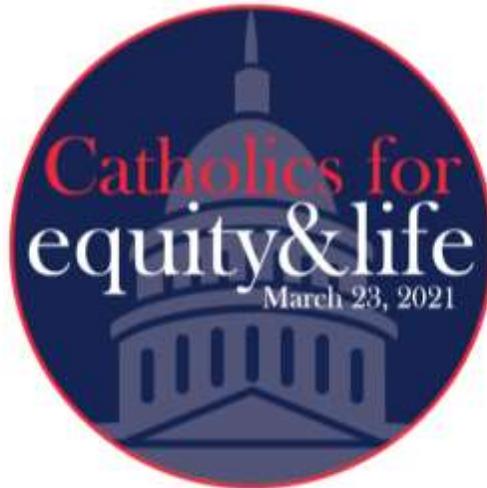


State Legislative Update



Catholic Advocacy Day

Virtual Catholic Advocacy Day on March 23, 2021

[Register](#) for our first virtual [Catholic Advocacy Day](#) (CAD). Scheduled for March 23, CAD will include several opportunities to choose from: pray at Mass, learn about current legislation that is important to Catholics, talk with your legislators virtually alongside fellow Catholics in your district, and/or participate in a social media campaign. Participate in all or some of the day's activities as your schedule allows. Please register for this free event by **March 9** if you would like to meet with your legislators during CAD.

Action Alert: Urge your State Representatives to Oppose Expanding Assisted Suicide

Last month we issued a separate action alert opposing assisted suicide. If you have not yet done so, please click [here](#) to urge your state representatives to oppose [House Bill 1141](#) (HB 1141), expanding assisted suicide. HB 1141 increases access to physician assisted suicide and accelerates the process. The bill broadens the definition of a "qualified medical provider" who can make a diagnosis and prescribe lethal medication. HB 1141 also loosens the definition of those who can provide counseling; in lieu of a psychiatrist or psychologist, a social worker, mental health counselor, or psychiatric advanced nurse practitioner may determine if a patient is suffering from a psychiatric or psychological disorder or depression causing impaired judgement. Additionally, this bill shortens the minimum amount of time from 15 days to just 72 hours or less that a patient is required to wait between making a request and receiving a prescription to terminate his or her life. Bishop Mueggenborg of the Archdiocese of Seattle and Washington State Catholic Conference (WSSC) Executive Director, Mario Villanueva, testified against HB 1141 on January 18. View their [testimony](#) at 1:29:02. It is anticipated that the HB 1141 will be brought to the House floor for debate. The WSSC opposes HB 1141.

Action Alerts: A Note On Signing In Positions for Bills

For the next two bills listed WSSC asks that you advocate by signing in and taking a position online at [leg.wa.gov](#). Links are provided and will bring you to a page titled "Committee Sign In – Remote Testimony." Please note that "Remote Testimony" in this instance only refers to selecting your position (Pro or Con) via the web; it does not include verbal testimony. You will also notice that a paragraph in green font explains this. Feel free to contact WSSC Director of

Policy and Communications, Adrienne Corpuz Joyce, with any questions:
adrienne.joyce@wacatholics.org. Thank you for your faith-centered advocacy.

Action Alert: Support the Clean Fuels Bill (HB 1091)

[Sign in](#) “pro” for the Clean Fuels Bill, [House Bill 1091](#) (HB 1091). This link will be available until February 16 at 12:30 pm. HB 1091 is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Committee on Transportation at 1:30 pm on February 16. The Clean Fuels Bill reduces the carbon intensity of transportation fuel to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Its Senate companion bill is SB 5231. In accordance with Pope Francis’s call to care for God’s creation in *Laudato Si’*, the WSCC supports HB 1091.

Action Alert: Support SB 5068, Which Improves Maternal Health Outcomes

[Sign in](#) “pro” for [Senate Bill 5068](#) (SB 5068), which improves maternal health outcomes, prior to 3 pm on February 15. SB 5068 is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Ways and Means at 4 pm on February 15. SB 5068 expands postpartum maternal coverage from 60 days to one year for recipients of Apple Health. Apple Health provides health coverage for eligible families, children, low-income adults, and certain disabled individuals. Throughout Washington state and the US, maternal mortality rates are much higher than other developed countries, with stark ethnic disparities. Related to our health care and racial justice legislative priorities, the WSCC supports SB 5068.

House Appropriations to Vote on Pathways from Prison to Postsecondary Education (HB 1044)

Action Alert: If one of your state representatives is a member of the [House Committee on Appropriations](#), please urge your representative to pass [House Bill 1044](#) (HB 1044) out of Appropriations. Identify your district and state representatives [here](#). The House Committee on Appropriations will be voting on HB 1044 on February 16. HB 1044 permits the Department of Corrections (DOC) to implement postsecondary education certificate and degree programs at state correctional institutions. It also establishes processes for identifying, assessing and accommodating incarcerated persons with learning disabilities, traumatic brain injuries, and cognitive impairments. Related to the bishops’ restorative justice priority, the WSCC supports HB 1044.

Senate Committee to Vote on SB 5010: Concerning Credit Scores and Equity

Action Alert: If your state senator is a member of the [Senate Committee on Business, Financial Services, and Trade](#), urge your senator to pass [Senate Bill 5010](#) (SB 5010) out of committee. Identify your district and state senator [here](#). SB 5010 prohibits the use of credit scores to determine rates for personal lines of insurance. The use of credit scoring to calculate rates for personal lines of insurance is unfair and has a disproportionately negative economic impact on women, low-income individuals, and communities of color in Washington. The WSCC supports SB 5010.

The Working Families Tax Exemption Referred to Appropriations

Action Alert: If your House representative is on the [House Appropriations Committee](#), request that your representative pass the Working Families Tax Exemption, [House Bill 1297](#) (HB 1297). Identify your district and House representatives [here](#). Also commonly known as the Working Families Tax Credit or the Recovery Rebate, HB 1297 will assist low-income, working individuals and families, including tax-paying immigrants. The HB 1297 tax credit seeks to address Washington’s regressive tax system, which causes low-income Washingtonians, who

are primarily Black, American Indian and Alaskan Native, Latina or Latino, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiracial, to pay six times more in taxes as a percentage of their household income in comparison to wealthier residents. The WSCC supports HB 1297.

HB 1009: Addition of Abortion Coverage to Student Health Plans

[House Bill 1009](#) (HB 1009) expands the coverage of abortion in student health plans for colleges and universities. Any student health plan that provides coverage for maternity care or services will also be required to include equivalent coverage to permit the abortion of a pregnancy. HB 1009 was passed by the House Committee on Health Care and Wellness and has been referred to the Rules 2 Review. It is anticipated that the bill will be brought to the House floor for debate. The WSCC will email a separate action alert next week with a template that you can use to urge your state representatives to oppose HB 1009. You are also invited to email your legislators directly now. The WSCC opposes HB 1009.

Senate Committee On Law and Justice Passes SB 5226 To End Debt-based Driver's License Suspensions

On February 11 the Senate Committee on Law and Justice voted to pass [Senate Bill 5226](#) (SB 5226), which ends debt-based driver's license suspensions. Current law adversely affects low-income families and individuals. When low-income individuals are unable to pay fines for civil driving infractions that are not crimes, such as failing to signal, their driving license may be suspended. When they must inevitably drive to work, the grocery store, or a medical appointment, low-income individuals then risk being charged with a crime: Driving While License Suspended in the Third Degree (DWLS3). Ultimately, inability to pay for a civil driving infraction leads to being charged with a crime with an accompanying loss of vehicle insurance coverage. SB 5226 stops the suspension of driver's licenses for financial reasons and the accompanying automatic loss of vehicle insurance coverage. Having a valid driver's license is a necessity of life for many people in Washington, for work and to provide transportation for their families. In accordance with the bishops' economic justice legislative priority, the WSCC supports SB 5226.

Healthy Environment For All (HEAL) Act Referred To Ways and Means

The Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act ([Senate Bill 5141](#)) was passed out of the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy and Technology and was referred to Ways and Means on February 10. Low-income and communities of color are disproportionately affected by environmental burdens. The HEAL Act addresses this by implementing the recommendations of the [Environmental Justice Task Force](#). Among its provisions, the HEAL Act defines environmental justice and requires its application in state agencies, using a racial justice lens. The HEAL Act also incorporates tribal consultation, directs funding with environmental benefits towards communities highly impacted by pollution or climate change, and establishes the Environmental Justice Council. In accordance with Pope Francis's call to care for God's creation in *Laudato Si'*, the WSCC supports the HEAL Act.

Rules Committee Passes HB 1342, Eliminating Copays for Student Reduced-Price Lunches

[House Bill 1342](#) (HB 1342) eliminates lunch copays for students who qualify for reduced-price lunches under the National School Lunch Program. This program provides nutritionally balanced meals to qualifying low-income children at public schools and nonprofit private schools, including Catholic schools. HB 1342 was passed out of the Rules Committee on February 10 and is eligible to be brought to the House Floor for a vote. The WSCC supports HB 1342.

Civil Legal Aid Funds for Undocumented Immigrants (HB 1072) Passes Rules

[House Bill 1072](#) (HB 1072) gives undocumented immigrants access to civil legal aid funds. These funds can be used for legal matters such as domestic relations and family law, elder abuse, disability rights, and health care. HB 1072 passed out of the Rules Committee and is eligible to be brought to the House Floor for a vote. In accordance with the bishops' legislative priorities to help low-income individuals, including immigrants, the WSCC supports HB 1072.

HB 1151, Which Bolsters Economic Recovery, Passes Appropriations

[House Bill 1151](#) (HB 1151) aims to bolster economic recovery by providing assistance to families in need. This bill allows Consolidated Emergency Assistance to be provided more than once in a 12-month period when directed by the governor; provides a one-time cash benefit and transitional food assistance; and requires the Department of Social and Health Services to update standards of need for cash assistance programs. This bill has been passed by Housing, Human Services, and Veterans and the House Committee on Appropriations. On February 11 it was referred to Rules 2 Review. The WSCC supports HB 1151.

Private Schools Emergency Waiver Bill (HB 1131) Passes House

[House Bill 1131](#) (HB 1131) provides a waiver for private schools to maintain their approval status when they are unable to meet minimum schools days or instructional hours due to a significant disruption resulting from an emergency situation. This bill is favorable to Catholic schools and allows them to be in good status with the state as schools contend with the challenges of the pandemic. The House passed HB 1131 unanimously, and it was passed to the Senate Rules Committee on February 9. The WSCC supports HB 1131.

Voter Eligibility, HB 1078

[House Bill 1078](#) (HB 1078) will automatically restore voter eligibility to individuals convicted of a felony offense who are not serving a sentence of total confinement under the authority of the Department of Corrections. Currently, convicted persons must undergo a two-step process to regain voting eligibility. The House Committee on State Government and Tribal Relations passed HB 1078, and it was referred to Rules 2 Review on January 26. In accordance with the Washington bishops' restorative justice legislative priority, the WSCC supports HB 1078.

Housing Stability and Eviction Prevention

[House Bill 1277](#) (HB 1277) creates a revenue source for housing stability services for low-income individuals and those experiencing homelessness. It also creates funds to prevent the eviction of households likely to become homeless or who would have severe health consequences, or both. The House Housing, Human Services and Veterans Committee passed HB 1277, and it has been referred to Appropriations. Committed to affordable housing, the WSCC supports HB 1277.

Solitary Confinement Restriction Act (SB 5413)

A hearing was held for the Solitary Confinement Restriction Act, [Senate Bill 5413](#) (SB 5413) on February 9, and no further action is scheduled. Studies demonstrate that solitary confinement can induce devastating and lasting psychological effects. Those subjected to solitary confinement also have higher rates of medical concerns and a shorter life expectancy once released into the community. Solitary confinement is disproportionately imposed upon Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic individuals in Washington's prisons. According to SB 5413 solitary confinement should only be used when necessary and should not be used against vulnerable

populations or for time periods that foster psychological trauma, psychiatric disorders, or serious, long-term damage to a person's brain. In accordance with the bishops' priorities of respecting life and restorative justice, the WSCC supports SB 5413.

WSCC Executive Director Testifies for School Choice, SB 5200

On January 29 WSCC Executive Director Mario Villanueva testified for school choice bill [Senate Bill 5200](#) (SB 5200) before the Senate Committee on Early Learning and K-12 Education. SB 5200 establishes a tax credit for contributions to student scholarship organizations. While this bill focuses on benefits for students who receive special education services or are foster children, the WSCC supports all efforts that lead to school choice and could be expanded in the future to benefit Catholic school students and families. The WSCC supports SB 5200.

Voice Your Opinion on Legislation

As a reminder, you may submit written [comments](#) on a bill at any time. To leave a message for legislators about a bill, call 1-800-562-6000.

WSCC Legislative Priorities

Each year the bishops of Washington establish state legislative priorities based on the teachings of the Catholic Church. Details of these 11 priorities may be found on our [website](#). These priorities are reflected in the WSCC's positions on the bills above.

Upcoming Events



Open Your Heart To Infants & Children in Need

It's been said that kindness comes in many forms but always from the heart. As we celebrate Valentine's Day, we ask that you open your heart to infants, children, mothers and dads in desperate need of love and kindness.

The PREPARES statewide program is a nurturing response and promise to mothers and fathers who have chosen life. A promise of support and care from pregnancy to their child's fifth birthday. Regardless of religious beliefs, this parish based program offers low income families vital life affirming services.

Your PREPARES gift, no matter the amount, is deeply appreciated and will help ensure that these critical services continue to thrive and expand in parishes in your region and all across the state of Washington.

From our own hearts, we extend the kindness of prayer that you and your family are abundantly blessed and that all those in the sacred care of PREPARES will be renewed by our loving mission of compassion.

With gratitude, we are yours in the heart of Christ.

Archbishop Paul D. Etienne
Archbishop of Seattle

Bishop Joseph J. Tyson
Bishop of Yakima

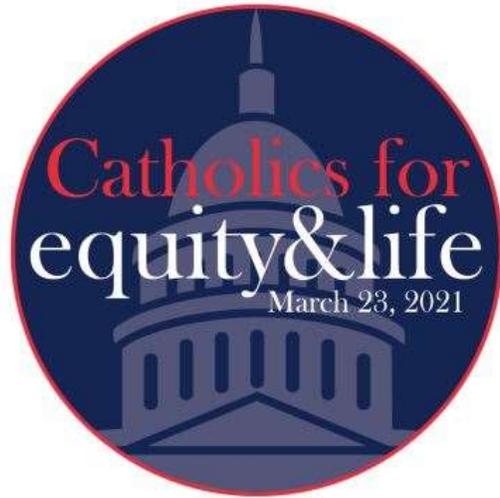
Bishop Thomas A. Daly
Bishop of Spokane

Thanks to the generosity of The Knights of Columbus #676, 100% of your donation will go directly to serve families in need **AND** the first \$25,000 given to the PREPARES Valentine Appeal **online** will be matched. Give today at www.preparesforlife.org/donate and **double your impact!**



[Donate Now](#)

A program of your local Catholic Charities Agency
www.preparesforlife.org



Catholic Advocacy Day

Tuesday March 23, 2021 | 8am-4pm

In this time of COVID and the call for economic and racial equity, join with Catholic parishes and organizations in a day of advocacy for a society in which all people and Earth can thrive.

Virtual Events

- Mass with Archbishop Etienne or Bishop Elizondo
- Speaker from State Government (TBD)
- Briefings on Issues
- Legislative Zoom meetings by District
- Social media campaigns

Register by March 9 at
ipjc.org/cad

Questions? Call 206.223.1138 or email
catholicadvocacyday@ipjc.org



USCCB Respect Life Action Guide: Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is March 25. The USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities released this [parish action guide](#) to aid with planning.

Important Dates

February	Black History Month
February 17	Ash Wednesday, First day of Lent
March 9	Deadline to register for Catholic Advocacy Day if you want to meet with your legislator.
March 23	Virtual Catholic Advocacy Day
March 25	Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord
April 4	Easter

Did a relative or friend forward this WSCC Catholic Advocacy Bulletin to you? Sign up for your own free subscription [here](#). The bulletin is available in both Spanish and English.

You can also find the Washington State Catholic Conference on Facebook, Twitter @wacatholics, and Instagram.

Click [here](#) to view previous WSCC bulletins on our website.

