

## WA State NOW - Legislative Update February 1, 2002

**Legislative Hotline 1(800) 562-6000**

Call to leave a message for your elected officials

### ***Priority Message of the Week*** (If you can only do one thing, do this!)

Call all House & Senate Health Care Committee members in Support of House Bill 2690 & SB 6537 – Providing Emergency Contraception in Emergency Rooms.

WA State NOW supports legislation that requires all emergency rooms to proactively offer emergency contraception to victims of sexual assault. Such a requirement would ensure that women are informed about emergency contraception and that they have ready access to emergency contraception, regardless of where they receive care.

### **Family Leave – HB 2364/SB6426 Support**

Taking unpaid time off to care for a sick and aging parent or child, a newborn or newly adopted child, or even for personal health reasons is a luxury many people can not afford. WA State NOW supports family leave insurance and expanding the Family and Medical Leave Act to create family friendly policies in the workplace.

**Status:** House bill scheduled for exec on 1/31 in Commerce and Labor

**Action:** Call committee members in support

### **Medicaid Waiver – HB 2431, HB 2461 & SB 6368**

Washington State's Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is preparing a Medicaid demonstration waiver proposal to send to the federal government. This waiver will result in dramatic changes in the state's Medicaid program and could shut out many thousands of current and future low-income families and individuals from needed health care. DSHS is seeking blanket authority to override many federal protections and has provided limited information on the changes that would introduce one these protections are lifted. WA State NOW is in opposition to the waiver until there are safe-guards to replace the federal protections.

**Status:** HB 2461 scheduled for exec in House Health Care on 2/5. We support this bill because it spells out a process for the legislature and DSHS to follow before adopting/pursuing the Medicaid Waivers.

**Action:** Call committee members in support.

### **Work-search Exemption for New Moms – HB 1144 Support**

WA State NOW supports legislation that would extend the exemption for new moms from the work-search requirement of welfare reform from the current 3 months to 12 months.

**Status:** 2/6 Public Hearing House Children and Family Services 8am

**Action:** Call committee members in support

### **Emergency Contraception in ER – HB 2690 SB 6537 Support**

WA State NOW supports legislation that requires all emergency rooms to proactively offer emergency contraception to victims of sexual assault. Such a requirement would ensure that women are informed about emergency contraception and that they have ready access to emergency contraception, regardless of where they receive care.

**Status:** SB6537 was heard in Senate Health on 1/28 and 1/31. HB 2690 will be heard on 2/5, scheduled for exec on 2/7

**Action:** Call Committee members in support

### **Trafficking of Women and Children – HB 2381 & SB 6407 Support**

At least seven hundred thousand persons annually, primarily women and children, are trafficked within or across international borders; with approximately fifty thousand women and children trafficked into the United States each year. Traffickers primarily target women and girls, who are disproportionately affected by poverty, the lack of access to education, chronic unemployment, discrimination, and the lack of economic opportunities in countries of origin. WA State NOW supports legislation that provides assistance to victims of trafficking.

**Status:** SB 6407 heard in Senate Judiciary on 1/29 HB 2381 heard on 1/29 in House Criminal Justice and Corrections

**Action:** Support

### **Unemployment Insurance for Victims of Domestic Violence and Stalking - HB 1248 (Support) & HB 2211**

HB – 1248 bill allows individuals to qualify for unemployment insurance when the unemployment is necessary to protect the claimant or a member of their immediate family from domestic violence or stalking. HB 2211 gives victims access to the Crime Victims Compensation Fund. NOW supports HB 1248.

**Status:** SB 5189 is in Senate Rules, and 1248 public hearing on 2/6 in House Commerce and Labor; 2211 is in House Appropriations

**Action:** Call House Commerce and Labor Committee members in support

### **Bullying –HB 1444 and SB 5528 Support**

These bills require schools to develop policies to prohibit harassment, intimidation and bullying on school grounds and at school activities. Substitute bill provides some flexibility to local school districts and is widely supported.

**Status:** Scheduled for exec on 1/31 in House Education

**Action:** Call both of your representatives in support!

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Party Visitation - HB 2322 Support**

Sets standards and circumstances for 3<sup>rd</sup> party visitations (i.e. grandparents, significant others, etc.)

**Status:** House Rules

**Action:**

### **Increasing Access to Education for Recipients of TANF - SB 5201 Support**

The Higher Education for Lifelong Progress (HELP) program allows qualified welfare recipients to attend college on a full-time basis as their required TANF work activity.

**Status:** Senate Ways & Means

**Action:**

### **The Friendly Parent Bill – SB 5511 Oppose**

Determination of whether a parent has taken greater responsibility for performing parenting functions relating to the daily needs of a child and which parent is more likely to allow and encourage the child frequent and continuing contact with the other parent are in the list of eight other factors that the court may consider.

**Status:** Senate Rules 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading

**Action:**

### **Chemically Dependant Pregnant Women - SB 5416 Oppose**

Sets up procedures for identifying and screening pregnant and lactating women to determine whether an infant is at risk of drug affected due to the mother's use of non-prescriptive addictive drugs.

**Status:** Senate Rules 3<sup>rd</sup> Reading

**Action:**

### **Mental Health & Minor's Consent – HB 2371 Oppose**

Changing the age of consent for minors receiving chemical dependency and mental health treatment from 13 to 16.

**Status:** Hearing 1/30, House Juvenile Justice and Family Law

**Action:**

**Modifying Initiative 200 – SB 6295 Support**

Exempts public universities and school districts from the anti-affirmative action requirements of Initiative 200

**Status:** Hearing in Senate Judiciary on 1/21

**Action:** Call committee members to support

**Changing Requirements for Health Insurance Plans Offered to Small Businesses – HB 2430 Oppose**

Requires the standard health plans to represent a range of health plans sufficiently diverse to meet the needs of small employer groups seeking health insurance coverage in Washington state. Finds that pilot projects should be established to determine whether it is appropriate to use basic health plan and medical assistance funds to subsidize premium shares for employer-sponsored health insurance when such a subsidy would be cost-effective for the state.

**Status:** House Health Care scheduled for exec on 2/7

**Action:** Call Committee Members to oppose

**Abstinence education provide only medically and scientifically accurate information HB 2546 & SB 6506**

Requires that school and other publicly funded sexuality or abstinence education provide only medically and scientifically accurate information.

**Status:** Hearing in Senate Education on 2/4, Hearing in House Education on 2/6

**Action:** Support

**Budget Cuts –**

In response to the state budget crisis caused by the national economic downturn, the Governor, in his proposed budget has a large number of budget cuts that effect the most vulnerable individuals and working families in our state. WA State NOW calls on the legislature to solve this budget crisis by finding new revenue sources, passing an economic stimulus package and to preserve state services that meet the needs of those that rely on health & human services and public safety programs.

**Status:**

**Action:**

For more information regarding WA State NOW's political positions, please refer to the web page at [www.wa-now.org](http://www.wa-now.org) or call 206-788-0843. To find your district, who represents you, and any additional information about the legislature and the legislative process go to [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov).