

Spring 2018

THE EQUAL TIMES

Women's rights. Nothing less.



THEY TOOK HER SON: DEFENDING AMY'S RIGHT TO PARENT HER CHILD

No one should be placed in the double bind of needing protection and being punished when they ask for it. But that's exactly what happened to Amy, a war veteran and domestic violence survivor, who had her child taken away when she reached out for help.

After suffering severe violence from her child's father, **Amy did the things we often encourage domestic violence victims to do:** she fled her abuser, got a protection order, obtained full custody of her child, and moved away to seek safety. But that didn't end the turmoil. Her abuser's stalking made it difficult to find safe housing, her son was experiencing serious health problems as a result of the abuse, and Amy herself was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Amy reached out to the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) for help. Instead of providing the support she needed to parent her child, **they took her son away**, placing him in foster care for nearly 18 months.

The state **used her status as a survivor against her**, suggesting that she was an unfit parent because she was a victim of abuse. And instead of accommodating her disability as the law requires, they used it as a reason to take away her child.

We're defending Amy's rights to parent her son, and to not be blamed for the abuse committed against her. Parents who are moving through the trauma of domestic violence may need to be

supported in parenting their children, but in most cases removing their children from their care only furthers the trauma—for both the parent and the child.

Amy is seeking justice for herself and her son—but also for the countless other domestic violence survivors who have been further victimized by this system. Despite strong evidence that children do better in their own homes, with their own parents, than they do in the foster care system, **DSHS continues the unfair—and unconstitutional—practice** of punishing families experiencing domestic violence rather than supporting them.

Your support has allowed us to take on this important case. We're optimistic that, together, we not only will bring justice to Amy and her son, but will also **change the Department's unjust and unconstitutional response** to parents who have suffered domestic violence and are trying to protect their children from harm. Thank you for being with us.

Special thanks to our co-counsel Molly Terwilliger—Yarmuth Wildon attorney and former Legal Voice Board President—for her tremendous and continuing efforts on behalf of Amy and her son.



LET'S CHEERS TO 40 YEARS!

Legal Voice is celebrating 40 years of progress—and we want to celebrate with YOU! Whether you were in the living room where we were founded in 1978, or you recently joined our community, you are invited. Please join us on **Sunday, June 17th** for a fun day at the beach, complete with food trucks, tasty beverages, family-friendly activities, and fabulous conversation. **Learn more and RSVP at LegalVoice.org/communitycelebration.**

COCKTAILS FOR A CAUSE: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY!

At this year's Cocktails for a Cause, and in honor of International Women's Day, we celebrated women from every walk of life. Together, we raised more than \$32,000 to advance our efforts on the issues that matter most to women, girls, families, and LGBTQ people in the Northwest. **We couldn't do what we do without your inspiring passion and support of our work.** Thank you being with us every step of the way. Thank you for believing in us.

We were honored to have **Quin Bender-Kokx** as our esteemed speaker at this year's event. Quin has been a part of Legal Voice since he was in diapers—literally! It has been a pleasure to see him progress from a helpful auction volunteer to an outspoken and articulate feminist of the next generation. We look forward to seeing Quin continue to fight for what is right.

Cocktails for a Cause was made possible by the support of our annual partner, **Lane Powell**, and our dedicated sponsors: Foster Pepper, Perkins Coie, Stoel Rives, and Summit Law Group. We'd also like to thank **Katherine Leggett** for producing our short film, and **Youth in Focus** for the fabulous photo booth pictures—available on our Flickr at www.flickr.com/legalvoice.



SAVE THE DATES!

Legal Voice Auction
Saturday, October 13, 2018 • 5:30–9:30 p.m.
New location! Sheraton Seattle Hotel

Cocktails for a Cause
Thursday, April 4, 2019 • 6–8 p.m.
New location! Sheraton Seattle Hotel



History, Made: A Powerful Legislative Session in Washington

*The Washington State Legislature's 2018 session was historic, indeed! Despite ongoing challenges at the federal level, **we remained fearless in our advocacy** for Washington's women, girls, and LGBTQ community.*

And so did you! Together with other Legal Voice supporters, you gathered to write hundreds of postcards to legislators, heeded our action alerts to speak out, and supported our many trips to Olympia to testify. (Can you believe Legal Voice staff testified more than 30 times in this short, 60-day session?)

And, in the end, **the Legislature passed nearly all of Legal Voice's priority bills!** Here are some of the powerful victories we accomplished together.

- House Bill 2661 created new **employment protections for survivors** of sexual and gender-based violence. The law explicitly prohibits employers from discriminating against survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking, and requires them to grant reasonable safety accommodations at survivors' requests.
- After nearly six years of community advocacy, legislators passed the **Reproductive Parity Act** (SB 6219)! This law ensures that health insurance companies provide birth control coverage without co-pays, and requires private insurance companies that provide coverage for maternity care to also cover abortion care.
- The update to Washington's **Uniform Parentage Act** (SB 6037) takes critical steps to recognize the many ways in which we form our families. It strengthens protections for LGBTQ and non-biological parents, and replaces the state's ban on compensated surrogacy with a strong system that protects the health, financial well-being, and autonomy of women acting as surrogates.

- A strong community effort led to the passage of House Bill 2016, which ensures access to **doula and midwife services for incarcerated pregnant people**. Washington jails and the Department of Corrections are now required to make reasonable accommodations for incarcerated pregnant people to have access to the care—as well as the dignity and respect—that they deserve.
- And just in the nick of time, the Legislature passed the **Equal Pay Opportunity Act** (HB 1506), Washington's first equal pay bill since 1943! It fights the gender wage gap by requiring any disparity in pay to be based on job-related criteria—such as education, training, or experience—and gives workers the right to discuss and compare their wages.

We are also thrilled that the Legislature took steps to enforce protections for **immigrant survivors** of violence (HB 1022), prohibit the dangerous and discredited practice of "**conversion therapy**" (SB 5722), and ensure **survivors of workplace sexual harassment and assault** can speak out and seek justice (SB 5996, SB 6313, SB 6471, and SB 6068).

We're already creating a plan to build upon these victories in the 2019 session. One of our top priorities will be to expand Washington's reproductive health laws to include **explicit provisions for immigrants and transgender people** in our communities. Thank you for your support this session, and here's to making more legislative change together in 2019!

Photo: Community advocates—including Legal Voice's David Ward, Fajer Saeed Ebrahim, Pamela Crone, and Nancy Sapiro—join Gov. Inslee as he signs HB 2661 into law.

A Bold Vision

Three years ago, Legal Voice staff, along with our Board of Directors, embarked on a carefully designed plan for raising an extra \$1 million to **increase our capacity** to create powerful, meaningful change in our region.

We knew that by bringing on additional staff, we could engage with even more attorneys, law students, volunteers, advocates, donors, and community members to move gender equity forward. We knew we would be able to **make more 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. And we knew our supporters believed in us and would get us to where we needed to be.

WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED

We've raised approximately \$900,000 to increase our staff capacity and change the conversations around gender equity in our region. With these additional funds we made an early investment by hiring a marketing and communications manager and an advocacy director, both of whom have brought incredible expertise and vision. More recently, we hired a junior staff attorney and added a reproductive justice fellow from If/When/How. Thus, we have **nearly doubled our program staff**, resulting in an unprecedented level of advocacy. Here is just a snapshot of what we've accomplished through this campaign:

- The 2018 legislative session resulted in an amazing array of new rights to Washingtonians, some of which we have been working toward for a decade! (*See left for more*)
- We've worked alongside new allies, including UNITE HERE Local 8 and City of Seattle's Hotel Workers Health and Safety subcommittee, to advocate for the economic rights and safety of **hotel workers and domestic workers**. We're also working with the state of Washington to remove occupational restrictions for formerly incarcerated women.
- After years of investigation, we sued the Washington Department of Social & Health Services to ensure it does not use victim-blaming and the experience of domestic violence as a means to break up families.
- Working with allies and partners, we've laid the groundwork to **file lawsuits in Idaho and Alaska** that will advance the bodily autonomy of all women.
- We are systematically addressing some of the internal diversity challenges we face and redoubling our efforts to **add diverse perspectives** to our board, staff, and committees.
- We've developed additional opportunities to go out into our communities, meeting our donors and volunteers where they live—including in Tacoma, Spokane, Portland, Boise, and Port Townsend.



- Because of our additional staff and the connections they bring, along with those who have worked here for years, we are **responsive to national conversations** and actions that would harm the people of the Northwest, and are prepared to file federal lawsuits in collaboration with allies and the Washington Attorney General.

We have \$100,000 left to raise to complete our goal and we invite you to join us! **Would you consider a gift in addition to your annual gift of support?** Your gift will help us complete our campaign and enable us to do even more incredible work for our region.

With this last campaign funding, we will continue to expand our capacity and our ability to do successful advocacy:

- We want to hire a **policy manager** to engage with communities throughout the region, ensure that we're aware of the most critical issues facing women and families, and establish relationships with new communities and constituents; and
- We are committed to retaining our outstanding staff and their expertise through **thoughtful and just compensation**. As a social justice organization driven to achieve equality and operating in a competitive, challenging, and expensive market, we must continue to ensure that Legal Voice acknowledges staff's dedication and skills, and that they know how much they are appreciated.

If you would like to join us in completing our capacity campaign, would like to know more, or would like to discuss giving a gift of stocks, donors advised fund gifts (DAF), or other assets, please reach out B. Michelle Johnson, Director of Development, at MJohnson@LegalVoice.org or at 206-682-9552 x113.

*THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS
WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OUR SPECIAL CAMPAIGN SO FAR:*

Shirley Aguilera
Kris Anderson & Carole Heath
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Kelsey Beck
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Beverly Whipple & Michael Howell
Helen Winkler & Bob Grimm
Julie Wittrock

Learn more about our renewed vision for the future by visiting LegalVoice.org/campaign

LEGAL VOICE

907 Pine Street
Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98101

T 206-682-9552

W LegalVoice.org

E info@LegalVoice.org

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ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
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BECOME A VISIONARY...

BY MARTI MCCALED

Before I accepted a position as a Legal Voice student extern, Seattle was barely more than a map dot to me. And yet, from the minute the plane touched down, something about this place called to me, and for the first time in a long time, I'd found a place that felt like home.

Legal Voice provided me the opportunity to combine my legal training, my first career as a domestic violence and sexual assault victim's advocate, and my personal interest—as the daughter of a single mom—in economic justice. The law is a tool that can and should be used to improve the lives of real people, and I see that commitment in Legal Voice's mission, its passionate staff, and its dedicated volunteers.

It has been almost a decade since that girl from Alabama stepped off the plane for the first time. Legal Voice has been there every step of the way, fighting for the causes I believe in and working tirelessly to make the world a better, safer, fairer place for women. I am proud to support that work today, and am honored to include that work in my legacy. I urge you to join me in leaving a lasting gift for Legal Voice.

Legal Voice Visionaries are supporters and friends who have included Legal Voice in their estate plans or wills. If you are interested in our Visionaries program and would like to know more about it, please contact B. Michelle Johnson, Director of Development, at 206-682-9552 x113, or by email at MJohnson@LegalVoice.org

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