



# League of Women Voters of Washington

Barbara Seitle, President // Marilyn Johnston, Lobby Team Coordinator // Newsletter edited by Laura McCarty

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

League office: 4710 University Way NE #214, Seattle 98105 / 206-622-8961 / 800-419-2596 / [lwwwa@lwwwa.org](mailto:lwwwa@lwwwa.org)

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## Action Priorities

January 22 - 26, 2007

"If you have time this week to make only one phone call, choose action on one of these ..."

**SUPPORT election reform ("clean elections")**

or

**SUPPORT new governance for cleaning up Puget Sound**

### SUPPORT

**HB 1186—Judicial Election Reform Act**

**SB 5226—Judicial Independence Act**

Both of these bills are proposals to introduce "clean elections" to the state of Washington. The House bill would establish voluntary limitations on contributions for judicial campaigns, such that any candidate who agrees to abide by these limitations would receive public funds to finance his or her campaign for judicial office at the state level. The Senate bill, on the other hand, would establish a pilot program for public financing of State Supreme Court and State Court of Appeals races. More details on the features of each bill are provided below under "Background."

**League Positions**—In support of clean elections:

- **Representative Government:** Action to facilitate changes in the state constitution to achieve a representative and effective state legislature. Action to limit methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office, and promote citizen participation in the election process.
- **Campaign Financing:** Campaign contributions should be limited. These limits should apply to both state and out-of-state contributions. The PDC should implement laws pertaining to these limitations.
- **Administration of Justice:** Action to ensure that our courts are fair, efficient, accessible and staffed with qualified personnel.

**Status**—**HB 1186** has been referred to the **House State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee**, and **SB 5226** has been referred to the **Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections**.

A public hearing is scheduled for the Senate bill at 3:30 on Thursday.

**Action**—*Contact your legislators on the House and Senate committees that are considering these bills. Says Lobby Team Coordinator Marilyn Johnston: "I believe it was Rep Sam Hunt, who now chairs the House State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee, who commented to a newspaper reporter that a bill had been received but he didn't think it would go anywhere. **We need our members to reply in substantial numbers now so legislators know this is legislation the public wants to see passed.**"*

**Talking Points**—Public financing means fair elections. Public financing truly gives us "government of, by, and for the people." Public financing of campaigns is affordable (as little as \$3.36 per resident per year, but even if it was \$5 or \$10 per year, isn't it worth it? - to restore balance - and citizen voice - to our democracy).

**Contacts**—Marilyn Johnston, 360-357-2813, [mfjhip@aol.com](mailto:mfjhip@aol.com)  
and Chris Chamberlin, 253-761-1376, [bcchamberlin@harboret.com](mailto:bcchamberlin@harboret.com)

## SUPPORT WITH CONCERNS

**HB 1374—Create new Puget Sound agency**

**SB 5372—Create new Puget Sound agency**

This legislation would establish a governance system for implementing the governor’s plan to protect and restore Puget Sound and Hood Canal. This new agency would take leadership, maintain oversight, and hold accountable those responsible for cleaning up and preventing toxic pollution, restoring damaged shorelines, reducing stormwater runoff into the Sound, cleaning up pollution from septic systems, protecting habitats, and more.

**League Positions—**Supporting this legislation:

- LWVWA (Land Use): “Regional authorities within the state are useful in resolving problems which transcend the boundaries of smaller jurisdictions. To be effective, regional authorities should have the ability to resolve conflicts among jurisdictions and implement plans of regional scope. Regional authorities should involve all levels of government, with responsibilities clearly defined. ...Planning and enforcement should be the responsibility of the level or levels of government that can do so most effectively in each case.”

**Status—**HB 1374 is scheduled for public hearing Tuesday, January 23, 10:00 a.m. in the **House Select Committee on Puget Sound**. The Senate bill, **SB 5372**, was heard January 17 in the **Committee on Water, Energy & Telecommunications** (video and audio available at [tvw.org](http://tvw.org) – search for “Puget Sound Partnership”).

**Action—***Contact the chair of the House committee considering this legislation, **Rep. Dave Upthegrove**, who is also the prime sponsor of the House bill (or **Sen. Phil Rockefeller**, prime sponsor of the Senate bill, or **Sen. Erik Poulsen**, chair of the committee) to request that strong language needs to be included in this important piece of legislation. This contact is especially important if any of these legislators, or any of the legislators who are on the respective committees, are from your district*

**Talking Points—***Make points listed below while thanking the governor and legislators for their efforts to strengthen our ability to recover the Sound’s health by 2020.* Leadership, accountability, and results are important. The proposed legislation is a good start, but key missing pieces need to be added:

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

League member attendance at January 23 public hearing would also be valuable.

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

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## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

### CLEAN ELECTIONS

LWVWA’s lobbyist in Olympia, Lonnie Johns-Brown, provided us with the following summaries of key features of two clean elections bills the League is supporting.

**Summary of 1186: Judicial Election Reform Act (prime sponsor is Rep. Shay Schual-Berke)**

The publicly financed candidate and their committee shall:

- 1) not accept contributions from PACs, caucus political committees, a union, a corporation, or any other group entity
- 2) not expend more than \$1000 of the candidate's personal money, and then only during the qualifying period
- 3) receive and expend seed money in a manner that is spelled out in the act (see below)
- 4) expend only funds received from the Judicial Election Reform Act fund after being certified as a publicly funded candidate
- 5) sign a joint statement with their treasurer, under oath, promising to comply with the requirements of this act
- 6) comply with the requirements of this act

Seed money:

- Limited to \$25,000 for a State Supreme Court race, \$10,000 for a State Court of Appeals race.
- May only be raised and spent during the qualifying period and only for the purpose of raising qualifying contributions.
- The candidate's personal money is considered seed money and must be spent during the qualifying period (any seed money not spent by the end of the qualifying period must be paid to the Judicial Election Reform Act Fund)

Controls on a publicly financed candidate's committee:

- 1) Committee may only have one account.
- 2) All deposits allowed by this act must be deposited in this account.
- 3) All payments for goods or services of \$100 or more must be made and reported from this account.
- 4) One or more petty cash accounts may be established.
- 5) No more than \$1000 in the aggregate may go in the petty cash fund(s).
- 6) Only payments of \$100 or less may be made with petty cash.
- 7) Expenditures from petty cash must be reported.

Prohibited use of public funds:

Candidates may not use public funds to pay fines or civil penalties or for defense of an enforcement action

Available funding:

1. Supreme Court race – 50 times the filing fee (currently \$1,413.94) which equals \$70,697 for the primary and \$141,394 for the general election
2. Court of Appeals race – 10 times the filing fee for the primary for a total of \$13,459.80, and 20 times the filing fee for the general election for a total of \$26,919.60

"Fair Fight" funds:

When a non-participating candidate has raised more money than his/her opponent who is a publicly funded candidate, fair fight funds will be made available to the publicly financed candidate. The fair fight fund allocation to the publicly financed candidate is capped at no more than two times the allocation listed under "Available funding."

Other provisions:

- 1) Publicly funded candidates in contested races must participate in two public debates in the primary and two in the general
- 2) PACs that make independent expenditures or electioneering communications in judicial races shall not accept contributions in excess of \$1000 in the aggregate in a calendar year from any person
- 3) The act caps at \$5000 the total that can be donated to any PAC in judicial races
- 4) Corporations, labor unions, and associations are prohibited from using general treasury funds for the purpose of influencing an election for Supreme Court or Court of Appeals
- 5) Establishes penalties

Effective date would be January 1, 2008.

**Summary of 5226: Judicial Independence Act (request legislation from Governor Gregoire)**

Establishes a voluntary, opt-in pilot program for public financing of nonpartisan Court of Appeals and Supreme Court races.

Exploratory funds:

1. Candidates who elect to participate may raise "exploratory funds" 120 days before the date when filing for office begins, up until the close of filing period.
2. Exploratory contributions may not exceed \$100 per donor.
3. Total amount of exploratory funds is limited to \$20,000 for Supreme Court races and \$10,000 for Court of Appeals races.
4. Candidates who "opt in" may only accept exploratory contributions from individuals, and not from PACs, unions, corporations, or other organizations.
5. A participating candidate may contribute up to \$5,000 in exploratory funds from his/her personal funds. Immediate family members also may contribute up to an aggregate total of \$5,000 in exploratory funds.

Qualifying contributions:

1. For Supreme Court: at least \$10,000 and no more than \$50,000. For Court of Appeals: at least \$2,000 and no more than \$10,000
2. Qualifying contributions must be from voters registered in Washington state.
3. Contributions must be in the form of a check.
4. Candidates for Supreme Court must have contributions from at least 500 eligible contributors. Court of Appeals candidates must have donations from at least 100 eligible contributors.

Pledge:

Qualifying candidates must take the clean campaign pledge

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For other bills of interest to the League, refer to the current issue of the Legislative Newsletter (January 19)

[www.lwwa.org/advocacy/newsletters/LNL-39-2.pdf](http://www.lwwa.org/advocacy/newsletters/LNL-39-2.pdf)