



WASHINGTON STATE COALITION AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

FINAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

March 15, 2006

Here is our final legislative update from Olympia for 2006. This state legislative session was a supplemental budget year, meaning the Legislature made significant changes to the 2005-2007 operating budget passed last year. The Legislature adjourned on March 8th after approving the operating and transportation budgets as required by law. Following is a summary of the status of WSCADV's legislative priorities for the 2006 legislative session.

State Budget/Funding

ESSB 6386 – SUPPLEMENTAL OPERATING BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- Restores funding for domestic violence legal advocacy programs to \$700,000 for FY 2007.
- Increases Civil Indigent Legal Services by approximately \$600,000 for FY 2007 for legal representation of domestic violence victims.
- Provides \$51 million to make up a budget shortfall in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF/WorkFirst) budget.
- Maintains funding for DSHS-funded domestic violence shelter and advocacy programs.
- \$35 million for improvements in providing mental health services.

Status: Awaiting review and signature by the Governor.

ESSB 6384 – CAPITAL BUDGET

The Capital Budget makes appropriations for construction and building. A large portion of the Capital Budget is the Housing Trust Fund, the largest public funding source for the creation of affordable homes for low-income families and individuals. The final Capital Budget adds \$21 million for the Housing Trust Fund with some of the allocations as follows:

- \$6,800,000 for Washington Housing Trust Fund "backlog" of eligible projects
- \$1,000,000 for housing vouchers for homeless persons, victims of domestic violence, low-income persons, or seasonal farm workers. The housing vouchers for homeless persons and victims of domestic violence would be administered by local public housing authorities, other local organizations with existing housing voucher programs, homeless shelters, or domestic violence shelters.
- \$4,500,000 for the Energy Matchmaker program
- \$500,000 for shelters or transitional housing for victims of domestic violence
- \$4,000,000 for the Homeless Families Services Fund

Status: Awaiting the Governor's signature.

Legislation supported by WSCADV that passed

Victim Confidentiality

ESHB 2848 - PROTECTING CONFIDENTIALITY OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INFORMATION

Prime Sponsor: Representative Pat Lantz

- Provides legal privilege for domestic violence victim advocates who are employed by community-based domestic violence programs.
- Clarifies how and when DSHS-funded domestic violence programs may share information about victims who have received services.
- Requires the Department of Social and Health Services to review its policies and procedures regarding personal information it possesses regarding domestic violence victims.

Status: Passed the Legislature on March 8th and is awaiting the Governor's signature.

ESSHB 6776 – PROHIBITING THE UNAUTHORIZED SALE OF TELEPHONE RECORDS

Prime Sponsor: Senator Bill Finkbeiner

- Creates the Crime of Unauthorized Sale or Procurement of Telephone Records, making it a class C felony to intentionally sell, knowingly purchase, or fraudulently obtain a person's telephone records without the person's permission. It is a gross misdemeanor to knowingly receive a person's telephone records without the person's permission. The Criminal Profiteering Act is amended to include the unauthorized sale or procurement of telephone records, which allows special remedies such as civil forfeiture and treble damages.
- Provides for a civil legal action against a telephone company that violates the laws relating to disclosure of wireless phone numbers.

Status: Awaiting the Governor's signature.

Housing

E2SHB 2418– AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Prime Sponsor: Representative Larry Springer

This bill creates the Interagency Council on Homelessness, directs the Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (CTED) to implement the Washington Homeless Client Management Information System to collect information about homelessness and homeless persons, provides that data collected for the homeless client management system may only be collected after obtaining informed, time-limited written consent from the client, and requires CTED to implement a statewide Affordable Housing Database.

Status: Awaiting the Governor's signature.

Economic Justice

SHB 2394/SSB 6305 – Including Financial Literacy in Work Activity Provisions

Prime Sponsors: Representative Mary Lou Dickerson and Senator Karen Keiser

This bill adds financial literacy training as a qualified “work activity” in the WorkFirst program, with the goal of increasing the capacity of welfare recipients to create a stable financial future.

Status: Awaiting the Governor’s signature.

Protective Orders

SSB 6806 – Creating the Domestic Violence Hope Card Committee

Prime Sponsor: Senator Luke Esser

This bill creates a committee to study the feasibility of distributing a wallet-sized card for individuals protected by a protection order, which would contain the relevant provisions of a protective order and aid in the enforcement of such orders. The committee would be made up of legislators, representatives from law enforcement, prosecutors, courts, and the victim services community.

Status: Awaiting the Governor’s signature.

Legislation supported by WSCADV that failed

Victim Confidentiality

HB 3057, SB 6653 - Regarding the Address Confidentiality Program

Prime Sponsors: Representative Tami Green and Senator Jim Kastama, by request of Secretary of State

These bills would add a definition for "stalking" to the law establishing the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP), change the address requirements and terms for changing one’s address for ACP participants, and establish that an ACP participant's records may only be released by court order.

Economic Justice

SHB 2970/SB 6628– Providing for the WorkFirst Safety Net

Prime Sponsor: Representative Eric Pettigrew and Senator Darlene Fairley

This bill would have provided for the provision of a child safety net for families in the WorkFirst program, eliminating the full-family sanction. Although this bill failed, funding in the final operating budget was provided to eliminate the need for the full-family sanction.

Legal Services

SB 6348 - Increasing Civil Legal Representation for Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Trafficking

Prime Sponsor: Senator Adam Kline

This bill would remove restrictions on state funding for civil legal services from representation of domestic violence, sexual assault, and trafficking victims who do not have lawful immigration status.

Child Welfare

SHB 2395 – Child Welfare and Domestic Violence

Prime Sponsor: Representative Mary Lou Dickerson

This amended bill provides that DSHS must make reasonable efforts in determining whether domestic violence plays a factor in child abuse and neglect cases, and requires that DSHS review its policies and procedures relating to screening and interventions in cases where domestic violence and child abuse or neglect co-occur. DSHS, along with the statewide leadership group currently working on developing policies and protocols relating to child welfare and domestic violence, shall review options for conducting assessments in these cases.

Legislation opposed by WSCADV that failed

Family Law

SB 6270, SB 6888 - Relating to Shared Parental Responsibility

Prime Sponsor: Senator Jim Kastama

This bill would create a presumption that shared parental responsibility is in the best interests of minor children in establishing a parenting plan, meaning that children would be mandated to have at least 1/3 residential time with each parent.

Other Legislation of Interest

Elections

HB 2529, 2752, 6362, 6565 - Relating to Voter Registration

These bills define how voter registration must occur and what constitutes valid voter registration, including limiting the ability of individuals who have a “traditional” residential address to use an alternative address for safety reasons.

Status: SSB 6362 is awaiting the Governor’s signature. HB 2529, HB 2752 and SB 6565 failed to pass.

Health Care Information

ESSB 6106 - Relating to Health Care Information Disclosure to Law Enforcement

Prime Sponsor: Senator Dale Brandland

This bill provides that a health care provider is required to disclose health care information about a patient without the patient's consent upon request of law enforcement authorities for any patient who has been, or is being, treated for any injury arising from: (1) the discharge of a firearm; (2) a sharp or pointed instrument which law enforcement authorities reasonably believe to have been intentionally inflicted; or (3) a blunt force injury which law enforcement authorities reasonably believe resulted from a criminal act. Law enforcement authorities can make the request for the information orally or in writing to a nursing supervisor, administrator, or designated privacy official.

Status: ESSB 6106 is awaiting the Governor's signature.

To review a more detailed summary of issues WSCADV worked on during the 2006 Legislative Session, see our previous Legislative Updates at: <http://www.wscadv.org/Legislative/index.htm>. To view the full text of new laws or legislation, go to the Washington State Legislature webpage at www.leg.wa.gov and enter the bill number in the "Bill Search" section.

*For more information on these and other Washington State Legislative issues, email: **action (at) wscadv.org**.*