



**Approaching February 15 Deadline**

**Entering Week 6**



This Tuesday, February 15 is the deadline for bills to pass out of their originating house. We've got a number of bills below that you can urge your senator and representatives to pass out of the House or Senate to ensure the bills stay the course to be enacted into law. A few bills have already cleared this hurdle, with committee hearings scheduled for next week. See immediately below for bills that you can sign in "pro" for. Thank you for your advocacy!

**Action Alert: Sign In "Pro" For These Bills**

**Action Alert: Sign In "Pro" for the Charity Care Act**

[Sign in](#) "pro" for the Charity Care Act, [House Bill 1616](#) (HB 1616). This link will be available until Friday, February 18 at 7 AM. HB 1616 is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Committee on Health and Long Term Care on February 18 at 8 AM. When signing in you may leave the "organization" box blank or write in "parishioner of --- Church." HB 1616 increases the number of individuals eligible for charity care at hospitals. In accordance with the bishops' hospitals and health care and economic justice legislative priorities, the WSCC supports the Charity Care Act.

**Action Alert: Sign In "Pro" for the Dementia Action Collaborative**

[Sign in](#) "pro" for the Dementia Action Collaborative, [House Bill 1646](#) (HB 1646). This link will be available until Wednesday, February 16 at 7 AM. HB 1646 is scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Committee on Health and Long Term Care on February 16 at 8 AM. When signing in you may leave the "organization" box blank or write in "parishioner of --- Church." House Bill 1646 (HB 1646) continues the work of the Dementia Action Collaborative. By the year 2025, it is expected that there will be 140,000 Washingtonians living with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia. The Dementia Action Collaborative was first established in 2014, and HB 1646 ensures that its work continues. The Dementia Action Collaborative will assess services and resources for persons with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and their families and caregivers, examine strategies to rectify disparate effects on people of color, and develop a strategy for a state response to this public health crisis. The Dementia Action Collaborative will also review and revise the Washington State Alzheimer's Plan. Per the bishops' legislative priority of caring for the aging and those with disabilities, the WSCC supports HB 1646.

**Action Alert: Sign In “Pro” To Address Human Trafficking By Commercial Drivers**

[Sign in](#) “pro” for [Senate Bill 5631](#) (SB 5631), which addresses human trafficking by commercial drivers. This link will be available until Thursday, February 17 at 2:30 PM. SB 5631 is scheduled for a hearing in the House Committee on Transportation on February 17 at 3:30 PM. When signing in you may leave the “organization” box blank or write in “parishioner of --- Church.” SB 5631 disqualifies a person convicted of human trafficking offenses from holding a commercial driver license for life. Human trafficking often involves the use of commercial vehicles. In accordance with the bishops’ legislative priority to respect the life and dignity of all, the WSCC supports SB 5631.

**Action Alert: Sign In “Pro” for Services For Individuals With Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities**

[Sign in](#) “pro” for [Senate Bill 5268](#) (SB 5268) to improve services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This link will be available until Thursday, February 17 at 12:30 PM. SB 5268 is scheduled for a public hearing in the House Committee on Housing, Human Services, and Veterans on February 17 at 1:30 PM. SB 5268 increases the capabilities of community residential settings and redesigns intermediate care facilities. This is a landmark bill to improve services for individuals with disabilities. In line with the bishops’ legislative priority to care for the aging and those disabilities, the WSCC supports SB 5268.

**Action Alert: Help These Bills Clear the House and Senate**

**Urge Your Senator and Representatives To Pass These Bills**

All bills must pass out of their originating house, the House or Senate, by Tuesday, February 15. Contact your house representatives to pass the following bills: HB 1756, HB 1802, HB 1860, HB 1904, and HB 1908. Ask your state senator to pass SB 5745. Bill details are below. Identify your district, your legislators, and their contact info [here](#).

**Action Alert: Urge Your Reps to Pass the Solitary Confinement Restriction Act**

Urge your House representatives to pass the Solitary Confinement Restriction Act, [House Bill 1756](#) (HB 1756). Identify your district, House representatives, and their contact information [here](#). Solitary confinement can have devastating and inhumane effects on incarcerated individuals. Those placed in prolonged solitary confinement have higher rates of medical conditions, shorter life expectancy, and higher recidivism rates. Solitary confinement is also disproportionately imposed on Black, Indigenous, and Hispanic individuals. The United Nations defines solitary confinement of 15 days or more as torture. HB 1756 limits the use of solitary confinement. WSCC executive director, Mario Villanueva, testified in support of this bill. View his testimony [here](#). In accordance with the bishops’ restorative justice legislative priority, the WSCC supports HB 1756.

**Action Alert: Ask Your House Representatives to Support Access and Representation For Individuals With Disabilities**

Contact your House representatives and urge them to pass [House Bill 1802](#) (HB 1802), which increases access and representation in policy-making for individuals with disabilities. Identify your district, your House representatives, and their contact info [here](#). The WSCC supports HB 1802, as it is in line with the bishops’ legislative priority of caring for the aging and those with disabilities.

### **Action Alert: Prevent Homelessness Among Persons Discharged from Behavioral Health Settings**

Urge your House representatives to pass [House Bill 1860](#) (HB 1860) and prevent homelessness among persons discharged from behavioral health settings. Identify your district, your House representatives, and their contact information [here](#). Per HB 1860, when the Health Care Authority contracts with a Managed Care Organization, the Managed Care Organization will be required to provide housing-related care coordination services for enrollees who are discharged from inpatient behavioral health settings. Discharge is a pivotal point in a person's treatment or recovery, and stable housing is a necessity to continued successful treatment and good health. In accordance with the bishops' legislative priority focusing on health care, the WSCC supports HB 1860.

### **Action Alert: Urge Your Reps to Pass Tenant Protections From Excessive Rent and Related Fees**

Urge your representatives to support tenant protections from excessive rent and related fees, [House Bill 1904](#) (HB 1904). Identify your district, your House representatives, and their contact information [here](#). Provisions of HB 1904 include requiring landlords to provide at least 180 to 220 days' notice for rent increases over 3 percent, allowing a tenant to terminate a tenancy for any rent increase over 3 percent, and limiting late fees to 1.5 percent of the tenant's monthly rent. In line with the bishops' affordable housing and economic justice legislative priorities, the WSCC supports HB 1904.

### **Action Alert: Support Using Surplus Public Property for Affordable Housing**

Urge your representatives to support the use of surplus public property for affordable housing, [House Bill 1908](#) (HB 1908). Identify your district and House representatives [here](#). In line with the bishops' affordable housing legislative priority, the WSCC supports HB 1908.

### **Action Alert: Urge Your Senator To Help Medicaid Recipients**



Urge your Senator to help Medicaid recipients and pass [Senate Bill 5745](#) (SB 5745), which increases the personal needs allowance to a more sustainable level. This bill is eligible for a vote now. Identify your district, your state senator, and your senator's contact info [here](#). Federal law requires that Medicaid recipients contribute to the cost of their long-term care. In calculating their contribution, a personal needs allowance may be deducted. The current personal needs allowance is too small, amounting to \$1,045 per month for a single person to cover rent, food, and other costs. A higher personal needs allowance gives seniors the opportunity to choose to stay in their homes and receive care, rather than move to more expensive facilities. Washington currently only allows personal needs allowances to equal 100% of the federal benefit rate, but other states allow for a personal needs allowance equaling

300% of the federal benefit rate. Catholic Community Services' Peter Nazzal, Director of Long Term Care, testified in favor of HB 5745. In line with the bishops' legislative priorities of economic justice and caring for the aging and disabled, the WSCC supports SB 5745.

### **Bills To Oppose**

#### **Oppose the Expansion Of Assisted Suicide**

**Targeted Action Alert:** If your senator is a member of the [Senate Committee on Health and Long Term Care](#), please urge your senator to oppose the expansion of assisted suicide, [House Bill 1141](#) (HB 1141). Identify your district, state senator, and their contact information [here](#). In 2008 Washington voters approved Initiative 1000, the Physician-Assisted Death Initiative, but only after being assured that certain "safeguards" would be in place. HB 1141 loosens safeguards, increasing access to physician-assisted suicide and accelerating the process. The bill broadens the definition of a "qualified medical provider" who can make a diagnosis and prescribe lethal medication. Two physicians are no longer required to diagnose a patient. 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 that a patient is required to wait between making a request and receiving a prescription to terminate his or her life. The 72 hour wait time may even be waived if the "qualified medical provider" deems that a patient has less than 72 hours to live. HB 1141 also permits assisted suicide prescriptions to be delivered via the mail. In accordance with the bishops' legislative priority to respect life, the WSCC opposes HB 1141.

#### **Action Alert: Urge the House To Oppose the Expansion Of Abortion**

Urge your representative to oppose the expansion of abortion, [House Bill 1851](#) (HB 1851). Identify your district, House representatives, and their contact information [here](#). The House is expected to vote on this bill soon. HB 1851 expands who may perform abortions. A physician would no longer be required to perform the procedure, and physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other health care providers would be authorized to perform abortions. Additionally, under HB 1851 the state is prohibited from taking action against an individual for having an abortion. The state is also prohibited from taking action against someone who aids or assists a pregnant woman with getting an abortion. Language in the bill is changed from "woman" to "pregnant individual." WSCC Executive Director Mario Villanueva testified against HB 1851 before the House Committee on Health Care and Wellness last week. Video may be viewed [here](#). In line with the bishops' legislative priority to respect the dignity of every human being from conception to natural death, the WSCC opposes HB 1851.

### **Targeted Action Alerts**

Is your senator a member of the Senate [Ways and Means](#), [Law and Justice](#), or [Housing and Local Government](#) Committees? We are looking for constituents to contact senators on the committees about HB 1099, HB 1725, HB 1789, and HB 1888. Identify your district, state senator, and your senator's contact information [here](#). Bill information is available below.

#### **Addressing Climate Change**

**Targeted Action Alert:** If your senator is a member of the [Senate Committee on Housing and Local Government](#), please urge your senator to address climate change and support [House Bill 1099](#) (HB 1099). Identify your district, your senator, and your senator's contact information [here](#). HB 1099 improves the state's climate response through updates to the Growth Management Act, the state's comprehensive planning framework. Cities and counties

will upgrade their land use and transportation planning to reduce greenhouse emissions. Additionally, this bill embeds a definition for environmental justice into the Growth Management Act. Environmental justice is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This bill is in line with the bishops' goal to Care for God's Creation, and the WSCC supports HB 1099.

### **Help Endangered, Missing Indigenous Persons**

**Targeted Action Alert:** If your state senator is a member of the [Senate Committee on Law and Justice](#), urge your senator to help endangered, missing indigenous persons, [House Bill 1725](#) (HB 1725). Identify your district, state senator, and your senator's contact information [here](#). HB 1725 creates an endangered missing person advisory designation for missing indigenous persons. Indigenous people experience disproportionate rates of violence in Washington state. To address the crisis of missing and murdered indigenous people, HB 1725 creates a special alert for missing indigenous persons. This alert is akin to amber alerts designated for missing children. In accordance with the legislative priority to respect the dignity of life, the WSCC supports HB 1725.

### **Urge Your Reps To Improve the Working Families Tax Credit**

**Targeted Action Alert:** If your state senator is a member of the [Senate Committee on Ways and Means](#), urge your senator to improve the Working Families Tax Credit, [House Bill 1888](#) (HB 1888). Identify your district, state senator, and your senator's contact information [here](#). In 2021 the legislature voted to fund the Working Families Tax Credit, a tax credit that assists low-income, working individuals and families. The Working Families Tax Credit addresses Washington's regressive tax system, which causes low-income Washingtonians to pay a higher percentage of their household income in comparison to wealthier residents. HB 1888 improves the Working Families Tax Credit by aligning rates with federal maximum qualifying income levels. In accordance with the bishops' legislative priority of economic justice, the WSCC supports HB 1888.

### **Useful Links For the Legislative Session**

[Legislative Priorities of the Washington State Catholic Conference](#)

[Identify your district and legislators](#)

[Washington State Legislature](#) – Information on bills, hearings, legislators, and more

[Find bill information](#)

[WSCC website](#)

### **PREPARES Annual Appeal**

The WSCC bishops invite you to learn about and support [PREPARES](#).



*"Your every act  
should be done with love."  
Corinthians 16:14*



Dear Friends,

This simple, yet profound message we find in Corinthians is most fitting as we invite you to join us in opening your hearts with love, care and concern for infants, children, mothers and dads in desperate need.

The PREPARES program is our combined initiative as Catholic bishops to provide a nurturing response to mothers and fathers who have chosen the precious gift of life. A promise of direct support and assistance from pregnancy to their child's fifth birthday. Regardless of religious beliefs, this parish-based program, administered by our Catholic Charities agencies statewide, offers low-income families vital, life-affirming services.

Your gift to PREPARES, no matter the amount, will have real impact in helping to ensure that the critical services for this pro-life, pro-family program continue to thrive and expand in parishes in your region and all across the state of Washington.

From our own hearts, we extend the gift 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 "every act... done with love."

With gratitude and blessings, we remain 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

## National Marriage Week: February 7-14

Click [here](#) for more information.



## Racial Justice Workshop



In this February 12 [Racial Justice Workshop](#), Fr. Dan Horan, author of *A White Catholic's Guide to Racism and Privilege*, invites us to actively address racism and become collaborators with our Black sisters and brothers as we work for racial justice in our society and Church. Grounded in the Gospel, the wisdom of Catholic tradition and Catholic Social Teaching, he offers practical ways to educate ourselves and advocate for racial justice.

### **Important Dates**

February 12 - 13	<a href="#">PREPARES</a> collection at your parish
February 15	Last day to pass bills out of house of origin
February 24	Last day to pass bills out of the opposite house with the exception of House fiscal committees and Senate Ways and Means and Transportation Committees
February 28	Last day to pass bills out of House fiscal committees and Senate Ways and Means and Transportation Committees
March 4	Last day to pass opposite house bills
March 10	Final day of the state legislative session



## WSSCC Staff

We invite you to contact us at any time.

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