

Advisory Committee Meeting- 01/21/2026

Attendance

Committee Members Present

- Jennifer Richards, Insurance Services Director
- Edsonya Charles, PFML Ombuds

Employee Representatives

- Samantha Grad, Teamsters 117
- Maggie Humphries, Moms Rising
- Joe Kendo, Washington State Labor Counsel
- Sam Hatzenbeler, Economic Opportunity Institute

Employer Representatives

- James Crandall, Association of Washington Business
- Jan Himebaugh- Building Industry Association of Washington

ESD Staff

- Alison Eldridge, Deputy Director
- John Mattes- Assistant Director
- Josh Dye- Government Relations Director
- Brian Kennedy- Leave and Care Legislative Manager
- Martin McMurry- Chief Operating Officer
- Dan Zeitlin- Chief of Staff
- Chris Barron- Communications Director
- Rob Wells- Leave and Care Communications Manager
- Rebecca Grady, Leave and Care Research& Data Manager
- April Amundson- Leave and Care Policy Manager
- Todd Dixon- Strategic Operations Manager
- Kennidi Hunsicker, Administrative Assistant 4- Host
- Colin Helsley- Co-Host
- Erika Ayala, Administrative Assistant 4- taking notes

Agenda

- *Approval of December minutes*
- *Governor's budget*
- *Legislative Update*
- *Open comment*

Introductions & approval of December Minutes

	Kennidi Hunsicker and JR Richards
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance and Introductions• James Crandall motions to approve• Samantha Grad seconds to approve• All in favor, December meeting minutes are approved

2026 Governor's Budget

	Martin McMurry, Chief Operating Officer
	<p>Governor Ferguson's 2026 Supplemental Budget</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paid leave Contribution Modification<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ ESD's Agency request legislation to modify the Paid Leave premium contribution requirements to alleviate the federal tax burden on employers• The proposal moves the employer contribution to family leave, easing implementation requirements and on-going costs and preventing customer confusion while not changing the total amount paid in premiums.• The associated resource request is primarily for IT contractor work to be completed in fiscal year 2027• Governor's budget fully funds this request <p>Paid Leave Decision Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decision Package- Paid leave Contribution Modification<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ ESD Request- \$1,160, FTE: 0.1◦ Governor's Budget- \$1,160, FTE: 0.1• There are 3 core areas from a technical standpoint<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Update premium rate tables◦ Update and test financial systems◦ Update the premium estimator on the Paid leave website• Joe Kendo- Is there anything that has come through that suggests reducing appropriation relative to last year or that can be characterized as caseload decrease?• Martin McMurry- No, an alternative in the Decision Package was sort of a do nothing or can we use this in an existing law? A 12-month sprint was the best path forward because other ways were putting tax liabilities on Employers but overall, there was nothing looking at decreasing the budget.• Joe Kendo- Is there any indication that federal resources you were expecting are necessarily not going to be made available?• Martin McMurry- There's always that risk in a congressional environment. In last 24 hours we seen the Senate and the House come together on non-military, etc. funding. There have been requests for higher levels of DOL funding. Still on a heightened level anything can change and always that's a risk. There is some clarity heading towards the outsource of our funding resources.

2026 Legislative update

Josh Dye, Government Relations Director

- Paid Leave bills ESD's tracking
- HB 2345/SB 6199: ARL regarding Paid Leave contributions
 - Agency request legislation impacting Paid Leave
 - The public hearing was last week
 - Meeting the afternoon of 1/21/26 to discuss amendment language
 - House LAWS has executive session for 2345 (IRS ARL) 1/23/26 at 10:30am.
- HB 2485: Supplemental benefits + program evaluation
 - Limits concurrent use of PTO or payments when taking Paid Leave
 - ESD evaluates processes and policy around qualifying events
- SB 5889: Supplemental benefits for government employees
 - Limiting supplemental benefits for public employees while on Paid Leave
 - Maggie Humphries- Is ESD gathering data in particular to supplemental benefits and employee information
 - Josh Dye- We are working with OFM to provide some information regarding supplemental usage. It seems like a general implementation approach based off the language of the bill. We don't think the bill language would provide programs with the required tools to do this at a program level.
 - OFM put together a fiscal note- [Fiscal Note Package 75324](#)
- SSB 5292: Paid Leave premium rate setting
 - Premium rate to be set based on actuarial report
 - Lowest rate necessary to maintain solvency and close with a 4-mnth reserve (this is a change this year from last year)
 - 1.2% maximum rate
 - Hearing is scheduled on Friday 1/23/26
- SB 6127: State audit of program integrity
 - Requires the state auditors to conduct audit and report findings around fraud protections, program misuse, and employer access to data
- SB 6140: Reduce the max weeks of leave
 - Initiates benefit reductions to maintain a 1.2% premium rate in the event insolvency is projected
- SB 6141: Pause on weekly growth of weekly benefit amount
 - Temporary pause on annual max weekly benefit amount increase for 2027
- SB 6142: Reduce the max weeks of leave
 - Reduce the max weeks available for leave by 4 weeks
- SB 6143: Increases claim period duration
 - Increases the claim year period from 1 year to 1.5 years

Next Meeting

- 1:00 to 1:30 pm on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 (virtual)
- Proposed topics
 - Legislative updates

Open Comment

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No open comment• Meeting adjourns at 1:27 pm	