

The Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending the constitutional right to abortion. States like Washington that still protect abortion access will play a critical role in providing care for people from states that ban or severely restrict abortion and gender-affirming care.

The impacts of abortion restrictions are disproportionately harmful to those who already face systemic barriers to healthcare — Black, Indigenous, and communities of color, LGBTQIA+ communities, undocumented immigrants, young people, those living in rural communities, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes.

Abortion access and reproductive freedom directly impacts a wide range of socioeconomic outcomes.

We have a unique and urgent opportunity to pass a comprehensive slate of policies to protect and expand abortion access, to protect the rights and safety of patients and providers, and to support the vital work of our reproductive health providers as they face unprecedented challenges.

Pro-Choice Washington and our partners are working to pass a package of innovative bills designed to ensure that Washington successfully fulfills its role as an abortion sanctuary state and its commitment to reproductive freedom.



# 2024 Legislative Agenda

## Priority Legislation

### Keep Our Care Act (SB 5241 / HB 1263)

**What it does:** The **Keep Our Care Act** would ensure that consolidations of health care systems, such as hospitals, **improve** rather than **harm** access to affordable, quality care. It would:

- Prohibit health entity consolidations that diminish access to care
- Place Attorney General oversight and enforcement power to ensure that health entity consolidations do not negatively impact access to care
- Require a health equity assessment to help health entity consolidations better serve the needs of marginalized communities
- Increase community input on proposed consolidations through public comment and hearings

**What is the issue:** Large, corporate health systems are gobbling up smaller, community-based health care organizations. Unchecked consolidations drive up prices and restrict access to critical health care services, including abortion. After decades of rampant consolidations, 50% of hospital beds are controlled by health care systems that have policies to deny patients reproductive, gender-affirming, and end-of-life care. Many patients traveling to Washington for reproductive or gender-affirming care find themselves in these private health systems. After being denied care at home, they are once again turned away.

Delays in abortion care increase a patient's physical, mental, and financial risks. Support the **Keep Our Care Act** to protect access to quality affordable health care.

## Support Legislation

### Regulating Ultrasounds to Protect Patients at Crisis Pregnancy Centers

**What is the issue:** In an attempt to bring some accountability to crisis pregnancy centers, we will support legislation that clarifies that ultrasounds must be offered in licensed facilities or by licensed providers.

The goal is to protect patients against unscrupulous users, including crisis pregnancy centers (also known as anti-abortion centers), which are typically immune to major regulatory efforts because of First Amendment protections.

# 2024 Legislative Agenda

## Priority Legislation: continued

### Strippers' Bill of Rights (SB 5614)

**What it does:** Strippers' Bill of Rights would create a safer working environment for strippers. It would:

- Legalize alcohol service in clubs
- Eliminate back rent practices (indebting dancers to clubs)
- Regulate high "house" fees
- Create mandatory training for club employees
- Require minimum security staffing in clubs
- Implement anti-discrimination protections
- Establish an independent contractor affirmative protections
- Panic Button requirements
- Maintain customer black lists requirements

**What is the issue:** Adult entertainment in Washington is considerably more criminalized and stigmatized compared to other states and has left strippers without basic protections and rights. This bill increases strippers' protections, limits club practices that create power imbalances and harm, and creates more stability and resources for them via profit sharing from alcohol sales. Strippers deserve to do their work safely, equitably, and without stigmatization.

### Expanding Access to PEP

**What it does:** This session, we will also support [Cascade AIDS Project](#) and other LGBTQ coalition partners as they introduce a bill to eliminate cost-sharing for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). This bill will also require hospitals to maintain a policy for prescribing PEP in emergency rooms and require hospitals to dispense PEP on-site, in part because it is difficult for patients to access pharmacies that stock PEP in rural communities.

### Mandating Coverage for Fertility Services (HB 1151 / SB 5204)

**What it does:** Many insurance plans in Washington do not cover fertility services and the cost of paying out of pocket can be prohibitive.

This bill will require insurance plans to cover the diagnosis and treatment of infertility, ensuring more access to fertility services.

### Nonconsensual Condom Removal/Tampering

**What it does:** There are currently no legal protections if a partner tampers with or removes a condom without a person's consent. This bill, which is supported by domestic violence and sexual assault coalition partners, allows for a survivor to bring civil charges against a person for nonconsensual condom tampering.

### Traffic Safety for All (HB 1513 / SB 5572)

**What it does:** This bill would help law enforcement officers focus on traffic stops related to road safety issues such as impaired/distracted driving and reckless driving. It would:

- Create a pool of grant money for cities, counties, tribes, and nonprofits to create pilot programs that help people comply with the law and fix their vehicles to avoid low-level violations.
- Prevent officers from pulling people over for equipment failures and expired tabs unless there's a safety risk.
- Restrict irrelevant questioning and voluntary searches for low-level offenses while allowing officers to stop people for impaired driving, speeding, and unrestrained passengers.
- Provide more robust data collection on stops to better understand current conditions and help us evaluate the implementation of the bill's other provisions.

**What is the issue:** Traffic stops are by far the most common interaction that people have with law enforcement. In Washington state, Black, Latinx, Native American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander drivers were searched at a rate up to 5x higher than white motorists. There is limited evidence that low-level traffic stops improve safety.

The [Washington Coalition for Police Accountability](#) (WCPA) is a coalition of families who have lost loved ones to police violence, advocates, experts, and organizations, working together on state-wide policies to reduce police violence.

# 2024 Legislative Agenda

## Priority Legislation: continued

### Attorney General's Investigations and Reform Bill (HB 1445)

**What it does:** Lead by the Washington Coalition for Police Accountability (WCPA), this bill strengthens and clarifies the Washington Attorney General's authority to investigate and bring suits where there are failures at an agency or department, resulting in violations of the Washington constitution or state laws.

This bill would help ensure a fundamental baseline of quality policing across Washington.

### Independent Prosecutor (2SHB 1579)

**What it does:** This bill would establish a state-wide independent prosecutor within the Attorney General's Office to address the conflict of interest that exists within the working relationships between prosecutors and police. Brought forth by Washington Coalition for Police Accountability, the proposal has three main parts:

- **Jurisdiction:** The Office of Independent Prosecutor would have concurrent jurisdiction with the county prosecutor
- **Location:** The Independent Prosecutor would be situated in the State Attorney General's Office
- **Caseload:** The Independent Prosecutor would handle the caseload coming from the Office of Independent Investigations (OII), which at this time is limited to investigating deaths from police use of deadly force.

**What is the issue:** Local prosecutors have an appearance of a conflict of interest when they faced with making a charging decision regarding law enforcement personnel. County prosecutors are part of the law enforcement arm and the police work closely with the prosecutor in the development of criminal cases.

Currently, it's up to the county prosecutor to evaluate the investigative evidence and decide whether to bring charges.

### Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign (HEIC)

**What it does:** The HEIC has three focus areas:

- **Education:** We will conduct workshops and trainings about existing health care access programs and services.
- **Identifying Gaps:** We will work alongside community leaders and impacted community members to identify the most urgent gaps in care and services via focus groups and surveys.
- **Policy/Legislative Initiatives:** We will use community-identified priorities to shape policy agendas and propose legislation. We will work with community leaders and impacted community members to communicate these priorities to elected officials and policymakers.

**What is the issue:** The COVID-19 public health emergency made it clear that immigrant communities and people of color need better access to health care coverage and services. We know that immigrant status restrictions limit how individuals can access healthcare, which results in delay or foregoing of care. Every Washingtonian should have access to health care, but federal restrictions and state austerity cuts have left many immigrants in our state without critical health services.

**Main Ask:** The Health Equity for Immigrants Campaign is calling on the Legislature to fund the next steps in the effort to ensure the program is successfully launched in 2024.

Meeting the basic health care needs for all Washingtonians will make every community healthier and our economy stronger.

