
SENATE BILL 5977

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators Carlyle, Braun, Brown, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Honeyford, Hunt, Keiser, Lias, Lovelett, Nguyen, Pedersen, Saldaña, Van De Wege, Warnick, C. Wilson, and L. Wilson

Read first time 02/12/22. Referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

1 AN ACT Relating to the legislative chamber skylights; creating a
2 new section; and making an appropriation.

3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

4 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** For nearly a century, the Washington state
5 legislative building has served as the symbol of the state's free and
6 democratic government, welcoming the people of Washington as they
7 engage with the citizen legislators who represent their voices in
8 Olympia.

9 Completed in 1928, the elegant, American-neoclassical style
10 building is the centerpiece of the capitol campus designed by
11 architects Walter Wilder and Harry White. The campus presents a grand
12 example of the City Beautiful Movement of the progressive era of the
13 early 20th century and in 1979 its buildings and grounds were entered
14 into the national register of historic places.

15 The state legislative building originally included skylight
16 systems above the chambers of the house of representatives and the
17 senate. For decades, these skylight systems bathed the work of each
18 chamber in an amber-tinted glow, admitting natural light filtered
19 through a layer of opalescent glass panels in an intricate,
20 ornamental bronze grid work laylight.

1 While a similar skylight system continues to illuminate the
2 building's state reception room, the skylight openings and glass
3 panels above the legislative chambers were removed in the 1970s amid
4 renovations to the building. The bronze ceiling laylights remain, but
5 the skylight openings and glass panels were replaced by a stainless
6 steel roof and by insulation painted black to obstruct any view.

7 The legislature recognizes that the state legislative building,
8 which has withstood three earthquakes due to its excellent structural
9 design and the superb craftsmanship of its builders, is an invaluable
10 architectural treasure that should be preserved and maintained in
11 line with its original design.

12 The legislature also recognizes the symbolic value of opening the
13 seat of state government to the light of public scrutiny. Sunlight is
14 essential to democracy and public trust in government improves when
15 government demonstrates that it is transparent and open. Accordingly,
16 the legislature finds it necessary to appropriate funding to restore
17 the skylight systems above the chambers of the house of
18 representatives and the senate.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The sum of \$5,982,000, or as much thereof
20 as may be necessary, is appropriated for the biennium ending June 30,
21 2023, from the state building construction account-state
22 appropriation to the department of enterprise services for the
23 purposes of this act. This funding is for design and construction for
24 the restoration of the legislative skylight systems located above the
25 chambers of the house of representatives and the senate, to include
26 work on each bronze ceiling laylight, skylight attic, roof and
27 skylight system, and chamber acoustics.

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