



WASHINGTON STATE CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

March 3, 2017

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Weekly Summary

Legislators have only until Wed., Mar. 8, to pass bills out of their original chamber in order for them to "stay alive." However, any bill deemed necessary to implement the budget can be exempt from cutoff deadlines. Bills have to be moved from their respective Rules Committees and placed on the floor calendar of their respective chambers before they can be voted upon by all the members of either the House or Senate. Not all bills will survive the Mar. 8 cutoff. Some will die in their respective Rules Committees, or on their respective floor calendars. On Mar. 9, the legislature's activity shifts back to the committee rooms, where the bills that passed their chamber of origin are eligible to be heard in a committee of the opposite chamber.

Note: Bills that are amended in committee are called substitute bills and are designated by the addition of "S" before their number, e.g., SSB 5234 or SHB 1234. Bills that are amended on the floor of a chamber are designated by the addition of "E" (engrossed) before their number, e.g., ESSB 5234 or ESHB 1234.

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Update on Bills

Source of Income Discrimination - HB 1633: In searching for a home, many individuals and families face discrimination by landlords unwilling to rent to Section 8 voucher holders. Seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities receiving government or nonprofit subsidies face similar discrimination. HB 1633 would prohibit a landlord from discriminating against applicants or tenants based on their source of income. Source of income includes income derived from social security, supplemental security income, other retirement programs, and any other public assistance programs. On Feb. 24, HB 1633 was placed on the House floor calendar.

Human Trafficking - SB 5030: Currently, child victims of commercial sexual abuse crimes do not benefit from the extended statute of limitations that applies to child victims of other sexual exploitation crimes. This bill would

extend the statute of limitations for trafficking crimes to ten years after the crime is committed, unless the victim is under the age of eighteen years old when the crime occurs. If the victim is a minor when the crime occurs, the statute of limitations for commercial sexual abuse and promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor would be extended to the victim's thirtieth birthday. The bill was passed unanimously by the Senate on Feb. 8. The House Public Safety Committee will hear SB 5030 on Mar. 9.

Vacating Convictions - [SSB 5272](#): This bill would vacate convictions if they arose from offenses committed as a result of being a victim of trafficking, promoting prostitution, or promoting commercial sexual abuse of a minor. The conviction could only be vacated if the person could prove by a preponderance of evidence that the other conviction was also a result of Trafficking, Promoting Prostitution in the first degree or Commercial Sex Abuse of a Minor. The bill unanimously passed the Senate on Feb. 22. SSB 5272 will be heard in the House Public Safety Committee on Mar. 9.

TANF Resource Limits - [SHB 1831](#): Eligibility for public assistance is determined by a combination of factors, including the resources or assets of an applicant, such as a personal car. SHB 1831 would authorize the state to exempt one motor vehicle per applicant for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) from being counted as a personal asset if that vehicle is used for transportation. The current vehicle limit is \$5,000. SHB 1831 would also exempt all other resources up to \$6,000. Without this legislation, some people who would otherwise qualify for TANF would be denied because the value of their car pushed them over the resource limit. SHB 1831 is in the House Rules Committee.

Cesar Chavez Day - [HB 1939](#): This bill would recognize March 31 as Cesar Chavez Day. Cesar Chavez, a Mexican-American born March 31, 1927, was an American farm worker, labor leader, and civil rights activist that worked to improve the treatment, pay, and working conditions of farm workers. On Feb. 27, HB 1939 passed the House by a 71-25 margin. The bill is now in the Senate State Government Committee.

Fair Chance Act - [SSB 5312](#) & [SHB 1298](#): These bills would prohibit employers from asking about arrests or convictions before an applicant is determined otherwise qualified for a position. Many job applications have a check box on the initial application form concerning arrests and/or convictions. The bills would prohibit use of this check box so that applicants could have a fair chance at being considered for a position based on their qualifications. SSB 5312 has been placed on the Senate floor calendar. SHB 1298 was amended in the House Appropriations Committee to make it conditional on funding being provided in the operating budget. SSB 1298 was passed by the entire House on Mar. 1 by a 68-30 margin and was referred to the Senate Commerce, Labor & Sports Committee.

Homeless Housing and Assistance - [SHB 1570](#): Both state and local homeless housing programs receive funding from the homeless housing and assistance surcharge collected by each county auditor when a document is recorded. These programs may include shelters, transitional housing, rental

assistance, and vouchers for victims of human trafficking. The surcharge is \$40 per recorded document, but is scheduled to change back to \$10 in 2019. As a result, as many as 22,000 people could become homeless. SHB 1570 would make the \$40 Homeless Housing and Assistance surcharge permanent and allow counties and/or cities to charge an additional surcharge, up to \$50 for homeless programs. SHB 1570 is in the House Rules Committee.

Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs) - [E2SHB 1783](#): Most people convicted of a crime receive at sentencing a notice of their Legal Financial Obligations (LFOs). These obligations include victim restitution, crime victims' compensation fees, etc. Upon completion of their sentence, the court-imposed debt, plus the very high interest rate of 12%, and sanctions, often presents a formidable barrier to persons integrating successfully back into their communities. E2SHB 1783 would eliminate the interest on most of the debt and limit the sanctions for those who prove an inability to pay. On Mar. 2, E2SHB 1783 was amended on the House floor and passed the full House by a 91 to 7 vote.

Public Notices in Languages other than English - [2SHB 1540](#): When wildfires ravaged so much of the state during 2015, many agricultural and forestry workers did not understand urgent evacuation notices because the notices were only in English. To address this public safety situation, 2SHB 1540 would require state agencies to provide health and safety notices in the language that diverse residents can understand when a significant segment of the community speaks a language other than English. 2SHB 1540 would also mandate each local organization for emergency management to maintain updated demographic data for their jurisdictions and information on the languages represented by their respective communities. The full House passed 2SHB 1540 by a 53-45 margin on Mar. 1. The bill is now in the Senate Local Government Committee.

Parental Notification - [SB 5320](#): This bill would require parental notification prior to abortions performed on girls who are unemancipated and under 18. Unless the parent or guardian has waived their right to notice, or there is a medical emergency, the abortion practitioner must give notice to one of the minor's parents or legal guardian at least 48 hours before the procedure. An exemption, known as a judicial bypass, would allow minors to undergo an abortion without parental notification. Petitions for judicial bypass are confidential and free. SB 5320 remains in the Senate Rules Committee.

Right to Counsel and Dependency Hearings - [SHB 1251](#): This legislation would have given children, who have been removed from their homes and are at risk of entering the foster care system, the right to be represented by counsel. It would also have required the court to appoint an attorney for a child before the initial shelter care hearing. The House Appropriations Committee heard, but did not pass SHB 1251. The bill missed the cutoff and is dead for the 2017 session.

School Nutrition Programs - [ESHB 1508](#): The bill would require high-needs schools, beginning in the 2018-19 school year, to offer breakfast after the bell to each qualifying student and provide adequate time for students to eat. All

public schools are encouraged to offer breakfast after the bell even if not required to do so. The bill would also direct districts with school lunch programs to begin eliminating lunch copays for qualifying students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 and to complete the copay phase out in the 2020-21 school year. The bill was amended by the House Appropriations Committee that the "bill is null and void unless funded in the budget." On Mar. 2, ESHB 1508 was amended on the House floor to remove the requirement for districts to eliminate lunch copays, and then passed the full House by a 90-8 margin.

Safe Surrender of Newborn Children - [SSB 5522](#): The legislation would require the Department of Social And Health Services to collect and compile information concerning (1) the number of newborns surrendered by the parent under Washington's Safety of Newborn Children Law; (2) the number of newborns abandoned within the state who were not surrendered; and (3) report its findings annually, to the public, which may be on its web site. Last month, the bill was amended to remove the medical condition of newborns from the reporting requirements. On Feb. 28, the entire Senate passed the bill by a vote of 48 to 1. SSB 5522 has been referred to the House Early Learning & Human Services Committee.

Informed Consent for End-of-Life Decisions - [SB 5433](#): The bill would revise the state's "Death with Dignity Act" to require an attending physician to inform the patient of feasible alternatives, including the treatment for the purpose of cure and the treatment for the purpose of extending the patient's life, to ensure that the patient is making an informed decision. On Mar. 1, the Senate Rules Committee placed SB 5433 on the Senate floor calendar.

Preventive Health Services (Mandating Contraceptives) - [ESHB 1523](#): Last month, the House Health Care & Wellness Committee amended and passed ESHB 1523, and on Mar. 1, the bill was amended on the House floor before passage by a 70-28 margin. It would require all health plans in the state to provide contraceptives at no cost. The contraceptives covered include those that are abortifacients. This constitutes a direct threat to the life and dignity of the human person. The WSCC opposes this bill.

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Lenten Creation Care Calendar



Many of us give up something during Lent. The Catholic Climate Covenant invites you to participate in a "carbon fast" and take steps to reduce your carbon footprint. This [Lenten Creation Care Calendar](#) can assist you, your family, parish, school, or religious community be more mindful of the ways that our daily habits impact both "our common home" and those most impacted by our neglect. With daily ideas for prayer and simple actions to reduce our carbon footprint, the calendar is a treasure trove for the season. You will notice that the second page is upside down. It is set up so you may print and photocopy (double-sided) and use as a bulletin insert.

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Pope Video - Help Persecuted Christians



Pope Francis' prayer intention for March 2017 is *"That persecuted Christians may be supported by the prayers and material help of the whole Church."* To

watch the related video, [click here](#).

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