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Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health: Wisconsin workers and advocates oppose attacks on worker's rights and local democracy

Posted on Monday, Feb 5, 2018

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For Immediate Release

February 5, 2018

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Wisconsin Workers and Advocates Oppose Attacks on Worker's Rights and Local Democracy

Legislation would prohibit local governments from implementing important labor protections and repeal portions of the WI Family and Medical Leave Act

Madison, WI –The Wisconsin Alliance for Women's Health (WAWH) joined workers, other advocacy organizations, and local officials to oppose two troubling bills that would greatly undermine the economic security and wellbeing of Wisconsin workers and their families. The first bill, SB634/AB748, would prohibit local governments

from enacting or enforcing labor or employment protections. The second bill, SB 490/AB 772, would eliminate some of the protections and benefits that the Wisconsin Family Medical Leave Act (WI FMLA) provides to employees who are employed by a business that is covered by both the state and federal FMLA's.

"Instead of focusing on policies that are proven to improve the economic security and wellbeing of working women and their families, our state Legislature has spent the past seven years passing laws that undermine the ability of workers to improve their wages and working conditions," said Sara Finger, WAWH Executive Director. "Now is not the time to scale back Wisconsinites' hard-won access to family and medical leave or the ability of local elected officials to implement policies that have the potential to benefit workers and families in their communities."

Besides being a direct attack on local democracy, SB 634/AB 748 would also foreclose many of the avenues local governments currently possess to pursue policies that will improve the wages and working conditions of workers in many low- and moderate-wage occupational fields in which women are often disproportionately overrepresented. If passed, the bill would prevent localities from passing anti-discrimination laws, living wage ordinances for employees who work on projects funded by local government, and many other important worker protections. Some localities already have anti-discrimination and living wage ordinances that would be struck down if the law passed.

"Instead of continuing to lower the bar, the Legislature should start focusing on **raising statewide standards** with long overdue policies like a minimum wage increase, paid family and medical leave, and stronger workplace antidiscrimination laws," said Finger.