

August 30, 2010

**League of Women Voters of Washington's
Positions on the Statewide Ballot Measures for the November 2, 2010 General Election**

SUPPORT: R-52, I-1098

OPPOSE: I-1053, I-1100, I-1105, I-1107

TAKE NO POSITION: I-1082, HJR4220, SJR8225

See details below

The League of Women Voters of Washington Board of Directors has voted to support the following:

Referendum Bill 52: Engrossed House Bill 2561 passed the 2010 legislature and was signed by Governor Gregoire. The bill was named the Jobs Act. The bill provides for state general obligation bonds of up to \$505 million to fund energy efficiency projects in the state's K-12 schools and higher education facilities. The bonds would be funded by extending the current state tax on bottled water beyond its current expiration date of 2013. Because this bonding amount exceeds the state's current debt limit, the bill must be submitted to the state's voters.

The national League's positions on Natural Resources, particularly those related to global climate change, together with the extensive work the national League has done in support of national climate change legislation, are the basis for League to support Referendum 52. LWVWA supported EHB 2561 in the 2010 legislative session.

Initiative 1098: concerns establishing a state income tax and reducing other taxes. This measure would tax "adjusted gross income" above \$200,000 (individuals) and \$400,000 (joint-filers), reduce state property tax levies, reduce certain business and occupation taxes, and direct any increased revenues to education and health.

League of Women Voters of Washington position on tax structure states: Inequities in the distribution of the tax burden should be removed. Ability to pay is an important criterion. Flexibility and recognition of changing times and needs is important in tax policy. Income should be part of the tax base preferably through a graduated net income tax.

The League of Women Voters of Washington Board of Directors has voted to oppose the following:

Initiative 1053: concerns tax and fee increases imposed by state government. This measure would restate existing statutory requirements that legislative actions raising taxes must be approved by two-thirds legislative majorities or receive voter approval, and that new or increased fees require majority legislative approval.

National League position includes that government must have the knowledge, resources and power to make decisions that meet citizens needs and reconcile conflicting

interests and priorities, and it must be able to function in an efficient manner with a minimum of conflict, wasted time and duplication of effort.

Initiative Measure No. 1100 concerns liquor (beer, wine and spirits). This measure would close state liquor stores; authorize sale, distribution, and importation of spirits by private parties; and repeal certain requirements that govern the business operations of beer and wine distributors and producers.

According to the Office of Financial Management, I-1100 would lower state revenue approximately \$25 million per year through the privatization of liquor.

Initiative Measure No. 1105 concerns liquor (beer, wine and spirits). This measure would close all state liquor stores and license private parties to sell or distribute spirits. It would revise laws concerning regulation, taxation and government revenues from distribution and sale of spirits.

According to the Office of Financial Management, I-1105 would lower state revenue approximately \$100 million per year through the privatization of liquor.

Initiative 1107 concerns reversing certain 2010 amendments to state tax laws. This measure would end sales tax on candy; end temporary sales tax on some bottled water; end temporary excise taxes on carbonated beverages; and reduce tax rates for certain food processors.

According to the Office of Financial Management, I-1107 would lower state tax revenue by 55 million in the current fiscal year and \$218 million in the upcoming biennium by removing the tax on candy & gum, bottled water, soda and reinstating tax loopholes.

League believes all initiatives proposed should “require how revenue losses or budget increases might be covered, either through program cuts or increases in revenue sources.” (League position on Initiatives, IR-4)

The League of Women Voters of Washington Board of Directors has voted to take no position on the following:

Initiative 1082 concerns industrial insurance. This measure would authorize employers to purchase private industrial insurance beginning July 1, 2012; direct the legislature to enact conforming legislation by March 1, 2012; and eliminate the worker-paid share of medical-benefit premiums.

Engrossed Substitute House Joint Resolution 4220. The legislature has proposed a constitutional amendment on denying bail for persons charged with certain criminal offenses. This amendment would authorize courts to deny bail for offenses punishable by the possibility of life in prison, on clear and convincing evidence of a propensity for violence that would likely endanger persons.

While League has no positions that directly address these issues, we do have concerns about both of them.

On I-1082, if the federal government does not provide sufficient resources, then the

state government must assume that responsibility. There is a question as to whether the state would have the resources if private insurance chose not to cover, and the federal government didn't sufficiently cover.

*On **ESHJR 4220**, we are concerned about modifying constitutional protection to bail without full vetting. This constitutional amendment came about because of a very tragic incident rather than because over time, the legislature considered a problem and sought a solution.*