

THE EQUAL TIMES

Women's rights. Nothing less.



WHAT HAPPENED IN OLYMPIA THIS SESSION?

The 2015 Washington Legislative Session was full of action, and especially busy for Legal Voice, as many bills with potential to impact women were considered. The Legislature's regular session was already scheduled to be a "long" 105-day session (alternate years are "short" 60-day sessions). Then, after the regular session concluded, the Governor called three special sessions so the Legislature could complete its work on the two-year operating budget.

The budget impasse—as well as the fate of many bills during the regular session—was due in part to the fact that control over the Legislature was again split, with a Democratic majority in the House and a Majority Coalition Caucus formed by 25 Republicans and one Democrat in the Senate. As a result of this divided government, only bills with strong bipartisan support made it through both houses. Despite these challenges, several bills that will positively affect women passed this session.

VICTORIES

In 2013, a Washington Supreme Court decision limited the ability of prosecutors to charge abusers with criminal custodial interference when they abduct a child in violation of a domestic violence protection order. Last session, we drafted the bill to close that loophole, and we are thrilled the bill (HB 1302) passed both chambers this session without a single "no" vote. The new law will go into effect on July 24. Another important new bill will help ensure prompt testing of rape kits (HB 1068). Despite evidence that testing all kits helps identify more perpetrators—many of whom are repeat offenders—these kits often remain untested. Washington's new law requires law enforcement agencies to request testing of all sexual assault kits within 30 days of receipt, if the survivor consents, and establishes a legislative task force that will make recommendations for reducing the backlog of untested kits.

Other new laws address the issue of campus sexual violence: SB 5518, among other provisions, clarifies that institutions must have a uniform process for all students and requires schools to adopt federal confidentiality and reporting protocols; SB 5719 creates a legislative task force to develop a set of best practices to promote campus sexual violence awareness, reduce occurrences, and enhance student safety. And relating to family law, HB 2140 will help preserve parent-child relationships when a parent is

making progress in overcoming substance abuse issues or has been unable to pay for services ordered by a court because of financial instability.

We were also successful this year in defeating several bills that would have harmed women, including a bill that would have required notification of a parent or guardian before a young woman could obtain an abortion (SB 5289) and a paternity disestablishment bill that would have extended the time that a man legally recognized as a child's parent could challenge his paternity, regardless of the child's age or how long the father has acted as a parent to the child (SB 5006).

We experienced a rollercoaster of emotions this session with two bills that create more effective remedies for victims of nonconsensual pornography, sometimes known as "revenge porn" (HB 1272 & HB 2160). This growing problem occurs when private, sexually explicit images of a person are distributed without her consent, and the victims are largely women and girls. The Legislature ran out of time in the regular session to pass these bills, but we are happy to say that both the House and the Senate unanimously passed these bills at the end of the second special session, a time when few bills are passed. As we go to press, the bills are awaiting action by Governor Jay Inslee.

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THE ROAD AHEAD

While several other priority bills did not make it across the finish line this year, we continue to see progress and plan to continue advocating for these important policies. Two new bills that we helped draft received hearings and made it through the House, though not the Senate. The Equal Pay Opportunity Act (HB 1646) would have closed loopholes in the existing equal pay laws and protected employees who ask about or disclose wage information. The Reproductive Health Act (HB 1647) sought to improve access to the full range of contraceptive methods without cost sharing, delays, or denials of coverage. It also would have required plans to cover at least one year's supply of birth control at a time, dispensed on-site; and would have required all health plans that cover maternity care to include abortion care.

While a bill establishing statewide paid sick and safe days (HB 1356) also did not pass, we continue to see progress on that issue, as well as on paid family and medical leave proposals, at the city and county level around the state.

It was more evident than ever this year that, as always, the makeup of the Legislature matters. We urge you to educate yourself on the candidates and where they stand on the issues, and then make your voice heard! We're looking forward to working with our supporters and the Legislature next year to advance our vision of a world where every woman and girl enjoys economic, social, and legal equality.

CELEBRATING A VICTORY IN IDAHO

We just love sharing good news with you! Last month we secured an important victory for women in Idaho and nationwide when the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals—the nation's largest federal Court of Appeal, covering 9 states and 2 territories—struck down several provisions of Idaho's abortion statute as unconstitutional. We filed a friend of the court brief supporting both Jennie Linn McCormack, who was arrested and prosecuted for inducing her own abortion, and a physician who joined the lawsuit challenging the statute.

The provisions the court held unconstitutional in *McCormack v. Herzog* included a ban on abortions after 20 weeks; a requirement that second-trimester abortions take place in hospitals; and requirements that first trimester abortions take place in a "properly staffed" facility and that the physician make "satisfactory arrangements" with a hospital.

When abortion is stigmatized, unaffordable, criminalized, and regulated nearly out of existence, many women are barred from the care they need. We will continue fighting for the right of every woman to have autonomy over her body and access to a full range of health care options.

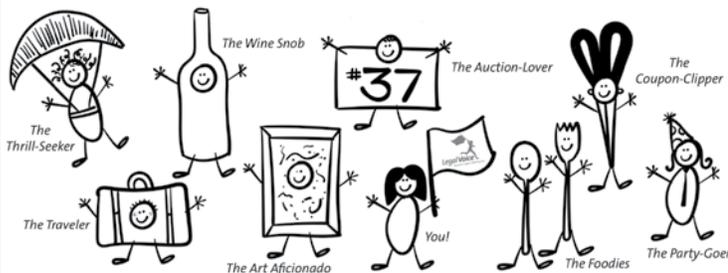


THE NEW LEGALVOICE.ORG

Our website has a new look! In an effort to easily connect you to the important work we do, we've updated and upgraded our website to increase accessibility and encourage engagement. Plus, the site is now optimized for mobile devices, meaning you can take us with you anywhere you go!

You can also join Legal Voice's online community by following us online:

-  [Facebook.com/LegalVoice](https://www.facebook.com/LegalVoice)
-  [Twitter.com/Legal_Voice](https://twitter.com/Legal_Voice)
-  SpeakingofWomensRights.blogspot.com



WHO WILL BE AT YOUR TABLE?

SAVE THE DATE: LEGAL VOICE AUCTION
Saturday, October 3, 2015



PHOTOS: Suzanne Fiore Photography

JOINING WITH FRIENDS, OLD AND NEW

Thank you for celebrating with us at Cocktails for a Cause! It was another lively gathering, bringing together 300 of our phenomenal friends, both old and new. The conversation was particularly inspiring as we focused on economic justice and what we—as a movement and as individuals—can do to support working women and families.

Together, we raised \$15,000 to sustain our work on the economic justice issues that matter most: pay equity, equal access to health care, paid family leave, eliminating sex discrimination, and more. As we continue making progress toward economic justice in our lives, our workplaces, and our communities, we also continue to be inspired by you and your support. You make change happen!

Save the date: Cocktails for a Cause — Thursday, March 17, 2016



BIG THANKS!

Thanks for being a part of such a generous community! The Seattle Foundation's GiveBIG event brought in a record \$16.3 million for more than 1,600 regional nonprofits. And you raised more than \$40,000 for our work committed to creating positive change in our community!

We are honored to be a part of this tremendous regional effort and are deeply thankful for your support.

ENOUGH ABOUT US— LET'S HEAR ABOUT YOU!

If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Johnson at MJohnson@LegalVoice.org or 206-682-9552 ext. 113. Thank you!

Your support means the world to us. Through thick and thin, victories and losses, you are there with us and the entire Legal Voice community. Now we want to show you *our* support by giving you the opportunity to tell us more about who you are, what is important to you, and how we can best meet your needs as a supporter, donor, and friend.

We recently sent you a survey—please take 10 minutes to fill it out. If you received a paper survey but would prefer to fill it out online, you may do so at <http://tinyurl.com/LegalVoiceSurvey2015>

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BECOME A VISIONARY...

BY ALISSA HASLAM

My wife and I recently signed our will and estate paperwork. At 40 years old and approaching my first wedding anniversary, it was hard to start thinking through how we should divide our assets. We had a lot of questions: What are our assets? Where will we be over the next 20 years? Who do we want to entrust with our dog? It's a lot. But one thing I knew for sure—I wanted Legal Voice to be included.

Legal Voice's Board of Directors is where I first found a home for my leadership. I know that Legal Voice will continue doing amazing and important work for women, even after I am gone. I wanted to use the decisions my wife and I made regarding our estate and our legacy as a testament to the trust and faith I have in Legal Voice's mission and fierce passion for justice.

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 Michelle Johnson, Director of Development, at 206-682-9552 x113, or by email at MJohnson@LegalVoice.org

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