



# League of Women Voters of Washington

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[www.lwvwa.org / advocacy](http://www.lwvwa.org/advocacy)

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January 19, 2007

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**SUPPORT—HJR 4201** and **SJR 8207—Simple majority for school district levies**

This legislation would ask Washington citizens to vote this November on a constitutional amendment that would allow school levies to pass by a simple majority. (More information below under "Background")

**League Position:** (LWVWA Education) A simple majority is sufficient for passage of a special levy (1977).

**Status:** **HJR 4201** is scheduled for public hearing in **House Committee on Education** at 1:30 January 19.

**SJR 8207** had a January 15 public hearing in the **Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education**.

**Action:** Please contact your senators and request that they support putting the simple majority constitutional amendment on the ballot – **"no amendments to SJR 8207, no more waiting, just let the people vote."**

Also, we could use league members across the state to help educate the public and their legislators on the issues of education funding and simple majority, so please contact us.

**Contacts:** Catherine Ahl, 360-697-7924, [cathahl@hotmail.com](mailto:cathahl@hotmail.com)

and Nancy Jander, 253-851-9260, [nancyjander@comcast.net](mailto:nancyjander@comcast.net)

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**SUPPORT—HB 1032—Creating an energy trust**

Creates a sustainable energy grant program to promote the development of sustainable energy resources, including new energy technologies.

**League Position:** LWVUS Energy position, point 7

**Status:** Public hearing was held on January 17

**Action:** Contact members of the **House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee**

**Contact:** Toni Potter, 206-365-8949, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net)

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**SUPPORT—HB 1303—Providing for the means to encourage the use of cleaner energy**

Provides incentives for replacement of the most polluting diesel engines, especially school buses. Provides transitional incentives for development of the promising in-state clean fuels and fuel feedstock. Reduces fossil fuel consumption by state fleets. Provides for the development of promising new technologies for displacing petroleum with electricity. Provides analysis and emission accounting procedures that prepare Washington to respond to global warming impacts.

**League Position:** LWVUS Energy Position, point 5

**Status:** Hearing January 24 at 8:00 a.m. before the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee

**Action:** If your legislator is on the **House Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee**, call them and ask them to support it.

**Contact:** Toni Potter, 206-365-8949, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net)

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**SUPPORT—HB 1036—Purchase of renewable energy by public entities**

Most state agencies would be required to purchase twenty percent of their total electricity in the form of qualified alternative energy resources.

**League Position:** LWVUS Energy position, point 7

**Status:** Public hearing on Wednesday, January 17 at 1:30 in House Hearing Room B, John L. O'Brien Building

**Action:** Ask members of **House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee** for their support.

**Contact:** Toni Potter, 206-365-8949, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net)

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**SUPPORT—HB 1208—Encouraging carbon dioxide mitigation**

Encourages businesses and nonprofit organizations to voluntarily mitigate greenhouse gases by allowing a one dollar tax credit for every ton of carbon emissions certified as mitigated by a qualified third party organization.

**League Position:** LWVUS Climate Policy

**Status:** Hearing January 24 at 8:00 a.m. before the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

**Action:** Contact members of **House Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee** and ask for their support.

**Contact:** Toni Potter, 206-365-8949, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net)

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**SUPPORT—HB 1210—Reducing statewide greenhouse gas emissions**

Requires that by January 1, 2009, rules will require the reporting and verification of statewide greenhouse gas emissions. Provides that by January 1, 2020, the annual statewide greenhouse gas emissions level shall be no more than the 1990 level.

**League Position:** LWVUS Climate Policy

**Status:** Hearing January 24 at 8:00 a.m. before the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee.

**Action:** Ask members of **House Agriculture & Natural Resource Committee** for their support on this bill.

**Contact:** Toni Potter, 206-365-8949, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net)

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**SUPPORT WITH CONCERNS—HB 1374 and SB 5372—Create Puget Sound Partnership**

This legislation would form a new Puget Sound Partnership to establish an accountable governance system for implementing the Puget Sound Plan recommended by the Partnership.

**League Positions:** LWVWA (Land Use) supports effective authorities who have the ability to resolve conflicts and implement plans of regional scope. Planning and enforcement should be the responsibility of level of government that can do so most effectively.

**Status:** Scheduled for public hearing Tuesday, January 23, 10:00 a.m. in the **House Select Committee on Puget Sound**.

**Action:** Contact Rep. Dave Upthegrove, prime sponsor of the House bill (or Phil Rockefeller prime sponsor of the Senate bill) to request that strong language needs to be included in this important piece of legislation. Leadership, accountability and results are important. It is a good start but key missing pieces need to be included. Attendance at January 23 public hearing is important. ***Make points listed below while thanking the governor and legislature for their efforts to strengthen our ability to recover the Sound's health by 2020.***

- Clarity that the Puget Sound plan is not advisory, optional, or a menu of choices.
- Meaningful accountability measures-- including fiscal consequences such as in GMA for non-compliance.
- Emphasis on action, rather than study and planning
- Capacity for the new Puget Sound Partnership to be the final decision-maker (deemed essential by federal General Accounting Office).
- Ability of the new Partnership to control funding to state agencies and local governments so that the 2020 recovery goal is achieved.
- Sufficient funds in the budget to provide meaningful incentives to implementers, especially local governments.

**Contact:** Ann Aagaard, 425-488-8418, [aagaarda@nwlink.com](mailto:aagaarda@nwlink.com)

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## BACKGROUND

### Home Visits for Medicaid Children with Asthma

Based on sound research indicating the cost savings as well as quality-of-life improvements resulting from home visits for children with asthma by trained community-health workers, Home Environment Portfolio Chair John Roberts has tirelessly advocated for these services for Medicaid-funded children. It appears that a bill will be heard in the House HCWC to accomplish this goal. It is not yet clear just how this will be done, but in the exploratory phases, John and others met with Rep. Schual-Burke, who volunteered to take the lead on this issue in the House. The meeting with Rep. Schual-Burke was an opportunity to become acquainted with recent findings of the **Joint Select Committee on Public Health Financing**. *I highly recommend you become familiar with the committee's report* (available at [www.leg.wa.gov/documents/joint/PHF/FinalReport.pdf](http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/joint/PHF/FinalReport.pdf)). This report will shape a major piece of legislation this session to augment public health funding across the state.

**Contact:** Ann Brand, 206-533-6269, [anklbrand@comcast.net](mailto:anklbrand@comcast.net)

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### Health Care Services for Children

The Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Health Care Costs and Access has completed its work. Its final report became available on the BRC's website just this past week. This very readable, commendably succinct report is available at the following internet address: [www.leg.wa.gov/Joint/Committees/HCCA/](http://www.leg.wa.gov/Joint/Committees/HCCA/) As bills are proposed during this session, it may prove helpful to see how they relate to the four overlapping strategies and the sixteen recommendations contained in the BRC's report.

**HB 1071**—which is the first piece of legislation to emerge from the recommendations of the BRC's Health Care Costs and Access report, as well as from the earlier push to expand health care services to uninsured children—was heard in the **House Health Care and Wellness Committee** (HCWC) on the first day of the legislative session. I anticipate that the League will support this bill in its final form.

**HB 1071** responds to Strategies One (“Build a high-quality, high-performing health care system”), Three (“Ensure the health of the next generation”) and Four (“Promote prevention and healthy lifestyles”). Specifically, it

- Directs Washington state's Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to design a seamless health insurance coverage program for children in families with household incomes of up to 250 percent of the **Federal Poverty Level**.
- Establishes a multi-agency outreach and education effort to identify and enroll eligible children.
- Beginning in 2008, requires rate increases for health care providers serving children to be linked to quality improvement measures.
- Establishes nutritional health and physical activity goals for all kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade (K-12) school districts.
- Allows the DSHS to enroll children or their parents into employer-sponsored health insurance, regardless of open enrollment season restrictions.

Some of the provisions of this bill will be re-worked in response to questions from HCWC members. Chair Cody intends to move this bill out of committee quickly, so we should have the specific language of the bill as it moves out of this committee probably next week.

**Contact:** Ann Brand, 206-533-6269, [anklbrand@comcast.net](mailto:anklbrand@comcast.net)

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## Medicare Part D Co-payment Coverage for Individuals Eligible for Medicaid and Medicare

**HB 1095** puts into statute approval given by the state legislature one and one-half years ago to offer Medicare Part D co-payment coverage to individuals eligible for medical assistance or the medically needy program and Medicare, subject to available funds. The \$14 million required for this program is already part of the “carry-forward” budget, so no fiscal note was requested. At the hearing on January 8, there were no suggestions for changes in language to this bill.

**Contact:** Ann Brand, 206-533-6269, [anklbrand@comcast.net](mailto:anklbrand@comcast.net)

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## Welfare & Children’s Issues

Numerous work sessions were held around Early Learning this past week, in both Houses. The **House Appropriations Subcommittee on Education** and the **House Early Learning and Children’s Services Committee** held briefings on the governor’s early learning recommendations, including the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). QRIS is the Children’s Issues portfolio priority this session. Gov. Gregoire presented the Washington Learns report to both the **Senate Ways and Means Committee** and the **House Appropriations Committee**, and emphasized QRIS as a critical aspect of the early learning system improvements she is requesting. Gov. Gregoire is expected to introduce an omnibus Washington Learns bill which will include QRIS.

A work session on QRIS and the child care career and wage ladder proposals is scheduled for Friday, Jan 19, from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. ***League members attending Lobby Day can plan to attend this session to obtain more detailed information.***

A work session was held in the **House Commerce and Labor Committee** on January 18 to create a Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program in Washington. A bill will be introduced later this week. The program would provide up to five weeks of leave for the birth or placement of a new child, for a worker's serious illness, or to care for a seriously ill child, spouse, domestic partner, or parent. It would provide up to five weeks of job protected paid leave. Wage replacement would be \$250 per week for full time workers, prorated for part time workers. The program would be funded through a 2 cent per hour payroll tax, paid by workers (about \$3.50 per week, or \$40 per year).

The Family and Medical Leave Insurance Program is good for children and families:

- Work hours are increasing and few families can afford to take time off without pay.
- The first few weeks of a child’s life are especially important for healthy development.
- A child needs time to bond with their parents.
- Children recover more quickly from illnesses and do better in school when their parents have paid leave from work.

**Contact:** Marjorie Reeves, 360-866-7507, [mpreeves@comcast.net](mailto:mpreeves@comcast.net)  
and Pat Dickason, 360-725-4680, [pdickason@earthlink.com](mailto:pdickason@earthlink.com)

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## Sourcing Rule for Collecting Tax on Mail-order and Internet Sales

**Senate Ways and Means** held a hearing on **SB 5089**, introduced by Sen. Regala (D – 27<sup>th</sup>), conforming Washington’s tax structure to the streamlined sales and use tax agreement. Washington and forty-five other states impose retail sales and use taxes. Thirty-four states have adopted the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement (SSUTA) in an effort to make their sales and use tax collection and administration systems more uniform in order to be able to tax mail-order and internet sales. During the 2003 legislative session, the legislature enacted certain portions of the SSUTA. This bill would enact the remaining portions – namely, modifying the “sourcing” rule for collecting the sales and use tax. Under Washington’s current sourcing rule, local sales and use taxes are sourced on an origin-based system – e.g., sales tax from the sale of goods is

sourced to the retail outlet at or from which delivery is made. Therefore, the local portion of sales tax revenue goes to the community where the retail outlet is located. SB 5089 changes the sourcing rule to a destination based system, effective July 1, 2008. Thus, if a good or service is received by the purchaser at the business location of the seller, the sales tax is still sourced to that business location. However, if the good is not received at the business location of the seller, the sales tax is sourced to the location where receipt occurs. Because some local jurisdictions will be negatively impacted by this change, the bill contains a mitigation account whereby the state will transfer funds to local jurisdictions equal to their annual losses. Witnesses representing business interests, cities, and counties all testified in favor of the bill. No one against it.

**Contact:** Barbara Bush, 425-349-5184, [omi.bush@verizon.net](mailto:omi.bush@verizon.net)

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### Simple Majority for School Levies

In 1944 Washington's Constitution was amended to require that school levies and bonds pass with a 60% super majority. Citizens have not had the opportunity to vote on the issue since then—63 years ago. Whereas in 1944 a super majority requirement might have made sense (our state had over 2,000 school districts and school district elections were held without public notice), in 2006 the requirement no longer is necessary—there are only 296 school districts, public notice is required for all elections, there are newspaper articles and other communications to inform the public about election issues, and some of the barriers to voting have been eliminated (for example, most of the state's counties have gone to all mail-in elections).

Simple majority legislation got left on the table in the last weeks of the 2006 legislative session, but we are optimistic that 2007 will be the year that Washington citizens will finally be able to vote on this constitutional amendment. The League is supporting the simple majority bills [HJR 4201](#) and [SJR 8207](#). Some senators want to amend SJR 8207 to allow a simple majority only in levy elections held in November. School districts typically hold levy elections in February, March, April, or May because teachers must be notified by May 15 if they will be hired for the next school year and the districts have to pass their budgets by August 31. Moreover, when a single issue is on the ballot, more information about that issue reaches voters and they can pay attention to that single issue rather than competing with all the candidates and issues that typically appear on a November ballot. The state legislature has already set the dates when elections can be held, and it should be left to the local jurisdictions to decide when they want to hold a school levy election. Bottom line: Just let the people vote.

**Contacts:** Catherine Ahl, 360-697-7924, [cathahl@hotmail.com](mailto:cathahl@hotmail.com)  
and Nancy Jander, 253-851-9260, [nancyjander@comcast.net](mailto:nancyjander@comcast.net)

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### Washington's 2007–09 Biennial Budget

A number of committees held work sessions and hearings on the governor's proposed budget this week. Over the next few weeks I will report on different aspects of her budget.

- Education spending is by far the largest component. The combined Operating, Transportation and Capital budgets devote \$15 billion to K-12 education, \$9 billion to higher education, and \$126 million to early learning – making up approximately 38% of the total spending.
- Social and Health Services account for another 30% of spending (\$19 billion); Transportation, almost 11% (\$6.8 billion)
- Governmental Operations, 5.4% (\$3.5 billion)
- Corrections, 2.8% (\$1.8 billion)
- Natural Resources, 2.4% (\$1.5 billion)
- Bond Retirement & Interest, 3.8% (\$2.4 billion)
- All Other, 7% (\$4.45 billion)

For a detailed description of the governor's budget, go to [www.leg.wa.gov/Senate/Committees/WM](http://www.leg.wa.gov/Senate/Committees/WM)

**Contact:** Barbara Bush, 425-349-5184, [omi.bush@verizon.net](mailto:omi.bush@verizon.net)

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## FOR REFERENCE

### Key Session Dates

The 60th Washington State Legislature opened its long session on Monday, January 8. The 2007 legislative session in Olympia runs from January 8 to April 22. Every day (including Saturday, Sunday, and holidays) is counted in the 105-day session. The Lobby Team will meet regularly during the session to talk with the League lobbyist, Lonnie Johns-Brown, and to decide on priority action for the upcoming week.

**Jan. 8** – First day of regular session

**Jan. 19** – LWVWA Lobby Day

**Feb. 28** – Last day for any bill to be considered in **policy** committee of its “house of origin” (House for HB, or Senate for SB)

**Mar. 5** – Last day for any bill to be considered in **fiscal** committee of its “house of origin”

**Mar. 14** – Last day for bills to be considered on the floor of their “house of origin” (5 p.m.)

**Mar. 30** – Last day for bills to be considered in a **policy** committee of the opposite house (Senate for HB, or House for HB)

**Apr. 2** – Last day for bills to be considered in a **fiscal** committee of the opposite house

**Apr. 13** – Last day for bills to be considered on the floor of the opposite house (5 p.m.) except initiatives and alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implementing budgets, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session.

**Apr. 22** – Last day of regular session

### CONTACT LISTS

Portfolios / Lobby Team – [www.lwvwa.org/about/officers.html](http://www.lwvwa.org/about/officers.html)

Legislators – [www.lwvwa.org/advocacy/newsletters/Legislators.pdf](http://www.lwvwa.org/advocacy/newsletters/Legislators.pdf)

Legislative Committees – [www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx)

Representation by legislative district – [www.lwvwa.org/advocacy/newsletters/DistrictReps.pdf](http://www.lwvwa.org/advocacy/newsletters/DistrictReps.pdf)

### LEAGUE POSITIONS

LWVWA positions – [www.lwvwa.org/advocacy/prog\\_in\\_action05-07.html](http://www.lwvwa.org/advocacy/prog_in_action05-07.html)

### RESOURCES

League action website – [lwvwa.org/advocacy](http://lwvwa.org/advocacy)

House Floor Activity as it happens – [flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov/default.aspx?chamber=3](http://flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov/default.aspx?chamber=3)

Senate Floor Activity as it happens – [flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov](http://flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov)

Public hearings as they happen – [twv.org](http://twv.org)

Bill information – text, analysis, status, committee action – [apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo)

Bill room (legislative information center) – **360-786-7573**

State budget information – [www.ofm.wa.gov](http://www.ofm.wa.gov)

Governor’s website – [governor.wa.gov](http://governor.wa.gov)

Washington state’s official website – [access.wa.gov](http://access.wa.gov)

#### Speaking to a Legislator

Visit, write to, call, or email the legislator directly (see contact list for legislators). Or, use the toll-free Legislative Hotline available weekdays from 8:00 am - 8:00 pm, and Saturdays from 9:00 am - 1:00 pm:

**800-562-6000** / TTY: 800-635-9993

Legislative hotline operators will send your message to one of your legislators, all three of your legislators, the governor and lieutenant governor, or all of these, as you request. Language translation services are also available. Person placing the call needs to know enough English to understand “Please Wait” and to report the language needed.

#### Addressing a Letter to a Legislator

Representative \_\_\_\_\_ Senator \_\_\_\_\_

P.O. Box 40600 P.O. Box 404[leg district]

Olympia, WA 98504-0600 Olympia, WA 98504-04[leg district]

#### Visiting Your Legislators

Citizens are welcome to visit their legislators in Olympia on any day during the session. Making an appointment first is prudent but not always required.

Later in the session, town hall meetings back in the legislators’ home districts are good opportunities for talking to your legislators. Lobby day events provide organized support for visits.