



*Forty years ago, our attorney braved an eastern Washington blizzard to try a case establishing that women have the right to equal access to a newly constructed sports facility—and other resources—at Washington State University. **Blair v. WSU** was the case that moved equity in athletics forward, and not only throughout the state; it also spread out and had a ripple effect across the country. It was the foundational case for our organization.*

A lot has happened in the subsequent four decades. We've won cases and drafted laws that improve the lives of those we serve. We've **challenged systems of sexism and oppression**, and worked diligently to dismantle them. We've developed a reputation for perseverance, success, and cutting-edge work that **makes Legal Voice a leader in the U.S.**, frequently sought out for our expertise. And we've done it all with a strong, vibrant community and allies supporting us, guiding us, and pushing us forward. We've done it with *you*.

Legal Voice boldly addresses critical issues, regardless of potential risk, and persists in navigating difficult legal and legislative arenas. Our ability to **meaningfully change the law** and improve the lives of women, families, and LGBTQ persons is a key reason we've remained dedicated to this work since day one.

A RENEWED VISION

Our history has shown that we can do incredible things as a lean and mighty organization. Even so, **we know we can be mightier**. A few years ago, we invited our board and staff to think BIG: to consider the conversations we need to join and the ones we need to change, the communities and organizations we need to work with, and the issues that need advancing. Big thinking led to great ideas, and we set out a **renewed and reenergized plan** for our organization. We launched a fundraising campaign to expand our capacity, allowing us to affirmatively address the needs of those most affected by gender oppression and injustice in our region.

Legal Voice has a bold vision. With increased capacity, we will engage with even more attorneys, law students, volunteers, advocates, donors, and community members to move gender equity forward. We will fulfill **our promise of making positive change in the entire region** by taking our winning strategies to our neighboring states of Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska—and borrowing from them when they are leading the way. We will work on the ground in these states and elevate the efforts of our allies already doing powerful work in their own communities.

We developed a series of programmatic initiatives in conjunction with this special campaign that will enable us to expand upon our past work, and do so throughout the entire region. While the concrete details of our plans are confidential at this time, we are proud to share the broader strategic initiatives that will guide this critical work.

INITIATIVE 1: ENDING RAPE MYTHS IN THE LAW

The criminal legal system often fails victims of rape. That's why many survivors and their advocates are increasingly turning to the civil courts, seeking remedies such as protection orders, instead of pressing criminal charges. Unfortunately, the same rape myths that undermine survivors' access to the criminal legal system are being used to deny survivors the legal protections they need to move on with their lives in safety and health. Through this initiative, we will work to **establish and defend laws that ensure protection is readily available**—and easily attainable—for survivors of sexual assault.

INITIATIVE 2: ERADICATING GENDER DISCRIMINATION TO ENSURE SAFE AND SECURE LIVES

Gender discrimination plagues almost every aspect of our society: it exists in housing, employment, schools, health care, public accommodations, prisons, and yes, even in the law. Our society is built on systems that not only perpetuate gender discrimination, but that **erect insurmountable barriers** for the most marginalized and vulnerable communities. All people are entitled to live their lives with dignity, safety, and respect. We're dedicated to ensuring a woman's **basic civil rights are fulfilled**, regardless of where she lives, what she does, or how she identifies.

INITIATIVE 3: SAFEGUARDING HEALTH CARE AS A HUMAN RIGHT

The Affordable Care Act has improved access to health coverage and ended some gender-discriminatory practices throughout the United States. And quite apart from uncertainty about its fate, we know it doesn't go far enough. Immigrants, people seeking abortion care, and people seeking gender-confirming health care **continue to face barriers to obtaining the care they need**. People are increasingly denied care because of the religious or personal beliefs of employers, health care providers, and institutions. But medical treatment and good health should never be at the mercy of a provider, an institution, or a legislative body. So **we are changing systems** that create economic barriers, impose a geographic burden, or otherwise deny women and LGBTQ people access to quality, affordable health care services.

INITIATIVE 4: HONORING FAMILIES

As concepts of family evolve, so must the legal protections that help families **stay together, care for one another, and thrive**. We are committed to reforming and enforcing state laws in our region to ensure that all families—whether different-sex or same-sex, married or unmarried, inter-generational, single-parent, adoptive, or child-free—are recognized and protected by the law.

INITIATIVE 5: ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO SAFETY FOR SURVIVORS OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Our work to ensure safe housing, leave from work, unemployment benefits, protective family laws, civil protection orders, and other substantive improvements, has made life better and safer for many survivors of intimate partner violence. But we will not rest until we have done our part to eradicate domestic violence. This means working to ensure that the civil legal system remains responsive to the needs of survivors; it also means **addressing new challenges and lifting up the experiences of all survivors**, whose intersectional lives make one-size-fits-all approaches untenable.

INITIATIVE 6: HONORING THE DIGNITY AND AUTONOMY OF PEOPLE MAKING REPRODUCTIVE DECISIONS

Women of color, LGBTQ people, youth, and pregnant people remain particularly vulnerable to state and institutional discrimination that **puts their dignity and health at risk**. The criminalization of pregnant people, disrespectful and dangerous birth care that results in individual harm and shocking maternal health care disparities, and laws that seek to elevate fetuses over pregnant people, are all on the rise—and are prime targets of Legal Voice. We have long worked to ensure that reproductive autonomy and the dignity of each person to make these key decisions about their lives are respected and recognized in every state in the Northwest. Through this initiative, Legal Voice will remain **at the forefront of cutting-edge legal work to advance reproductive health and rights**, and prioritize providing our support to our allies in the reproductive justice movement.



WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED

We set out to raise \$1 million to increase our staff capacity and change the conversations in our region. And we've made incredible progress:

- We've raised \$800,000 toward our \$1 million goal.
- With this added capacity, we made an early investment in a **marketing and communications manager** to bolster our message and bring our story to more audiences. Since then we have
 - doubled our media mentions;
 - maintained strong relationships with reporters; and
 - launched a new mobile friendly website.
- In early 2016, we hired an **advocacy director** who has brought incredible expertise and vision, and allowed us to take our campaign plans to the next level, and to be agile in changing times.
 - In the 2017 legislative session, more bills that Legal Voice drafted and advocated for passed than in the last three sessions combined.
 - Our team is clearer about what cases and issues most need our expertise, and are moving steadily toward being more proactive and creative in our approach.
 - We are systematically addressing some of the diversity challenges we face and redoubling our efforts to **add diverse perspectives** to our board, staff, and committees.
- Additional work that we have been able to do since we increased our staff:
 - Develop additional opportunities to go to our communities and meet our donors and volunteers where they live, whether that is Tacoma, Spokane or Port Townsend.
 - Working with allies and partners, lay the groundwork to **file a lawsuit in Idaho** that would protect the bodily autonomy of all women.
 - Be responsive to national conversations and developments that would harm the people of the Northwest and be ready to file federal lawsuits if necessary.
 - Protect families by ensuring the Department of Social & Health Services does not use victim-blaming as a strategy to break up families.

Women's Bill of Rights in the Northwest

We've made progress everywhere, but there is still a lot of work to do.

 = **WOMEN'S LEGAL RIGHTS ACHIEVED**

THE RIGHT TO EQUAL TREATMENT AND TO BE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION.



THE RIGHT TO DECIDE WHEN AND HOW TO FORM AND MAINTAIN THEIR FAMILIES.



THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE WHEREVER THEY ARE.



THE RIGHT TO ECONOMIC EQUALITY AND INDEPENDENCE.



THE RIGHT TO BE HEALTHY AND ACTIVE.



Let's Change the Conversation

We're excited about where Legal Voice is headed. This increased capacity and groundbreaking work has been accomplished with just two additional staff members on our team. Can you imagine what we could do with even more capacity? The work we'd be able to add with a staff attorney in another community or state? What about a dedicated policy person to work with folks in our region to make connections and share strategies?

Will you join us in closing out this campaign with a special gift, above and beyond your annual support, to create an even bigger impact for women and families in our region?

Please visit us at LegalVoice.org/campaign to make a donation today.



Legal Voice is a progressive feminist organization using the power of the law to make change in the Northwest. We use that power structure to dismantle sexism and oppression, specifically advocating for our region's most marginalized communities: women of color, lesbians, transgender and gender-nonconforming people, immigrants, people with disabilities, low-income women, and others affected by gender oppression and injustice.

How We Make Social Change

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE EQUALITY

- Through allies and partners
- Through community outreach

EXAMPLE: Allies inform us that women are being fired for taking time off from work to get safe; Ramona takes leave to escape abuse, is later demoted and fired.

WE TAKE ACTION

POLICY

We draft model policy;
Ramona testifies to
the Legislature.

LAWSUITS

We file go to court, arguing it is
against public policy to fire someone
for trying to be safe.

EDUCATION

We inform communities and
allies about the problem.
We talk about Ramona's
case in the media.

WE SUCCEED

Washington Supreme Court rules that firing someone because she wants to be safe violated public policy.
Washington Legislature passes bill prohibiting employers from firing someone if they take time off to get safe.

LAWS ARE ENFORCED

We write "Know Your Rights" materials about the new law.
We sue employers that violate the law.
We engage community partners to educate everyone about the law.

PERSPECTIVES CHANGE

Women know about and assert their rights.
Employers learn about survivor's right to safety.

SOCIAL CHANGE!

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