

Bill Descriptions of 2024 Legislation Tracked by the WSCC

HB 1075: Improving Eligibility for The Working Families Tax Credit - *Failed*

[House Bill 1075](#) (HB 1075) would improve eligibility for the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC). WFTC is an annual tax credit up to \$1,200 for Washington residents with low to moderate incomes. Currently, single adults aged 18 to 24 are not eligible to receive this tax credit. Adults over the age of 65 are also ineligible. HB 1075 would amend the WFTC to cover all adults aged 18 and over. This will particularly benefit individuals that aged out of the foster care system or are attending community college or trade school. Increasing WFTC eligibility will also benefit the growing population of aging individuals living in poverty. In line with the bishops' economic justice legislative priority, the WSCC supports HB 1075.

HB 1151: IVF and Mishandling of Human Embryos - *Failed*

[House Bill 1151](#) (HB 1151) would have promoted the mishandling of human embryos. HB 1151 would have mandated health coverage of fertility services. The WSCC specifically opposes the promotion of in vitro fertilization (IVF), which creates human embryos that are not properly cared for. Our Catholic faith teaches us to respect all life and that life begins at conception. However, IVF often results in unused embryos that are frozen indefinitely, destroyed, or abandoned. Life is not properly cared for nor respected. Additionally, IVF can treat children as commodities that are manufactured outside of the construct of the expression of love of a married couple. A more thorough explanation of the complexity of the Church's opposition to IVF may be found [here](#). In line with the legislative priority to respect life, the WSCC opposed HB 1151 and its companion bill, [Senate Bill 5204](#).

HB 1368: Clean School Buses - *Passed*

[House Bill 1368](#) (HB 1368) would fund zero emission school buses. Under HB 1368 the Department of Ecology would administer a zero-emission school bus grant program and prioritize grants to overburdened communities and school districts with buses manufactured prior to 2007. Forty million dollars have been designated in the state budget for these grants. Additionally, the bill also calls for a survey of school districts regarding the adoption of zero emission buses. With a statewide fleet of 10,000 buses, moving toward electric school buses would reduce pollution and adverse health effects resulting from diesel buses. In line with the bishops' legislative priority to care for God's creation, the WSCC supports HB 1368.

HB 1879: Naming Tribal Curriculum After Rep. John McCoy - *Passed*

[House Bill 1879](#) (HB 1879) would name the curriculum used to teach public school students about tribal history, culture, and government as the John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial (STI) curriculum. Representative John McCoy, whose traditional name in Lushootseed is Iulilaš, sponsored House Bill 1495 in 2005, which began the process of incorporating information about tribal history, culture, and government into

social studies courses in which Washington or United States history is taught. In line with the bishops' racial justice legislative priority, the WSCC supports HB 1879.

HB 1889: Professional Licenses and Certifications for Immigrants - *Passed*
[House Bill 1889](#) (HB 1889) would allow individuals to receive certain professional licenses, certifications, permits, and registrations for various professions, regardless of immigration or citizenship status. This past fall, the WSCC issued this [statement](#) on immigration. In accordance with the bishops' legislative priority to support immigrants, the WSCC supports HB 1889.

HB 1905: Improving the Equal Pay and Opportunities Act - *Passed*
[House Bill 1905](#) (HB 1905), which would improve the Equal Pay and Opportunities Act. The Washington Equal Pay and Opportunities Act prohibits an employer from discriminating by providing compensation based on gender between similarly employed employees. HB 1905 would extend this discrimination prohibition to other defined "protected classes," including a person's age, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, creed color, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, or the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability or the use of a trained guide dog or service animal by a person with a disability. In line with the bishops' legislative priorities to respect the life and dignity of all, care for the aging and disabled, and respect the rights of workers, the WSCC supports HB 1905.

HB 1929: Support For Youth Exiting Behavioral Health Care - *Passed*
[House Bill 1929](#) (HB 1929) would provide support for youth exiting inpatient behavioral health care. Young adults completing inpatient behavioral health care treatment are the largest group of people who become homeless within three to 12 months after exiting publicly funded care. The moment of exiting inpatient behavioral health care is a key point in time to end a youth's experience with homelessness. To assist youth during this important time, HB 1929 would create a post inpatient housing program for young adults to provide supportive transitional housing with behavioral health support. This program would also focus on securing long-term housing for the group of young adults exiting inpatient behavioral health treatment. HB 1929 is in line with the bishops' legislative priorities of caring for children and families, combating homelessness, and providing health care for all. The WSCC supports HB 1929 and its companion bill, [Senate Bill 6050](#) (SB 6050).

HB 1941: Improving Care for Children with Medically-Complex Conditions - *Passed*
[House Bill 1941](#) (HB 1941) would improve health care options for children receiving Medicaid who have medically-complex conditions. In 2019, the federal government passed the Advancing Care for Exceptional (ACE) Kids Act. This law created provider "health homes" and health teams who can coordinate prompt care for children with medically-complex conditions. HB 1941 would create a plan to participate in the ACE

Kids Act and establish these health home plans in Washington state to better serve children with medically complex conditions. In line with the bishops' legislative priority to improve health care access, the WSCC supports HB 1941.

HB 1945: Streamlining Eligibility for Child Care and Early Education Programs - *Passed*

[House Bill 1945](#) (HB 1945) would streamline eligibility for child care and early education programs. If families are eligible for basic food benefits, then HB 1945 would automatically also make them eligible for the Working Connections Child Care program, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and Birth to Three ECEAP. The Working Connections Child Care program provides child care subsidies to those who have household incomes at or below 60 percent of the state median income. ECEAP and Birth to Three ECEAP are voluntary preschool programs that include education, health, and family support services. Children eligible for this program are in families living at or below 110 percent of the federal poverty level or are eligible for special education due to a disability. In line with the bishops' economic justice and children/families legislative priorities, the WSCC supports HB 1945.

HB 1946: Behavioral Health Scholarship Program - *Passed*

[House Bill 1946](#) (HB 1946) would create the behavioral health scholarship program. Scholarship recipients would be required to work in underserved behavioral health areas. This bill would help address a shortage of behavioral health professionals. In line with the bishops' health care legislative priority, the WSCC supports HB 1946.

HB 1982: Increased Broadband Access for Rural Areas and Native American Tribes - *Passed*

[House Bill 1982](#) (HB 1982) would increase broadband access for rural areas and Native American tribes. HB 1982 codifies the Community Economic Revitalization Board Rural Broadband Program. This program provides grants and loans to local governments and federally recognized tribes for the purposes of financing the cost to build infrastructure to provide high-speed, open-access broadband service to rural and underserved communities for the purposes of economic development or community development. High-speed internet connectivity via broadband is an essential component to modern life, impacting access to education, health care, public safety, social services, and economic opportunities. Securing access to underserved populations is in line with the bishops' economic justice legislative priority. The WSCC supports HB 1982.

HB 2007: TANF Limit Extensions for Certain Families - *Passed*

[House Bill 2007](#) (HB 2007) will extend TANF time limits for families living in deep poverty. This bill was amended significantly along the way to allow only TANF families with a child under 2 years old and who qualify for an infant/toddler WorkFirst participation exemption to qualify for a time limit extension. Statewide Poverty Action estimates this will help approximately 80 TANF families. In line with the bishops' economic justice and children/families legislative priorities, the WSCC supports HB 2007.

HB 2012: Support Nonprofits Providing Affordable Housing - Passed

[House Bill 2012](#) (HB 2012) would increase the eligibility of nonprofits for property tax exemptions if they are providing affordable rental housing or lots for mobile homes for qualifying low-income individuals. In line with the bishops' legislative priorities to support affordable housing and combat homelessness, the WSCC supports HB 2012.

HB 2019: Native American Apprentice Assistance Program - Passed

[House Bill 2019](#) (HB 2019) would establish a Native American apprentice assistant program. HB 2019 cites challenges Native Americans in our state face in attaining post-secondary education. For example, in some cases there is a lack of access to programs near reservations. In other instances, stigma against certain educational opportunities has developed as the result of experiences at historical boarding schools that separated Native American families. Recognizing obstacles faced in the past, HB 2019 would create a Native American apprentice assistant program to create opportunities for indigenous people and advance workforce development. HB 2019 is in line with the bishops' legislative priorities to respect the life and dignity of all and to seek racial justice and economic justice. The WSCC supports HB 2019.

HB 2049: Washington Recycling and Packaging (Re-WRAP) Act - Failed

Currently, over 50% of packaging and paper products are not recycled. Additionally, less than 60% of the state has access to curbside recycling services. The Washington Recycling and Packaging Act (WRAP Act) was introduced in previous legislative sessions, and this Re-WRAP version of the bill once again proposes to modernize recycling in the state. [House Bill 2049](#) (HB 2049) would employ producer responsibility to ensure that more packaging is reusable, recyclable, or compostable. Additionally, curbside recycling would be made available to all who currently have curbside garbage pickup services. A statewide, standardized list of what can and cannot be recycled would also be produced. In line with the bishops' legislative priority to care for God's creation, the WSCC supports the Re-Wrap Act, [HB 2049/SB 6005](#).

HB 2058: Increasing Access to Free Meals In Schools - Failed

[House Bill 2058](#) (HB 2058) would increase student access to free meals in public schools. Food insecurity is a barrier to education. Universal access will directly impact childhood hunger and reduce the stigma that is a barrier to accepting meals. Programs offering free meals to students in grades kindergarten through fourth grade at qualifying schools are already underway, and SB 5964 would increase the scope of access, permitting any student that requests it to receive a free meal. In accordance with our children/families, education, and economic justice legislative priorities, the WSCC supports HB 2058 and its companion bill, [Senate Bill 5964](#).

HB 2070: CURB Pollution Act - Failed

Under the Cumulative Risk Burden (CURB) Pollution Act, [Senate Bill 5990](#) (SB 5990) and [House Bill 2070](#) (HB 2070), projects seeking permits in areas overburdened by pollution will be subject to an *environmental justice impact statement*. Environmental justice impact statements will assess environmental and public health stressors resulting from proposed projects or projects seeking permit renewals. Impacted

communities will have an opportunity to speak about project impacts at a public hearing. Permits will then be granted, deemed conditional, or denied based on the environmental justice impact statement and the public hearing. The CURB Pollution Act develops a transparent, replicable, and translatable process for analyzing the cumulative health risks of those who are disproportionately harmed by pollution. WSCC Director of Policy and Communications, Adrienne Corpuz Joyce, testified in support of the CURB Pollution Act before the Senate Committee on Environment, Energy, and Technology. The testimony may be viewed [here](#). In line with the bishops' care for creation and environmental justice legislative priorities, the WSCC supports the CURB Pollution Act.

HB 2076: Addressing Human Trafficking - *Failed*

[House Bill 2076](#) (HB 2076) addresses crimes involving human trafficking and sexual exploitation. It further expands criteria for which one can be found guilty of human trafficking to reflect the breadth of tactics used by traffickers. The bill also establishes a statewide committee to address the issue of children who are sexually exploited and to make recommendations on statewide laws and practices. On January 16 WSCC executive director, Jean Hill, testified in support of HB 2076 at its committee hearing. Jean's testimony may be viewed [here](#). In line with the legislative priority to combat human trafficking, the WSCC supports HB 2076 and its companion bill, [Senate Bill 6057](#) (SB 6057).

Initiative 2081 (I-2081) – *Passed*

[Initiative 2081](#) (I-2081) will establish a parents' bill of rights for parents of children in public schools. In the tradition of Catholic Social Teaching, families are a central social institution that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. I-2081 is the result of signature gathering that occurred in 2023.

The text of I-2081 may be viewed [here](#). I-2081 names parents as the primary stakeholders in their children's upbringing. It also reiterates or establishes numerous parents' rights within the public school system. Among those listed are the right to review medical records and health records, the right to receive prior notification when medical services are being offered to their child (except when emergency medical treatment is required), the right to receive notification of a medical service or medications provided to their child that could result in financial impact, the right to receive reassurance that a child's public school will not discriminate against a child based upon sincerely held religious beliefs, and the right to receive notification if a child is taken or removed from a public school campus without parental permission, including to stay at a youth shelter or host home. I-2081 also calls for parents to receive notification and the ability to opt their children out of activities that include questions about a child's sexual experiences or are on the topic of sexual activity. In line with the bishops' legislative priority to support children and families, the WSCC supports I-2081.

HB 2097: Recovering Wages Owed to Workers – Passed

[House Bill 2097](#) (HB 2097) would establish a work group to develop and recommend strategies to help employees recover wages owed to them when employers violate provisions of the Minimum Wage Act or other wage payment requirements. The bishops prioritize the dignity of work and the rights of workers, and the WSCC supports HB 2097.

HB 2099: Identification Cards for Persons in State Custody or Care – Passed

[House Bill 2099](#) (HB 2099) would require the Department of Corrections, all state hospitals, secure community transition facilities, and residential treatment facilities to ensure that individuals in custody or care of these agencies possess state identification issued by the Department of Licensing prior to release or discharge. Proper identification will assist those who completed sentences or care to access housing, social services, bank accounts and to reintegrate into society. Successful re-entry is key to reducing recidivism. Identify your district and senator and find a link to send your senator a message [here](#). In line with the bishops' restorative justice legislative priority, the WSCC supports HB 2099.

HB 2114: Rent Stability - Failed

[House Bill 2114](#) (HB 2114) would improve housing stability for tenants. Provisions of HB 2114 include limiting rent and fee increases, requiring notice of rent and fee increases, limiting fees and deposits, establishing a landlord resource center, authorizing tenant lease termination, creating parity between lease types, and providing for attorney general enforcement. Amidst a housing affordability crisis in Washington state, this bill is in line with the bishops' affordable housing legislative priority, and the WSCC supports HB 2114.

HB 2115: Abortion Prescription Label Changes – Passed

[House Bill 2115](#) (HB 2115) would allow health care providers who have prescribed an abortion medication to request that their names not be printed on prescription labels. WSCC executive director Jean Hill testified against the bill, and her testimony may be viewed [here](#). HB 2115 would allow practitioners to request that the prescription label for a patient's abortion medication include the prescribing and dispensing health care facility name, instead of the practitioner's name. Proponents of the bill argue that omitting a provider name will decrease harassment or intimidation. The WSCC does not condone harassment nor violence against abortion providers. At the same time, women may experience adverse effects following an abortion, and it is important that provider information be easily accessible in the event of an emergency. The health of women seeking abortions should be prioritized. Additionally, federal law requires that physician's names be provided on prescription labels. Respecting life and the dignity of every human person is a legislative priority, and the WSCC opposes HB 2115.

HB 2130: Extend Special Education Services - Failed

[House Bill 2130](#) (HB 2130) would extend special education services from age 21 to age 22. In line with the bishops' legislative priority to care for those with disabilities, the WSCC supports HB 2130.

HB 2270: Creates A State Department of Housing - Failed

[House Bill 2270](#) (HB 2270) would create a department of housing in Washington. Amid a housing crisis in our state, a new housing department would focus solely on housing and homelessness issues and bring together state programs that currently span multiple agencies and partners. In January the bishops released this [statement](#), calling on the faithful and legislators to care for vulnerable populations impacted by homelessness and the lack of affordable housing. The WSCC supports HB 2270.

HB 2368: Refugee and Immigrant Assistance – Passed

[House Bill 2368](#) (HB 2368) would refine laws supporting refugees and immigrants. provide refugee and immigrant assistance. HB 2368 establishes the scope of the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance. Under HB 2368, this office would coordinate state, federal, and local efforts to support the economic and social integration of immigrants and refugees arriving in Washington state. This office would also provide cash assistance, medical assistance, and refugee support services to immigrants and refugees. This past fall, the WSCC issued this [statement](#) on immigration. In line with the legislative priority to care for immigrants, the WSCC supports HB 2368.

HB 2457: Housing Support For Domestic Violence Survivors - Failed

[House Bill 2457](#) (HB 2457) would increase housing options for domestic violence survivors. Domestic violence is a leading cause of homelessness for women and children. At the same time, there is a shortage of domestic violence shelters. HB 2457 would create a domestic violence emergency housing voucher program, a grant program to increase emergency housing units for survivors, and a task force to work on solutions to increase the supply of short-term housing for survivors. In line with the bishops' children/families and housing legislative priorities, the WSCC supports HB 2457.

SB 5109: Wage Replacement for Immigrant Workers - Failed

[Senate Bill 5109](#) (SB 5109) would establish a wage replacement program to help undocumented immigrant workers who are ineligible for unemployment insurance and meet certain qualifications. In line with the bishops' immigration legislative priority, the WSCC supports SB 5109 and its companion bill, [House Bill 1095](#) (HB 1095).

SB 5180: The Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact – Passed

[Senate Bill 5180](#) (SB 5180), the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact, would support teachers from other states in pathways to licensure in Washington. The bill would also help eligible military spouses in becoming licensed in our state. SB 5180 could be advantageous for teachers seeking employment in Catholic schools. In line with the

bishops' Catholic schools and education legislative priority, the WSCC supports SB 5180.

SB 5580: Maternal Health Outcomes – Passed

[Senate Bill 5580](#) (SB 5580) would improve maternal health outcomes. The U.S. morbidity rate for women who are pregnant or giving birth is the highest among developed nations. SB 5580 would increase eligibility to 210% of the federal poverty level requirement for health care (Apple Health) for pregnant and postpartum individuals. SB 5580 would also direct the Health Care Authority (HCA) to create a post-delivery and transitional care program for people with substance use disorder at the time of delivery to allow for extended post-delivery hospital care. Additionally, the Maternity Support Services (MSS) program would be updated to address perinatal outcomes and increase equity and healthier birth outcomes. In line with the bishops' health care, respect life, and children/families legislative priorities, the WSCC supports SB 5580.

SB 5893: Supporting Formerly Incarcerated Individuals Reintegrating into Society - Failed

[Senate Bill 5893](#) (SB 5893) would support those reintegrating into society and being released from custody prior to the end of their sentence. Current law stipulates that those being discharged from the Department of Corrections shall be supplied with suitable clothing, transportation, and subsistence money that the operating budget has currently set for \$300. SB 5893 extends these provisions to those transitioning to partial confinement or community custody. As individuals complete their sentences, it is important to support those departing from the Department of Corrections to avoid recidivism. This bill aligns with the bishops' restorative justice legislative priority. The WSCC supports SB 5893.

SB 5908: Improve the Extended Foster Care Program – Passed

[Senate Bill 5908 \(SB 5908\)](#) would improve the extended foster care program. Youth who age out of the foster system face substantial challenges. An extended foster care program for youth ages 18-21 has proven impactful: 41% of youth who age out of the foster care system at age 18 experience homelessness or housing instability, compared to only 23% of those using the extended foster care program. SB 5908 improves the extended foster care program by allowing youth to enter or exit the program at any time when they are aged 18-21, increasing awareness of the program among foster youth, improving eligibility, and creating a housing and maintenance subsidy for participants. Related to the bishops' children/families and affordable housing/homelessness legislative priorities, the WSCC supports SB 5908.

SB 5917: Updating Hate Crime Laws – Passed

[Senate Bill 5917](#) (SB 5917) updates language for hate crimes. Currently, hate crime laws apply if a *specific person's* property is damaged. SB 5917 would consider damage to *public* property to be a hate crime if motivated by the perception of one's "race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender expression or

identity, or mental, physical, or sensory disability.” In line with the bishops’ religious liberty and racial justice priorities, the WSCC supports SB 5917.

SB 5921: Tribal Representation on the Conservation Commission - *Failed*

[Senate Bill 5921](#) (SB 5921) would require one member of the State Conservation Commission to be an appointed member or representative from a federally recognized tribe. While this is currently the general practice, SB 5921 would make this practice a legal requirement. The Conservation Commission is a state agency created to assist and guide conservation districts in preparing and implementing resource conservation programs. In line with the bishops’ racial justice and care for creation legislative priorities, the WSCC supports SB 5921.

SB 6063: Revising Persistent Offender Laws for Juveniles- *Failed*

[Senate Bill 6063](#) (SB 6063) revises how the “three strikes,” or persistent offender, law is applied to those who committed crimes while under the age of 18. The “three strikes” law requires courts to impose a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of release when a person is deemed to be a persistent offender. Currently, crimes committed when one is under 18 may be applied to the definition of a persistent offender. SB 6063 would modify the definition of persistent offender to excludes crimes committed when one is under 18 years old. In line with the bishops’ restorative justice legislative priority, the WSCC supports SB 6063.

SB 6066: Amending Assisted Suicide Laws – *Failed*

[Senate Bill 6066](#) (SB 6066) would amend provisions of Washington’s assisted suicide laws, or the death with dignity act. Numerous assisted suicide law changes were made during the 2023 legislative session. Under the newly revised assisted suicide laws, health care providers who object to assisted suicide are now required to participate in the act if their patient requests assisted suicide. Objecting health care providers must chart a patient’s request for assisted suicide, starting the seven-day waiting period before a patient may be given a lethal prescription. Previously, objecting health care providers were not required to be part of the process that started the clock of the waiting period. A more detailed analysis authored by Richard Doerflinger of the problems that SB 6066 seeks to correct may be found [here](#). The WSCC bishops oppose assisted suicide and support SB 6066.

SB 6068: Dependency Outcome Reporting - *Passed*

[Senate Bill 6068](#) (SB 6068) will increase data collection on the well-being of children who are dependents of the state. Currently, data is only collected on the number of cases that have not achieved permanent placement. More data is needed to assess the relational permanency and well-being of dependent children, which will provide for better practices to improve outcomes in foster care. In line with the bishops’ legislative priority to care for children and families, the WSCC supports SB 6068.

SB 6157: Permitting DACA Recipients to Apply for Civil Service - *Passed*

[Senate Bill 6157](#) (SB 6157) would reform the civil service to allow Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients to apply for the civil service and permit a civil service exam scoring advantage for bilingual and multilingual applicants, applicants with higher education, and applicants with prior work experience in social services. Established in 2012, DACA delays the deportation of individuals without documentation who came to the United States as children. DACA recipients are eligible for work permits, or Employment Authorization Documents (EADs). The US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the WSCC support the DACA program. SB 6157 would also grant agencies the discretion to add percentage points to applicants with language fluency, thereby increasing the capability of the civil servant work force to communicate and work with diverse populations. In line with the bishops' immigration and racial justice legislative priorities, the WSCC supports SB 6157.

SB 6191: Increase Affordable Housing - *Failed*

Using funds from the existing real estate excise tax, [Senate Bill 6191](#) (SB 6191) would designate permanent funds for the housing trust fund, the apple health and homes account, the affordable housing for all account, the new developmental disabilities housing and services account, and the housing stability account. The bishops recently released this [statement](#), calling on the faithful and legislators to care for vulnerable populations impacted by the lack of affordable housing and homelessness. The WSCC supports SB 6191.

SB 6298: Mandatory Reporting and the Clergy Penitent Privilege – *Failed*

[Senate Bill 6298](#) (SB 6298) concerns the duty of the clergy to report child abuse or neglect, SB 6298 makes all clergy of any faith mandatory reporters of child abuse or neglect with the limited exception of information obtained in a penitential communication. The definition of penitential communication is narrowly designed to protect the Catholic Sacrament of Reconciliation. Opponents of the bill sought to eliminate the privilege entirely, leaving clergy without any protections when they refuse to break the seal of confession.

The WSCC was in support of most of this bill, which represented a compromise between the religious liberty rights of religions and the rights of survivors of abuse. Thus, the bill provides a strong exemption from reporting for any information obtained solely in the Sacrament of Confession. On the other hand, if a child is actively being abused, the bill adds a duty to warn authorities, even if the information comes "in part" from a penitential communication.

No priest has authority to violate Canon Law by breaking the Seal of Confession, even in part. Similarly, we know of no priest who would allow known child abuse to persist and a known perpetrator to continue to jeopardize their immortal soul after that person has reached out for help in the Sacrament of Confession.

The WSCC took a neutral position on the "in part" language because the broader exemption for penitential communications in the bill is critical to protect the Sacrament of Confession from state intrusion. The duty to warn is such an intrusion but can be

avoided by following Safe Environment policies and pastoral care of a penitent confessing to ongoing sinfulness.