

# Washington State **LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2026**



*Protecting Workers. Strengthening Public Services.  
Building a Stable Future for Washington.*

PROTEC17 is a labor union representing thousands of professional, technical, and administrative public employees in State, county, and local government who deliver essential services across Washington State. As lawmakers navigate fiscal uncertainty, technological change, and growing community needs, we urge the Legislature to advance policies that protect workers, preserve public services, and address the structural challenges facing our state.



## **Public Health & Local Government Flexibility**

HB 1870 and SB 5709 provide a practical, locally-driven solution by **allowing counties greater flexibility in how public health clinic funding is structured and sustained**. This flexibility enables counties to better align resources with on-the-ground needs without requiring new state appropriations.

**PROTEC17 supports HB 1870/SB 5709 to:**

- Strengthen the long-term stability of county public health clinics that serve as a safety net for vulnerable populations
- Protect frontline public health workers and ensure continuity of care amid workforce shortages and budget volatility
- Improve counties' ability to respond quickly to emerging public health threats and community health priorities
- Reduce reliance on emergency or short-term funding mechanisms that undermine service planning and retention

Investing in flexible, sustainable public health funding is both fiscally responsible and essential to protecting community health. **HB 1870/SB 5709 ensures counties can maintain strong public health systems** while safeguarding the professional workforce that delivers these critical services.



## **Progressive Revenue to Protect Essential Services**

Washington faces ongoing structural budget challenges that threaten essential services and the public workforce. **Sustainable solutions must not rely on service cuts or layoffs.**

**PROTEC17 supports progressive revenue options, including a millionaire tax, to:**

- Protect essential public services and public sector jobs
- Ensure the wealthiest Washingtonians contribute fairly
- Stabilize long-term funding for state and local government programs

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To learn more about PROTEC17 members, visit: [protec17.org](https://protec17.org)

# 2026 Washington State LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



## Technology & Worker Protections

Artificial intelligence (AI) is being introduced in government operations across the State with the potential to reshape how public sector services are delivered. **Workers should have a voice in how these tools are implemented.** HB 1622 and SB 5422 would make the deployment of AI in the workplace a mandatory subject of collective bargaining.

**PROTEC17 supports HB 1622/SB 5422 to:**

- Make AI deployment a mandatory subject of bargaining when it affects employment.
- Protect jobs, working conditions, and professional discretion
- Promote responsible, transparent use of emerging technologies



## Paid Family & Medical Leave

Washington's Paid Family & Medical Leave (PFML) program is one of the most successful programs of its kind in the nation.

**PROTEC17 urges lawmakers to:**

- Protect the long-term sustainability of PFML
- Reject rollbacks that would reduce access or benefits
- Preserve stability for workers and employers



## Housing Affordability & Workforce Stability

The housing crisis directly impacts workforce recruitment, retention, and economic stability. **HB 1687 is a pro-housing action that can be taken this session without requiring new state funding.**

**PROTEC17 supports HB 1687 to:**

- Add social housing as a qualifying use under the Housing Cooperation Law, allowing flexibility from restrictive zoning and building codes
- Enable state and local governments to support the siting, development, and long-term maintenance of social housing
- Lower development costs through targeted, project-specific regulatory flexibility
- Expand permanently affordable housing across Washington, particularly as federal affordable housing funding faces deep cuts

Voters in Seattle have overwhelmingly supported social housing, this bill's approach can overcome site-specific zoning barriers while maintaining local control.



## Transportation Funding

We will continue to monitor and assess transportation funding bills that commit to increased funding to preserve and maintain the State's infrastructure assets and to complete federally-mandated fish passage work, while at the same time balancing the need to direct investments toward completing new construction projects throughout the State.