

Legal Voice Policy Workgroups



907 Pine Street
Suite 500
Seattle, WA 98101

T 206-682-9552
F 206-682-9556

LegalVoice.org

Crisis Pregnancy Centers

Crisis pregnancy centers (CPCs) have been described as the operational arm of the anti-choice movement. They target women experiencing unintended pregnancies, often by presenting themselves as clinics or as social service providers. Their mission, however, is to prevent women from having abortions. To accomplish this mission, CPCs regularly use false and misleading practices aimed at preventing women from having abortions and from obtaining comprehensive information about their reproductive health options. This workgroup focuses on working to bring an end to CPCs' deceptive practices.

Caregiver/Pregnancy Discrimination

Many women in the Northwest experience discrimination in the workplace when they become pregnant or take on caregiving responsibilities in their families. These forms of discrimination significantly and adversely affect women, whose careers can be deferred or derailed by these assumptions and resulting employment decisions. This workgroup examines ways to eliminate these biases and the resulting discrimination against pregnant women and family caregivers.

Assisted Reproductive Technologies

Assisted reproductive technologies (ART), including in vitro fertilization, egg donation, and surrogacy, present complex issues for women's reproductive autonomy. For low-income women, single people, and LGBT couples, assisted reproductive technologies may be out of reach financially or because of discrimination. At the same time, these technologies raise questions about long term impacts on women's health; the potential for abuse and exploitation, especially of low-income women and women of color; and the ethics of exchange of reproductive capacity for compensation. This workgroup will examine these issues and develop a framework for promoting progressive ART laws and policies that ensure reproductive justice.

Families/Relationship Recognition

Building on Legal Voice's successes in Washington in ensuring that all families are treated fairly (e.g., establishing the de facto parentage equitable doctrine, passing the Washington domestic partnership legislation), this group conducts research in the four other Northwest states (AK, ID, MT, OR) to assist in developing strategies for exporting to other states these successes in various areas of the law.

Campus Sexual Harassment/Assault Policies and Procedures

Reports from students from around the Northwest indicate college and university sexual harassment and assault policies and procedures are inadequate, not widely disseminated to students, or are severely under-enforced. This workgroup will examine how universities in the five Northwest states respond to reports of harassment and assault, will develop a model policy, and identify best practices to help students assess their school's policies and advocate for changes if needed.

Violence Against Women

Battered women and victims of sexual assault and stalking face multiple barriers to attaining safety. When battered women try to leave violent relationships, they often face sustained frivolous litigation from abusive ex-spouses or partners, as well as discrimination in rental housing. Sexual assault and stalking survivors face similar, if not identical, risks when they try to use the legal system to obtain safety or relocate to avoid future violence. This workgroup is working in these two areas to develop a legislative/litigation strategy to advance the law on housing discrimination in the five Northwest states and a judicial education training curriculum, as well as potential litigation/legislation, designed to curb abusive litigation.

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Women's rights. Nothing less.