

From: Tom McBride
Subject: June 2018 Washington State Interim Report
Date: June 1, 2018

Washington State's candidate filing week ended on May 18 and you can view a complete list of candidate filings [here](#). The next major election date in Washington will be on August 7 when the state holds its primary election. Keep in mind that Washington State has a top-two primary system, which means that regardless of party affiliation the top-two vote getters will advance to the general election ballot.

Below is a summary of recent legislative and regulatory activities in Washington State.

Taxes & Tax Preferences

After the City of Seattle recently passed a \$275 head tax on qualifying employers, Sen. Steve O'Ban (R- University Place) is considering legislation to provide a \$275 tax break for each job that is created in Washington's economically distressed counties. As explained in this KiRO 7 News [story](#), O'Ban cited a desire to highlight other areas of the state that could benefit from job growth.

Environment

Wells Tested for Banned Firefighting Foam

The Washington State Dept. of Health will be testing several hundred water systems in the state in order to check for traces of chemicals found in recently banned firefighting foams. As explained in this *Seattle Times* [article](#), the results of the testing will be used to identify the scope of the issue and assist with the possible development of state standards for some of the chemicals.

Shellfish Contamination

Trace amounts of opioids were found in mussels in 3 of 15 tested locations in Washington State. As reported in this Associated Press [article](#), the study was run by the Dept. of Fish & Wildlife in partnership with the Puget Sound Institute.

Health Care

Single-Payer Initiative

An initiative campaign ([I-1600](#)) to move Washington State to a single-payer health care system has collected only 50,000 signatures of the nearly 260,000 signatures required to qualify for the fall ballot.

Skin Cancer Rates High in WA State

The rate of skin cancer in Washington State ranks very high in the United States, as pointed out in this *Spokesman Review* [article](#). In a 2014 study the state averaged 52 melanoma cases per 100,000 residents.

Behavioral Health

City Sues State Regarding Releasing Patients

The City of Lakewood is suing Washington State regarding the release of offenders from Western State (psychiatric) Hospital into local adult family homes run by the state. As explained in this *The News Tribune* [article](#), among other things Lakewood cites safety concerns and a violation of the Growth Management Act in the lawsuit.

Western State Safety Concerns

In related news, federal regulators recently issued new citations regarding fire detectors and patient safety against Western State Hospital, as reported in this *Seattle Times* [article](#).

K-12 Education

School Safety – Special Session?

Recently Sen. John Braun (R-Chehalis) asked Democrat Governor Jay Inslee to consider calling a special session prior to the 2018-2019 school year in order to consider legislation to prevent mass shootings in schools. As reported in this *The News Tribune* [article](#), Braun emphasized the importance of debating upgrades to the state's mental health system and new age limits for gun buyers.

Special Education

The Asst. Superintendent of Special Education, Glenna Gallo, has announced she is concerned with the low 21.8% rate of disabled students in Washington State who go to college after high school. As noted in this *Bellingham Herald* [article](#), Gallo points out that a higher than average rate of English language learners labeled as disabled may mean some are being inaccurately identified.

Transportation

New Director for Dept. of Licensing Chosen

Governor Inslee announced the new Director of the Dept. of Licensing will be Teresa Berntsen, who will begin in this role at the end of June. Berntsen currently serves as the Director for the Office of Minority & Women's Business Enterprises.

Pay-Per-Mile Pilot Program Update

Rep. Harmsworth (R-Mill Creek) voiced his concerns in this *Everett Herald* [article](#) about the pay-per-mile pilot program the state is currently conducting. Approximately 2,000 people are participating in the twelve-month pilot program.

Elections

- After filing for re-election, Sen. Jan Angel (R-26th Legislative District) unexpectedly withdrew her candidate filing on the last day of filing week.
- The Initiative 1639 campaign for firearm safety measures, such as raising the age to purchase a semi-automatic weapon, has raised \$3 million, as reported in this *Seattle Times* [article](#). The campaign is currently experiencing trouble gathering signatures to qualify for the ballot due to pending lawsuits against the initiative.
- In order to qualify for the fall ballot, by July 6 initiatives must collect 259,622 valid signatures and referenda must collect 129,811 signatures.