

# 2023 Legislative Update Webinar Series

February 15, 2023

Please note: This training is being recorded.



# Introductions

- In the chat box:
  - Name
  - Pronouns
  - Where you're joining from
  - Do you know your state legislative district?

# Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. SSB 5536 Overview – *Alison Holcomb, Director of Political Strategy*
3. Q&A
4. ACLU-WA's 2023 Legislative Agenda: Status Updates
5. Announcements

# **SSB 5536 & the War on Drugs**

*Alison Holcomb, Director of Political Strategy*

“Substance use disorder is a public health issue. Criminal activity that is associated with substance use disorder is criminal activity. And we have to be able to separate the two.”

**- Sen. Manka Dhingra**

**Chair of the Senate Law & Justice Committee**

**February 6, 2023**

# Why do we oppose criminalization?

- Black, Indigenous, and Latinx people are arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated at disproportionately high rates compared to drug use rates across races and ethnicities.
- Simply being charged with a crime creates records that are mined by companies and sold to employers and landlords, contributing to destabilized families and communities, and widening wealth gaps between BIPOC and white people.
- People who are arrested and put into jail for short stays are at an exponentially higher risk of overdose upon release.

# What does SSB 5536 do?

- Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5536 would make drug possession a gross misdemeanor, which means an individual would face up to 364 days in jail and a \$5,000 fine.
  - This is possession for one's own personal use – possession with intent to deliver, and delivery, are already felonies.
- Police and prosecutors would be *encouraged* to divert people, resulting in “justice by geography.”
  - Law enforcement attitudes about the War on Drugs differ widely across the state. Rural communities don't have the same availability of diversion services as urban communities.

# What does SSB 5536 do? (cont.)

- Court-ordered treatment is more expensive and no more effective than community-based outreach and services tailored to the individual's actual needs.



# What can I do?

- SSB 5536 is scheduled for a hearing on Saturday, February 18 at 9am.
- Register your position as “Con” with the Senate Ways & Means committee now and spread the word!

# **ACLU-WA 2023 Legislative Agenda: Bill Updates**

# Legislative Session Cutoff Dates

- January 9: First day of 2023 session
- February 17: Last day to pass bills out of policy committee (chamber of origin)
- February 24: Last day to pass bills out of fiscal committee (chamber of origin)
- March 8: Last day to pass bills out of chamber of origin



# 2023 Legislative Priorities

## Abortion and Gender Affirming Care Access

- Washington My Health, My Data (HB 1155) – in Rules
- No cost-sharing for abortions (SB 5242) – had hearing in Ways & Means on Monday, needs exec session
- Keep Our Care Act (SB 5241) – scheduled for exec session in Law & Justice tomorrow
- Provider licensing protections (HB 1340) – in Rules
- Shield law (HB 1469 & SB 5489) – both in Rules

# 2023 Legislative Priorities

## Decriminalizing Drug Possession

- End the failed War on Drugs by adopting the SURSAC recommendations (SB 5624) – heard last week, not scheduled for an exec session
- **ACTION OPPORTUNITY!** Sen. Robinson's alternative (SSB 5536) – scheduled for hearing in Ways & Means on Saturday; we do not support this bill

# 2023 Legislative Priorities

## Reducing Police Violence & Strengthening Accountability

- **Traffic Safety for All (HB 1513 & SB 5572)** – HB 1513 referred to House Transportation; SB 5572 heard in Senate Transportation on Monday
- **Access to Fairness (HB 1025)** – in Appropriations
- **ACTION OPPORTUNITY! AG Investigation & Reform (HB 1445)** – scheduled for hearing in Appropriations tomorrow

# 2023 Legislative Priorities

## Transforming Sentencing & Reentry

- Raise the Age (SB 5434) – in Ways & Means
- Emerging Adults (SB 5451) – scheduled for exec session in Law & Justice tomorrow
- Juvenile Points (HB 1324) – in Rules

# 2023 Legislative Priorities

## Ending the Long-Term Use of Solitary Confinement

- **HB 1087** – in Appropriations

## Protecting People's Privacy

- **People's Privacy Act (HB 1616)** – no hearing scheduled
- **Automated decision systems (SB 5365)** – heard in Environment, Energy & Technology this morning, but no exec session scheduled



# Announcements & Actions

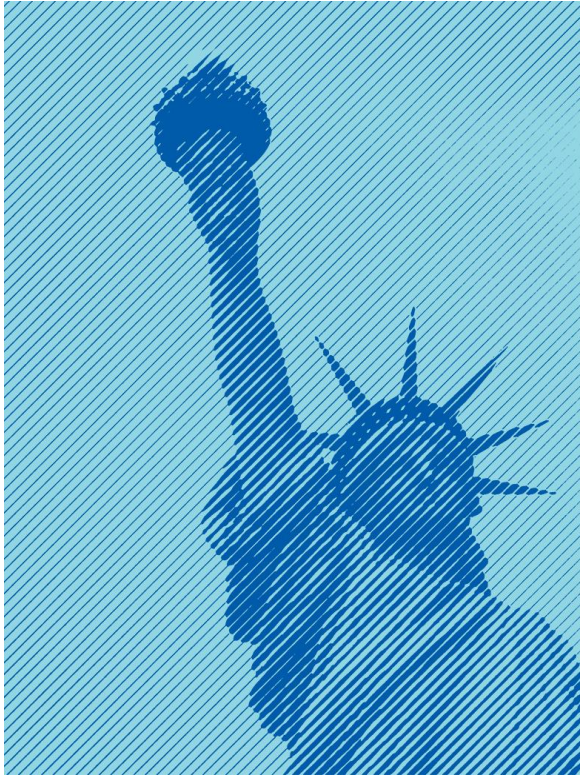
- Sign up for our legislative update email list for weekly updates on all our bills, plus ways you can support our community partners.
- Sign in on the following bills:
  - **Sign in PRO on HB 1445**
  - **Sign in CON on SB 5536**
  - Check your email tomorrow morning – there may be more!

# Next Zoom Call

Tuesday, March 7 at 5:30pm

Same call-in information

There will be NO webinar on Tuesday, February 21.



## Questions?

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# ACLU

Washington

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