



WSBA SECTIONS: SESSION PRIMER

An overview of the legislative process and preparation for the 2020 session

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AGENDA

- Sections + Outreach & Legislative Affairs
- Rules & Policies
- Legislative Action overview



SECTIONS + OUTREACH & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Role

- Craft Bar-request bills
- Receive, respond, and track bills
- Provide expertise when requested/needed
 - In coordination with Outreach & Legislative Affairs staff
- Provide input/comment on relevant bills of importance
 - In coordination with Outreach & Legislative Affairs Manager, BOG Legislative Committee, guidelines

WSBA OUTREACH & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Legislative goals

- **WSBA Mission:** “serve the public and members of the Bar, ensure the integrity of the legal profession, and to champion justice.”
- **Advocate**
 - Bar-sponsored legislation
 - Bar-supported legislation
 - Other issues outlined in the 2020 Legislative Priorities
- **Respond** to all legislative-related inquiries accurately and timely to advance the overall goals of WSBA.

WSBA OUTREACH & LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Staff

- Outreach & Legislative Affairs Manager
- Outreach & Legislative Affairs Coordinator

Office locations

- Seattle (year-round)
- Olympia (session only)

RULES & POLICIES

General Rule 12

- Pursuant to GR 12.2(b)(17), the WSBA is authorized to “maintain a legislative presence to inform members of new and proposed laws and to inform public officials about the organization’s positions and concerns.”
- Pursuant to GR 12.2(c), the WSBA only takes positions on legislation that “relate to or affect the practice of law or the administration of justice.”
- Excludes political and/or social issues

RULES & POLICIES

Legislation & Court Rule Comment Policy [[link](#)]

- Sections shall seek authorization from the Outreach and Legislative Affairs Manager or the BOG Legislative Committee **prior to** publicly communicating with anyone.
- WSBA entities must follow direction of WSBA and entities are responsible for advising WSBA on an ongoing basis regarding decisions, comments, and actions.
- Encourages WSBA entities to speak with one voice; maintain consistency
- *Executive Director, Bar President, BOG, or BOG Legislative Committee may enforce*

RULES & POLICIES

Public Disclosure Commission

- Lobbyist = anyone attempting to influence state legislative action
- WSBA entities are *not authorized* to engage in lobbying activities.
- People register as lobbyists only if:
 - Activities are beyond public committee hearings; and
 - Compensation is received
- www.pdc.wa.gov
- Please contact the WSBA office of General Counsel with any questions: julies@wsba.org

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: BILL REFERRAL PROCESS

Outreach and Legislative Affairs staff

- Reviews bills daily during session
- Refers relevant bills to Section(s) via email
- Makes recommendations about next steps (e.g. testimony, etc.)
- Communicates with legislators/staff/stakeholders
- Tracks bills of importance throughout session

BILL REFERRAL EMAIL TEMPLATE

PLEASE CHOOSE 1 OF THESE 3 OPTIONS WHEN RESPONDING:

- Option 1:** We do not find this bill to be of interest or relevance to our Section
- Option 2:** We would like this bill tracked but have no position at this time. Your section will receive a report on the bill at the end of the legislative session if you select this option. If you would like more information about a bill during session (for example: public hearing notifications) please indicate this in your response.
- Option 3:** We have followed the WSBA legislative bill process and are taking a position of _____ on Bill #_____.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: BILL REFERRAL PROCESS

Sections

- Review referred bill(s), GR 12 analysis
- Take a position, if deemed necessary (75%+ vote)
- Offer alternative bill language
- Be available for questions, appropriate next steps (e.g. testimony, written correspondence, etc.)

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: TAKING POSITIONS ON BILLS

Before taking a position, a Section must:

- Determine the bill meets GR 12; and
- Discuss, vote via Section executive committee (75%+)

Possible positions:

- Support
- Concerns
- Opposed (use sparingly)
- Neutral
- No position

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: TAKING POSITIONS ON BILLS

Support

- Further action: possible
- Outreach & Legislative Affairs Manager communicates with legislators/staff
- After approval, testify/sign-in pro depending on significance

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: TAKING POSITIONS ON BILLS

Concerns

- Further action: yes
- Detail concerns, offer alternative language/fix
- Outreach & Legislative Affairs Manager communicates with legislators/staff
- After approval, testify or send correspondence to appropriate legislator(s)

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: TAKING POSITIONS ON BILLS

Opposed (**use sparingly**)

- Further action: yes
- **Only use** when alternative language fixes are not possible
- Outreach & Legislative Affairs Manager communicates with legislators/staff
- After approval, testify or send correspondence to appropriate legislator(s)

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: TAKING POSITIONS ON BILLS

Neutral

- Further action: possibly
- Occurs when a 75%+ vote of a Section executive committee is not reached or is not desired.
- Continue to track bill(s) throughout session.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: TAKING POSITIONS ON BILLS

No position

- Further action: no
- Occurs when a 75%+ vote of a Section executive committee is not reached or the Section feels the bill is irrelevant to their practice area.
- Will not continue to track bill(s) throughout session, no action taken

LEGISLATIVE ACTION: COMMUNICATION

WSBA Outreach & Legislative Affairs

- Daily bill emails/referrals (beginning-middle of session)
- Social media, blog updates (posted online)
- Support throughout session

Sections

- Track bills of importance
- Keep Outreach & Legislative Affairs staff apprised of all legislative activity
- Ask questions before determining action (e.g. GR 12 analysis, testimony, other legislative communication, etc.)

QUESTIONS?

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Resources

- **WSBA Outreach & Legislative Affairs:**
wsba.org/About-WSBA/Legislative-Affairs
- **WA State Legislature:** leg.wa.gov
 - Bill tracking
 - Committee information
 - Legislator biographies, etc.
- **TVW:** tvw.org
 - Committee hearings
 - Floor action