

Pro-Choice Washington envisions a future where every person in Washington state has equitable access to the reproductive healthcare options they need to thrive.

To help make this vision a reality, we prioritize legislation that focuses on three things:

1. Increases access to affordable, timely, and quality abortion and reproductive healthcare;
2. Reduces the burden of out-of-pocket costs for reproductive health services, which are often unaffordable and may delay or prevent access to healthcare;
3. Builds a more equitable Washington that protects all peoples' rights, safety, and healthcare.

Achieving this vision requires working closely with our partners that protect our democracy and our communities more broadly by improving health equity, voting justice, and police accountability.

# 2022 Legislative Agenda

## Priority Legislation

**Keep Our Care Act (SB 5688, HB 1809)** This bill would create a system of public oversight to ensure that future health entity mergers in Washington benefit patients, not just the bottom line. Mergers between health care entities -- like hospitals and clinics -- are prolific in Washington state. Under current regulations, these mergers have negatively impacted cost, quality, and access to necessary health care services, in turn exacerbating systemic inequities for rural and low-income communities, people of color, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and terminally ill patients. Unlike nearby states, such as California and Oregon, health entity mergers in Washington receive minimal oversight. Washington needs a comprehensive system of public oversight to safeguard access to existing services and ensure Washingtonians can access quality care where they live, regardless of their identity, zip code, or medical needs.

**Progressive Revenue (HB 1406, SB 5426, HB 1465)** Washington has one of the least equitable tax codes in the country where low-income households are taxed at a much higher rate than the wealthiest. Not only is our upside-down tax code deeply unfair, but it directly limits the reach and effectiveness of critical community services, including affordable reproductive healthcare, other healthcare programs, good schools, and quality public transportation. It is critical that we reduce the tax burden on low-income families and increase investments in critical community programs that allow all residents to thrive.

Last year, the Washington State Legislature made important progress towards fixing our regressive tax code with the passing of a Capital Gains Excise Tax and a Working Families Tax Credit. But, more work remains to ensure the wealthiest Washingtonians pay their fair share towards essential social and health programs across the state. Pro-Choice Washington supports multiple approaches to achieving progressive revenue, including a Tax on Excessive Wealth (HB 1406 and SB 5426) and an Estate Tax (HB 1465). Only with bold, progressive revenue policies will Washington be an equitable place to live for all families. [Learn more about Balance Our Tax Code here.](#)

**Priority Legislation** refers to bills that are directly connected to Pro-Choice Washington's **key issue areas**. These bills fall under our core advocacy focus and have a direct impact on our community. As a result, these bills receive significant Pro-Choice Washington resources, including staff time, communications support, and member activism.

**Support Legislation** refers to bills that are connected to Pro-Choice Washington's values and broader vision for Washington, including expanding health equity, improving democratic processes, and building safe and healthy communities. These often fall outside of our core advocacy focus, so we follow the lead of brilliant partner organizations.

# Support Legislation

## Health Equity for Immigrants (Budget Request)

This budget request would create parity in publicly funded health coverage programs for all Washington residents regardless of immigration status. An estimated 46 percent of undocumented Washingtonians are uninsured, compared to seven percent of the overall population. The COVID-19 pandemic illuminated this huge gap in healthcare coverage and services for immigrant communities. All residents must have access to quality and affordable healthcare, including abortion care and broader reproductive healthcare. The 2021 Washington operating budget directed the Health Benefit Exchange to pursue a state health coverage program by 2024 for people who are ineligible for federal assistance. The Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign urges the Legislature to fund the next steps in this effort, so the program can fully launch by 2024. [Learn more about the Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign here.](#)

## Mandated Coverage of Infertility Treatments (HB 1730, SB 5647)

This bill would mandate insurance coverage for infertility treatments for all Washingtonians to ensure those struggling to become or to stay pregnant have access to health services that may help them start a family. The single largest barrier to in vitro fertilization (IVF) is out-of-pocket cost, which disproportionately affects access to infertility care for Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other people of color. For example, Black women are 80 percent more likely to report infertility than white women, yet Black women's access to infertility services is substantially lower than white women's. Additionally, some LGBTQ+ patients require medical assistance to have children, but currently face barriers due to discrimination and medically unnecessary requirements from Washington insurance carriers. Increasing access to infertility coverage will improve the health outcomes of pregnant people and families, and will reduce disparities in access to these services.

## Midwife Scope of Practice (No Bill Number Yet)

This bill would increase the midwifery scope of practice to allow midwives to write limited prescriptions for contraception, medications to treat UTIs and STIs, and therapies for common conditions in pregnancy and postpartum. The increased scope would improve access to care, continuity of care,

and health outcomes for pregnant patients in Washington, particularly for rural and underserved communities.

**Local Options for Ranked-Choice Voting (HB 1156, SB 5584)** This bill would allow local jurisdictions to use ranked-choice voting – an important step towards building a more equitable and representative democracy. Ranked-choice voting is a more equitable method of voting where voters may rank multiple candidates in order of preference. This voting method better captures the will of voters by eliminating the impact of vote splitting. It also has been shown to encourage more diverse candidates to run for office, increase voter participation, and reduce the cost of local elections for municipalities. [Learn more about Washington for Equitable Representation coalition here.](#)

**Affirm Washington Abortion Act (HB 1851)** This bill would update the language related to abortion care in Washington's legal code to be gender neutral and to reflect the range of providers who are licensed to provide abortion care. These updates would ensure that the gender identities of all people who have abortions are reflected in the statute and would confirm the already established legal ability of qualified licensed providers, such as physician assistants (PAs) and advanced registered nurse practitioners (ARNPs) to provide abortion care.

**Police Accountability** The 2022 legislative session will focus on maintaining police accountability policies that passed in 2021. These bills include: (1) SB 5051, which expands the type of conduct that officers can be fired for and expands background requirements for those applying to be officers; (2) HB 1310, which requires officers to use de-escalation tactics and to limit the use of deadly force; (3) HB 1267, which creates an office of independent investigation to unbiasedly and thoroughly investigate officers' use of force; and (4) HB 1054, which would ban or restrict the use of violent tactics by officers. In addition, the 2022 legislative session will focus on (1) HB 1202, which would provide a civil right of action by victims and their families for excessive use of force; and (2) HB 1507, which would establish an independent prosecutor to handle criminal cases of police use of deadly force. These policies are critical to the health and safety of Washingtonians, particularly Black communities that have been subject to decades of harm and violence by police. [Learn more about the Washington Coalition on Police Accountability here.](#)

