



2025 Bills Likely to Return in 2026

Below is a list of bills that did not make it through this legislative session. Although all bills that did not pass will automatically be reintroduced and reconsidered during the 2026 session, the list below highlights legislation that is expected to receive significant discussion during the 2026 session. We encourage you to review and prepare for the continuation of these policy discussions.

Misdemeanor Charge Dismissal Framework: [House Bill 1113](#), sponsored by Rep. Darya Farivar (D-46th LD), establishes a framework for courts of limited jurisdiction to dismiss certain misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor charges if defendants comply with court-ordered conditions aimed at rehabilitation. Courts may dismiss charges upon a defendant's substantial compliance with conditions over a continuance period of 6 to 12 months, which must be tailored to support rehabilitation and address factors such as behavioral health disorders, housing instability, or employment challenges. Exclusions include serious offenses such as DUI-related crimes, domestic violence, firearm-related charges, animal cruelty, and offenses involving sexual motivation or minors.

Neighborhood Cafes: [House Bill 1175](#), sponsored by Rep. Mark Klicker (R-16th LD), mandates that cities and towns allow neighborhood cafés and stores in residential areas, with provisions regulating parking, hours of operation, and additional local controls such as maximum square footage. Neighborhood cafés serving alcohol must also offer food, and stores in residential zones are prohibited from selling nicotine products. The bill exempts certain actions related to its implementation from environmental review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) and requires cities planning under the Growth Management Act to incorporate these requirements into their comprehensive plan updates in 2027, while other cities must implement the requirements within two years of the bill's effective date.

Commerce Oversight of Shelter Permitting: [House Bill 1195](#), sponsored by Rep. Strom Peterson (D-21st LD), facilitates the siting, permitting, and operation of permanent supportive housing, transitional housing, indoor emergency housing, and indoor emergency shelters. Counties and cities must approve permit applications for these facilities through administrative processes, prohibiting local comprehensive plans or regulations from precluding such developments in residential or commercial zones within urban growth areas contiguous with cities. The Department of Commerce is empowered to resolve disputes, enforce compliance, and withhold certain revenues from noncompliant local governments, while exemptions apply to critical areas, natural hazard zones, and lands of long-term commercial significance.

Competency Evaluations: [House Bill 1218](#), sponsored by Rep. Darya Farivar (D-46th LD), introduces significant changes to Washington State's forensic mental health system, focusing on competency evaluation and restoration services. The bill aims to reduce demand for forensic services, improve diversion options, and enhance community-based behavioral health services. Key provisions include expanding the role of forensic navigators to assist individuals referred for competency evaluation for class B and C felonies and misdemeanors, streamlining outpatient competency restoration eligibility, and requiring courts to dismiss charges if restoration is deemed unlikely. Additionally, it establishes a Behavioral Health Diversion Incentive Program to reduce inpatient competency referrals, creates a Behavioral Health Diversion Fund, and mandates counties to develop diversion plans to reduce jail time for individuals with behavioral health needs.

Wildfire Building Codes: [House Bill 1254](#), sponsored by Rep. Davina Duerr (D-1st LD), mandates phased statewide adoption of the International Wildland Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) to address wildfire risks. The bill requires the State Building Code Council to adopt the IWUIC by November 1, 2029, following the creation of statewide wildfire hazard maps, and allows local governments to use optional IWUIC codes until the statewide maps are finalized. The bill also mandates IWUIC application in high-risk areas identified through mapping, permits local governments to adopt amendments with fire marshal approval, and establishes a grant program to support mapping efforts.

Even-Year Local Elections: [House Bill 1339](#), sponsored by Rep. Mia Gregerson (D-33rd LD), allows local governments to move their elections from odd-numbered to even-numbered years to boost voter turnout. The bill introduces a new option for cities, towns, and special purpose districts to transition their elections to even-numbered years through mechanisms such as legislative adoption of an ordinance, voter approval of a referred ordinance or charter amendment, or voter-initiated initiatives or charter amendments. Key provisions include requirements for two public hearings held at least 30 days apart, adjustments to elected officials' term lengths to align with the new schedule, and a funding contingency clause making implementation dependent on specific appropriations by June 30, 2025.

Homelessness Regulation Framework: [House Bill 1380](#), sponsored by Rep. Mia Gregerson (D-33rd LD), establishes a framework for regulating the use of public property by individuals experiencing homelessness, requiring such regulations to be "objectively reasonable" in terms of time, place, and manner. The bill applies to laws enacted by cities, towns, counties, and the state, including those governing capitol building lands. It allows individuals to challenge unreasonable laws in court and assert an affirmative defense, prohibits monetary damages, and includes an emergency clause for immediate enactment.

Public Defense Funding Reform: [House Bill 1592](#), sponsored by Rep. Strom Peterson (D-21st LD), revises Washington State's public defense funding structure by shifting significant financial responsibility to the state and establishing new requirements for counties and cities. Beginning in fiscal year 2026, the state will cover 50 percent of public defense costs and assume responsibility for costs exceeding a five-year average of county and city expenditures, while

counties must redirect supplanted funds to programs such as diversion, behavioral health services, and affordable housing. The bill also mandates robust data collection and reporting requirements, establishes eligibility standards for state funding, and allows rural counties to request the Office of Public Defense (OPD) to take over public defense services.

AI and Collective Bargaining: [House Bill 1622](#), sponsored by Rep. Lisa Parshley (D-22nd LD), requires employers to bargain over the adoption or modification of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies that impact wages or performance evaluations. Bargaining is not required for updates to existing AI technologies made by third parties that do not meaningfully affect wages or evaluations. The bill also ensures existing contracts are not subject to the new requirements until they expire, are renewed, or reopened.

Independent Jail Oversight: [Senate Bill 5005](#), sponsored by Senator Rebecca Saldaña (D-37th LD), establishes the Washington Jail Council within the Office of the Governor to oversee and improve the state's jail system. The council's purpose is to promote transparency, ensure safe and humane conditions for jail employees and incarcerated individuals, encourage rehabilitative reforms, and reduce litigation risks. The council is tasked with monitoring jail operations, conducting annual surveys, publishing reports, investigating systemic issues, and participating in unexpected fatality review teams to issue recommendations to the legislature and governing jail authorities.

Juvenile Interrogations: [Senate Bill 5052](#), sponsored by Sen. Jesse Salomon (D-32nd LD), clarifies law enforcement authority to contact juvenile witnesses and victims not suspected of criminal activity. It specifies that attorney consultation requirements apply only to juveniles detained based on probable cause of criminal involvement, ensuring law enforcement can interact with juvenile witnesses and victims without triggering these requirements. The bill also adds provisions to ensure the admissibility of lawfully obtained evidence and includes legislative intent to provide consistent statewide interpretation of juvenile law enforcement interactions.

Prevailing Wage Adjustments: [Senate Bill 5061](#), sponsored by Sen. Steve Conway (D-29th LD), requires annual adjustments to prevailing wage rates for most public works contracts to ensure wages reflect current rates during the duration of a project. The bill exempts small works roster projects and residential construction from the adjustment requirement and requires residential construction projects to include a designation in the contract, with provisions for reclassification to commercial rates if necessary.

Expanded Weapon-Free Zones: [Senate Bill 5098](#), sponsored by Sen. Javier Valdez (D-46th LD), expands weapon-free zones to include neighborhood, community, or regional park facilities where children are likely to be present, state or local public buildings, and county fairs during public operating hours. Exceptions are provided for gun shows, color guards, and honor guards during permitted events, museum staff handling firearms as part of collections or exhibitions, and concealed pistol license holders in specific circumstances. Municipalities are required to post signage at common access points, and violations are classified as gross misdemeanors. The

definition of "weapon" is updated to include additional instruments capable of causing death or bodily injury.

Short-Term Rental Tax: Engrossed Substitute [Senate Bill 5576](#), sponsored by Sen. Liz Lovelett (D-40th LD), authorizes counties, cities, and towns in Washington State to impose a new local excise tax on short-term rental lodging transactions facilitated through short-term rental platforms. The bill establishes the framework for the tax, its rate, collection, and use of proceeds, as well as administrative requirements. Local governments may impose the tax at a rate not exceeding 4%, with proceeds deposited into the "essential affordable housing local assistance account" to fund affordable housing-related purposes, including construction, operations, rental assistance, and social services. Local governments may retain up to 15 percent of revenue for administrative costs and are required to publish annual reports on expenditures.

Clear and Objective Development Regulations and Design Standards: [Senate Bill 5613](#), sponsored by Sen. Jesse Salomon (D-32nd LD), amends Washington's Growth Management Act to require cities and counties to adopt clear and objective development regulations and design standards for residential development. The Department of Commerce must form a stakeholder work group to analyze barriers to housing and develop model codes, which cities and counties must adopt or submit alternatives for approval by the Department by January 1, 2029. The bill expands the jurisdiction of the Growth Management Hearings Board to address noncompliance and allows alternative approval processes for aesthetic considerations if they do not reduce density below comprehensive plan levels.

Mandatory Hearing Examiners: [Senate Bill 5719](#), sponsored by Sen. Jesse Salomon (D-32nd LD), mandates changes to Washington State law regarding the use of hearing examiners for land use and development decisions by counties and cities. Counties fully planning under the Growth Management Act (GMA) and cities with populations over 2,000 must adopt hearing examiner systems for quasi-judicial land use decisions, such as plat approvals, planned unit developments, variances, and conditional uses. Hearing examiner decisions are designated as final and appealable only through the courts, with jurisdictions allowed to specify whether substantial weight must be given to administrative decision-makers in appeals. Counties not fully planning under the GMA and cities with populations of 2,000 or less may adopt hearing examiner systems, but are not required to do so, with optional legislative review processes also permitted.

Permit Streamlining: [Senate Bill 5729](#), sponsored by Sen. Chris Gildon (R-25th LD), streamlines the permitting process for affordable housing construction by deeming professionally prepared applications complete upon submission and limiting local governments' ability to impose substantial modifications. Applications consistent with development regulations and infrastructure capacity are deemed approved after six reviews unless violations are demonstrated, and certain types of projects are excluded from site plan review. The bill also imposes professional liability insurance requirements for engineers and architects and

compliance restrictions to ensure adherence to development regulations and housing affordability standards.