

February 2015

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## Happenings in Olympia—As We See Them

Lawmakers are discussing more than just education, transportation and global warming

*Whenever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.* --Thomas Jefferson

With a lot of sobering news reaching us from the Middle East these days, much less attention is given to the workings of our solons in Olympia. They are at Day 48 of the 2015 regular legislative session. Hopefully, the session should conclude at day 105.

Arguably, transportation infrastructure is a high-priority item at the moment—especially along the bottled-up I-5 corridor between Joint Base Lewis-McCord and Mercer Street in Seattle. But, that is not to say that “social measures” are not being discussed each day of the week. Following are a handful of proposals in the current legislative hopper that are likely of interest to our supporters.

### HUMAN LIFE (AND DEATH)

**PARENTAL NOTIFICATION—HB 1493 (House bill), SB 5289 (Senate bill).** This proposed legislation would require notification to parents or guardians in cases of abortion. Proponents believe it is important to protect the constitutional rights of parents to rear and make decisions for their children. The bill is sponsored by 17 Republicans in the House and seven Republicans and one Democrat (Hargrove) in the Senate. The Legislative Hot Line number is: 1-800-562-6000.

**LIFE AT CONCEPTION ACT—HB 1687.** This bill would implement equal protection for the right to life of each born and preborn human person. It has 13 Republican sponsors in the House. They are: Representatives Scott, McCaslin, Taylor, Van Werven, Wilson, Young, Vick, Condotta, Holy, Pike, Shea, Short, G. Hunt—Republicans all. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

**ABORTION PILL MANDATE—HB 1502, SB 5026.** This proposed measure declares that it is an unfair practice for any employer who provides health insurance to its employees as part of an employee’s benefit package to not include contraceptive coverage as part of the benefit package. It is clearly an attempt to fast-track the matter back before the U.S. Supreme Court where it was recently and successfully KO’d by the Christian business owners of *Hobby Lobby*.

The notion of employer-provided contraceptives is being aggressively pushed by 36 Democrat House members and 22 Democrats in the Senate. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

**ABORTION INSURANCE MANDATE—HB 1647, SB 5574.** This bill essentially makes it illegal to buy or sell a private insurance policy that doesn’t cover controversial contraceptives, voluntary sterilization and elective abortion. So far 21 House Democrats and 13 Senate Democrats are on board. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

**TELEMEDICINE—HB 1403, SB 5175.** Although this bill has many good facets, opponents fear it could open the door to webcam abortions as it has elsewhere.

Prime sponsors are Republicans Johnson, Harris, DeBolt, Short, and 13 Democrats in the House. Republicans Angel, Becker, Dammeier, Fain, Parlette, Rivers and eight Democrats are Senate sponsors. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

INFORMED DEATH WITH DIGNITY—SB 5919. Amends the current Death with Dignity (or assisted suicide) RCWs (laws) to insure the patient has been given all feasible alternatives before they choose suicide. Specifically, it requires an attending physician to ensure that a patient is making an informed decision, and it informs the patient of possible treatments to cure or extend the patient's life. It is endorsed by 6 Republicans and 2 Democrats. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND FAMILY LAW**

PERSONAL CONVICTION EXEMPTION—HB 2009. This legislation would eliminate the “personal conviction exemption” from the immunization requirement. This measure is sponsored by House Republicans Johnson, Magendanz, Harris, and 24 Democrats. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION CHANGE THERAPY—HB 1972, SB 5870. If passed, this legislation would make it professional misconduct for a licensed therapist to help a minor reduce or eliminate unwanted same-sex attraction. Washington State would join New Jersey and California in banning Sexual Orientation Change Effort (SOCE) therapy.

Surprisingly, GOP House members DeBolt, Harris, Walsh and Magendanz, together with 17 Democrats (not a surprise) support this bill. In the Senate, Republicans Litzow, Fain, and Rivers are co-sponsors with 13 Democrats. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

THIRD-PARTY VISITATION RIGHTS—SB 5005. This bill would allow grandparents to petition the courts for visitation of children against the will of a fit parent. It is sponsored in the Senate by one Republican and one Democrat. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN—SB 5215. This proposed bill calls for the creation of a Washington internet crimes against children account and requires expenditures from the account to be used exclusively by the Washington internet crimes against children task force and its affiliate agencies. Funds will be appropriated from \$2 million in unclaimed lottery monies—requiring no new taxes. So far, this measure has strong bi-partisan support. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

EXTENDING THE TIME PERIOD FOR VOTER REGISTRATION, HB 1144. This changes the voter registration deadline for filing online from 29 days to eight days for any election. Okaay. It also allows walk-ins to register to vote up to 5:00 PM on Election Day. 25 House Democrats like this bill. Our concern? Provisional ballots are sometimes “mistakenly” counted without proper vetting. Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

ENHANCING YOUTH VOTER REGISTRATION—HB 1294. This bill would allow pre-registration of 16 and 17 year-olds. 1 Republican (Stambaugh) and 41 Democrats are on board with this idea. Call 1-800-562-6000.

PROVIDING PREPAID POSTAGE FOR ELECTION BALLOTS—HB 1724, SB 5344. 19 House Democrats are sponsors. In the Senate, Republicans Roach, Benton and Pearson are on board with seven Democrats. New taxpayer costs aside, it has been noted that this bill eviscerates a valid time stamp (postmark), opening the door for post-election ballot stuffing. Can you say Rossi-Gregoire? Register your thoughts at: 1-800-562-6000.

It is important—very important—to frequently remind our elected officials that we’re out here. One of the best ways to communicate with them is by phone. Did we mention a toll-free number, 1-800-562-6000?

*Rick Forcier*