



League of Women Voters of Washington

Barbara Seitle, President // Barbara L. Bush, Action Chair // Newsletter edited by Stasha McBride

www.lwvwa.org / [advocacy](#)

Legislative Newsletter, Vol.41, No.3

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Action Priority

January 24 -January 30

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

SUPPORT - HB 1517 & SB 5534 creating a system to automatically restore the right to vote for people who were convicted of felonies and who have come out of the criminal justice system

Under our current laws, it can take nine separate steps, involving state and county officials and several forms and petitions, to regain the vote. There are at least five different ways to regain the right to vote, depending on when and where the person was sentenced. Even elections officials often are unsure who is and is not eligible to vote. This bill provides that for a felony conviction in a Washington state court, the right to vote is restored as long as the person is not under the authority of the department of corrections. For a felony conviction in a federal court, the right to vote is restored as long as the person is no longer incarcerated.

League Positions - The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. The League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) believes that registration should be simple and convenient for voters in addition to ensuring accuracy.

Status - Companion bills have been introduced in both houses. **HB1517** was referred to the House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs. **SB 5534** was referred to Senate Committee on Government Operations and Elections. A hearing has been scheduled for **SB 5534** on February 9. LWVWA will testify.

ACTION - Contact the following representatives to thank them for co-sponsoring **HB1517**: **Darneille**, prime sponsor; **Green; Dickerson; Goodman; Ormsby; Chase; Llias; Miloscia; Kagi; Hudgins; Hunt; Santos; Wood; Moeller; Williams; Kenney; Carlyle; Nelson; Quall**. Contact the following senators to thank them for co-sponsoring **SB 5534**: **Kohl-Welles**, prime sponsor; **Kline; Fairley; McDermott; Regala; Hargrove; Fraser; Kauffman**.

Message - This is a "good government" bill because it simplifies a complicated, costly, and ineffective process. It provides a bright line for elections officials and is less costly to administer than the current system. Restoring the right to vote encourages people to reconnect with their communities and become good citizens.

Contact - Barbara Seitle, bseitle@whidbey.com, 360 221 3792

SUPPORT - HB 1738 - Providing public funding for Supreme Court campaigns

The bill would establish a program of optional public financing of campaigns for the Washington State Supreme Court thereby allowing candidates the opportunity of financing their campaigns solely or primarily on public financing. It creates a State Judicial Campaign Fund, sets out qualifications for participating in the program, establishes a formula for grants, provides for rescue funds, and authorizes private fundraising if state funds are insufficient to meet funding obligations. The bill also requires that the program will not become operational until at least \$3 million is appropriated and deposited in the State Judicial Campaign Fund.

League Positions - LWVUS believes that the methods of financing political campaigns should ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and allow maximum citizen participation in the political process.

Status - The bill was introduced with 32 co-sponsors, and has been referred to the House Committee on State Government and Tribal Affairs. A hearing has not yet been scheduled, but is expected in the next couple of weeks. A companion bill should be introduced in the Senate in the next few days.

ACTION - Thank the following representatives for co-sponsoring the bill: Prime Sponsor **Llias; Appleton; Carlyle; Chase; Cody; Darnielle; Dickerson; Dunshee; Eddy; Flannigan; Goodman; Green; Hasegawa; Hunt; Kagi; Kenney; McCoy; Miloscia; Moeller; Nelson; Ormsby; Orwall; Pettigrew; Probst; Roberts; Rolfes; Sells; Simpson; Wallace; White; Williams; Wood**.

Contact - Barbara Seitle, bseitle@whidbey.com, 360 221 3792

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## Additional Action Items

### Support - **HB 1612 & SB 5629** - Concerning pregnancy prevention programs

The bills remove the requirement that the Department of Health (DOH) apply for funding for abstinence only sex education and that DOH has the option to apply for funds that promote medically and scientifically accurate sexual health education as required by the Healthy Youth Act.

**League Position** - LWVUS supports reproductive rights.

**Status** - **HB 1612** has been referred to the House Committee on Health Care & Wellness and is awaiting a hearing. **SB 5629** has been referred to the Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care and is awaiting a hearing.

**ACTION** - If you have a Representative (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) or Senator (**Keiser, Franklin, Pflug, Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray, Parlette**) on these Committees ask them to have a hearing and to pass the bill out with a **do pass** recommendation.

**Contact** - Wayne Martin, MD, [docmartin934@aol.com](mailto:docmartin934@aol.com), 425 746 9960

### Support – **HB 1652** - Eliminating the requirement that ferry vessels that carry no more than one hundred motor vehicles be constructed within boundaries of Washington

This bill will enable Washington to compete for federal economic stimulus funds by allowing Washington shipbuilders to compete with other shipyards across the nation for the construction of these ferry vessels.

**League Position** - The league supports increases in funding to provide adequate revenue for our transportation system. This bill would provide for possible increases in funding.

**Status** - **HB 1652** is scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Transportation on February 2, at 3.30pm

**ACTION** – If your representative is on the above committee please contact him/her and ask them to support this bill: **Judy Clibborn** (Chair) **Liias, Roach, Rodne, Armstrong, Campbell, Cox, Dickerson, Driscoll, Eddy, Ericksen, Finn, Flannigan, Herrera, Johnson, Klippert, Kristiansen, Moeller, Morris, Rolfes, Sells, Shea, Simpson, Springer, Takko, Uptegrove, Wallace, Williams** and **Wood**. Contact the sponsors to thank them for co-sponsoring the bill.

**Contact** - Luella Wells, [lawells@wavecable.com](mailto:lawells@wavecable.com), 360 598 3267

### Support - **HB 1493** – Prohibiting the use of patient health care information for marketing prescription drugs

**HB 1493** would prohibit sale or sharing of any health care information for the purpose of marketing prescription drugs to patients. This legislation is part of the legislature’s commitment to promote evidence-based practices and cost containment.

**League Position** - “Quality health care at an affordable cost” is a basic goal stated by the LWVUS. The practice prohibited by this bill is a cost driver and influences prescribing practices that may not be in the best interests of health care consumers.

**Status** - Hearing scheduled in the House Committee on Health Care and Wellness on February 3 at 1:30 pm. Members of both major political parties have signed on as co-sponsors of this bill.

**ACTION** - If your representative is on the Health Care and Wellness Committee (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) ask them to support this important legislation to protect consumers and thank them if they are supportive. **Cody, Campbell, Hinkle, Moeller, Morrell, & Pedersen** are bill sponsors.

Contact - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com), 253 572 9305

**Support - SB 5480 - Creating the Washington health care discount plan organization act**

This bill establishes standards for discount plan organizations to protect consumers from unfair or deceptive marketing, sales, or enrollment practices, and facilitates consumer understanding of the role and function of discount plan organizations. The Insurance Commissioner requested this bill.

**League Position** - "Quality health care at an affordable cost" is a basic goal stated by the LWVUS. The regulations contained in this bill will influence marketing practices that may not be in the best interest of health care consumers.

**Status** - A hearing is scheduled in the Senate Committee on Health and Long-Term Care on February 2 at 1:30pm.

**ACTION** - If your senator is on the Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (**Keiser, Franklin, Pflug, Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray, Parlette**) ask them to support this legislation to protect consumers. Senators Delvin, **Franklin, Fairley, Keiser & Shin** are bill sponsors.

Contact - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com), 253 572 9305

**Support – HB 1819 & SB 5735 - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions**

The bill known as "Cap and Invest" puts our state on a firm path to meet or global warming pollution reduction goals by requiring polluters to buy permits to pollute. Revenue raised by the permits would be invested to spur new clean-tech innovation, put people to work increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy, and provide assistance to working families struggling with high energy costs. It is essential to pass this bill this year so that Washington will be a leader in the clean energy economy and to minimize the economic, health and environmental impacts of climate change.

**League Position - LWVUS Climate Change Position**

**Status-** This is a Governor's request bill. **HB 1819** will be heard in the House Committee on Ecology & Parks on Tuesday, Feb 3 at 10 a.m. and will **air on TVW**. **SB 5735** will be heard in the Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy on Tuesday, Feb 3 at 10 a.m.

**ACTION** - If your Representatives (**Uptegrove, Rolfes, Short, Newhouse, Chase, Dickerson, Dunshee, Eddy, Finn, Hudgins, Kretz, Kristiansen, Morris, Orcutt, Shea**) or Senators (**Rockefeller, Pridemore, Honeyford, Delvin, Fraser, Hatfield, Holmquist, Marr, Morton, Ranker, Sheldon**) are on either of the above two committees, call and ask her/him to support the bill, and find some creative funding as we know there is no money in the general fund and the League does not support cutting existing programs. **In addition**, please write a letter to the editor of your local paper in support of this bill.

Contact – Toni Potter, [antoniapoter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapoter@comcast.net), 206 365 8949

Marian Wineman, [mwineman@comcast.net](mailto:mwineman@comcast.net), 206 285 1066

**Support – HB 1747 - Reducing climate change in the built environment**

This bill will promote super-efficient, low-energy-use building codes, require disclosure of buildings' energy use scores (similar to a vehicle's MPG rating or energy star ratings on appliances) to prospective buyers, make public buildings models of energy efficiency, finance energy-saving upgrades to existing buildings, and reduce high energy costs for low-income residents.

**League Position** - The League supports use of a variety of energy sources, with emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies. The League supports mandatory energy conservation measures, and assistance for low-income individuals when energy policies bear unduly on people who are economically poor.

**Status** - **HB 1747** will be heard Monday 2 February at 1:30 in the House Committee on Ecology & Parks, and will **air on TVW**.

**ACTION** - If you have a representative on the above committee (**Uptegrove, Rolfes, Short, Newhouse, Chase, Dickerson, Dunshee, Eddy, Finn, Hudgins, Kretz, Kristiansen, Morris, Orcutt, Shea**) call and ask her/him to support the bill, and find some creative funding as we know there is no money in the general fund and the League does not support cutting existing programs.

Contact – Toni Potter, [antoniapoter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapoter@comcast.net), 206 365 8949

Marian Wineman, [mwineman@comcast.net](mailto:mwineman@comcast.net), 206 285 1066

**Support** with concerns **SB 5649** Regarding energy efficiency in buildings

The bill creates an Energy Efficiency Assistance Program with a fund, which provides grants and technical assistance for energy efficiency audits and improvements in residential commercial buildings and agricultural activities. Funding will also be directed to provide training for workers to do the energy efficiency work. The bill seems to be set up to take advantage of forthcoming federal grants.

**League Position** - The League supports use of a variety of energy sources, with emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies. The League supports mandatory energy conservation measures, and assistance for low-income individuals when energy policies bear unduly on people who are economically poor.

**Status** – The bill was heard in the Senate Committee on Environment, Water & Energy on Friday, January 30.

**ACTION** - If your senator is on the committee, (**Rockefeller, Pridemore, Honeyford, Delvin, Fraser, Hatfield, Holmquist, Marr, Morton, Ranker, Sheldon**) tell him/her that there are many good things we support in the bill, but we oppose the portion of this bill that changes a previous law (voted in by the people as **Initiative 937** concerning energy resource use by certain electric utilities) allowing utilities who donate to the energy efficiency assistance account or the low-income weatherization account to get credit toward their renewable energy targets specified in **Initiative 937**.

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

Marian Wineman, [mwineman@comcast.net](mailto:mwineman@comcast.net), 206 285 1066

**Support** in concept - **SB 5219** - Creating a legislative task force to address housing for individuals at a high risk of being homeless

The Legislature and the Governor would appoint the task force members who would review and make recommendations regarding:

- Identification and removal of barriers for individuals at risk of being homeless;
- Inventory and review of existing programs that serve these populations and advisable methods of providing housing assistance in the future;
- Methods of encouraging private landlords to provide housing for at-risk populations;
- Statutory changes to the residential landlord-tenant act; and
- Quality controls to ensure housing standards for at-risk tenants.

The task force must present a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature by November 15, 2009.

**League Position** - The LWVWA believes that state government should provide information, assistance and coordination for housing programs at all levels. Due to the current state fiscal crisis, we are not able to support new General Fund programs. However LWVWA would support the policy of this legislation.

**Status** - This bill, sponsored by Senators **Carrell, Regala, Hargrove, Kline, Brandland, Swecker, Stevens, and King**, is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections at 10:00 a.m. on January 30<sup>th</sup>.

**ACTION** - If a member of the Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (**Hargrove, Regala, Stevens, Brandland, Carrell, Kauffman, McAuliffe**) is from your district, tell him/her that you support the concept of forming a task force to address housing for individuals at a high risk of being homeless but that LWVWA recognizes that, in the state's current fiscal situation, there are no General Fund moneys to support new programs.

**Contact** – Betty Sullivan, [jaybetty2@msn.com](mailto:jaybetty2@msn.com), 206 682 5240

**Support** the review (in policy) - **SB 5585 & HB 1696** - Concerning tax relief to promote employer-assisted housing

The bills would offer a tax incentive to promote employer-assisted housing that enables employees to obtain appropriate housing close to jobs and services. It requires the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) to conduct an evaluation of the Employer-Assisted Housing Program after 36 months using

performance measurement data, as well as other information provided by the employers and employees participating. The Washington State Housing Finance Commission and the Department of Revenue are required to provide information necessary for the JLARC to perform the review required under the act.

**League Position** - The LWVWA believes that state government should provide information, assistance and coordination for housing programs at all levels. LWVWA believes that any tax exemption proposal should be carefully evaluated for purpose, benefit and cost, and all tax exemptions should be periodically reviewed. Due to the current state fiscal crisis, we are not able to support new General Fund programs.

**Status** - **SB 5585**, sponsored by Senators **Jacobsen, Kohl-Welles**, and **Keiser**, was requested by the Housing Finance Commission and was referred to Senate Committee on Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance. No hearing date has been set. **HB 1696**, sponsored by Representatives **Kenney, Springer, Moeller, Ormsby, Simpson**, and **Nelson**, was referred to the House Committee on Local Government & Housing. No hearing date has been set.

**ACTION:** If a member of the Senate Committee on Financial Institutions, Housing & Insurance (**Berkey, Hobbs, Benton, Franklin, Parlette, Schoesler**) or the House Committee on Local Government & Housing (**Simpson, Nelson, Angel, Ericksen, Cox, Miloscia, Short, Springer, Upthegrove, White, Williams**) is from your district, tell him/her that you support the concept of having JLARC evaluate the employer-assisted housing program. Ask that hearings be scheduled with the policy committees. Whether we could support the tax incentive to promote this plan would depend on the conclusions of the JLARC review. Tell the legislators that LWVWA recognizes that, in the state's current fiscal situation, there are no General Fund moneys to support the funding of this tax exemption and review.

**Contact** – Betty Sullivan, [jaybetty2@msn.com](mailto:jaybetty2@msn.com), 206 682 5240

**Support** (in policy) - **HB 1495** - Provides real estate excise tax exemptions to stabilize neighborhoods

This bill offers a solution to the inventory of unsold or foreclosed vacant homes on the market that are driving property values down and destabilizing neighborhoods. **HB 1495** would provide targeted incentives to housing developers, would stimulate the sale of vacant homes to low-income buyers, and would stabilize neighborhoods affected by this growing inventory. This incentive will be provided through excise tax relief on sales of homes to low-income, first-time homebuyers. A sale of a qualifying residential housing unit by a qualifying seller to a qualifying buyer is exempt from excise tax under **HB 1495**. When the amount of state real estate excise taxes exempted reaches one million dollars in any fiscal year, the exemptions will stop for that fiscal year.

**League Position** - LWVWA believes that any tax exemption proposal should be carefully evaluated for purpose, benefit and cost: and, all tax exemptions should be periodically reviewed. LWVWA believes that the state government should provide information, assistance, and coordination for housing programs at all levels.

**Status** - **HB 1495**, sponsored by Representatives **Pettigrew, Nelson, Kenney, White**, and **Ormsby**, was referred to the House Committee on Local Government & Housing. It is scheduled for a public hearing on February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:30 p.m.

**ACTION** - Tell your legislators on the House Committee on Local Government & Housing (**Simpson, Nelson, Angel, Ericksen, Cox, Miloscia, Short, Springer, Upthegrove, White, Williams**) that LWVWA recognizes that in the state's current fiscal situation there are no General Fund moneys to support the funding of this new tax exemption, but that if new funding becomes available, we would support it.

**Contact** – Betty Sullivan, [jaybetty2@msn.com](mailto:jaybetty2@msn.com), 206 682 5240

**Support** - **HB1180** - Safe Baby Bottle Act (Regarding the use of bisphenol A)

Why should new mothers be concerned about the safety of the bottles for their child's milk and juice? Because most probably contain bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical used extensively to harden plastic products. Numerous studies have shown that BPA leaches from the bottles and sippy cups into the liquids that they contain. BPA is linked to higher incidents of development and reproductive damage, cancer and diabetes. This bill bans the sale after 7/1/10 of any bottle, cup or other container containing BPA in the plastic that is intended to be filled with a liquid, food or beverage for consumption by children age 3 or younger. It also bans any sports water bottle with BPA. A process is established for the Department of Ecology to assess alternatives to BPA in other food and beverage containers before enacting any further restrictions. Fiscal Note is not yet available.

**League Positions** - LWVUS Early Intervention for Children at Risk: support for action to reduce or eliminate

threats to young children's full growth, development and safety.

**Status** – A hearing was held on Jan. 28 in the House Committee on Environmental Health. The bill is scheduled for executive session in the same committee on Feb. 4 at 1:30.

**ACTION** - If your legislator is on the House Committee on Environmental Health (**Campbell, Chase, Shea, Orcutt, Dickerson, Dunshee, Finn, Hudgins, Kretz, Rolfes**) please contact him/her to urge support for this bill.

**Contact** - Elizabeth Davis, [elizabethd@whidbey.com](mailto:elizabethd@whidbey.com), 360 331 4184

### **Watch** - **SB 5607 & HB 1817** - Attaining a world class K-12 educational system

These bills are the second set to be introduced regarding full funding of Basic Education. **SB 5444 & HB 1410** were written about in last week's Newsletter. LWVWA will testify regarding both sets of bills that we support full funding, that the Legislature should pass a bill that combines the best parts of both bills, that the full funding of education reform (passed in 1993 with new standards and mandates for students and school districts) is long overdue. We will also say that until the Legislature reforms the tax structure in this state, it will never have enough revenue to support all of its programs.

**League Positions** - LWVWA believes the state has the responsibility for fully funding Basic Education, all programs mandated by the Legislature, as well as maintenance and operations costs.

**Status** - A hearing is scheduled next week on **SB 5607** in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Feb. 2, 1:30pm and **HB 1817** has been referred to the House Committee on Education Appropriations, but no hearings have yet been scheduled.

**ACTION** - Contact your local Legislators and remind them of the state Constitution's Article IX, Section 1: "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders..." Ask them to support a new funding system that is transparent, stable, and ample and provides for a local levy system to provide extra, not basic education.

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

### **Support** – **HB 1210 & SB 5203** - Regarding insurance coverage for autism spectrum disorders

These bills would require that care for children with autism spectrum is included in health insurance.

**League Position** – LWVUW supports access to affordable Health Care.

**Status** - **HB 1210** has been referred to the House Committee on Health Care & Wellness and is waiting to be heard. **SB 5203** was heard on 29 Jan. There was little opposition.

**ACTION** - These bills have a majority of both the House(51) and the Senate(31). For the sponsors a thank you would be appropriate. House Sponsors: **Williams, Roach, O'Brien, Kirby, Anderson, Pettigrew, Appleton, Dickerson, Dunshee, Darneille, White, Pedersen, Goodman, Campbell, McCune, Rodne, Haler, Priest, Sells, Green, Morrell, Hunt, Blake, Upthegrove, Wood, Orwall, Conway, Ericks, Moeller, Flannigan, Kenney, Ormsby, Hasegawa, Eddy, Rolfes, Liias, Roberts, Takko, Seaquist, Chase, Hurst, Sullivan, Wallace, Carlyle, Clibborn, Springer, Kelley, Ross, McCoy, Maxwell, Miloscia** Senate Sponsors: **Hobbs, Pflug, Fairley, Haugen, Swecker, Rockefeller, Tom, Marr, Pridemore, King, Delvin, Murray, Kohl-Welles, Regala, McAuliffe, McDermott, Kastama, Becker, Kline, Jarrett, Oemig, Brown, Kauffman, Fraser, Shin, Parlette, Kilmer, Brandland, Roach**. If your representative has not yet declared their support please urge them to act.

**Contact** - Wayne Martin, MD, [docmartin934@aol.com](mailto:docmartin934@aol.com), 425 746 9960

### **Support** – **SB 5279 & HB 1165** - Providing for the safe collection and disposal of unwanted medicines

What does one do with old medication - unused, unwanted, and/or expired? We now know not to put them down the toilet or into the landfill but when they collect in homes, the chances of improper or accidental use increase. These bills provide for a producer maintained and funded product stewardship program. Producers of drugs sold in Washington State must prepare a plan for these unwanted drugs by 1.1.12. The plans must provide for a collection system from residential sources in all counties of the state. Fees will be charged to the producers for the costs of administering the program. There will be no charge to consumers to dispose of these drugs at the collection places.

**Fiscal information** - As of today, a surprisingly large fiscal note is attached to the bill. Surprising because the bill provides for fees to cover administrative costs to set up and run the program. While we support the policies of the bill, we will watch with concern its possible fiscal effects.

**League Positions** - LWVUS Natural Resources: support for protection and improvement of water quality, and reduction of pollution. LWVUS Early Intervention for Children at Risk: support for action to remove threats to the health and development of very young children.

**Status** - A hearing was held on Jan. 21 in the House Committee on Environmental Health, and the bill passed out of committee on Jan. 28. A hearing is scheduled on Feb. 4 at 8:00 am in the Senate Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

**Contact** - Elizabeth Davis, [elizabethd@whidbey.com](mailto:elizabethd@whidbey.com), 360 331 4184

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## Issue Background Items

### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

At the national level, a letter to your Representative and/or your Senator asking them to restore funding for Family Planning to the stimulus legislation would be appreciated.

**Contact** - Wayne Martin, MD, [docmartin934@aol.com](mailto:docmartin934@aol.com), 425 746 9960

### HEALTH CARE

On January 29<sup>th</sup> Mathematic, the consulting firm which conducted an econometric analysis of the health care reform proposals in **ESSB 6333**, presented their findings to the House Committee on Health Care and Wellness and to the Senate Committee on Health and Long-Term Care. An evaluation of all five plans was presented (a draft copy of the analysis is found at [www.leg.wa.gov/senate/committee/HEA/reports.htm](http://www.leg.wa.gov/senate/committee/HEA/reports.htm).) The analysis showed that two plans, the Partnership Plan and a Single Payer Plan, would cover all of the uninsured people in Washington State, however, the analysis indicated that the Partnership Plan would cost the state considerably less than the Single Payer Plan that was analyzed. There were many questions asked during the work session. Individuals or groups may contact health care committee chairs, **Senator Karen Kaiser** or **Representative Eileen Cody**, with questions or suggestions in giving feedback to the consultants. The final report will be released later. A citizens' work group on health care will be established to conduct meetings throughout the state to inform the public and to gather suggestions for health care reform. Schedule information will be included here when it becomes available.

**Contact** - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com), 253 572 9305

### **SCHIP** (State Children's Health Insurance Program) Federal Legislation

Reauthorization of the SCHIP bill including the Legal Immigration Children's Health Improvement Act **passed the Senate on January 29!** I appreciate your contacting Senators Murray and Cantwell asking them for their support and for letting me know that you contacted them.

**Contact** - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com), 253 572 9305

### CHILDREN'S ISSUES

We thought we had taken care of the paid family and medical leave legislation in 2007 which covered care for a new-born or adopted baby but the start-up was suspended by Governor Gregoire due to the revenue shortfall. **HB 1609 & SB 5679** Concerning family and medical leave would extend coverage to include a worker's own serious health condition as well as a seriously ill child, spouse, partner, or parent. It would be financed through an employee-paid payroll premium of 2 cents an hour. This amounts to 80 cents a week for full-time workers. **HB 1609** was referred to the **House Committee on Commerce & Labor**, and **SB 5679** was referred to the Senate Committee on **Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection**. A hearing has not been scheduled for these bills. LWVUS supports policies and programs at all levels of the community and government that promote the well being, encourage the full development and ensure the safety of all children.

**Contact** - Margie Reeves, [mpreeves@comcast.net](mailto:mpreeves@comcast.net), 360 866 7507

Pat Dickason, [p.dickason@comcast.net](mailto:p.dickason@comcast.net) 360 753 7647

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## For Reference

### KEY SESSION DATES

The 61st Washington State Legislature opened its long session on Monday, January 12. The 2009 legislative session in Olympia runs from January 12 to April 26. 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. 12** – First day of regular session

**Feb. 25** – Last day to read in committee reports in house of origin, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees

**Mar. 2** – Last day to read in committee reports from House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees in house of origin.

**Mar. 12** – League Lobby Day

**Mar. 12** – Last day to consider bills in house of origin (5 p.m.)

**Mar. 30** – Last day to read in committee reports from opposite house, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

**Apr. 6** - Last day to read in opposite house committee reports from House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

**Apr. 17** - Last day to consider opposite house bills (5 p.m.) (except initiatives and alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implement budgets, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session).\*

**Apr. 26** - Last day allowed for regular session under state constitution.

\* After the 96th day, only initiatives, alternatives to initiatives, budgets and matters necessary to implement budgets, messages pertaining to amendments, differences between the houses, and matters incident to the interim and closing of the session may be considered.

### CONTACT LISTS

Portfolios / Lobby Team – <http://www.lwwwa.org/about/officers.html>

Legislators – <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>

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

### LEAGUE POSITIONS

LWVWA positions – <http://www.lwwwa.org/advocacy/Program%20In%20Action%20website.pdf>

### RESOURCES

League action website - [http://www.lwwwa.org/advocacy/advocacy\\_index.html](http://www.lwwwa.org/advocacy/advocacy_index.html)

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 – [tvw.org](http://tvw.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 (follow “Legislators” link above). 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.

League of Women Voters of Washington  
4730 University Way NE, #720  
Seattle, WA 98105