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## Weekly Summary

*Thank you to all of you who responded to last week's Action Alerts on the TANF Resource Limits (HB 1831) and the Legal Financial Obligations (HB 1783). Unfortunately, both bills failed to be voted out of the Ways and Means Committee before the April 4 cutoff. They are considered dead for the 2017 legislative session.*

*The focus of legislative efforts in Olympia now shifts to the House and Senate Chambers. Some bills are on the calendar of the House or Senate, awaiting a vote by the entire chamber. Other bills are in their respective Rules Committees and need to be passed before they can be brought to the floor for a vote by April 12, the next cutoff.*

*Note: Bills that are amended in committee are usually considered as substitute bills and are designated by the addition of "S" before their number, e.g., SSB 5234 or SHB 1234. If a bill is amended in two Committees, it is designated with the addition of a 2 before the S, e.g. 2SHB 1234. Bills that are amended while being considered on the floor of a chamber are designated by the addition of "E" (engrossed) before their number, e.g., ESSB 5234 or ESHB 1234, or even 2ESHB 1234.*

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## Update on Bills still Alive

**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 passed the Senate and made it through the House committees. On April 6, the House unanimously passed SB 5030.

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. SSB 5272 passed the Senate and, on April 5, passed the House by a 92-5 margin. It will go to the Governor for his signature.

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. Last month, HB 1939 passed the House by a 71-25 margin, and is in the Senate Rules Committee awaiting a vote to put it before the entire Senate.

Fair Chance Act - [ESSB 5312](#): The bill 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. ESSB 5312 passed the Senate by a slim 25-24 margin. The House Appropriations Committee passed the bill to the Rules Committee on April 4. The House Rules Committee placed the bill on the floor calendar, where it awaits a vote by the entire House.

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. Bills necessary to implement the budget (NTIB) are exempt from all cutoff deadlines. SHB 1570 is considered to be NTIB and is therefore still alive, even though it didn't pass the House before the March 8 cutoff. On April 5, the bill was placed on the House floor calendar by the House Rules Committee.

Public Notices in Languages other than English - [2SHB 1540](#) / [SSB 5046](#):  
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 and SSB 5046 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. The bills 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. 2SHB 1540 appears to have died in the Senate Ways & Means Committee. The Senate version of the bill, SSB 5046, was amended and passed by the House Public Safety Committee on March 28 and was passed by the House Appropriations Committee on April 4. SSB 5046 is now in the House Rules Committee.

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. ESHB 1508 was amended and passed by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 27. The bill was passed by the Senate Ways & Means Committee on April 4 and has been referred to the Senate Rules Committee, awaiting a vote that would put it on the floor calendar.

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### Bills Not Surviving April 4 Cutoff

TANF Resource Limits - [ESHB 1831](#): ESHB 1831 would raise asset limits for public benefit programs. Currently, applicants are ineligible if they possess a car worth more than \$5,000 or greater than \$1,000 in liquid assets. These limits were set in 1996 and have not been adjusted since that time. ESHB 1831 which passed the House 75-22 provides for modest increases more reflective of today's cost of living - \$10,000 limit for car value and \$6,000 in liquid assets. The bill died in the Senate Ways & Means 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, as amended by the Senate Law & Justice Committee, decreases the interest rate to 4% for those who prove an inability to pay. After passing the House, E2SHB 1783 was amended and passed by the Senate Law & Justice Committee on March 29 to the Senate Ways & Means Committee, where it died.

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### Hunger Crisis: Advocate for Emergency Funding



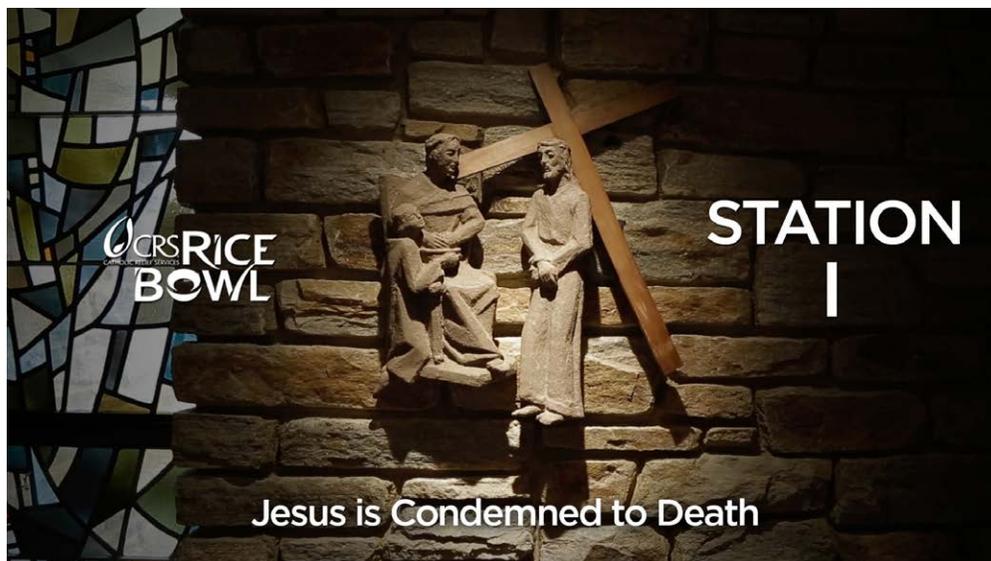
You may have seen the grisly images on your tablet or TV. Children reduced to skin and bones. Mothers and fathers walking for miles in search of food. A hunger crisis is gripping Somalia, Nigeria, and Yemen and a famine has been declared in South Sudan.

This is not the time to sit back and watch this horror unfold before our eyes. Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, called on all of us when he said: "There is always someone who is hungry or thirsty and who needs me. I cannot delegate this to another. This poor person needs me, my help, my word, my commitment."

Catholic Relief Services and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops are calling on our nation to lead the world to respond to this human catastrophe. Please join us by contacting [your members of Congress today](#) and urge them to provide critical funding to help save the lives of our brothers and sisters.

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## Stations of the Cross



The Stations of the Cross provide us with the opportunity to journey with Christ on His way to the cross. Today, so many of our brothers and sisters still walk that hard road to Calvary. Check out CRS Rice Bowl's Stations of the Cross Digital Retreats and reflect on how you can be Simon or Veronica

for someone in need. [Watch now.](#)

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## **U.S. Bishops Respond to Syria Chemical Attack**

Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), and Archbishop José H. Gomez of Los Angeles, vice president of the USCCB, issued the following joint statement on yesterday's chemical weapons attack in northern Syria. Full statement follows:

"The chemical attack in Syria on April 4 shocks the soul. The many innocent lives targeted by these terrible tools of war cry out for humanity's protection. In this season of Lent when Christians draw near to the suffering of Christ, let us match the horrific indifference shown for innocent life with a fervent prayer for love to break through the evil. Let us also match our prayer with a faithful witness to suffering so that no life at risk is forgotten.

"Pope Francis has repeatedly issued an appeal to Syrian leaders and to the international community saying: 'Please, silence the weapons, put an end to the violence! No more war! No more destruction! May humanitarian laws be respected, may the people who need humanitarian assistance be cared for and may the desired peace be attained through dialogue and reconciliation.'

"We echo the Holy Father's call. We pray for an end to the carnage in Syria and we pray that God will assuage all those who suffer and bring them consolation as we approach Easter and its message of love and hope."

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