



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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321 16th Ave S, Seattle, WA 98144 — 906 Columbia St SW, Olympia, WA 98501 — 360-943-0608



Bills about fairness, family need votes

Status report on working-family bills

Tomorrow, March 8, is International Women's Day. It's also the Washington State Legislature's cutoff deadline for policy bills to pass their houses of origin. That makes it a great time to call your state legislators at 1-800-562-6000 and leave a message for them to vote "yes" on these bills that discourage discriminatory pay and provide paid family and medical leave:

EQUAL PAY OPPORTUNITY ACT—HB 1506 (prime sponsor: Rep. Tana Senn) addressing income disparities by prohibiting pay secrecy policies, allowing discussion of wages and prohibiting retaliation for asking for equal pay. Passed both the Labor and Appropriations committees, pulled from Rules and available for a floor vote.

EQUAL PAY: SALARY HISTORY—HB 1533 (Rep. Laurie Dolan) prohibiting employers from seeking job applicants wage and salary history or requiring that the wage or salary meet certain criteria. Passed Labor committee, now in Rules.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE—HB 1116 (Rep. June Robinson) implements a Family and Medical Leave Insurance program, employer and employee funded, offering up to \$1,000/week for up to 26 weeks for the birth or adoption of a child, for a family member's serious health condition or for leave needed for a military reason. Passed both Labor and Appropriations committees, now in Rules.

Here's a status report on some key working family bills. This is not a comprehensive list. There are many other bills upon which the Washington State Labor Council has taken a position. These updates are on bills previously described in this newsletter and at The Stand.

Bills SUPPORTED by the WSLC

APPRENTICESHIP UTILIZATION—HB 1849 (Rep. Mike Sells) strengthening compliance with existing apprenticeship utilization standards. Passed House 51-47, now in Senate Transportation Committee.



COLLEGE FACULTY PAY—HB 1237 (Rep. Mike Sells) allowing full-scope collective bargaining so colleges can use local funds in negotiating faculty/staff wages. Passed House 65-32, now in Senate Labor.

CONTRACEPTIVE HEALTH—SHB 1234 (Rep. June Robinson) require insurance carriers to provide a full year's supply of birth control at a time; 12 months of contraception will improve women's health and birth outcomes by preventing unintended pregnancies. Both House 93-5, now in Senate Health Care.

ELECTRICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT—SHB 1952 (Rep. Brian Blake) improving enforcement of state electrical laws. Passed House 97-0, now in Senate Labor.

NURSE MEAL & REST BREAKS—HB 1715 (Rep. Marcus Riccelli) would require that nurses be provided with uninterrupted meal and rest breaks, and says an employer may not require intermittent meal or rest periods. It would also close the mandatory overtime loophole by clarifying that employers may not use prescheduled on-call time to fill chronic or foreseeable vacancies due to staff shortages. Passed House 55-42.

OUTSOURCING ACCOUNTABILITY—SHB 1851 (Rep. Laurie Dolan), the Taxpayer Protection Act, protecting taxpayers by providing accountability and transparency in government

(SEE REVERSE)



contracting. Passed State Government and Transportation committees, pulled from Rules and available for a floor vote.

PRESCRIPTION DRUG TRANSPARENCY—2SHB 1541 (Rep. June Robinson) addresses the ongoing barriers and increasing cost of certain prescription drugs by improving regulation, transparency and accountability on prescription drug pricing. Passed House 52-46.

WAGE THEFT: DAMAGES—HB 1302 (Rep. Noel Frame) discouraging wage theft by increasing civil liabilities for employers guilty of illegally withholding pay. Passed Labor committee, now in Rules.

WAGE THEFT: RECOVERY—SHB 1486 (Rep. Mia Gregerson) creating a statutory wage lien for claims on unpaid wages. Passed both Labor and Appropriations committees, now in Rules.

WASHINGTON FILMWORKS—SB 5502 (Sen. Randi Becker) reinstating the Motion Picture Competitiveness Program tax incentive to encourage filmmaking in our state and attract a wide range of associated jobs and economic investment. Passed Economic Development committee, and is now in Ways & Means. (Companion HB 1527 is in the Finance committee.) These bills are not dead because they are considered necessary to implement the budget, and are therefore exempt from cutoff.

WASHINGTON VOTING RIGHTS ACT—HB 1800 (Rep. Mia Gregerson) empowers local governments to avoid costly litigation by creating a collaborative process to ensure fair elections, that every vote is protected, and that every community is fairly represented. Passed House 51-46, now in Senate State Government.

WORK SAFETY FINE CLARIFICATION—HB 1953 (Rep. Laurie Dolan) making sure state WISHA fines for work safety violations are in conformance with federal OSHA penalties. Passed Labor committee, now in Rules.

WORKERS' COMP: HANFORD—SHB 1723 (Rep. Larry Haler) would remove barriers that prevent seriously ill Hanford workers from getting workers' compensation benefits. Passed House 69-29, now in Senate Labor.

Bills OPPOSED by the WSLC

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RESTRICTIONS—SB 5726 (Sen. Steve Hobbs) would remove health benefits from the scope of collective bargaining for local K-12 school employees. Instead, school employees would be given token representatives on a statewide board that would purchase and provide benefits, and dictate point-of-service cost-sharing levels and premium costs for districts and employees. Passed Ways & Means, now in Rules.

FARMWORKER WAGE THEFT—SB 5720 (Sen. Brad Hawkins) creates a new "production-based safe harbor" for growers by which they can avoid liability for unpaid wages for rest breaks as ordered by a state Supreme Court decision. It would also allow employers to avoid responsibility for payment of wages for work performed outside production. Passed Senate 28-18, now in House Labor.

HIGHER EDUCATION CONTRACTING OUT—SB 5550 (Sen. Dino Rossi) opening a number of state services at institutions of higher education to contracting out/privatization. Passed both the Labor and Ways & Means committees, now in Rules.

RELIGIOUS OBJECTORS—SB 5339 (Sen. Dino Rossi) allows public employees who are "religious objectors" to unionization to control which charity receives their dues equivalent, rather than the current practice of agreeing on a charity with their union. It also broadly expands the list of "charities" to include quasi-political groups like the Freedom Foundation. Passed Health Care and Appropriations committees, now in Rules.

SILENCING STATE EMPLOYEES—SB 5533 (Sen. Dino Rossi) prohibiting state employee unions from making contributions to incumbent candidates for governor, with whom they collectively bargain. Passed both the Labor and Ways & Means committees, now in Rules.

UNDERMINING I-1433—SB 5530 (Sen. Michael Baumgartner) would cut the state's \$11 minimum hourly wage back to \$9.53 and deny workers the opportunity to earn paid sick leave in every county except King County. It would be as if I-1433 was never approved in the rest of Washington. Passed Labor committee, now in Rules.

UNDERMINING I-1433: NONPROFITS—SB 5532 (Sen. Michael Baumgartner) excluding all nonprofits from I-1433's minimum wage and sick leave provisions, exempting over 50,000 corporations and hundreds of thousands of workers at some of Washington's biggest employers like Providence and MultiCare health facilities. Passed Labor committee, now in Rules.

UNDERMINING I-1433: TEEN WAGES—SB 5541 (Sen. Michael Baumgartner) allowing employers to pay 85 percent of the minimum wage to 16- and 17-year-olds. Passed Labor committee, now in Rules.

UNDERMINING STATE EMPLOYEE UNIONS—SB 5551 (Sen. Dino Rossi) requiring members of state employee unions to vote on reauthorizing the union every four years. Passed Labor and Ways & Means committees, now in Rules.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION—SB 5822 (Sen. Michael Baumgartner) is a Christmas list of benefit cuts, eligibility restrictions, and erosions of our state's workers' compensation safety net for injured workers and their families. Passed the Labor committee, now in Rules.

Stay tuned to TheStand.org for details on these and other bills.