

Legislative Agenda

2023

Open Arms firmly believes that equity is a birthright and that healing solutions comes from within communities.

Each year, we prioritize legislation to reduce racial disparities in perinatal and infant health, improve essential support for families, and increase equitable access to healthcare.

We work alongside partner organizations and community members to advance birth equity and health justice at the local, state, and federal levels.

MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH

HB 1168 Prenatal Substance Exposure: Providing prevention services, diagnoses, treatment, and support for prenatal substance exposure.

SB 5470 Lactation Consultants: Creating a new state-credentialed health profession for lactation consultants.

SB 5501: Establishing a public education program to reduce the incidence of stillbirth using a platform for recording and tracking fetal movements.

Budget Item #1: Support families from birth to the first few years of a child's life by investing in and expanding home visiting.

Budget Item #2: Increase Maternity Support Services for pregnant people with factors that lead to higher rates of poor birth outcomes.

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CARE

HB 1263 (SB 5241) "Keep Our Care Act": Safeguards would be put in place to ensure healthcare access is not reduced by health entity mergers and acquisitions.

Budget Item #3: Raise the eligibility limit for Apple Health pregnancy and postpartum services to eliminate the coverage gap.

REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

HJR 4201 (SJR 8202) Reproductive Freedom: Amending the Constitution to address reproductive freedom.

Budget Item #4: Increase access to community birth by addressing Medicaid rates for midwifery birth kits, birth center overhead, and labor management.

Budget Item #5: Invest in the development of new culturally appropriate birthing centers in historically underserved areas of Washington.

RACIAL JUSTICE

HB 1177 (SB 5137) Indigenous Women: Creating a missing and murdered Indigenous women and people cold case investigations unit.

SB 5477 Murdered Indigenous Women: Implementing the recommendations of the Washington state missing and murdered Indigenous women and people task force.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

HB 1075 (SB 5249) Working Families' Tax Credit: Expanding eligibility for the working families tax credit to everyone age 18 and older.

HB 1094 (SB 5125) Future Fund Program: Creating "baby bonds," money that would be invested each year for babies born in Washington, to be distributed between the ages of 18 and 35 for higher education or to purchase a property.

HB 1045 Guaranteed Basic Income: Creating a pilot program paying 7500 individuals the equivalent of rent for a 2-bedroom apartment for 24 months.

EARLY CHILDHOOD & EARLY LEARNING

SB 5339 (HB 1238) Free School Meals: Providing free school meals for all public school children in the state.

SB 5225 Working Connections Child Care: Increasing access to the working connections child care program, for child care workers, those involved in therapeutic courts, and those who were previously ineligible because of immigration status.

EARLY CHILDHOOD & EARLY LEARNING, CONT.

Budget Item #6: Invest in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), quality pre-K for 3- and 4-year-olds growing up below or near the poverty line.

Budget Item #7: Continue funding for establishing Community Health Workers in primary care settings to support families needing connections to resources.

Budget Item #8: Continue to implement and fund the Fair Start for Kids Act, the landmark 2021 legislation that dramatically expanded the state's early learning resources.

Do you have questions or want to get further involved? Contact our lobbyist, Amber Ulvenes, at amber@ulvenesconsulting.com.