

# WSCADV



Advocating for Survivor Safety, Freedom & Options:  
**WSCADV Report on the 2024  
State Legislative Session**

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# OVERVIEW OF SESSION

The Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (WSCADV) advocates each year at the Washington State Legislature. We advocate for positive changes to the State's response to domestic violence and impacted survivors. This year (2024) marked what's known as a "short session," meaning the legislature convenes for 60-days to pass bills and supplemental biennial budgets. The legislature was in session from January 8 to March 7, 2024. This year, WSCADV's priority policy agenda included:

- Safety, health, & wellbeing for survivors
- Housing & economic security
- Anti-violence education & violence prevention
- Racial equity
- Human dignity

WSCADV tracked over 150 bills that, if passed, would impact survivors' economic & housing stability, reproductive healthcare, and ability to navigate the legal system, among others. This overview presents information about some of those bills that were passed into law and some that did not pass.

Special thanks to our policy team and the entire WSCADV staff for supporting our policy work. And a huge thank you to all our Member Programs and community partners for their support in advocating for policy solutions that enhance safety and freedom for survivors. We couldn't do this work without you.

Have questions, thoughts, or suggestions on bill ideas for the next session? Please contact WSCADV's Public Policy Director, Em Stone, at [emily@wscadv.org](mailto:emily@wscadv.org) with any questions.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink that reads "Emily Stone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Em Stone  
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# BUDGET UPDATES

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In a short session, the legislature writes a supplemental budget, which is designed to include additions to the larger biennial budget. Last year, (in the 2023 session), WSCADV helped secure a 60% increase in ongoing funding for DV emergency shelter services, along with a one-time allocation of over \$41 Million in 2024-2025 for crime victim services to address Federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding cuts. Outlined below are a few supplemental budget wins for FY 2025.

## DV HOUSING

This proviso allocates \$1M of general state appropriation funding towards the administration of housing assistance for persons fleeing or who have recently fled domestic violence. This one-time funding will be allocated to service providers who already have contracts with the Office of Crime Victims Advocacy (OCVA) to support program operating costs. At least 80% of these funds will be used to cover survivors' rental payments. Survivors are at high risk of becoming homeless; this additional funding will help survivors and their families remain stably housed.

## DV INTERVENTION TREATMENT

This proviso allocates \$200,000 for OCVA to convene a work group to create a roadmap of the steps needed for insurance billing for DV intervention treatment (DVIT) in Washington. Additionally, \$1.3M is allocated to OCVA to contract with a research university to conduct research comparing the "Strength at Home" program to standard DVIT methods used in Washington.

We are encouraged by the strength-based, non-stigmatizing approach of the "Strength at Home" program and hope it will broaden the options for effective, evidence-based interventions for those that cause harm. We hope the workgroup may also facilitate a dialogue around how this option could be made more widely available at low or no cost, communities around the state have an opportunity to access to high quality behavioral health care that would help to reduce recidivism, and increase health and safety for survivors, their children, the person causing harm and their communities.

# BUDGET UPDATES

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## HEALTHCARE FOR IMMIGRANTS

We secured \$28.4M in the budget to expand healthcare access for undocumented individuals and families with a Medicaid-equivalent. With this additional funding, the number of folks who can access this program will double. Undocumented survivors face many barriers to accessing healthcare, including fear of deportation, language barriers, and financial abuse. This is an important step towards dismantling these barriers and promoting health equity for immigrants and survivors alike.

## DOULAS FOR ALL MEDICAID COVERAGE

The budget includes funds for the ability of birth doula services to be reimbursed through Medicaid coverage. The approved reimbursement rate of up to \$3,500 per doula is the highest rate for birth doulas in the nation. Additionally, \$100,000 has been allocated for the development of a “Doula Hub,” which will provide support for doulas navigating Medicaid referral and billing systems. The physical, emotional, and informational support that birth doulas provide during pregnancy and the postpartum period has been shown to significantly improve health outcomes and health equity. Doula services are holistic and culturally responsive, which is particularly important for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, low-income, and other communities that face barriers or discrimination when accessing the health care system.



## DV PREVENTION & TREATMENT WORK SESSION

During the first week of the legislative session, Em (Public Policy Director) and Ward Union (Senior Prevention Strategist) presented on community-based domestic violence prevention across the state in front of the House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry Committee. Alongside national and state experts in violence prevention, WSCADV staff spoke about the importance of finding solutions that center reducing harm. Ward shared powerful examples of some of our partners engaging in prevention, such as [Good Foot Arts Collective](#) and [UTOPIA WA](#).

This was the **first time ever** that the state legislature created space to have meaningful dialogue about the value of DV prevention or treatment. There is expanding statewide interest in funding prevention and batterer's intervention services, paving the way to a world where all people can live and love without fear.

***"Every one of us is in a relationship with another human being. And I've yet to meet a human that has said, 'I've got it nailed. I've got human relationships down.'"***

***- Ward Union -***

# BILLS THAT PASSED

## **HB 1541** “NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US” ACT

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This bill acknowledges that the people most impacted by proposed policies should be in the room helping to create that legislation. Survivors of domestic violence have had to fight for their voices to be heard. This bill honors that fight and codifies a pathway for survivor voices to have a seat at the table.



*Em Stone testifying on SB 1541 at Senate State Government & Elections Committee*

## **HB 1618** STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS FOR CHILDHOOD SEXUAL ABUSE

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This bill removes the civil statute of limitations for childhood sexual abuse. Previously, survivors only had a three-year window in which they could bring a cause of action. Eliminating this limitation allows survivors to heal on their own timeline and ensures survivors can speak out and seek justice when they are ready.

## **HB 1652** CHILD SUPPORT PASSTHROUGH

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This bill curtails a long-standing practice of the state intercepting child support payments to families who are receiving TANF. Previous policy allowed parents receiving TANF benefits to receive only \$50 per month of child support payments, or up to \$100 if there are multiple children. Starting January 1, 2026, the entirety of child support payments will go directly to families. However, the state can still seize back-owed debt.



# BILLS THAT PASSED

## **HB 1958 NONCONSENSUAL REMOVAL OF A SEXUALLY PROTECTIVE DEVICE**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** “Stealthing” refers to the deliberate and nonconsensual removal of a condom or other barrier method of protection during sexual intercourse. Stealthing poses a serious health risk and violation of bodily autonomy and can be used to intentionally cause an unwanted pregnancy as a tactic of coercive control in an abusive relationship. This bill officially recognizes stealthing as a form of sexual assault and provides legal recourse for survivors.

## **HB 2115 PRESCRIPTION LABELING FOR ABORTION MEDICATIONS**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** Harassment and violence against abortion providers has surged in recent years. This bill protects providers by allowing them to remove their name from the prescription labels for abortion medications. Keeping providers safe will help protect equitable access to reproductive care, particularly in rural areas where fewer providers may be available. Additionally, this will support more survivors across the state having timely access to abortion medication.

## **HB 2124 CHILDCARE ACCESS**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** Access to safe, affordable childcare is vital to survivors with children. HB 2124 will increase access to Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) benefits by creating new eligibility categories, allowing more families to access affordable, high-quality childcare. This will redefine the working requirement to include families participating in the Early Head Start or Birth to Three ECEAP programs. In addition, childcare provider eligibility will be extended to Head Start, Early Head Start, ECEAP, and Birth to Three ECEAP providers, helping to close the childcare gap that many parents face.





# BILLS THAT PASSED

## **HB 5780** PUBLIC DEFENSE TRAINING

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This bill begins to address the crumbling public defense system in Washington. The aim of the bill is to create internship programs for aspiring public defenders and prosecutors in rural and underserved areas. In addition, state agencies are instructed to provide training to early-career public defenders and prosecutors. Bolstering the public defense system in Washington will provide much needed resources for individuals without the financial means to hire private attorneys to have access to quality representation. This is vital for criminalized survivors to navigate the hardships of the criminal justice system.

## **SB 5793** PAID SICK LEAVE

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** Paid sick leave is vital for survivors who are caring for loved ones, whether they are biological or chosen family. This bill expanded the state's paid sick leave law to include caring for individuals who are not related to the employee, making the overall policy more equitable for people living with or caring for their chosen family!

## **SB 5937** CRIME VICTIMS SUPPORT

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This comprehensive bill advances trauma-informed responses for survivors engaging in the legal system and expands survivors' rights. It clarifies and expands eligibility for survivors accessing the Crime Victims Compensation Program (CVCP). It also covers survivors' medical costs and transportation costs for forensic exams, regardless of where the violence occurred (i.e. out of state). Additionally, it removes the statute of limitations for rape committed by first responders and modifies the elements of rape in the first degree. Survivors are now given the option of attending court proceedings in-person or remotely. Finally, this bill also establishes the Statewide Forensic Nurse Examiner program to ensure forensic nurse examiners and sexual assault kits are readily available when needed.



*Em Stone testifying on SB 5937 at House Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry*



# BILLS THAT PASSED

## **SB 6105 ADULT ENTERTAINERS**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This bill provides important workplace protections for dancers working in the adult entertainment industry by enforcing safety guidelines such as on-site security during certain hours, clear contracts for dancers, panic buttons, and mandatory safety training for all club staff. It also promotes adult entertainers' financial stability and independence by ensuring they are compensated fairly and not required to pay high rent fees to the club owners.

## **SB 6227 PROTECTION ORDERS FOR "NGRI" (NOT GUILTY BY REASON OF INSANITY)**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** When a criminal case is dismissed for any reason, any no-contact orders put in place by the court are dropped. This bill will allow for courts to place protective orders against individuals who have been determined "not guilty for reason of insanity" in criminal proceedings. The court may enter a no-contact order to protect victims for the entirety of the time that the individual is within court-ordered inpatient treatment, conditional release, or court supervision. This will help support survivors who often feel that they are left with few options for safety when abusers are found not guilty by reason of insanity.



*Advocates from Mother Africa and DAWN with Rep Mia Gregerson during our Domestic Violence Advocacy Days!*

# BILLS THAT FAILED

## **HB 2001 JUDICIAL DISCRETION ACT**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** Incarceration isolates people from their families, communities, and support systems. This bill would have provided a pathway for people who are currently incarcerated with life or long sentences and have made considerable progress in their healing and rehabilitation work to reunite with their families through reduced sentences. This would have been particularly impactful for criminalized survivors, who make up most incarcerated women, transgender, and gender non-conforming people.



*Heather Wehrwood testifying on HB 2001 for the House Community Safety, Justice, & Re-entry Committee*

## **HB 2006 COURT INTERPRETERS**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** Survivors with limited English proficiency and survivors who are Deaf or hard-of-hearing rely on language interpreters to navigate the legal system. In many places across WA, there are not enough certified interpreters to meet survivors' needs. Without an interpreter who speaks their language, survivors can be cut off from the legal resources they need to maintain their safety. This bill would have lowered this language barrier by expanding the pool of language interpreters who could be appointed by the court.

# BILLS THAT FAILED

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## **HB 2114 RENT STABILIZATION**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** One of the biggest challenges getting survivors housed is the continued housing crisis in Washington state. Increasing rent prices and costly move-in fees are barriers to a survivor's ability to access stable housing. This bill would have prohibited landlords from increasing rent during the first 12 months of tenancy and no more than 5% within any 12-month period. In addition, landlords would have been prohibited from charging different rental amounts for month-to-month leases versus longer-term leases. It also would have limited move-in fees to the equivalent of one month's rent or less. All these provisions would have made housing more accessible for survivors, who often must navigate complex and difficult re-housing systems after escaping abuse.

## **HB 2237 PARENTING PLAN LIMITATIONS**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This bill would have updated the current parenting plan statute sections on limitations in parenting plans when there is a risk of harm to the child. Many survivors rely on this section of the statute to seek safety for themselves and their children when creating parenting plans with abusive ex-partners. Survivors often take actions to protect their children from abuse and this legislation provided updated language around actions taken by a "protective parent" that would have been particularly impactful for survivors. Additionally, the statute provided new protections for criminalized survivors, expanded guidance for supervised visitation and parenting plans when sexual abuse has taken place.

## **SB 5241 KEEP OUR CARE ACT**

**WSCADV Position:** Support

**Summary:** This bill would have protected access to quality and affordable health care when health entities, such as hospitals, hospital systems, and provider organizations, consolidate. Such mergers and acquisitions occur without community input and can drive up costs, decrease quality of care, and restrict access to reproductive care, gender-affirming care, and other health care services. This is especially critical for DV survivors and for anyone whose access to health care is already restricted, including members of marginalized communities and residents of rural areas.



# THANK YOU!



Thank you all for supporting legislation for survivors this session! WSCADV is honored to advocate for survivors every session and could not do it without the valuable stories, wisdom, and passion our partner programs share with us.

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POLICY ACTIONS BY  
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