kurz and Mr. Resendiz-Eyler,

My name is Jude Ahmed and I previously served as the DOLA for ASWWU. I organized four in person and online Lobby Days as an ASWWU employee. It has been brought to my concern that Western Intersectional Lobby Day (WILD) was reduced from 100 spots to 50 spots. Meanwhile, the spots have been filled even with a waiting list in less than a week with six more days to sign up. In my eyes, this is a momentous occasion for WILD and I am incredibly proud of the work put in by ASWWU to drive sign ups for this amazing event.

It should be encouraged for even more students to sign up, especially because in the last few years the lobby day funding was not utilized to take students to Olympia, and when I was DOLA I did not utilize my funding to stay in Olympia for the legislative session since it was all online. For context, the year that we did WLD and WILD in person, the MCC had just been established, and there was a lot of turnover in the staff for the student government. The Senate was also just getting back onto its feet and building capacity.

Ensuring that WILD is fully open with the same opportunities as WILD is crucial to the capacity building of marginalized student communities to engage with our lawmakers and get involved in legislative advocacy. Western has one of the strongest cultures for civic engagement and produces one of the largest student lobby days. The ability of students of color and other marginalized identities to go to Olympia and meet with legislators directly has passed numerous momentous bills, including the Washington College Grant and DEI training for faculty and staff.

In addition, I learned that the decision to decrease WILD spots was made without the consent of and despite the input of the DOLA and ASWWU President who are women of color. Women of color have typically organized and led WILD, but they are being excluded this year. This deeply concerns me that they are being unheard. The ASWWU president has extensive experience with lobby days and organizing students and they should be trusted to be included in the decision making. Please listen to women of color and increase the capacity for WILD.

Thank you,  
Jude Ahmed  
Advocacy Organizer  
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle