



City of Bellevue

City Manager's Office

**DATE:** May 14, 2024**SUBJECT:** State Legislative Update, April 2024**Overview**

Following the conclusion of the 2024 State Legislative Session, legislators transition to focusing on the November 2024 elections. All members of the House of Representatives and roughly half the members of the State Senate will face re-election.

The end of the 2024 session brought about several announcements of legislators who do not plan to seek re-election. At least nine state senators and 16 members of the House of Representatives will not return to the Legislature, although some of them may find themselves in new elected positions:

- Senator Sam Hunt (D-Olympia) has served in the Legislature since 2000 and is now retiring; Rep. Jessica Bateman has announced that she will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 22nd Legislative District.
- Senator Andy Billig (D-Spokane) has served in the Legislature since 2010 and is now retiring; Rep. Marcus Riccelli has announced that he will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 3rd Legislative District.
- Senator Karen Keiser (D-SeaTac) has served in the Legislature since 1995. She has announced that she plans to retire in December, midway through her current term, so an appointment to the 33rd Legislative District Senate seat will be made at the end of the year. It's likely that a current 33rd District House member will be appointed, resulting in an appointment to an open House seat.
- Senator Lynda Wilson (R-Vancouver) has served in the Legislature since 2015 and is now retiring; Rep. Paul Harris has announced that he will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 17th Legislative District.
- Senator Brad Hawkins (R-Chelan) has served in the Legislature since 2012 and is now running to be a County Commissioner; Rep. Keith Goehner has announced that he will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 12th Legislative District.
- Senator Ann Rivers (R-Clark County) has served in the Legislature since 2010; Rep. Greg Cheney has announced that he will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 18th Legislative District.
- Senator Mike Padden (R-Spokane Valley) first served in the House of Representatives from 1981 to 1995 and has served in the Senate since 2011 and is now retiring; Rep. Leonard Christian has announced that he will run for the Senate seat, creating an open House seat in the 4th Legislative District. Rep. Christian faces several opponents for the Senate seat.
- Representative JT Wilcox (R-Yelm) has served in the Legislature since 2011 and is now retiring.
- Representative Joel Kretz (R-Wauconda) has served in the Legislature since 2005 and is now retiring.
- Representative Spencer Hutchins (R-Gig Harbor) has served in the Legislature since 2023 and is not seeking re-election.
- Representative Frank Chopp (D-Seattle) has served in the Legislature since 1995 and is former Speaker of the House and is now retiring.

- Representative Bruce Chandler (R-Yakima County) has served in the House of Representatives since 1998 and is now retiring.

There are four statewide executive positions open with Governor Jay Inslee and Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler retiring, and Attorney General Bob Ferguson and Commissioner of Public Lands Hilary Franz running for new offices. Several legislators have announced they plan to run for higher office, and as a result will not be seeking re-election to their positions:

- Senator Mark Mullet (D-Issaquah) is running for Governor. Rep. Bill Ramos plans to run for the position, leaving an open House seat in the 5th Legislative District.
- Senator Kevin Van De Wege (D-Sequim) is running for Commissioner for Public Lands. Rep. Mike Chapman (D-Port Angeles) plans to run for the position, leaving an open House seat in the 24th Legislative District.
- Representative Jacquelin Maycumber (R-Republic) is running for the 5th Congressional Seat.
- Representative Kelly Chambers (R-Puyallup) is running for Pierce County Executive.

Still yet, there are legislators who are running for statewide positions, but if unsuccessful in winning those races, they can still return to the Senate to continue the remainder of their term (two more years). If successful, an appointment process will occur after the November 2024 elections to fill their seats prior to the January 2025 Legislative Session:

- Senator Manka Dhingra (D-Redmond) is running for Attorney General.
- Senator Patty Kuderer (D-Bellevue) is running for the Office of Insurance Commissioner.
- Senator Emily Randall (D-Bremerton) is running for the 6th Congressional Seat.
- Senator Drew MacEwen (R-Shelton) is running for the 6th Congressional Seat.

Look toward filing week, May 6-10, for more news about who is choosing to file for state legislative offices. Filing week will be followed by the August 6th primary election, and the November 5th general election.

### **Legislative Redistricting**

In March, U.S. District Court Judge Robert Lasnik approved new Legislative District maps that create a new Latino voter-majority district in Central Washington. The redistricting was ordered by Judge Lasnik after it was determined that the current districts adopted by the Washington State Redistricting Commission diluted the voting power of the Latino community in violation of the federal Voting Rights Act. Following the announcement, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a motion to block the adoption of new Legislative District maps, affirming that the court-provided District maps will be in place for the November 2024 elections.

The Legislative Districts primarily impacted are the 14th and 15th legislative districts in the Yakima area, but other districts across the state will also have their [district boundaries modified in a minor way](#). Residents living in districts that are changing will be automatically registered in their new district and will receive a new voter registration card. As a result of the redistricting, several legislators have made announcements on how they will run:

- Senator Curtis King (R-Yakima) has served in the 14th Legislative District, but the redistricting moves him into the 15th Legislative District; he will move to the 14th Legislative District to run for the open 14th District Senate Seat.

- Senator Nikki Torres (R-Pasco) currently represents the 15th Legislative District, but no longer lives in the district because of the redistricting. She will serve out her term, which ends January 11, 2027.
- Representative Chris Corry (R-Yakima) has served in the 14th Legislative District but has been redistricted into the 15th Legislative District; he plans to run for the open House seat in the 15th Legislative District being created by the retirement of Rep. Bruce Chandler.
- Representative Gina Mosbrucker (R-Goldendale) has served in the House of Representatives since 2014 and is not seeking re-election in part due to being redistricted out of the 14th Legislative District

### **Initiatives**

Prior to the start of the 2024 Legislative Session, the Legislature was sent six initiatives for their consideration. The Legislature passed three of them: [Initiative 2081](#), providing parents with a statutory right to receive updates on and to review certain educational materials; [Initiative 2111](#), prohibiting state and local governments from enacting a personal income tax; and [Initiative 2113](#), rolling back certain restrictions on police vehicular pursuits. The remaining three will be sent to the voters for their consideration in the November election. Those initiatives are [Initiative 2109](#), repealing the capital gains tax; [Initiative 2117](#), prohibiting carbon tax credit trading and repealing provisions of the 2021 Washington Climate Commitment Act; and [Initiative 2124](#), allowing all employees to opt out of paying a long-term care insurance tax and receiving that benefit.

In addition to the three initiatives that will appear on the November ballot, dozens of other initiatives are also trying to qualify for the ballot. For Initiatives to the People to qualify for the ballot in November, they will need at least 324,516 valid signatures by the July 5th deadline. Once the Secretary of State receives the signatures, they will conduct a review to verify the signatures are valid prior to the initiatives being placed on the ballot. A complete list and description of the [Initiatives to the People](#) can be found following the hyperlink. They include proposals repealing a new law that the Legislature approved in 2024 to speed up Puget Sound Energy's shift away from fossil fuels and use of natural gas, repealing recent changes to the state's building code, and other topics. Several of the proposals are facing legal challenges from environmental groups, stalling the collection of signatures.

### **Policy Updates**

**Public Defense Standards:** In March, the Washington State Bar Association (WSBA) Board of Governors voted 12-1 to submit [new guidelines](#) for public defense services to the Washington State Supreme Court for consideration. The stated goal of the new guidelines is to retain current public defense attorneys and attract new attorneys to public defense, while also allowing for higher quality representation. The new guidelines reduce the maximum yearly workload from 400 misdemeanors to 120, and 150 felony cases to 47. Additionally, the guidelines add requirements for an increase in support staff and modify qualifications for the type of cases public defenders can take on. The proposed guidelines will be phased in over two years beginning in July 2025.

The Association of Washington Cities has voiced concerns over the new guidelines, particularly related to how the new guidelines would be funded. These funding and resource concerns could exacerbate the current shortage of public defense attorneys, particularly in rural counties.

The Washington State Supreme Court has indicated that it will conduct a public comment process prior to adopting any new guidelines. Details around that public comment process are expected to be released at the Court's Rules Committee meeting on May 13.

**Drought Declaration:** On April 16 Governor Inslee and the Department of Ecology declared a statewide drought emergency with limited exceptions for parts of Seattle, Tacoma, and Everett due to their reservoir storage capacity and current water management strategies. The drought declaration was triggered because the water supply fell below the State's 75 percent statutory threshold for drought conditions, and the expectation of a warm and dry summer. By declaring an emergency declaration, the Department of Ecology can make \$4.5 million available in drought response grants to qualifying public entities. For the latest information regarding the drought declaration, please see the Department of Ecology's [Drought Response webpage](#), and the [National Integrated Drought Information System](#).

**High-Capacity Magazine Ban:** On April 25, the Washington State Supreme Court upheld a temporary statewide ban on the sale of high-capacity magazines for firearms. The emergency stay from the Court Commissioner was issued after Cowlitz County Superior Court Judge Bashor ruled the ban unconstitutional. The ban on high-capacity magazines will remain in place as the case to overturn it makes its way through the appeals process. A copy of the emergency stay on the high-capacity magazine ban can be found [here](#).

### **Association of Washington Cities Activities**

The Association of Washington Cities is conducting several processes over the interim months to prepare for the 2025 session.

The Association's Legislative Priorities Committee will be holding its first meeting in May to begin developing the Association's 2025 Legislative Agenda. The Committee will meet five times throughout the summer and fall before adopting a legislative agenda to submit to the Board of Directors in September.

Every four years, the Association reviews its Statement of Policy, which outlines positions the Association holds on fundamental municipal issues and serves as a framework for developing legislative priorities and positions. The Association will review the State of Policy from April to May 2024, with any proposed changes being presented to the membership in advance of the June 20, 2024 business meeting.