

Basics of the Washington Legislative Process

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Branches of Government

Judicial Branch

Chief Justice
Debra
Stephens



Legislative Branch

Speaker of the House
Laurie Jenkins



Executive Branch

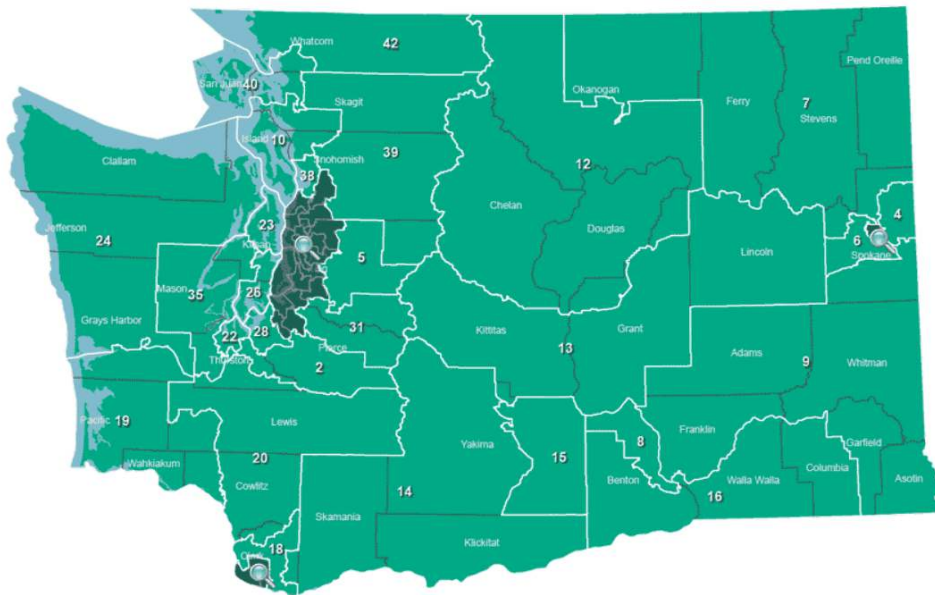
Governor Jay Inslee



The Legislative Cycle

- The legislative cycle is two years long
 - One LONG (105 days) session and one SHORT (60 days) session
 - Operating Budget is decided in long sessions
- Every bill has until the end of the legislative cycle (i.e. the end of the short session) to be signed by the Governor
- Any bill that does not pass by the end of the legislative cycle is “dead” and must start from the beginning
- Make sure you follow the annual [Session Cutoff Calendar](#)

The Legislature



- 49 Districts Equal in Population
- 49 Senators with 4 year terms
- 98 Representatives with 2 year terms
- Caucuses
- Committees

Prefiling/First Reading

- Ideas submitted to Code Reviser
- Must have a sponsor to be a bill
- “Dropping” a bill
 - First Monday in December
- The bill is read on the floor of the chamber of origin



Policy Committee

- Referred to a committee for more study and any amendments
- Committee Staff write nonpartisan bill analysis and reports
- Three kinds of Committee Meetings:
 - Hearings
 - Work sessions
 - Executive sessions
- The Chair of each committee decides the schedule and agenda



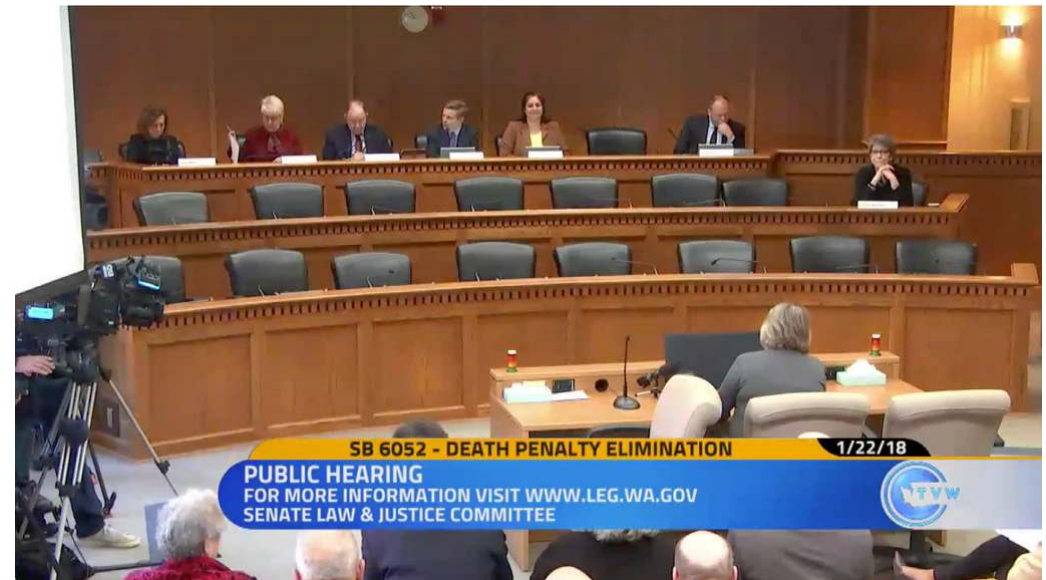
Budget Committee

- ONLY referred here if the bill has a fiscal note
- Appropriations in the House, Ways & Means in the Senate
- Similar process to the policy committee, but hears many more bills



Rules Committee

- The “leadership committee”
- Speaker of the House and the Lt. Governor chair these committees
- Each committee member can “pull” 2-3 bills
- Two steps:
 - Rules Review/Rules White
 - Rules Consideration/Rules Green
- (Rules X File)



On the Floor (Again)



- Second Reading
 - Substitutes
 - Floor Amendments
- Third Reading (Final Vote)

Opposite House

- Opposite House cannot engross the bill
- Propose amendments to the House of Origin
- If it fails in the Opposite House it is returned to the House of Origin

House of Origin

- House of Origin must agree to amendments
 - Leadership chooses which bills are considered
- Suspension (House) / Consent (Senate)
- Concurrence
 - Can “recede” or “dispute”
- Dispute
 - Conference Committee
 - Both chambers must adopt Conference Committee Report



Governor



- 5 days/20 days to act
- Sign the bill
- Veto
 - Full bill
 - Sections
 - Line Items
- Can do nothing
 - Bills become law by default
- Effective 90 days after signing

Terms

- **Biennium** – Two year cycle
- **Biennial** – Having two legislative chambers
- **House of Origin** – The chamber where the bill was first “strapped”
- **“Ding” (a bill)** – Introduce a bill to the legislature
- **“Floor”** – The main chamber of the House or the Senate where the entire body congregates and votes
- **Opposite Chamber** – The other legislative chamber a bill must go through after passing through its House of Origin
- **Legislative cycle** – The two-year period a bill has to pass through the legislature from start to finish, made up of one LDNG
- **Fiscal note** – Estimate of the cost, savings, revenue gain, or revenue loss that may result from implementation of requirements in a bill, written by nonpartisan staff
- **“Put” (a bill)** – To be selected by a member of the Rules Committee for Rules/ Rules/ Rules/ White
- **Rules Review/Rules/ White** – The first step a bill must pass in the Rules Committee
- **Rules Consideration/Rules/ Green** – The second step a bill must pass in the Rules Committee
- **Rules “X”** – Stopped by the Majority Leader, can be introduced at any time but usually means the bill is dead
- **Substitute** – A bill engineered by the Policy Committee that can replace the original bill on the Floor
- **Engrossed** – Bill with amendments adopted in the House of Origin
- **Line and Page Amendment** – A verbal, printed amendment to the bill
- **Striker** – A sweeping change to the bill
- **Veto** – The Governor strikes the bill entirely, or strikes a section, or strikes a line. Can be overcome by 2/3 of both houses
- **State Day** – Last day of session