



Washington State National Organization for Women

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Legislative Update February 11, 2006

Legislative Hotline 1(800) 562-6000

Call to leave a message for your elected officials

Tuesday, February 14, 2006 at 5:00 PM is the last day to consider bills in their house of origin. In other words house bill (HB) or senate bills (SB) must have passed and have been sent to the opposite house from where they originated.

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

Call and leave a message for Speaker of the House Frank Chopp and ask that he bringing HB 2517 to the floor for a vote. We have the votes to pass this bill in the House but Speaker Chopp has some concerns. He needs to hear from you. As more and more residents of our state go without health care all of us, including big corporations, need to do their Fair Share in addressing the health care crisis.

Health Care

Establishing minimum labor standards for certain large employers as related to health care services expenditures (FAIR SHARE) – HB 2517 & SB 6356 SUPPORT

This bill would require that large employers (with 5000 or more employees) either provide adequate health insurance to their employees OR pay into a fund that would expand access to the state's Basic Health Plan

Status: HB 2517 is in the House Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full House for a vote.

SB 6356 is in the Senate Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

Action: Call and leave a message for Speaker of the House Frank Chopp and ask that he bringing HB 2517 to the floor for a vote.

Call your Representatives and Senators and ask them to support bringing the Fair Share bills, HB 2517 & SB 6356, to the floors of the House and Senate for votes. As more and more residents of our state go without health care all of us, including big corporations, need to do their Fair Share in addressing the health care crisis.

Granting the insurance commissioner the authority to review and approve individual health benefit plan rates – HB 2499 SUPPORT

This bill is part of the “Fair Share” package of health insurance bills. It would give the Insurance Commissioner the authority to review and approve individual health benefit plan rates.

Status: HB 2499 is in the House Rules Committee and has been referred to the floor of the House for a full vote by the Representatives.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Representatives and ask them to vote YES on HB 2499

Requiring health carriers to report certain information – HB 2500 & SB 6232 SUPPORT

This bill is part of the “Fair Share” package of health insurance bills. It requires that each health care coverage provider provide data annually to the insurance commissioner for 5 categories of recipients (total, individual

contracts, small group contracts, large group contracts, & government contracts). The insurance commissioner on a searchable web site will then make this data available to the public.

Status: HB 2500 has passed the House and is now in the Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee.

SB 6232 is now in the Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

Action:

Call and leave a message for your Senator and let them know that you support SB 6232

Requiring surveys of health professions work force supply and demographics. – SB 6193 SUPPORT

This bill is based on recommendations from the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities established by the 2004 legislature, which looked at disparate health impacts on persons of color, and to a lesser extent on women. The committee identified a need to develop a workforce that is representative of the diversity of our state's population. In order to accomplish this relevant and accurate data on health care professionals, students in health care professions, and recipients of health care services must first be collected. This bill has now been amended and requires a voluntary, confidential survey of health care providers to collect at a minimum data related to age, gender, race, ethnicity, area of practice, zip code of practice location, years in practice, and type of facility where a provider practices.

Status: SB 6193 is in the Senate Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senator and ask them to vote YES on SB 6193

Requiring multicultural education for health professions – SB 6194 SUPPORT

This bill was also based on recommendations from the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities. A multicultural health course would be required as part of basic education preparation for programs with a curriculum for training health professionals. Training in multi-cultural health would be included as part of continuing education programs required for health professionals.

Status: SB 6194 is in the Senate Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senator and ask them to vote YES on SB 6194

Requiring health impact assessments – SB 6195 SUPPORT

This bill was also based on recommendations from the Joint Select Committee on Health Disparities. This bill requires a systematic review a legislative or budgetary proposal or other public policy, program, or practice to determine the extent to which such proposal, policy, program, or practice improves or exacerbates health disparities. Such an assessment can be initiated by any member of the legislature or a member of Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities

Status: SB 6195 is in the Senate Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senators and let them know you support SB 6195.

Creating the governor's interagency coordinating council on health disparities – SB 6197 SUPPORT

This bill is related to SB 6195 and creates the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities. The Council must design an action plan to eliminate health disparities in Washington State by 2012 and present progress reports to the Legislature every two years beginning on January 15, 2008, until completion of the plan

in 2012.

Status: SB 6197 is in the Senate Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senators and let them know you support SB 6197.

Modifying basic health plan preexisting condition limitation requirements - HB 2455 MONITOR

If the Basic Health Care Plan rules include a pre-existing condition limitation, the rule must allow the enrollee to credit a period of continued participation in a community based program established to provide care for uninsured individuals.

Status: HB 2455 is Dead as it did not pass out of the Appropriations Committee by the cutoff deadline.

Action:

Regulating Body Piercing – HB 2335 MONITOR

This bill requires the Secretary of Health to establish sterilization and disease prevention standards for body art and body piercing procedures.

Status: SHB 2335 passed the House and is in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee.

Action:

Reproductive Rights

Insuring victims of crimes – HB2481 SUPPORT

HB 2481 is designed to try to protect businesses, such as the Olympia women’s clinic, from being unable to acquire reasonably priced liability insurance because they have been victimized by a crime, such as arson.

Status: HB 2481 passed the House on February 9. HB 2481 is now in the Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 16.

Action: Call and leave a message for you’re the Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee and ask them to pass HB 2481 out of committee.

Equal Protection Under the Law

Expand the jurisdiction of the state Human Rights Commission to cover lesbians, gays, bi-sexuals and transgender individuals – HB 2661

This bill would expand the jurisdiction the state Human Rights Commission to include discrimination due to an individual’s sexual orientation.

Status: HB 2661 has passed the house and the Senate and has been signed by Governor Christine Gregoire on January 31. The law is effective June 8, 2006.

Action: CELEBRATE! And leave a thank you message for **Senators** Berkey, Brown, Doumit, Eide, Fairley, Finkbeiner, Franklin, Fraser, Haugen, Jacobsen, Kastama, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McAuliffe, Poulsen, Prentice, Pridemore, Rasmussen, Regala, Rockefeller, Shin, Spanel, Thibaudeau, and Weinstein **AND Representatives** Appleton, Blake, Chase, Clibborn, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Dickerson, Dunshee, Eickmeyer, Ericks, Flannigan, Fromhold, Grant, Green, Haigh, Hankins, Hasegawa, Hudgins, Hunt, Hunter, Jarrett, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Kilmer, Kirby, Lantz, Linville, Lovick, McCoy, McDermott, McIntire, Miloscia, Moeller, Morrell, Morris, Murray, O'Brien, Ormsby, Pettigrew, Priest, Quall, Roberts, Santos, Schual-Berke, Sells, Shabro, Simpson, Sommers, Springer, Sullivan, B., Sullivan, P., Takko, Tom, Upthegrove, Wallace, Walsh, Williams, Wood, and Mr. Speaker. Also thank **Governor** Gregoire for signing HB 2661 into law.

Revising the privilege for sexual assault advocates - HB 2454 & SB 6479 SUPPORT

HB 2454 will clarify that the privileged communication between a sexual assault victim and her sexual assault program advocate is protected when the advocate is communicating with the victim NOT just when the victim is communicating to the advocate

Status: HB 2454 passed the House on February 10 and has been sent to the Senate.
SB 6479 passed out of the Senate on February 9 and is now in the House Judiciary Committee..

Action: Call and leave a message for the House Judiciary Committee and ask that they vote SB 6479 out of committee.

Extending retirement benefits to domestic partners – SB 6218 SUPPORT

This bill extends retirement benefits to domestic partners of the judiciary in Washington State.

Status: SB 6218 is dead, as it did not pass out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee by the February 6 deadline.

Action:

Creating sexual assault protection orders – HB 2576 & SB 6478 SUPPORT

This bill allows for a sexual assault protection order to be filed by a victim of sexual assault or on behalf of a minor child, vulnerable adult or any other adult who because of age, disability or health or inaccessibility cannot file for his or her own protection order. This would create a useable protection order for victims of stranger rape and would not require that the individual have been prosecuted.

Status: SHB 2576 has passed the House and is now in the Senate Judiciary Committee and is eligible for a public hearing.

SB 6478 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Judiciary Committee and is eligible for a public hearing.

Action: Call and leave a message for the Senate and House Judiciary Committees and ask that they pass the Sexual Assault Protection Order bill out of committee.

Prohibiting sellers of travel from promoting travel for sex tourism – SB 6731 SUPPORT

This bill establishes the crime of promoting travel for prostitution if the person knowingly sells or offers to sell travel services for sex tourism.

Status: SB 6731 is in the Senate Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full Senate for a vote.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senator and ask that they vote YES on SB 6731

Economic Equity

Modifying the Family and Medical Leave - SB 6185 & HB 2392 SUPPORT

This bill would re-institute a state law on family leave to insure our state can maintain a strong benefit, even if the federal administration follows through with their proposed rule changes that would make utilizing this unpaid leave benefit much more difficult. The original bills also expanded the number of employers covered by applying it to those who employ 25 or more (the current law covers only those with 50 or more employees). In addition, the bill extends the right to take unpaid family leave to domestic partners. The House & Senate bills have now been amended to cover employers with 50 or more employees and domestic partners have been

eliminated from eligibility for Family and Medical Leave.

Status: SB 6185 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Commerce & Labor Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 15.

HB 2392 is in the House Rules Committee for a second reading and can be sent to the full House for a vote.

Action: Leave a message for your Representatives and ask them to support and vote for HB 2392 Modifying the Family and Medical Leave Act. We need to have it passed and in law BEFORE the federal rule changes are made.

Providing Collective Bargaining for Family Child Care Providers – HB 2353 and SB 6165 SUPPORT

Declares that the purpose of this act is to improve access to and the quality of family childcare services. It also declares that in order to ensure that children receive the highest quality services from these providers, it is necessary to achieve and maintain a stable, well-trained work force. To accomplish these goals, this bill would allow family childcare providers and licensees to have a voice in the development of childcare assistance and other programs through collective bargaining.

Status: HB 2353 has passed the House and has been sent to the Senate.

SB 6165 has been passed the Senate and is now in the House.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Representatives and Senators and let them know you support passage of HB2353 and SB 6165.

Establishes the Department of Early Learning – HB 2964 SUPPORT

This bill consolidates all Early Learning Programs in the state of Washington into one Department. The Department's primary duties are to implement early learning policy, to coordinate, consolidate, and integrate child-care and early learning programs to promote an efficient use of funds, and to collaborate with the K-12 school system to improve transitions from pre-kindergarten environments to kindergarten.

Status: HB 2964 has passed the House and is now in the Senate Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education Committee

SB 6466 is Dead as it did not pass out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee by the Feb 7 deadline.

Action: Call and leave a message for the Senate Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education Committee and ask that they pass HB2964 out of committee..

Establishing work groups to periodically review and update the child support schedule – HB 2462 SUPPORT with some concerns

This bill requires that every four years starting in 2008 that the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee or other committee designated by the legislature shall review and report on the child support schedule. The bill also requires that the Division of Child Support convene a work group to examine current laws, administrative rules, & practices regarding child support.

NOW supports the every four-year review but has some concerns with the 2nd part of the bill as it goes much further than the federal requirement for the review of the schedule itself.

Status: HB 2462 is in the House Rules Committee and has been placed on a second reading and is eligible for a vote by the full House.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Representatives and let them know that you support the review of the child support schedule every 4 years as required in HB 2462 but that you also have concerns about the other requirements of the bill.

Family Law

Encouraging shared parental responsibility in child custody arrangements – SB 6270 OPPOSE

This bill encourages shared parental responsibility in child custody arrangements. It would create a presumption that shared parenting was in the best interest of the child, change factors that are currently weighted regarding historical care taking roles and set aside state dollars to create pilots.

Status: SB 6270 is DEAD, as it did not pass out of the Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee.

Action: Celebrate

Concerning visitation rights for grandparents – HB 2711 - CONCERNS

This bill creates an avenue for grandparents to seek visitation rights.

The state and national courts have been clear that the reasons for over ruling a parents rights in granting visitation to a third party must be based on compelling reasons (such as the person having acted in parental capacity and harm to the child if visitation is not granted) NOT just a particular legal relationship, such as grandparents

Status: HB 2711 is currently in the House Rules Committee and is eligible for a vote by the full House

Action: Call and leave a message for your Representatives and let them know that 2711 should be amended to provide avenues for all persons who can meet the Supreme Court standards to seek visitation (including same sex partners and other relatives!)