

**2025-2027**

# **Legislative Updates**

***Provided by South  
Puget Sound SHRM***

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**The following information about recent HR-related laws passed by the WA State Legislature is intended for informational purposes only. These abbreviated explanations should not be relied on for legal compliance; instead check with your employment attorney and/or watch for more interpretation and guidance from employment law firms or enforcing agencies.**

# Equal Pay & Opportunities Act Expansion

***New Legislation:*** **Effective July 27, 2025;**  
*Sunsets July 2027*

- Employers cannot be sued for postings by third parties which were not authorized or solicited.
  - Until July 2027, employers may receive notice of an allegedly deficient job postings and can correct the posting within 5 business days - if so, then the employer cannot be subject to the private right of action for that job posting.
- Judicial discretion allowed regarding overall damages.

***Old Legislation:*** *Effective July 1, 2025*

- Added protected classes include:
  - Age (40 and older), sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, creed, color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability.
- **[EPOA Employer Resources Here!](#)**

# HB1875 – Paid Sick Leave Expansion

*Effective July 27, 2025*

## **What This Means:**

- Employees can use Paid Sick Leave to prepare for or participate in judicial or administrative immigration proceedings for themselves or a member of their family.

## **Allowable documentation is very broad:**

- Can only be requested if absence exceeds 3 days
- Documentation can be created from “an advocate, attorney, member of the clergy, or other professional” who is assisting the employee or family member.
- Cannot disclose employee or family member’s immigration status.

# SB5041 – UI for Striking Workers

*Effective July 27, 2025*

## What This Means:

- Striking workers will be able to access benefits beginning the second Sunday after first day of strike with a cap of 6-weeks of benefits.
- If a final judgment finds that a strike is prohibited by state or federal law, any benefits paid must be repaid by the workers.
- 10-year sunset clause.

# HB1747 – Fair Chance Act Expansion

*Effective July 27, 2025*

## What This Means:

- No automatic or categorical exclusion of individuals with criminal record.
- Employer may not conduct a background check until the employer makes a conditional offer of employment.
- No adverse action may be taken based upon arrest data (unless the charge remains pending).
- No tangible adverse employment action without a legitimate business reason.

# HB1308 – Personnel Records

*Effective July 27, 2025*

## What This Means:

- Employer must provide a copy of personnel file within 21 days of request.
  - “Personnel file” includes: application, evaluations, disciplinary records, leave and accommodation records, payroll records, and employment agreements (only if these documents exist).
- Requires employers to provide a former employee, upon request, a statement of the employee’s discharge date and reasons (if any) for the discharge.
- Private right of action with statutory damages.

# SB5525 – Mini-WARN Act

*Effective July 27, 2025*

## What This Means:

- Tracks federal WARN on timing and employee count.
- Creates additional notice requirements.
- RIF may not include employees on FMLA or Washington PFML.
- Employers that fail to comply with the notice requirement could face significant financial penalties, including back pay plus the cost of benefits for affected employees and civil penalties for violations.
- ESD, aggrieved employees, or the aggrieved employees' bargaining representative can file a civil lawsuit on behalf of the aggrieved employees, "other persons similarly situated, or both," within three years of the alleged violation.

# HB1213 – Paid Family & Medical Leave Expansion

*Effective January 1, 2026*

## What This Means:

- Minimum claim amount reduced from 8 to 4 consecutive hours.
- Job protection to be required from smaller employers:
  - 25+ employees beginning January 1, 2026
  - 15+ beginning January 1, 2027
  - 8+ beginning January 1, 2028
- Employment protections begin at 180 calendar days of work (previously 1250 hours).
- Health coverage must be maintained during PFML for employees also eligible for job protection.

# SB5101 – Victims of Hate Crimes

*Effective January 1, 2026*

## What This Means:

- Eligible employees can take leave under the Domestic Violence Leave Act (paid or unpaid) if they or a family member is a victim of a hate crime.
- An employer may require verification that the employee or family member is a victim of a hate crime and that the leave or safety accommodation was for a permitted purpose.
- Hate crime means an assault, damage, or destruction of property, or threat committed because of a person's perception of another person's specified characteristics, including race, gender, or religion. Hate crime includes offenses committed through online communication.

# SB5217 – Healthy Starts

*Effective January 1, 2027*

## What This Means:

- Expands Washington’s Healthy Starts Act (“Act”) to apply the law to employers of any size, religious and non-profit orgs (currently at 15 employees and does not include religious and non profits).
- Act becomes part of WLAD and includes:
  - Pay for break time (including travel time, if needed) for lactating worker to express breastmilk, in addition to meal/rest breaks required for all employees . Available up to 24 months after birth of child.
  - Provide reasonable accommodation to pregnant workers.
  - Scheduling flexibility required for postpartum visits, in addition to prenatal visits.

# Important Wage & Exemption Updates

***Effective January 1, 2026***

## Minimum Wage Increases in 2026:

- Bellingham: \$18.66 → **\$19.13**
- Burien (*large employers*): \$21.16 → **\$25.63**
- Everett (*large employers*): \$20.24 → *to increase with inflation*
- Renton: \$20.90 → *to increase in 2026*
- SeaTac (*hospitality & transportation*): \$20.17 → *to increase in 2026*
- Seattle: \$20.76 → **\$21.30**
- Tukwila (*big employers*): \$21.20 → **\$21.65**
- Unincorporated King County (*large employers*): \$20.29 → **\$20.82**
- Washington State: **\$16.66 → \$17.13**

Select "Exempt Salary Threshold" for more details.

**Exempt Salary Threshold:**  
Increasing to **\$1,541.70/week**  
(equivalent to **\$80,168.40/year**)

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