**2019 Washington Legislative Session Wrap Up**

Washington state lawmakers passed a new two-year operating budget Sunday in dramatic fashion, only 18 minutes before a midnight deadline to adjourn.

During the final hour before the deadline, they similarly passed a deal to let school

districts collect more money from local property-tax levies — something several districts said they need if they are to avoid budget cuts.

The passage of the $52.1 billion budget and the levy bill capped off a busy evening at the state Capitol, as lawmakers concluded their 105-day session.

Also on Sine Die, both chambers of the Legislature approved Initiative 1000, which reverses a state ban on affirmative action.

A flurry of overnight votes took place on Friday and Saturday leading up to the Legislature's Sunday adjournment. Even so, at several points it looked as if lawmakers still might not finish on time, due to a debate that came to a head over the so-called “levy lift” bill.

Legislative leaders ultimately struck a deal to pass the levy bill that involved stripping out the charter-school language. The compromise also meant adopting stricter accountability measures to try to ensure local levy money doesn't pay for basic education, which is the state's responsibility.

One of the things that died in the Legislature, however, was a tax on capital gains, which would have affected profits from selling stock and bonds.

Both the House and Senate — each with healthy Democratic majorities — floated versions of a capital-gains tax this year. But the tax, which opponents have decried as an unconstitutional tax on income, failed to make it into the final budget deal.

The $52.1 billion budget agreement that Senate and House leaders passed Sunday now heads to Gov. Jay Inslee's desk.

Once signed into law, it will begin to reform the state’s mental health system — in part by establishing more options for treating people in their communities, rather than at the troubled Western State Hospital in Lakewood. The two-year spending plan also will finish the phase-in of the state’s plan to fully fund public schools, which the Legislature approved in 2017 to comply with a court order to amply fund K-12 education.