

WA State NOW - Legislative Update February 9, 2002

Legislative Hotline 1(800) 562-6000

Call to leave a message for your elected officials

Priority Message of the Week

Call your Senator and support the Bullying bill (SHB 1444) as is with no amendments.

Also of interest: Insurance Commissioner Mike Kriedler has introduced legislation that would regulate the ability of insurance companies to use credit history when making decision to underwrite, deny, cancel, or refuse to renew a policy of personal insurance. NOW supports this bill as more women experience bankruptcy and difficult financial times after a divorce or upon leaving an abusive situation. Call your representatives in support of HB 2544 and SB 6524.

Family Care – 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: Both House and Senate Bills are in Rules

Action: NOW is supporting the Senate Bill. Call your senators 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 passed House Health Care. 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 in support – don't water down.

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: Passed out of house committee

Action: Call Appropriation 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 is in Rules HB 2690 was scheduled for exec on 2/7

Action: Call 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 SB 5189

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 passed to Appropriations; 2211 is in Appropriations

Action: **Call members and encourage them to pass 1248 or 5189 as is.**

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: 1444 passed House. Referred to Senate Education

Action: **Call your senator in support – no changes!**

3rd Party Visitation - HB 2322 Support

Sets standards and circumstances for 3rd 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 3rd 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 3rd 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:

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: Defeated in Committee!!!!

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**

Regulating the use of credit scoring in Insurance HB 2544 & SB 6524

Regulates the ability of insurance companies to use credit history when making decision to underwrite, deny, cancel, or refuse to renew a policy of personal insurance. NOW supports this bill as women often experience difficult financial times after a divorce or upon leaving an abusive situation.

Status: **HB 2544 Passed out of committee on 2/8 SB 6524 Passed committee on 2/8**

Action: **Call all members in support**

For more information regarding WA State NOW's political positions, please refer to the web page at 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.