

Child

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to the Senate. Fatality reviews would apply for any death _whether the cause was negligence, abuse, homicide or an apparent natural cause. SIDS is a major cause of death for children 2 and under in child-care settings. Many of these deaths are preventable if the staff follows safe sleep rules, which are

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taught to every licensed child-care provider, according to committee and department staff. Kagi said she was inspired to propose the bill by Eve’s story and because of her experience sitting on fatality-review committees for the state’s foster care system.

Children protected by other state departments are already subject to these mandatory reviews, and the foster-care system was able to improve its safety record because of them, Kagi said. Andy and Barbara Hazard also testified before the committee last week. Their son, Graham, died in 2001 in the same day care center where Eve died.

“It didn’t occur to us to question or challenge the circumstances or the particular daycare provider,” Andy Hazard said. “She had taken care of our older son, Noah. We felt like she was a member of our family.” A dozen years later, when they heard of Eve’s death, Barbara Hazard said, she felt a tremendous amount of guilt. “No other parent ought to feel that way,” she said. “We naively trusted the system, and we felt everything that needed to be done had been done.”

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Youth March



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

A flash mob dances before the start of the 9th Annual Martin Luther King Youth March on Saturday, Jan. 18. About a hundred young people participated in the march from Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Park to Rainier Community Center, celebrating the contribution Seattle youth make in creating a better city and to honor the work that youth do to keep Dr. King’s dream alive every day.

Bill

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ority for immigrant-rights groups in Olympia this session. If the bill is signed into law, Washington would become the fifth state in the country to approve state financial aid for college students illegally in the country. California, Texas, New Mexico and Illinois have passed similar legislation. Proponents have said the average number of college students in Washington each year who can’t provide proof of legal residency is about 550. They estimate that number would grow by about 20 or 30 percent if the financial-aid measure is approved. “Denying financial aid to an entire generation of motivated Washingtonians benefits no one,” said Emily Murphy, a lobbyist for OneAmerica, an immigrant rights group. “The Dream Act is about education and the economy, and we want to make sure we have a vibrant economy served by a well-educated workforce.” During the debate on the House floor,

opponents of the bill said the state can’t afford to expand the state need grants pool. One lawmaker said 30,000 students who applied for state financial aid didn’t get it. “The statistics unfortunately trump the dream at this point,” said Republican Rep.

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Larry Halder of Richland. Vance said that immigrant-rights groups are a key constituency of the Democratic Party and, combined, they can bring a lot of “passion and money” into a legislative district if they target it. A Republican can diffuse that pressure by supporting such a bill, he said. But state Republican Party spokesman

Keith Schipper said he doesn’t buy the argument that immigration-reform issues in Olympia would have an effect on the November elections. “This is simply a distraction to get the voter minds off the issues they’re truly upset about,” Schipper said. “This is simply the Democrats fishing.” Voters in November will focus on education issues, the botched rollout of the Affordable Care Act and taxes, Schipper said. Minority and immigrant voters have shown they can affect election results in Washington state, a political expert said.

After Gov. Jay Inslee won the governor’s office in 2012, University of Washington pollster Matt Barreto estimated that Latino and Asian voters broke 3 to 1 for the Democrat and helped him beat Republican candidate Rob McKenna, who had courted immigrant votes but couldn’t shake off the anti-immigrant image of the GOP. “My hope is that Latino groups realize that the Legislature needs to work or change,” said Maru Mora, an immigrant activist and organizer of the annual May Day march in Seattle. Democrat political consultant Christian Sinderman pointed out that some of the swing districts for Senate races are in neighborhoods with significant numbers of immigrants.

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Inslee

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and \$11.82 cents an hour. It’s an idea that was not well received by the Senate, particularly among lawmakers who represent rural areas. Senate leaders expressed a variety of concerns about the minimum wage hike, saying it would force more small businesses to close down, that it would make it difficult for the agriculture industry to have their commodities compete nationally and that it would particularly strain businesses in border counties near Idaho, which has a minimum wage at just \$7.25—a difference of perhaps \$4 an hour under Inslee’s plan. Democratic Sen. Jim Hargrove represents portions of Grays Harbor County, which has the largest unemployment rate in the state. He said small business owners in his region would have to lay people off if the minimum wage increases. “I’m not seeing how it could work,” Hargrove said.

Transportation Package

Inslee said last year that lawmakers need-

ed to approve a package by the end of 2013. It didn’t happen. Now he says 2014 is the year, but the political dynamics are only growing more challenging. To approve the transportation package, lawmakers would need to vote in favor of a large increase in the state gas tax to help fund the projects. That’s a difficult vote for some in an election year. Meanwhile, the state Department of Transportation is in the midst of troubles on

Leaders in the state Senate—largely Republicans, but also some Democrats—have balked at Inslee’s proposals

two current megaprojects—the 520 bridge replacement linking Seattle to Bellevue and the tunnel to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct in Seattle. Lawmakers from both parties have said those issues make it more

challenging to pass the transportation package, since the bill may need approval from voters in a referendum. Inslee spokesman Jaime Smith said there’s some frustration at the governor’s office that the issues aren’t moving ahead, especially on the transportation package that lawmakers have worked on for so long. She said the Senate can act to advance the transportation plan and other issues. “There’s certainly a path forward on all of

these things if the folks in the Senate were ready to take those on with us,” Smith said.

Financial Aid

Inslee wants lawmakers to approve a plan that would expand state financial aid to students who are living in the country illegally. That bill stalled in the Senate last year. Senate Majority Leader Rodney Tom, the Democratic leader of the predominantly Republican Majority Coalition Caucus, said this week his caucus is focused on other priorities. Some Republicans expressed concern that expanding the program to those living in the country illegally would prevent others from getting financial aid.

Education Funding

Inslee himself had initially proposed minimal budget changes for the 60-day legislative session but has since scrapped his own budget plan and recommended adding \$200 million to the state education system. He proposes doing that, in part, by eliminating some tax exemptions _ although he hasn’t identified which ones.

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