



Washington State National Organization for Women

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Statement of Purpose

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men. This purpose includes, but is not limited to, equal rights and responsibilities in all aspects of citizenship, public service, employment, education, and family life, and it includes freedom from discrimination because of race, ethnic origin, age, marital status, sexual preference/orientation, or parenthood.

The Basics

Health Care – WA State now believes in equal access to quality affordable and accessible health care services for women and children.

Reproductive Rights – WA State NOW supports access for all women to the full range of reproductive services. WA State NOW will defend a woman's right to choose, opposing any attempts to weaken the current law as passed by Initiative 120.

Equal Protection Under the Law - WA State NOW supports efforts to end violence against women and their families, including sexual assault and domestic violence. WA State NOW supports equal protection for all regardless of their sexual orientation or the size of business for whom they work

Economic Equity – WA State NOW supports economic equity for all women, including but not limited to, access to affordable, quality childcare; paid family leave, equal pay for equal work, and a reasonable safety net for those who need it.

2007 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Equal Marriage

1. Oppose legislation to create a state constitutional ban on gay/lesbian marriage
2. Support legislation to give lesbians/gays the right to marry
3. Support legislation to give inheritance rights and health care access rights to lesbian/gay partners and domestic partners

Health Care Access

Support the Fair Share Coalition Agenda:

1. Expand coverage for children under Medicaid;
2. Expand Basic Health Plan (BHP) slots;
3. Create a "connector" process to allow individuals and small businesses the ability to purchase a variety of health plans which would eliminate the need to the current health care screening process for individuals;
4. Enact legislation to require large businesses to either provide health insurance to their employees OR pay a fee to the state so that health care can be provided

Reproductive Health

1. Support passage of the bill to require that all sexual health education taught in public schools be evidence based

2. Support funding for purchase of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccine and the development of a state wide distribution process
3. Support replacement of family planning funds cut by recent federal changes

Paid Family Leave

Support passage of legislation to create a fund to allow five weeks of paid family leave through a penny per hour fee paid by employers and employees and require that leave cover domestic partners

Programs that support low income families and individuals

1. Support legislation to prohibit implementation of a full family sanction in the WorkFirst Program
2. Support funding to set the child care subsidy rate at the 75th percentile; the Early Childhood & Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) per child rate at the Head Start level and to fill the 1% cut made by Congress to the Head Start program
3. Support expansion of slots for ECEAP and creation of a state early ECEAP program
4. Support creation of a Quality Rating system for child care (QRIS) based on adequate reimbursement and training dollars for providers
5. Support grant increase for families and individuals receiving TANF and GAU grants
6. Support pegging the WorkFirst benefit level to at least 50 percent of the basic needs standard and enact annual increases to keep up with inflation.

Stopping Violence Against Women

1. Support legislation to allow victims of domestic violence, stalking and/or sexual assault to take leave from work to attend court, doctor's visits and other needs related to the crime
2. Support legislation to prohibit polygraphing of sexual assault and child sexual abuse victims, as required by the Federal Violence Against Women Act
3. Support legislation to give victims of trafficking access to the state address confidentiality program

Family Law

1. Support legislation and funding to insure that more divorced parents have a place to resolve disputes without going to court (such as existing Dispute Resolution Centers). And support funding for appropriate training for those dealing with these parents in issues related to sexual abuse and domestic violence
2. Oppose creation of a presumptive shared parenting statute but support legislation to clarify that this is an option parents can pursue

Economic Justice

1. Support legislation that would reform WA State's regressive tax system. Continue to look at and enact the recommendations of the 2002 WA State Tax Structure Study Committee which was chaired by William H. Gates, Sr., Chair
2. Support legislation that would reign in predatory pay day loans
3. Require DSHS and CTED have a contract requirement that all employees of contractors receive at least a living wage.