



# Washington State National Organization for Women

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## Legislative Update February 18, 2006

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

Call to leave a message for your elected officials

All bills must pass out of the policy committees in their opposite house (i.e.: House bills out of Senate policy committees and Senate bills out of House policy committees) by the end of the day, Friday, February 24<sup>th</sup>.

**Priority Message of the Week** (If you can only do one thing, do this!), Call your representative on the House Appropriations Committee and ask them to support the \$3 million dollars in the Senate budget that would keep the child safety net in place for those on public assistance and prevent in the imposition of full family sanctions!

House Appropriations Committee Members: Helen Sommers - Chair (D), Bill Fromhold - Vice Chair (D), Gary Alexander - Ranking Minority Member (R), Glenn Anderson - Asst Ranking Minority Member (R), Joyce McDonald - Asst Ranking Minority Member (R), Mike Armstrong (R), Barbara Bailey (R), David Buri (R), Bruce Chandler (R), Jim Clements (R), Eileen Cody (D), Steve Conway (D), Jeannie Darneille (D), Hans Dunshee (D), Bill Grant (D), Kathy Haigh (D), Bill Hinkle (R), Ross Hunter (D), Ruth Kagi (D), Phyllis Kenney (D), Lynn Kessler (D), Kelli Linville (D), Joe McDermott (D), Jim McIntire (D), Mark Miloscia (D), Kirk Pearson (R), Skip Priest (R), Shay Schual-Berke (D), Pat Sullivan (D), Gigi Talcott (R), and Maureen Walsh (R)

## Budget

### Budget

The Senate budget passed the Senate on Friday, February 17th and the House version of the 2006 supplemental budget is expected to be unveiled on Tuesday, February 21st.

**Status:** The Senate Budget has passed the Senate and is now in the House Appropriations Committee.

**Action:** Call your representative on the House Appropriations Committee and ask them to support the \$3 million dollars in the Senate budget that would keep the child safety net in place for those on public assistance and prevent in the imposition of full family sanctions!

## 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:** Both bills are DEAD, as they did not pass out of their house of origin by the February 14 deadline.

**Action:**

**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 DEAD as it did not pass out of the House by the February 14 deadline

**Action:**

**Establishing the small employer health insurance partnership program HB 2572 SUPPORT**

This bill is part of the “Fair Share” package of health insurance bills. This bill establishes a premium assistance program for small business through the Health Care Authority. The Department of Social and Health Services is directed to submit a request to the federal Department of Health and Human Services for a state Children's Health Insurance Program section 1115 demonstration waiver to seek authorization to draw down Washington's unspent state Children's Health Insurance Program allotment to finance Basic Health Plan coverage for parents of children enrolled in Medicaid or the state Children's Health Insurance Program.

**Status:** HB 2572 has passed the House and is in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee where it had a public hearing on February 16. HB 2572 is now eligible for an executive session to be passed out of committee.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the Senate Health Care and Long Term Care Committee and ask that they pass HB 2572 out of committee.

**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 and had a public hearing on Feb 16. The bill is now eligible for an executive session by the committee.

**SB 6232** has passed the Senate and is now in the House Health Care Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 21.

**Action:**

Call and leave a message for the Senate Health Care and Long Term Care Committee and ask that they pass HB 2500 out of committee.

Call and leave a message for the House Health Care Committee and tell them 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 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Health Care Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 21.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the House Health Care Committee and ask that they pass SB 6193 out of committee.

#### **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 multi-cultural 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 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Health Care Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 21.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the House Health Care Committee and ask that they pass SB 6194 out of committee.

#### **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 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Health Care Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 21.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the House Health Care Committee and ask that they pass SB 6195 out of committee.

#### **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 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Health Care Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 21.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the House Health Care Committee and ask that they pass SB 6197 out of committee.

#### **Regulating Body Piercing – HB 2335 SUPPORT WITH NO AMENDMENTS**

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 the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee where it had a public hearing on February 15. It is now eligible for an executive session.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee and tell them you support HB 2335 with no amendments.

### **Establishing an early detection breast and cervical cancer screening program – SB 5714 SUPPORT**

The Department of Health must administer a state-supported early detection breast and cervical cancer screening program to assist eligible women with preventative health services. Eligible women are defined as women aged 40-64, with income at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level.

The funding from the state must not be used to replace federally funded breast and cervical cancer early detection programs, but will be used to operate Department of Health approved programs or to increase access to existing state-approved programs.

**Status:** SB 5714 has passed the Senate and is in the House Health Care Committee where it had a public hearing on February 16. It is eligible for an executive session to be passed out of committee.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the House Health Care Committee and tell them you support SB 5714.

### **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 and is now in the Senate Financial Institutions, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee and had a public hearing on February 16. The bill is now eligible for an executive session to be passed out of committee

**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 and is in the Senate Judiciary Committee and is eligible for a public hearing.

SB 6479 passed out of the Senate & is in the House Judiciary Committee where it is eligible for a public hearing

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the Senate & House Judiciary Committee and ask that they vote HB 2454/SB 6479 out of committee.

### **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 had a public hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on February 17. SB 2576 is now eligible for an executive session

SB 6478 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Judiciary Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 20.

**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 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Commerce & Labor Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 22.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the House Commerce & Labor Committee and ask that they pass SB 6731 out of committee.

## **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 had a public hearing on February 15. SB 6185 is now eligible for an executive session to be passed out of committee.

HB 2392 is Dead, as it did not pass out of the House by the Feb 14 deadline.

**Action:** Leave a message for the House Commerce & Labor Committee and ask that they pass SB 6185 out of committee. 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 Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Committee and is scheduled for a public hearing on February 20.

SB 6165 is Dead, as it did not pass out of the Senate by the February 14 deadline.

**Action:** Call and leave a message the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research & Development Committee and let them know you support passage of HB 2353.

### **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 and had a public hearing on February 16. It is now scheduled for an executive session on February 20.

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the bill as it goes much further than the federal requirement for the review of the schedule itself.

**Status:** HB 2462 is Dead, as it did not pass the House by the Feb 14 deadline.

**Action:**

### **An act relating to studying the minimum wage in Washington State – SB 5551 OPPOSE**

This bill requires the Washington Institute for Public Policy to conduct a study to address the impact of the minimum wage and its annual increases

**Status:** SB 5551 has passed the Senate and is now in the House Commerce & Labor Committee where it had a public hearing on February 15.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the House Commerce & Labor Committee and tell them to NOT PASS SB 5551 out of committee.

### **Creating the opportunity grant program –HB 2630 SUPPORT**

This bill creates the opportunity grant fund to assist low income residents to go to two year and four year college or vocational/technical schools

**Status:** HB 2630 has passed the House and is now in the Senate Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education Committee where it had a public hearing on February 16. It is now eligible for an executive session to be passed out of committee.

**Action:** Call and leave a message for the Senate Early Learning, K-12 & Higher Education Committee and ask that they pass HB 2630 out of committee.

## Family Law

### 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 Dead, as it did not pass out of the House by the February 14 deadline.

**Action:**