



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF WASHINGTON

Empowering all Washingtonians to engage in a more responsible and responsive democracy

## 2018 ISSUE PAPER –REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

**Overview:** Legislation dealing with expanding access to contraception and abortion rights has been introduced during the past several legislative sessions.

While the following issues affect both women and men, women are disproportionately burdened across several key areas of health, safety, and equal access to economic security. “From its inception, the League has worked for equal rights and social reforms. In the early years, the League was one of the first organizations to address such issues as child welfare, maternal and child health programs, child labor protection and laws that discriminated against women.”

### Position Statements:

“That League of Women Voters of the United States believes that public policy in a pluralistic society must affirm the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.”

“The League of Women Voters of the United States supports equal rights for all regardless of sex. The League supports action to bring laws into compliance with the ERA: a) to eliminate or amend those laws that have the effect of discriminating on the basis of sex; b) to promote laws that support the goals of the ERA; c) to strengthen the enforcement of such existing laws.”

### Reproductive Rights - Potential 2018 Legislative Proposals:

A number of bills were introduced in 2017 (and therefore are automatically still alive for 2018)

- Reproductive Rights Protection—that would restrict access to abortion by prohibiting the use of public funds (HB 1002) and by requiring parental notification (HB 1003). League will oppose efforts to restrict access and will support legislation that serves to expand coverage, availability and economic access for reproductive support. The League has opposed cutoffs of Medicaid funding for abortion, on the basis of the supportive services provisions of the Income Assistance position and because such actions clearly discriminate against economically disadvantaged women.
- Reproductive Parity Act - advocates have been working on this concept, unsuccessfully, for a number of years. We are envisioning an updated version of past efforts but in essence ensuring that Washingtonians are guaranteed reproductive health equity regardless of type of insurance, income, citizenship status or gender identity. Substance of the bill is still being developed.
- Preventive services - in 2017 the League supported HB 1523 which would require health plans to continue to cover, with no cost sharing, all preventive services required to be covered under federal law as of December 31, 2016 (ACA) regardless of what happens in DC. This would allow women to continue to get their contraception without cost sharing.

## **Equality and Safety - Potential 2017 Legislative Proposals:**

\* Equal Pay Act – Last year’s HB 1646 would have ensured that equitable pay actually happens by requiring employers to allow employees to discuss openly their compensation with their colleagues if they wish to do so. A similar bill is expected to be introduced in 2017. League’s work on pay equity (equal pay for jobs of comparable worth) stemmed from member concern over the feminization of poverty. That League played a key role at the national level through its work with the broad base National Committee on Pay Equity in the 1980s

### Resources:

Planned Parenthood: [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)

Plan Parenthood of the Great Northwest and the Hawaiian Islands: <http://www.plannedparenthood.org/planned-parenthood-great-northwest-hawaiian-islands>

### **Contact Information:**

Susan Eidschink, 253-365-4005, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com)

Jo Rodman, 253-358-3622, [rodmanjo45@gmail.com](mailto:rodmanjo45@gmail.com)