

# 2024 Legislative Summary

## Racial Equity Team

Dr. Bernal C. Baca, Chair  
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## **Introduction**

Who makes up the Racial Equity Team? The Team participation is voluntary and includes individuals, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations, educational institutions, and local and state governmental entities. The members of the Racial Equity Team analyze legislative proposals for bills that impact Communities of Color utilizing an Impact Assessment Tool. The Team began over 15 years ago and serves as a non-partisan forum for identifying and sharing legislative and procedural actions that impact, involve, or specifically address communities and people of color in Washington State.

The Racial Equity Team meets every Tuesday during legislation to discuss bills on the Watchlist and share information with members, legislators, and staff. The coordinator provides regular legislative weekly Watchlist updates and educational information to members, legislators, agencies, State officials, and staff via email.

During the 2024 Legislative Session, the Racial Equity Team worked on over 35 bills of which 3 have been signed by the Governor and 6 have been delivered. Overall, the 2024 Legislative Session had some success in services to education, protecting consumers, and assistance programs. The bills signed by the Governor and the bills that didn't make it will be discussed in the Summary.

## **Bills that passed and Delivered to the Governor**

### **HB 1889- Allowing persons to receive professional licenses and certifications regardless of immigration or citizenship status.**

This bill will provide eligibility for certain professional and commercial licenses, certifications, permits, and registrations for various professions for persons not lawfully present in the United States. Also, it permits applicants for licensure, certification, or registration to provide an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number instead of a Social Security Number.

This bill passed the House 66-31. In the Senate, it passed 41-8.

Bill Sponsors: Walen, Taylor, Leavitt, Slatter, Ramel, Duerr, Ryu, Ramos, Bateman, Reeves, Reed, Ormsby, Callan, Peterson, Kloba, Macri, Street, Doglio, Bergquist, Mena, Goodman, Thai, Santos, Hackney, Pollet, Fosse, Davis, Senn

**The Governor signed into law on March 13, 2024.**

**Communities for Our Colleges Coalition supported this Bill**

**HB 2226- Concerning collecting data on H-2A worker program and from certain hand harvesters.**

This bill requires the Employment Security Department to collect certain data about H-2A workers when conducting field checks and field visits. Also, requires the Office of Agricultural and Seasonal Workforce Services to conduct annual wage surveys of workers hand harvesting apples, cherries, pears, and blueberries.

This bill passed the House 56-39. In the Senate it passed 27-22.

Bill Sponsors: Ortiz-Self, Berry, Gregerson, Ramel, Santos, Reeves, Reed, Davis

Companion Bill: SB 5996

**Delivered to Governor to sign into law on March 7, 2024.**

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**SB 5986- Protecting consumers from out-of-network health care services charges.**

Under the Balance Billing Protection Act (BBPA), a nonparticipating provider or facility may not balance bill an enrollee for: emergency services provided to an enrollee; nonemergency health care services performed by a nonparticipating provider at certain participating facilities; or air ambulance services.

This bill passed the House 95-1. In the Senate it passed 49-0.

Bill Sponsors: Cleveland, Muzzall, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Mullet, Nobles, Randall, Salomon, Valdez, Wellman

Companion Bill: SB 2285

**Delivered to Governor to sign into law on March 8, 2024.**

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**HB 1905- Including protected classes in the Washington equal pay and opportunities act.**

This bill Amends the Equal Pay and Opportunities Act to prohibit an employer from discriminating in compensation and career advancement opportunities against similarly employed employees based on the employee's age, 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.

This bill passed in the House 63-34. In the Senate it passed 36-13.

Bill Sponsors: Mena, Senn, Berry, Cortes, Morgan, Ortiz-Self, Ramel, Ramos, Bateman, Reed, Ormsby, Callan, Kloba, Macri, Street, Gregerson, Doglio, Orwall, Bergquist, Goodman, Reeves, Lekanoff, Hackney, Fosse, Pollet, Davis, Simmons

**Delivered to Governor to sign into law on March 4, 2024**

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**HB 2112 - Concerning opioid and fentanyl prevention education and awareness at institutions of higher education.**

This bill will require public and private institutions of higher education to provide opioid and fentanyl prevention education and awareness to all students. Also, requires public and private institutions of higher education to make naloxone and fentanyl strips available to students on campus. And, requires public and private institutions of higher education to provide education and training on administering naloxone to staff working in residence halls.

This bill passed in the House 94-3. In the Senate it passed 49-0.

Bill Sponsors: Nance, Leavitt, Simmons, Reed, Ormsby, Callan, Rule, Orwall, Paul, Timmons, Lekanoff, Riccelli, Wylie, Reeves, Shavers, Pollet, Kloba, Davis

**Delivered to Governor to sign into law on March 6, 2024**

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**HB 2214- Permitting beneficiaries of public assistance programs to automatically qualify as income-eligible for the purpose of receiving the Washington college grant.**

This bill expands the demonstration of financial need for Washington College Grant eligibility to include students who participate in Washington's Basic Food Program or the Food Assistance Program.

This bill passed in the House 68-29. In the Senate it passed 28-20.

Bill Sponsors: Slatter, Bergquist, Chopp, Ramel, Reeves, Paul, Morgan, Gregerson, Ormsby, Alvarado, Reed, Fosse, Macri, Goodman, Pollet, Leavitt, Timmons, Davis, Riccelli, Duerr

**The Governor signed into law on March 15, 2024**

**Stand For Children Washington supported this bill.**

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**HB 5904- Extending the terms of eligibility for financial aid programs.**

This bill extends eligibility for awards under the Washington College Grant, College Bound Scholarship, and Passport to Careers programs from five years or 125 percent of the published length of the student's program, to six years or 150 percent of the published length of the student's program.

This bill passed in the House 61-35. In the Senate it passed 35-14.

Bill Sponsors: Nobles, Hansen, Dhingra, Frame, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Lias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Randall, Stanford, Trudeau, Valdez, Wilson, C.

**Delivered to Governor to sign into law on March 8, 2024**

**Stand For Children Washington supported this bill.**

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**SB 5974- Concerning the disposition of unenforceable legal financial obligations other than restitution imposed by a court or an agent of the court against a juvenile prior to July 1, 2023.**

This bill makes debts from juvenile nonrestitution legal financial obligations null and void and considered satisfied and paid in full by July 1, 2025.

This bill passed in the House 66-27. In the Senate it passed 42-6.

Bill Sponsors: Frame, Saldaña, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Kuderer, Nguyen, Nobles, Trudeau, Wilson, C.

Companion Bill: HB 2251

**The Governor signed into law on March 13, 2024**

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**HB 1541- Establishing the nothing about us without us act**

An act relating to increasing access and representation in policy-making processes for people with direct lived experience.

This bill passed in the House 83-14. In the Senate it passed 40-9.

Bill Sponsors: Farivar, Couture, Mena, Pollet, Taylor, Ortiz-Self, Street, Thai, Reed, Waters, Fosse, Caldier, Simmons, Davis, Alvarado, Schmidt, Ryu, Griffey, Ramel, Barnard, Orwall, Hackney, Bergquist, Walen, Berry, Tharinger, Peterson, Goodman, Volz, Eslick, Stonier, Gregerson, Riccelli, Ormsby, Kloba, Doglio, Bateman, Macri, Duerr

Companion Bill: SB 5616

**Delivered to Governor to sign into law on March 4, 2024**

**Disability Rights Washington supported this bill.**

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# Budgets

## **The Capital Budget**

*\$1.3 billion budget funds construction projects and infrastructure across Washington and makes major investments in school construction, behavioral health facilities, and affordable housing construction.*

- Increasing state support in the School Construction Assistance Program from \$271 to \$375 per square foot a total increase of \$79 million in support for school construction.
- \$68 million for skills centers and other career and technical education facilities
- The budget includes \$127.5 million for the Housing Trust Fund ( affordable housing).

## **The Operating Budget**

\$5,000,000 of the General Fund—State 19 appropriation for fiscal year 2025 is provided solely for a grant to 20 King County for costs to provide transitional and long-term housing. 21 supports for unsheltered, recently-arrived individuals and families.

\$2,853,617,000 General Fund -State Appropriation for The State Health Care Authority-Medical Assistance.

\$488,871,000 Year 2024 for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

\$527,084,000 Year 2025 for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

\$4,940,000 of the general fund—state appropriation for year 2024 provided solely for the Washington State 23 Achievers Scholarship and Washington Higher Education Readiness 24 program.

\$190,116,000 General Fund—State Appropriation for the year 2024 for the Department of Health.

\$184,729,000 General Fund—State Appropriation for the year 2025 for the Department of Health.

\$500,000 of the general fund—State Appropriation for fiscal 14 year 2025 is provided solely for a grant to a nonprofit organization 15 to provide essential social services for low-income families and 16 individuals.

**UNSUCCESSFUL  
PRIORITY BILLS  
THAT WERE  
TRACKED**



## **Priority Bills that were tracked but unsuccessful:**

- **HB 1320**- concerning access to personnel records.
- **HB 1473**- Investing in Washington families and creating a more fair tax system by enacting a narrowly tailored property tax on extreme wealth derived from the ownership of stocks, bonds, and other financial intangible property.
- **SB 5408**- Establishing the ninth-grade success grant program.
- **SB 1045**- Creating the Evergreen basic income pilot program.
- **HB 1094**- Creating the Washington Future Fund Program.
- **HB 1075**- Expanding eligibility for the working families tax credit to everyone age 18 and older.
- **HB 2374**- Creating the Washington Promise Program to provide 90 credits of tuition-free community or technical college to eligible students.
- **SB 5476**- Authorizing agricultural employers to select 12 weeks a year to employ workers for up to 50 hours a week before overtime applies.
- **HB 1866**- Concerning the academic and support needs of children of seasonal farmworkers.
- **HB 1940**- Protecting the rights of workers to refrain from attending meetings or listening to their employer's speech on political or religious matters.
- **HB 1095**- Creating a wage replacement program for certain Washington workers excluded from unemployment insurance.
- **HB1874** -Protecting consumers from predatory loans.
- **HB 2081**- Regulating home equity sharing agreements under the Consumer Loan Act.
- **HB 2094**- Improving consumer protection on gift certificates.
- **HB 1915**- Making financial education instruction a graduation prerequisite and a required component of public education.
- **SB 5171**- Addressing consumer gender discrimination.
- **SB 5059**- Concerning prejudgment interest.
- **HB 1933** -Supporting the servicing and right to repair of certain products with digital electronics in a secure and reliable manner.
- **SB 5863**- Prohibiting credit reporting on delinquent accounts that are designated to a person in a divorce.

- **HB 1991** - Concerning paid sick leave, expands the definition of “family member” in Washington’s Paid Sick Leave Law.
- **SB 5924** - Concerning access to personnel records.
- **HB 2242**- Supporting sexual assault survivors at institutions of higher education.
- **HB 2058**- Increasing student access to free meals served at public schools.
- **HB 1045**- Creating the evergreen basic income pilot program.
- **HB 2036**- Concerning workplace safety and operational standards for adult entertainment establishments.
- **HB 2065**- Recalculating sentencing ranges for currently incarcerated individuals whose offender score was increased by juvenile convictions.
- **HB 2070**- Integrating environmental justice considerations into certain project decisions.
- **SB 6216**- Establishing a statewide network for student mental and behavioral health.
- **SB 6254**-Providing student navigational support to increase postsecondary enrollment.

## Conclusion

Although the 2024 Legislative session was short, we are pleased with our success however, we have a lot to resume in the 2025 Legislative Session. Without the support of our devoted lobbyists, activists, and community members the bills that impact our communities wouldn't have had a voice. The advocacy of the Racial Equity Team will help the 2025 Legislative session be even more impactful and set the stage for the future.

In addition to tracking bills and advocacy, the Racial Equity Team sponsored two successful events. The Annual Members of Color Caucus reception, honoring our legislators with the “Bernaly” Awards which over a hundred people participated. The other event was the annual Pisco, Paella, and Pozole party. Chefs Arlen Harris, Bernal C. Baca, and Orlando Cano made the event a huge success with wonderful food and vibrations. The Event was packed and most of the Democratic Caucus attended that evening.

**Special thanks to all the donations received  
from individuals and organizations which  
helped in funding the success of the  
Racial Equity Team!**

## Photos



Senator Bob Hasegawa and Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos received the First Bernal Awards at the Members of Color Caucus Reception 2024.



Dr. Bernal Baca and Orlando Cano presenting the Bernal Awards at the Reception.



Photograph of the Racial Equity Team Logo from 2024.



Chefs Dr. Bernal Baca and Arlen Harris at the Pisco, Paella & Pozole Evening



Members of Colors Caucus Reception 2024



Members of Color Caucus Reception 2024