

**WSSC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
BUDGET**

PRINCIPLES

Scripture and Catholic social teaching form the basis for our understanding of the role and responsibility of government. ... Some things are best addressed by individuals, families, churches and charities; but when problems such as homelessness, hunger, drug addiction and mental illness are common to every community, it is a just and reasonable expectation that society will act cooperatively to address these problems. WSSC, Who Is My Neighbor? The Face of Poverty in Washington State, November 17, 2016

In order to truly serve the common good, Washington State revenue policies must consider the impact of the current tax structure on individuals, families, small businesses and corporations in order to create an economic environment that promotes and supports the creation of jobs, living wages and state revenues sufficient to support essential services for poor and vulnerable people. WSSC, Seeking the Common Good, Fall 2015

In the 2017 session of the legislature, lawmakers must adopt a balanced budget for 2017-2019. This must be accomplished with a Republican controlled Senate, a 50-49 Democratic majority in the House of Representatives, and a Democratic Governor. They will start the budget-making process with a maintenance-level deficit close to \$1 billion.

In addition to an estimated carry-forward deficit, the 2018 *McCleary* deadline will require an additional \$1.5-4 billion to meet the constitutional requirement to fully fund basic education. Other court cases require additional funding for beds to treat persons with mental illness, improved competency evaluation and restoration services for individuals charged with a crime and detained in city and county jails. There is also population growth, caseload increases, and decreasing federal funds for health care.

Without adequate revenue, advocates will need to work to preserve current safety net programs at the present level of funding. Maintaining funding for essential social services will be the top priority for WSSC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSSC SUPPORTS:

- Providing adequate revenue to support “safety net” programs
- Establishing new revenue sources if the State is not able to address the needs of people in poverty through existing resources
- Creating a just tax structure

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**WSSC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
AGING AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

PRINCIPLES

...the Holy Father encourages all of you to let the light of that glory shine so brightly that everyone may come to recognize the inestimable value of all human life. Even the weakest and most vulnerable, the sick, the old, the

unborn and the poor, are masterpieces of God's creation, made in his own image, destined to live forever, and deserving of the utmost reverence and respect. - Pope Francis, Day of Life Message, 2013

HOME CARE: Seniors and people with disabilities need appropriate high quality supportive services in the setting that best meets their needs. It is estimated that in the U.S. there are currently more than 9 million seniors and people with disabilities who need long term care. Most are cared for at home by family and other loved ones. Approximately 30 percent need supportive services provided by others. These services are provided to people who have chronic illnesses and are designed to help meet health and personal needs. All Catholic Charities agencies in Washington State provide a variety of in-home care services in partnership with the state.

Providing seniors and people with disabilities the choice of home care and community-based services saves public dollars by avoiding nursing home placement. The state needs high quality community partners, like Catholic Charities agencies who recruit, train and supervise home care workers. WSCC will work to retain access to home care services.

INCREASING ELDERLY POPULATION: The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that the nation's 65-and-older population is projected to reach 83.7 million in the year 2050, almost double in size from the 2012 level of 43.1 million. A large part of this growth is due to the aging of baby boomers and the increase in life expectancy. The increase is expected to strain social service budgets and the health care system. To assure that the human dignity of the elderly is respected and protected, policies and programs that prevent elder abuse and financial exploitation will need to be strengthened. Just as important, the legislature will need to provide adequate resources to protect vulnerable adults by meeting their long-term care needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Maintaining home care programs and services
- Funding for volunteer services
- Protecting seniors and vulnerable persons

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WSCC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

PRINCIPLES

Parents—the first and most important educators—have a fundamental right to choose the education best suited to the needs of their children, including public, private, and religious schools. Government, through such means as tax credits and publicly funded scholarships, should help provide resources for parents, especially those of modest means, to exercise this basic right without discrimination. Students in all educational settings should have opportunities for moral and character formation consistent with the beliefs and responsibilities of their parents.

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2015

SAFE ENVIRONMENT: State law requires adults in the education system to report suspected abuse. Evidence-based prevention programs could be integrated into existing curricula, and many schools have integrated a prevention curriculum. WSCC supports legislation that requires effective, age-appropriate education programs on prevention of child abuse for all public and private school students.

EARLY LEARNING AND CARE: Catholic Schools and Catholic Charities provide an array of early learning and care programs, including birth-to-five programs, pre-school, and before and after school programs. State efforts are underway to implement the Early Start program for all eligible children. These efforts include addressing workforce shortages and the lack of available facilities, as well as increasing subsidies for families in need.

HEALTHY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: Children who are homeless experience significant impediments to learning. Recent data from public schools has indicated that there are more than 30,000 homeless students statewide. Childhood hunger is also a serious obstacle to learning, and in a recent survey three out of five teachers said that they have children who regularly come to school hungry. Policy changes and additional funding will be needed to enable children to have a healthy learning environment.

PARENTAL CHOICE: “Parents – the first and most important educators – have a fundamental right to choose the education best suited to the needs of their children...” (Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship). Almost a century ago, the United States Supreme Court recognized that, “Parents... direct the upbringing and education of their children.” At this time in our Nation’s history, parental choice also called “school choice” is an issue of justice. “School choice” in its various forms ensures that all parents, including those with limited income, can direct the education of their children. WSCC is committed to working in partnership with others to secure greater educational opportunity for all children in Washington State.

SCHOOL SAFETY: There have been a number of highly public tragedies in schools across the nation that focus attention on the vulnerability of students and schools. Several years ago, the Washington Legislature enacted legislation stating that it was a matter of public safety for public schools and staff to have current safe school plans and procedures in place, fully consistent with federal law. Being consistent with federal law allows school districts to be eligible for federal assistance. The law requires each school district to adopt and implement a safe school plan. Public school districts were to work with first responders to build a mapping information system. Funding was provided to begin this process, but it has never been concluded. Unfortunately, private schools were never included. WSCC will work to secure funding for comprehensive safety plans for all schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Funding child abuse prevention education programs for all students in K-12 schools
- Ensuring eligible children access to quality early learning programs
- Securing housing for homeless students and their families
- Improving access to meals in school settings
- Providing opportunities to enhance parental choice in education
- Providing funding for comprehensive safety plans for all schools

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WSCC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

PRINCIPLES

The “home” represents the most precious human treasures, that of encounter, that of relations among people, different in age, culture and history, but who live together and together help one another to grow. For this reason, the “home” is a crucial place in life, where life grows and can be fulfilled, because it is a place in which every

person learns to receive love and to give love. Pope Francis, address during visit at the homeless shelter, Dono Di Maria, 2013

CHILD WELFARE: Children’s services provided by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) are designed to protect children and assist families whose children are in danger of entering the child welfare system (foster care). The goals of the system are to ensure that children are placed in safe and stable foster homes or to work with families to create an environment that allows the children to remain safely in their own homes. The WSCC will work with Catholic Charities staff and other advocates to ensure the goals of stable placements and access to services are met.

BEHAVIOR REHABILITATION SERVICES: Behavior Rehabilitation Services (BRS) is an intensive support and treatment program for youth with extremely high-level needs. Catholic Community Services (CCS) is a major provider of these services. The services are provided in an array of settings and are intended to keep youth safely in their own homes with wraparound supports to the family or to secure an alternative permanent placement. The desired outcomes are to increase the child’s behavioral, school and placement stability. Presently, BRS funding does not meet the need as the number of eligible children and youth has increased. The result is higher rates of hospitalization or inadequate placements.

ACCESS TO REPRESENTATION: Within 72 hours after a child is removed from their home, a judge decides whether the child will return home or enter foster care. The judge will hear only from attorneys representing the state case workers and the parents. Under current Washington law, many children are made to wait for representation until after termination of their parents’ rights. The National Conference of State Legislatures noted that providing foster children with attorneys is an evidence-based practice because it dramatically shortens the time a child spends in foster care, with the likelihood the child will return to the biological family.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Improving the child welfare system
- Establishing increases for BRS services for all eligible youth
- Providing access to legal representation for children removed from their homes

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WSCC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES CRIMINAL JUSTICE

PRINCIPLES

An ethic of responsibility, rehabilitation, and restoration should be a foundation for the reform of our broken criminal justice system. A humane and remedial rather than a strictly punitive approach to offenders should be developed. - Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2015

LEGAL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS: In Washington State, nearly all people convicted of a crime receive at sentencing notice of their Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs). These obligations include the fees, fines, costs, and restitution imposed by the court. Upon completion of their sentence, the court-imposed debt often presents a formidable barrier to persons integrating successfully back into their communities; 80-90 percent of whom are

indigent. Washington has a 12 percent interest rate and added surcharges can result in an insurmountable debt. Arrest warrants can also be issued simply because a person is unable to pay the LFO. WSCC will work to achieve reforms in the LFO program.

FAIR CHANCE ACT: Most job applications will post two questions regarding past criminal history: Have you ever been arrested and have you ever been convicted of a crime? Affirmative answers to these questions may cause the hiring body to reject the applicant. Studies have shown that gainful employment greatly reduces the likelihood of someone re-offending. Eliminating these questions on the application while maintaining the right of potential employers to conduct background checks and ask questions about criminal history will provide more opportunity to be considered for employment of those who have been arrested, but not convicted as well as those who have completed their sentences.

ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS TO INCARCERATION: When persons with drug or alcohol addictions or a mental illness are incarcerated, they often do not receive adequate treatment. Several counties have instituted drug and mental health courts with positive results. These and other alternative programs have proven to be cost effective. Advocates will work to expand the number of alternative courts.

LOW-LEVEL OFFENDERS: A variety of factors, including enhanced sentences, have caused our state's jail and prison population to more than triple since 1980. Under-age offenders and low-level offenders who pose a low risk of reoffending would benefit from alternatives to incarceration. In addition the state could cut incarceration costs by improving early release programs, granting judges greater discretion at sentencing, and expanding community supervision. Not only would such efforts cut costs, they would also reduce chances of people reoffending by integrating them more effectively into society. WSCC supports taking responsible steps to provide alternatives for low-level offenders.

SENTENCING YOUTH IN ADULT CRIMINAL COURT: In certain circumstances, state law requires youth to be tried in adult courts. The adult criminal court would have exclusive jurisdiction over a juvenile when the juvenile is 16 or 17 years of age on the date of the alleged serious violent crime. When sentencing an offender under adult court jurisdiction for a crime committed as a minor, the court has the discretion to impose an exceptional sentence below the standard range based on a consideration of the youth's age, sophistication, and role in the crime. WSCC supports legislation to give courts this discretion.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING – VACATING CONVICTIONS OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS: WSCC supports legislation that allows persons who are forced into prostitution via human trafficking or coercion to be able to vacate their prostitution convictions if they can prove they are a victim of trafficking. If the victim has a criminal conviction, they are not allowed to have the prostitution conviction vacated.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING – TRAINING: A minimum training to recognize human trafficking for persons who work in any establishment that requires a liquor license or an establishment that has adult entertainment may help reduce human trafficking. WSCC supports legislation that requires this on-line training for workers provided at no cost to them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Reforming the system of legal financial obligations
- Improving opportunities for former offenders to obtain employment
- Expanding alternatives to incarceration for those with underlying conditions that require treatment
- Providing alternatives to incarceration for underage and low-level offenders and alternatives to reduce incarceration for eligible low-level offenders
- Strengthening laws to protect and support victims of human trafficking

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WSSC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES ECONOMIC JUSTICE

PRINCIPLES

We gratefully acknowledge the programs and services in the State of Washington designed to reduce poverty, alleviate suffering and ensure basic human rights for those living in poverty. It is unfortunately true, however, that when revenue collections fall short, these essential lifelines are among the first to be reduced or eliminated. ... the plight of those living in poverty in our state is reaching crisis proportions. WSSC, Who Is My Neighbor? The Face of Poverty in Washington State, November 17, 2016

POVERTY REDUCTION: Despite a booming economy in some parts of our state, many Washingtonians continue to struggle to make ends meet. Over 850,000, approximately 1 in 8 Washington residents, suffer from poverty. For children, the situation is worse – close to 1 in 5 are in poverty. Over the last few years, the number of households with children that receive food stamps has increased by 50,000 to a total of 182,000. WSSC advocates for programs that will assist families to support themselves.

TANF: In Washington State, more than twelve percent of people live below the federal poverty level (over 850,000). More families are seeking shelter, lining up at local food banks, and requesting assistance to meet needs; e.g. clothing, medicine, health care and utilities. Persons who rely on public support, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), fear cuts in their grants or losing vital services like child care. While some TANF funding has been restored, TANF benefits are only 31 percent of the poverty level – in 1996 they were approximately 50 percent of the poverty level. Increasing TANF grants and services will be a high priority for WSSC.

TRAINING FOR TANF RECIPIENTS: The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, known as WorkFirst in Washington State, provides eligible adults various forms of assistance while they participate in activities that will help them connect to the workforce. Some of these activities include unsubsidized and subsidized paid employment, internships, on-the-job training, job search, and vocational educational training. Many vocational education programs require two years of training before the participant is able to earn a certificate of completion. Under current law, a WorkFirst participant's vocational educational training may not exceed 12 months. WSSC supports increasing the amount of vocational training from 12 to 24 months for recipients of WorkFirst/TANF.

TANF ASSET LIMIT: States have discretion in setting or eliminating asset limits for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). Eight states have eliminated TANF asset limits entirely with no significant increase in caseloads. The existence of an asset limit, no matter how high, sends a signal to program applicants and participants that they should not save or build assets. Washington State has set an asset limit of \$3,000 for TANF recipients; although they are allowed one vehicle if it is worth less than \$5,000. With increases in the average value of vehicles, some people cannot qualify for TANF benefits because their car is valued above the asset limit. WSSC supports Washington State eliminating all asset limits for TANF benefits.

HOUSING AND ESSENTIAL NEEDS: The Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) program provides essential needs like rent and utility assistance, personal health and hygiene items, cleaning supplies, and transportation, to persons who are homeless or are at substantial risk of homelessness. HEN is the only safety net available for many disabled needy adults. Catholic Community Services administers the HEN program in King and Kitsap Counties. Despite some increased funding, the program has not been restored to former levels, nor were previous eligibility levels restored. To serve this vulnerable population, WSSC will work to enhance eligibility and increase HEN funding.

HUNGER: Hunger programs such as the Emergency Food Assistance Program, the Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program, and school meal programs provide access to food for struggling families. Increasing numbers of people are coming to food banks and free meal programs. Approximately 5 percent of people in Washington State (over 350,000) experience hunger. Food insecurity, defined as families who are financially stretched to a point where they cannot be certain all household members will not go hungry, impacts 1 in 7 Washingtonians. Advocates will work to protect eligibility and increase funding for food assistance programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSSC SUPPORTS:

- Reducing the number of people living in poverty
- Increasing TANF Grants
- Expanding training for WorkFirst participants
- Eliminating TANF asset limit
- Expanding “safety net” programs for vulnerable persons
- Increasing food assistance programs

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**WSSC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES
ENVIRONMENT**

PRINCIPLES

Creation is not a property, which we can rule over at will; or, even less, is the property of only a few: Creation is a gift, it is a wonderful gift that God has given us, so that we care for it and we use it for the benefit of all, always with great respect and gratitude. If we are called to be good stewards of what we cannot own, surely we should also be of our own wealth. – Pope Francis, 2014

LIVEABLE ENVIRONMENT: There are five refineries in the Puget Sound area, which have been refining Alaska crude oil for decades. Recently, new fracking technology for recovering oil from deep beneath the surface has produced oil from the Bakken formation from North Dakota. The shipment of this highly explosive oil has substantially increased in Washington State over the last two years to over 200,000 barrels of oil per day and could more than quadruple by 2020, if proposed projects are completed. At the same time, the state’s refineries are being retrofitted to accept thick crude from the tar sands of Alberta. Legislation on oil transportation safety passed in 2015 that will require public disclosure of the volume and type of oil, oil spills, and other critical data for first responders. The public will have access to this information through a new website in 2017. The bill was changed, and all oil spill prevention measures for Puget Sound were removed. There is also considerable concern about the adequacy of responding to an oil spill from a train derailment, or from barges. WSSC supports oil safety regulations.

CARBON EMISSIONS: Our climate and atmosphere are global common goods – as such, they belong to everyone. The best available information clearly points to the dangers of climate change caused in large part by the emissions of greenhouse gases (e.g., carbon dioxide). Because of the long duration of these gases in the atmosphere, “[t]here is an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next few years, the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced ...” (Pope Francis, *Laudato Si*). WSSC advocates for phasing out fossil fuel emissions and reducing carbon emissions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSSC SUPPORTS:

- Promoting a safe environment for oil transport
- Reducing carbon emissions

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WSSC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES HEALTH CARE

PRINCIPLES

Affordable and accessible health care is an essential safeguard of human life and a fundamental human right. ... The nation's health care system needs to be rooted in values that respect human dignity, protect human life, respect the principle of subsidiarity, and meet the needs of the poor and uninsured, especially born and unborn children, pregnant women, immigrants, and other vulnerable populations.

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2015

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE: The federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) was enacted in 2010 to increase access to health care coverage. To implement the ACA, the public-private Washington Health Benefit Exchange was established to create a health insurance marketplace for individuals and small businesses. The result has been a decrease in the number of uninsured persons and a 30 percent decrease in hospital charity care. However, approximately ten percent of Washingtonians remain uninsured, and over thousands of people lost health coverage due to their failure to pay premiums. Advocates will work to ensure access to maternity support services and a federal Basic Health Plan to assist ACA ineligible people to gain access to health care.

The ACA also requires all insurance companies to provide coverage of contraceptives, abortifacients, and sterilization at no cost to the insured person. The rules provide narrow conscience clauses. The WSSC will work to ensure adequate conscience protections in state law.

ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE: In 2014, Washington's Medicaid program resumed covering dental care for adults. However, there are long waits to get authorization for dental procedures, in some instances as long as six months. There is also a significant need to increase reimbursement rates so that more dentists will accept Medicaid patients. WSSC supports making significant investments in dental care for people in poverty.

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE: Washington State's Mental Health Parity Act requires all health plans that include medical and surgical services to also cover mental health services. Copays, cost-sharing and prescription drug coverage limits apply to all services, including mental health. Unfortunately, many people suffering from mental illness continue to experience dangerous gaps in coverage and care.

HEALTH INTEGRATION: One of the goals of health care reform is to fully integrate mental health, chemical dependency treatment, and physical health by 2020. This integration of services is called Behavioral Health. Efforts will be needed to increase and improve the work force in these areas. WSSC is actively involved in the integration process.

MEDICAID TRANSFORMATION: Washington State applied for a Medicaid waiver to initiate creative projects that would enhance the health of vulnerable Washington citizens. The waiver was granted, and the state could receive \$1.5 billion over five years, if performance standards are met. The long-term goal is to establish the projects

as permanently reimbursable Medicaid benefits. Two of the projects includes the creation of: (1) housing transition services that provide direct support to help individuals obtain housing, and (2) housing tenancy sustaining services that help individuals maintain their housing. In addition to these supportive housing services, there is also a targeted supported employment Medicaid benefit.

PRICE OF PHARMACEUTICALS: A health plan offering coverage to individuals or small groups is required, under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), to cover ten categories of essential health benefits, one of which is prescription drugs. To comply with the ACA's prescription drug coverage requirement, an issuer must cover prescription drugs in a manner substantially equal to a benchmark plan selected by the state. WSCC supports legislation to enable individuals to access affordable prescription drugs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Providing access to health care for all, including access to mental health services, dental services and affordable prescription drugs
- Providing health care services, including maternity support services and basic health care for adults, children and immigrant families
- Ensuring conscience protections in health plans
- Ensuring behavioral health integration that meets the needs of patients
- Creating services as a Medicaid benefit for homeless persons or persons at risk of homelessness

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WSCC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES HOUSING

PRINCIPLES

The lack of safe, affordable housing requires a renewed commitment to increase the supply of quality housing and to preserve, maintain, and improve existing housing through public/private partnerships, especially with religious groups and community organizations. - Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB, 2015

HOUSING TRUST FUND: The Housing Trust Fund (HTF) is a part of the state's capital budget. It assists low-income families and individuals acquire housing by providing funds to enable organizations like Catholic Charities and Mercy Housing to build affordable housing. Over the thirty years the HTF has been in existence, 47,000 housing units have been developed. Unfortunately, many people remain homeless as the supply of affordable housing fails to keep pace with the demand. Advocates will seek \$200 million for the HTF in the 2017-2019 capital budget, to develop more than 5,000 additional units of affordable housing.

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SERVICES BENEFIT: Persons who struggle with homelessness may have significant challenges that impede their ability to maintain stable housing. Supportive housing that combines affordable housing with services that help residents has been shown to be a successful way to prevent further homelessness and provide housing stability. Catholic housing knows the importance of combining housing and wrap-around services, and has been successful at piecing together funding sources to sustain the programs. WSCC continues to support efforts to make Medicaid available as a way to improve health care by creating housing stability.

TENANT BACKGROUND CHECKS: The Residential Landlord-Tenant Act (RLTA) regulates the rights and duties of landlords and tenants in residential rental housing. Under the RLTA, landlords may screen and evaluate potential tenants either by conducting their own searches of public records or by using companies that provide consumer reports for use in tenant screening. Currently, applicants for rental units may have to pay for a new background check each time they apply for housing. WSCC supports enabling tenants to grant landlords access to a completed screening report online. This portability provides landlords with the information they need while making the search for new housing more affordable to tenants.

DOCUMENT RECORDING FEE: Document recording fees are the major funding source for state and local homeless services. The funds are generated by a fee when real estate related documents are filed. Of this fee, \$40 provides critical resources for local homeless housing and assistance. Most of the recording fee reserved for housing is scheduled to sunset in 2019. As a result, 22,000 people could be thrown into homelessness. WSCC supports increasing the document recording fee, and eliminating or extending the sunset.

SOURCE OF INCOME DISCRIMINATION: In a home search many individuals and families face discrimination by landlords unwilling to rent to Section 8 voucher holders. Seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities receiving government or nonprofit subsidies face similar discrimination. WSCC supports legislation to prohibit refusing to lease or rent to an eligible person based on their source of income.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Increasing funding for the Housing Trust Fund
- Establishing a Medicaid supportive housing services benefit
- Encouraging online screening of potential tenants
- Increasing the document recording fee and eliminating the sunset
- Prohibiting discrimination based on a renters source of income

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WSCC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES LIFE ISSUES

PRINCIPLES

The direct and intentional destruction of innocent human life from the moment of conception until natural death is always wrong and is not just one issue among many. It must always be opposed. ... Racism and other unjust discrimination, the use of the death penalty, resorting to unjust war, the use of torture, war crimes, the failure to respond to those who are suffering from hunger or a lack of health care ... are all serious moral issues that challenge our consciences and require us to act. - Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, 2015

ABORTION: Legislation has been introduced, but not adopted, to mandate that all state-regulated health care plans include coverage for abortions. Though legal, the federal government prohibits use of federal funds for abortion; however, Washington State does provide funding for low-income women to procure abortions. WSCC opposes mandating all state health care plans to provide abortion coverage.

PARENTAL NOTIFICATION: Most medical procedures for minors require parental consent, recognizing that those under the age of 18 need the support and assistance of their parents. However, state law does not require parental consent or even parental notification before most minor girls obtain an abortion. The U.S. Supreme Court has generally upheld the constitutionality of parental notification statutes under the First and Fourteenth

Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, as long as they include judicial bypass provisions sufficient to protect the minor's rights. WSCC supports parental notification legislation.

FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE: State policy makers have not included adequate conscience clauses in state law. Conscience clauses allow individuals and organizations when receiving or providing services to honor their consciences. WSCC will continue to promote conscience clauses that respect freedom of conscience.

DEATH PENALTY: The application of the death penalty is deeply flawed and biased by factors such as race, economics, the quality of legal representation, and where the crime was committed. States are re-examining the death penalty – its fairness, effectiveness, and social and moral dimensions. There are now 19 states without the death penalty and Washington is one of four states in which the governor has placed a moratorium on executions. WSCC and advocates will continue to support legislation that abolishes the death penalty.

NEWBORN SAFE SURRENDER: In 2002, the Safety of Newborn Children Act was enacted offering a safe place to confidentially leave a newborn child. A parent within 72 hours of a child's birth can transfer the baby to a qualified person at a hospital, fire station, or federally designated rural health clinic, and do so anonymously without fear of criminal prosecution for abandoning the child. In 2014, King County created a Task Force to examine ways to improve the implementation of the Act. One of the Task Force's recommendations was to develop protocols with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for annually reviewing data on newborns relinquished under the Safety of Newborns Act. WSCC supports legislation to require DSHS to collect and compile this information

ASSISTED SUICIDE: In 2008, voters legalized assisted suicide by passing Initiative 1000. While WSCC opposes assisted suicide, it is unlikely to be overturned by the legislature. Vulnerable and ill people have requested the lethal drugs in our state and some individuals have used them. Because the law does not provide for ways to protect individuals against many abuses, efforts will be made to establish safeguards to protect vulnerable persons at the end of life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC SUPPORTS:

- Requiring parental notification for abortions performed on minors
- Enacting conscience clauses
- Abolishing the death penalty
- Collecting information on newborns relinquished under the Safety of Newborns Act
- Establishing safeguards to protect vulnerable persons at the end of life

WSCC OPPOSES:

- Mandating abortion coverage in all health care plans

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WSCC 2017 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES MISCELLANEOUS

COMPLIANCE WITH REAL ID ACT: The REAL ID Act established minimum security standards for state-issued driver's licenses and identification cards and prohibits federal agencies from accepting for official purposes licenses and identification cards from states that do not meet these standards. In October 2015, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) notified Washington State that DHS would not grant another extension that allowed

the state more time to comply with the standards. Beginning on January 30, 2017, DHS will require Washington residents to present an enhanced ID or a regular ID and passport to access secure federal facilities. Starting January 22, 2018, DHS will require Washington residents to present an enhanced ID or a regular ID and passport to board a domestic flight. Legislation may be introduced in the 2017 session that would require the state to comply with the federal law. Because the REAL ID Act has significant implications for undocumented immigrants, WSCC will oppose bills that negatively impact undocumented immigrants.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WSCC OPPOSES:

- Restricting access to driver's licenses and identification cards for undocumented immigrants