

2019-20 House Standing Committees/Issue Areas

Please note: This is a general description of issue areas considered by committees; not a definitive or exhaustive listing. It is provided solely to assist the public in understanding the general roles of House committees.

Appropriations

The House Appropriations Committee considers the operating budget bill and related legislation, budget processes, and fiscal issues such as pension policy and compensation. The committee also considers bills with operating budget fiscal impacts.

Capital Budget

The House Capital Budget Committee considers the state capital budget which approves money for the construction and repair of public buildings and for other long-term investments, such as land acquisitions and transfers. In addition, the committee considers state money that is either given or lent to local governments or nonprofit organizations for infrastructure, housing, and cultural and heritage facilities. The committee also considers bills relating to public works contracting, state buildings and land, and the authorization of state debt.

Civil Rights & Judiciary

The House Civil Rights and Judiciary Committee considers a wide variety of legal issues, including constitutional law and anti-discrimination measures, commercial law, torts, probate, guardianships, civil commitment, forensic mental health, firearms, eminent domain, landlord/tenant law, and Consumer Protection Act remedies and processes. The committee also considers issues relating to courts and judicial administration; and family

law issues such as marriage, marriage dissolution, child support and adoption.

College & Workforce Development

The House College & Workforce Development Committee considers issues relating to the state's public and independent baccalaureate colleges and universities, public community and technical colleges, and private career schools. Issues include governance and coordination of higher education, financial aid, tuition, distance learning, workforce development, apprenticeships and the licensing of private colleges and career schools.

Commerce & Gaming

The House Commerce & Gaming Committee considers issues relating to the regulation of commerce in alcohol, tobacco and cannabis, as well as issues relating to the regulation and oversight of gaming, including tribal compacts.

Consumer Protection & Business

The House Consumer Protection & Business Committee considers consumer protection issues relating to motor vehicles, financial services, and insurance, as well as the licensing and regulation of businesses and professions (except for health care and law-related professions). The committee also considers issues relating to the activities of the Office of the Insurance Commissioner and the Pollution Liability Insurance Agency, the solvency of insurance companies, and the rates and practices of insurance companies. Financial services issues include the safety and soundness of state banks and credit unions, the regulation of consumer credit and lending, and the regulation of securities and investments.

Education

The House Education Committee considers issues relating to kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) education.

Environment & Energy

The House Environment & Energy Committee considers issues relating to the State Environmental Policy Act, the Growth Management Act, the Shoreline Management Act, air quality, aquatic lands, oil spill prevention, recycling and solid waste, hazardous waste, toxics, and climate change. The committee also considers issues related to renewable energy standards and energy availability, production and conservation, and oversees the Puget Sound Partnership's activities in Puget Sound and Hood Canal.

Finance

The House Finance Committee considers issues relating to state and local revenues, such as increases or decreases in taxes, exemptions from taxes, and changes in the administration of taxes. (Note: Issues involving revenue for transportation purposes, such as gasoline taxes, are usually considered by the House Transportation Committee.)

Health Care & Wellness

The House Health Care & Wellness Committee considers a broad range of issues relating to the provision of physical and behavioral health care services, long-term care, and strategies to promote better health. Health care service issues include the licensing and regulation of health care facilities and the credentialing of health care providers. The committee also regulates pharmacies and pharmaceutical drugs, and has oversight and regulatory responsibility for state public health programs. The committee also considers issues relating to the accessibility and affordability of health care in both the private health insurance market and public health programs such as Medicaid and the state health exchange.

Housing, Community Development & Veterans

The House Housing, Community Development & Veterans Committee considers a broad array of issues relating to housing, including accessibility and affordability, homelessness, state assistance to low-income housing, housing authorities and the Housing Finance Commission. The committee also considers issues relating to community development, community investment programs, underrepresented communities, veterans and military affairs, parks and recreation, and emergency management preparedness and response.

Human Services & Early Learning

The House Human Services & Early Learning Committee considers a broad array of issues and services affecting children and families, including child welfare services; children's mental health and substance abuse; aid for needy families, developmental disabilities and juvenile justice. The committee also considers issues relating to early learning and child development from birth to kindergarten.

Innovation, Technology & Economic Development

The House Innovation, Technology & Economic Development Committee considers issues relating to technology and digital communications, including state information technology systems; small business assistance; business financing; the development of industry clusters; tourism; international trade; emerging technologies; and technology-driven jobs.

Labor & Workplace Standards

The House Labor & Workplace Standards Committee considers issues relating to industrial insurance, unemployment compensation, collective bargaining, family leave, safety and health standards, occupational health, and employment standards such as wage laws and employment discrimination. The committee also considers issues relating to the building and construction trades.

Local Government

The House Local Government Committee considers issues relating to the operations and financing of counties, cities, and some special districts.

Public Safety

The House Public Safety Committee considers issues relating to law enforcement agencies, crime prevention, criminal penalties and sentencing, impaired driving, registration and civil commitment of sex offenders, and adult correctional programs and institutions.

Rules

The House Rules Committee considers all bills reported from policy and fiscal committees and determines whether, and in what order, to schedule their consideration on the floor of the House. The Rules Committee also reviews, adopts and schedules consideration of floor resolutions.

Rural Development, Agriculture, & Natural Resources

The House Rural Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee considers issues relating to rural development, as well as issues relating to agricultural production, marketing, and sales; animal and plant disease control; fisheries and wildlife; forest practices and forest fire protection; water; and mining. The committee also considers the management of certain state-owned lands.

State Government & Tribal Relations

The House State Government & Tribal Relations Committee considers a broad array of issues relating to state government, including state agency rulemaking, procurement standards, performance audits and public employment. The committee also considers issues relating to elections, campaign finance, public disclosure, ethics in government, and the government-to-government relationship of the state and Indian tribes.

Transportation

The House Transportation Committee considers the transportation budget, revenue sources for transportation funding, and issues relating to transportation policy and transportation agencies, including the Department of Transportation and the Washington State Patrol.