



Washington State National Organization for Women

2002 Legislative Priorities

THE BASICS

Health Care – WA State now believes in equal access to quality affordable and accessible health care services for women and children.

Reproductive Rights – WA State NOW supports access for all women to the full range of reproductive services. WA State NOW will defend a woman's right to choose, opposing any attempts to weaken the current law as passed by Initiative 120.

Equal Protection Under the Law - WA State NOW supports efforts to end violence against women and their families, including sexual assault and domestic violence. WA State NOW supports equal protection for all regardless of their sexual orientation or the size of business that they work for.

Economic Equity – WA State NOW supports economic equity for all women, including but not limited to, access to affordable, quality childcare; paid family leave, equal pay for equal work, and a reasonable safety net for those who need it.

2002 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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.

Family Leave – 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.

Medicaid Waiver - Washington State's Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has prepared 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 safeguards to replace the federal protections.

Work-search Exemption for New Moms – 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.

Emergency Contraception in Emergency Rooms – WA State NOW supports legislation that requires all emergency rooms to proactively offer emergency contraception to victims of sexual as-

sault. 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.

Trafficking of Women and Children – 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.

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.