

WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

CAPITOL UPDATE

July 6, 2009

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Summary of State Budget

The State Senate and Assembly passed the Conference Committee version of the state budget on June 26, 2009. After amending the bill by veto, the Governor signed the budget into law on June 29. The following summarizes issues of interest to the WCC.

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Foster Care and Kinship Care. Increases foster care rates by 2.5% for relatives and by 5% for non-relatives beginning on January 1, 2011. Fully funds kinship care benefits.

Foster Parent Training. Funds a statewide foster parent training program.

Child Care Rating System. Directs the Department of Children and Families to return to the Joint Finance Committee with a specific plan for establishing a state-wide quality rating system for child care providers receiving Wisconsin Shares subsidy payments.

EDUCATION

Contracts for School Busing. Permits Milwaukee Public Schools when withdrawing busing services for families that have two or more children attending the same nonpublic school building to offer each family a single transportation contract instead.

Milwaukee Parental Choice Program (MPCP). Increases regulation and accountability in the MPCP, including imposing new testing requirements. Requires MPCP schools to comply with school records laws, but allows for transfer of Catholic school records to the Archdiocese if parents agree to this arrangement. Requires bachelor's degrees for MPCP teachers, but allows those teachers who have 5 years of continuous service to apply for a waiver that will allow them to continue to teach while obtaining a degree.

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten Grants. Provides funding for 4K programs, including start-up funding and grant preference for "community approaches" to four-year-old kindergarten.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

BadgerCare Plus Coverage of Childless Adults. Supports expansion of coverage for childless adults statewide beginning on July 1, 2009.

BadgerCare Plus Program Eligibility. Deletes the term “unborn child” from parts of the statute pertaining to program eligibility.

Family Planning Waiver for Men. Expands eligibility for contraceptive services to men ages 15-44 who meet the specified qualifications of the Medical Assistance family planning waiver program.

Children’s Long-Term Support Program. Increases funding for Medicaid-eligible children with disabilities or severe emotional disturbances with at-home or community-based care.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse. Increases funding for community-based mental health and substance abuse treatment for low-income persons.

WISCONSIN WORKS PROGRAM (W-2)

W-2 Eligibility for Pregnant Women. Extends eligibility for a monthly cash benefit payment to women with no other children who are in the 3rd trimester of pregnancy and are not able to work because of a medically verified at-risk pregnancy.

IMMIGRATION

Instate Tuition for Undocumented Students. Provides that a person who is a citizen of another country is exempt from nonresident tuition if that person meets certain requirements.

CORRECTIONS

Criminal Justice Reform Initiative. Redirects prison spending by reducing the time spent in prison for certain non-violent offenders and by increasing the use of community corrections.

OTHER

Tax-Exempt Housing. Allows certain non-profit providers of low-income housing and housing for the aged to use rent income for multiple purposes and to retain tax-exempt status. Requires that eligible homes for the aged be owned by “benevolent” organizations.

Domestic Partnership Registry and Benefits. Directs counties to permit same sex couples to register as domestic partners and receive selected benefits.

Pharmacy Contraception Mandate. Mandates that all pharmacies have a duty to dispense and deliver lawfully prescribed contraceptives to a patient without delay when presented with a valid prescription. No exemption exists for religious health care institutions.

Insurance Contraception Mandate. Mandates that certain employee health insurance policies include contraceptive coverage. No exemption exists for religious institutions.

Upcoming Hearings of Interest

(N.B. Only bills of interest are flagged. In most cases, committees will be considering other bills as well.)

Senate Committee on Education

11am, Thu., July 9, 201 SE

[SB-41. School Environmental Quality](#) (Sullivan) Directs DPI to create Indoor Environmental Quality in Schools Task Force to make recommendations for development of a model management for maintaining indoor environmental quality in public and private schools.

[SB-154. School Safety](#) (Legislative Council) School safety plans, pupil records and school bullying.

Web Sites of Interest

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/waml>

- Who are my legislators

[Directory of Senate Members](#)

[Directory of Assembly Members](#)

<http://www.legis.state.wi.us/leginfo.html>

- 2009-10 Session Schedule
- Weekly Schedule of Committee Activities
- Senate and Assembly Daily Floor Calendar

Capitol Update is a periodic e-mail on legislative issues from the Wisconsin Catholic Conference.

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