



February 24, 2008 MEMORANDUM

TO: Friends and Colleagues, ASUW Board of Directors
FR: Bryce McKibben
RE: Legislative Update
Week 6

This report summarizes the week of legislative business during February 18-22, 2008. The report will be broken down by specific bills and budget priorities with status updates.

The past week identified a number of pieces of legislation as "dead" or "alive" with the passage of the house of origin cut-off. All bills that failed to make it out of the chamber (House or Senate) in which they were introduced, with a vote of that full body, by Tuesday, 2/19 are "dead" for the session - unless they aren't.

The House Appropriations Committee continued to reel under the bad news of last week's revenue forecast of a \$423.4 million reduction in state revenues. After much infighting, the House Appropriations and House Capital Budget Committees trimmed their initial spending estimates and released the House Supplemental Operating & Capital Budgets on Wednesday, 2/20.

The next few weeks will be dedicated to making sure all surviving legislation makes it through the opposite chamber (with testimony, amendments, and all) and to closely follow the House and Senate budgets.

A. Policy

[x] Alive [x] Dead

The issues of policy in which we are following include:

SUPPORT [x] Childcare Grant Program (SHB 2582)

The bill had a hearing in Senate Higher Education on Wed., 2/20. I testified for the Washington Student Lobby, along with Andrew McNeeley of ASUW Tacoma. A number of stakeholders signed in to support the bill, and we heard unanimously supportive testimony. The bill was passed out of the committee the next day and awaits a "pull" in the Senate Rules Committee; thereafter, the bill needs only a vote by the Senate before being sent to the Governor's desk.

Amendments: The committee added language to specify that grants were exclusively to be used to improve access to childcare for students (rather than other constituencies). We were neutral on the amendment, as its effect on childcare centers - who use a combined set of funds, including grants - is to be determined.

- SUPPORT** **Campus Safety Legislation (SSB 6328)**
 The WSL testified for this legislation at public hearing in the House Higher Education Committee on Wed 2/20. The bill was passed out of committee unanimously on Monday 2/25. It now goes before the Rules committee and then the House floor for a final vote before heading to the Governor's desk. We expect this legislation to pass easily.
- SUPPORT** **Voter registration and information activities (HB 2917)**
 A hearing in the Senate Higher Education Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, 2/27. I will testify on this legislation with Jake Stillwell of ASCWU. We may propose minor amendments related to the usage of online voter registration and voter registration activities in on-campus housing.
- SUPPORT** **HECB 2008 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education (SHCR 4408)**
 The resolution had a hearing in the Senate on Wednesday, 2/20. It awaits further committee action.
Amendments: Some Senators on the committee are in disagreement over the "legislative policies" contained in the House version of the resolution, which they are considering. These policies contain important language about student inclusion in implementation, improving middle-class financial aid, and expanding student support services such as advising and childcare. We oppose any amendments to change the language of the House resolution in a way that would weaken the content.
- SUPPORT** **Financing for the renovation of university stadium facilities (SB 6848)**
 As you know, the issue of Husky Stadium has not been warmly received during a session with very few available dollars, during a looming recession, and with widespread opposition to sports stadiums. But, we're not giving up! This bill failed to make it out of the Senate before the 2/19 cut-off, but because it deals with fiscal matters, it may still be eligible for floor action. It is our hope that we can keep this bill alive, and continue to educate members on its importance – and the nuances of the financing plan. As the clock on the session ticks down rapidly, it is increasingly important for students to contact their legislators on this matter, if it is to have any hope of surviving.
- NEW!**
SUPPORT **Concerning the imposition of tolls (E2SHB 1773)**
 It was my mistake in forgetting to list this legislation in previous reports. The ASUW Legislative Steering Committee endorsed the use of tolls and the proposed replacement of the SR-520 bridge with partial funding of the project from tolls. The LSC believes that this legislation supports student consensus that we must replace the SR-520 bridge as soon as possible and in an environmentally friendly way. This bill will enable "congestion pricing" on roadways in the State of Washington, and there are plans to begin tolling soon on the existing SR-520 and I-90 bridges across Lake Washington in order to generate funds for bridge replacement.
- NEUTRAL** **Authorizing an additional University of Washington branch campus (HB 2548)**
 The legislation failed to make it past the 2/19 cut-off date. However, the legislation could be eligible for floor action under rules that permit budget-related bills to move. We do not expect that to happen, or for the legislation to move forward this year. The issue of UW North is likely to return to Olympia as an issue in the 2009 Legislative Session.

Continued on the next page.

B. Budgetary

As you know from my previous report, the state revenue forecast changed the outlook of the budget negotiations significantly and has forced Legislators and the Governor to accept a much smaller surplus. Nevertheless, spending is leaner in this supplemental budget than has been seen in a long time. On Wednesday 2/20, the House of Representatives released its versions of the operating, capital and transportation budgets, and as expected, they contained very few new spending initiatives for the UW and the other four year institutions. However, we celebrate at least one success as **the WSL was responsible for the single largest increase to higher education funding – a 333% increase to the HECB for its state childcare grant program** (and an equally large increase for the SBCTC for two-year institutions). The House voted on the operating, transportation, and capital budgets with a few minor amendments; they passed the operating budget - ESHB 2687 - by a vote of 62-33-3. Briefly, here is a summary of how the UW and Washington Student Lobby requests were funded.

OPERATING BUDGET

The House budget provides a total of \$582,000 of new operating resources for the UW, with most all of these items not requested by the University. They are:

- \$88,000 for one new mental health counselor position.
- \$100,000 to continue academic planning activities related to a UW North Sound campus.
- \$125,000 for a land use study to be conducted by the Ruckelshaus Center.
- \$119,000 for a patient safety study to be conducted by the Ruckelshaus Center.
- \$150,000 for the Institute for the Study of the Brain (ILABS).

Additionally, the House budget provides a total of **\$650,000 of new funding for the state childcare grant program** for the 2008-2009 year. The money will be split, with a total of \$325,000 each going to the four-year program administered by the HECB and the two-year program administered by the SBCTC, respectively. **The UW will receive the largest portion of that grant pool if the childcare bill (SHB 2582) passes.**

CAPITAL BUDGET

The House capital budget includes a total of \$3.3 million in new funding for the UW for two items. They are:

- A total of \$3 million for land acquisition (\$2 million) and soils remediation (\$1 million) for the UW Tacoma.
- \$300,000 to conduct a pre-design study for a future expansion of the Burke Museum.

C. Week 7 Preview

The beginning of this week, I will be focused on providing feedback to legislators about the budget and managing an increasingly large number of proposed amendments to legislation we support or are interested in.

The Senate will release its operating, capital, and transportation budgets this week. I will weigh in on behalf of ASUW and the Washington Student Lobby.

I will attempt to ensure that no surviving legislation gets “left behind” in the mad dash towards the end of session.

The clock is ticking! Time to get back to work!