



Washington State National Organization for Women

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Legislative Update February 26, 2006

Legislative Hotline 1(800) 562-6000

The legislative session ends on Thursday March 9, 2006. It is expected that the session will end one day early on Wednesday March 8.

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

Call your Senator and Representatives and let them know that you support the funding levels as proposed for the Basic Health Plan and Children's Health Insurance slots in the House version of the budget. This would add about 6500 slots to the Basic Health Plan and Children's Health Care program

Budget

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The Senate supplemental budget passed the Senate on Friday, February 17th. The House then amended the Senate version stripping the Senate's language and inserting the House's version of the budget. Now the two houses are negotiating the final version with plans to complete the session by Wednesday, March 8th.

The House budget has \$2 million for community sexual assault programs, compared to the Senate's \$1 million. Finally, the House added three million more for both BHP and Children's Health care slots.

Status: The supplemental budget is currently in negotiation between the Senate and the House.

Action: Call your Senator and Representatives and let them know that you support the funding levels as proposed for the Basic Health Plan and Children's Health Insurance slots in the House version of the budget. This would add about 6500 slots to the Basic Health Plan and Children's Health Care program

Health Care

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 Senate and has been returned to the House for concurrence on the amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Representatives to vote YES on HB 2572,

Requiring health carriers to report certain information – HB 2500 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 both the House and the Senate and has been sent to the governor for signature.

Action: Call and leave a message for Governor Christine Gregoire asking her to sign HB 2500.

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 the House. It has been sent back to the Senate for concurrence on amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senators and ask that they 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 has passed the Senate and the House. It has been sent back to the Senate for concurrence on amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senators and ask that they vote YES on SB 6194.

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 the House. It has been sent back to the Senate for concurrence on amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senators and ask that they vote YES on SB 6197

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 is DEAD, as it did not pass out of the Senate Ways & Means Committee by the Monday February 27 deadline.

Action:

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 the House. . It has been sent back to the Senate for concurrence on amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senators and ask that they vote YES on 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 the Senate. The House refused to concur on the Senate amendments and has asked the Senate to recede from their amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senator to vote YES on HB 2481

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!

Revising the privilege for sexual assault advocates - HB 2454 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 the Senate. It has been sent to the Governed for signature.

Action: Call and leave a message for Gov Gregoire asking that she sign HB 2454.

Creating sexual assault protection orders – HB 2576 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 the Senate. The House refused to concur on the Senate amendments and has asked the Senate to recede from their amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senator to vote YES on HB 2576.

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 the House. The bill has been sent back to the Senate for

concurrence on the House amendments.

Action: Call and leave a message for your Senators to vote YES on SB 6731.

Economic Equity

Modifying the Family and Medical Leave - SB 6185 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 the House. It has been sent to Governor Gregoire for signature.

Action: Call and leave a message for Governor Christine Gregoire and ask that she sign SB 6185

Providing Collective Bargaining for Family Child Care Providers – HB 2353 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 the Senate. It is being sent to the Governor for signature

Action: Call and leave a message for Governor Christine Gregoire and ask that she sign 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 the Senate. It is being sent to the Governor for signature.

Action: Call and leave a message for Governor Christine Gregoire and ask that she sign HB 2964.

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 is DEAD, as it did not pass out of the Senate by the March 3rd deadline.

Action: