



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.6

League office: 4730 University Way NE #720, Seattle 98105 / 206-622-8961 / 800-419-2596 / lwvwa@lwvwa.org

Six weeks into the fifteen-week legislative session. As the session moves along we all need to be making the individual contacts – calls or emails – that our Lobby Team requests. This newsletter is set up to make it very easy for you to do that. All you have to do is click on the Representative's or Senator's name in [blue](#). That will send you to their legislative home page. There is a place on that page for you to click to send an email, or their phone number is listed if you prefer to call. If you want to get more information about the bill you are addressing, click on the bill number in [blue](#) on this newsletter page; that will send you to the bill's information page. It's really important to make those contacts. When you have, please send an email to the Lobby Team member telling them what contacts you have made. Our email addresses are at the bottom of each news item.

Our **LOBBY DAY** is coming up on Thursday, March 12 and I hope you are all planning to join the Lobby Team in Olympia. Details and a registration form are in the Winter Voter. You can also get the registration form from the www.lwvwa.org website. **Call Your Senator and Representatives NOW** and make appointments to meet with them that day. Each legislator will receive an invitation from President Barbara Seitle to join us for coffee and conversation between 8:30 and 9:30 a.m. in the Columbia Room. When you call, add your personal invitation to Barbara's. By March 12 the legislators will be deep into the painful budget process and we will need to speak loudly and clearly for our priorities.

SEE YOU THERE. DON'T FORGET TO WEAR YOUR SHINY LEAGUE BUTTON!

Barb Bush
Action Chair

Action Priority

21 February - 27 February 2009

"If you have time this week to make only one phone call..."

Support – **SB 5534** & **HB 1517** 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.

Status - **SB 5534** was reported out by Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee and sent on to the Senate Rules Committee. **HB 1517** was amended and reported out by House State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee with a substitute. We will be analyzing the substitute bill.

ACTION - Help is needed in the Senate to show enough favorable votes that Rules Committee will bring the bill to the floor. Everyone please **call or email your Senator** and ask him/her to support **SB 5534**. To contact your Senator, go to www.leg.wa.gov click on Senate, then click on Senators. You will get the Senator's legislative page with email and phone information. If you get a definite response (positive or negative), please email bseitle@whidbey.com with the information.

Message - Please support this bill. 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

~~~~~

## Action Items

### Support – **HB 2193** & **SB 6061** – An Act relating to improving Washington state ferry service by modernizing ferry fleet and organization

This act may be known and cited as Washington’s marine highway modernization act. The intent of this legislation is to establish levels of service that amply meet the needs of the communities and statewide economy served by the ferry system; to established a framework for fleet and service modernization that will support sustained ferry construction; to implement cost-saving efficiencies; and to upgrade organizational effectiveness. The legislature finds that the current ferry system is not fully meeting the service requirements of the communities served by the network of “marine highway.”

**League Position** – Transportation projects and programs should be prioritized to develop a balanced and seamless transportation system. Population, topography, location of transportation facilities, job/housing balance, environmental impacts, social factors, and energy consumption must be considered. Funding for all modes of transportation should be adequate and predictable.

**Status** – **HB 2193** is sponsored by Rep. **Seaquist, Rolfes, Morris** and **Nelson**. This bill has not been scheduled yet for public hearing but will take place within the next week. **SB 6061** is sponsored by **Ranker, Kilmer** and **Rockefeller** and is yet to be scheduled for public hearing.

**ACTION** - If your representative is on the House Committee on Transportation, and is not a sponsor, (**Judy Clibborn** (Chair) **Liias, Roach, Rodne, Armstrong, Campbell, Cox, Dickerson, Driscoll, Eddy, Ericksen, Finn, Flannigan, Herrera, Johnson, Klippert, Kristiansen, Moeller, Sells, Shea, Simpson, Springer, Takko, Upthegrove, Wallace, Williams** and **Wood**) please contact him/her and ask them to support this bill. If your Senator is on the Senate Committee on Transportation, and is not a sponsor, (**Haugen, Marr, Becker, Benton, Berkey, Delvin, Eide, Jacobsen, Kastama, Kauffman, King, Ranker, Jarrett, Swecker, Sheldon**) please contact him/her urging passage of this bill.

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

### Support – **HB 2026** – Concerning Washington state ferry system procurement strategies

Declares an intent to restructure the duties of Washington State Ferries (WSF) to reflect best procurement practices in the marine industry. This legislation is to direct WSF to institute a design built program for the procurement of vessels and redirect the functions of staff to managing operations not designing vessels. This is part of the modernization of the system.

**League Position** - Transportation projects and programs should be prioritized to develop a balanced and seamless transportation system. Population, topography, location of transportation facilities, job/housing balance, environmental impacts, social factors, and energy consumption must be considered. Funding for all modes of transportation should be adequate and predictable.

**Status** – **HB 2026** is sponsored by Rep. **Seaquist, Smith, Angel, Morris, Van De Wage, Appleton, Haigh, Finn, Roberts, Rolfes, Cody** and **Carlyle** and is yet to be scheduled for a public hearing.

**ACTION** - If your representative is on the House Committee on Transportation and not a sponsor (**Judy Clibborn** (Chair) **Liias, Roach, Rodne, Armstrong, Campbell, Cox, Dickerson, Driscoll, Eddy, Ericksen, Flannigan, Herrera, Johnson, Klippert, Kristiansen, Moeller, Sells, Shea, Simpson, Springer, Takko, Upthegrove, Wallace, Williams** and **Wood**) please contact him/her to urge passage of this bill.

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

### Support – **SB 6005** – Acquiring State Ferry Vessels through the use of certain tourism industry tax revenues

This bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to purchase ferry vessels, to be used in a county with a population of one million or more, using the revenues generated to pay the principle and interest on any bonds used to purchase the vessels.

**League Position** –LWVWA supports increases in funding to provide adequate revenue and flexibility for a multi-model system of transportation.

**Status** – This bill is sponsored by Senators [Ranker](#), [Haugen](#), [Kilmer](#), [Marr](#), [Pridemore](#) and [Shin](#) and is scheduled for a public hearing on Tuesday, February 24 at 3:30.

**ACTION** – If your Senator is a member of the Senate Transportation Committee and is not a sponsor, ([Becker](#), [Benton](#), [Berkey](#), [Delvin](#), [Eide](#), [Jacobsen](#), [Kastama](#), [Kauffman](#), [King](#), [Jarrett](#), [Swecker](#), [Sheldon](#)) contact him/her urging passage of the bill out of committee. A thank you call to sponsors is always appreciated.

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

**Oppose** – **HB 2087** – Eliminating certain boards, committees, and commissions

**Oppose the inclusion of the Ferry Advisory Committee** (FACs) on the list of boards, committees and commission to be cut in **HB 2087**. The purpose of the bill is to reduce expenditures related to these entities. The members of the FACs are volunteers and not paid even for expenses incurred.

**League Position** - Effective citizen participation requires comprehensive and consistent communication between the governmental sponsor and its constituents. There should be opportunities for public comment from the institution of the plan, consideration of alternatives, development of the project or program, and throughout implementation.

**Status** - This bill is sponsored by Rep. [Springer](#), [Hunter](#) and [Kelley](#) on behalf of the Governor. It was referred to the House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs.

**ACTION** - If your representative serves on the State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee ([Hunt](#), [Appleton](#), [Armstrong](#), [Alexander](#), [Flannigan](#), [Hurst](#), and [Miloscia](#)) contact him/her to oppose the inclusion of the FACs on the list.

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

**Support** - **HB 2132** - Relating to instruction in civics

The State Board of Education establishes high school graduation requirements. This past year it proposed “Core 24” – the 24 credits required for admission to state universities. A half-credit was added to the required social studies credits without designating what course that should be. **HB 2132** would make that half-credit a civics class when, or if Core 24 is funded and takes effect.

**League Positions** - LWV believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government.

**Status** - The House Education Committee held a public hearing on **HB 2132** on February 17 and passed it out of committee on February 18. On February 20 the bill was passed to the House Rules Committee for second reading.

**ACTION** - Contact your Representatives and ask that they help move **HB 2132** out of the Rules Committee for passage by the full House.

**Message** - Preparation for citizenship is as important as preparation for college and a career and should take its place as a requirement for receiving a high school diploma.

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

**Support** - **SB 5912 & HB 1738** The Supreme Court Fair Elections bill

Establishing a program of optional public financing of campaigns for the Washington State Supreme Court, thereby allowing candidates the option of financing their campaigns solely or primarily on public financing.

**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** - Because **HB 1738** was not reported by the House State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee by Friday, this bill has died in committee for this session. Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee still has next week in which it could hear **SB 5912** and act on it.

**ACTION** - Contact the members of the Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections ([Fairley](#), chair; [Oemig](#), [McDermott](#), [Roach](#), [Benton](#), [Pridemore](#), [Swecker](#)) and ask them to schedule the bill for a hearing.

**Contact** - Barbara Seitle, [bseitle@whidbey.com](mailto:bseitle@whidbey.com), 360 221 3792

**Support** - **SB 5476** - A bill to abolish the death penalty.

**League Position** - The LWVUS supports the abolition of the death penalty.

**Status** – The bill was heard in Senate Judiciary on February 10. There is still one more week for the committee to report the bill.

**ACTION** - If your Senator is on the Judiciary Committee, (**Kline** - Chair, **Regala, McCaslin, Carrell, Hargrove, Kohl-Welles, Roach, Tom**) urge her/him to vote to report the bill out of committee.

**Contact** - Barbara Seitle, [bseitle@whidbey.com](mailto:bseitle@whidbey.com), 360 221 3792

**Support** - **SB 5854 & HB 1747** - Reducing climate pollution in the built environment

This is an energy efficiency bill known as “Efficiency First” which will create jobs and provide us with more clean energy for a cheaper price than any generation. It is cheaper to conserve energy than to generate it.

**League Position** - The League supports action by appropriate levels of government to encourage the use of energy conservation.

**Status** - **SB 5854** passed out of committee with amendments, but it is still strong. It has gone to the Senate Ways & Means Committee. **HB 1747** passed out of committee and has gone to the House Ways & Means Committee.

**ACTION** - If your Senator is on Ways & Means, (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, and Schoesler**) ask him/her to vote for **SB 5854**. If your Representative is on the House Ways & Means Committee, (**Linville, Ericks, Alexander, Bailey, Dammeier, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, and Sullivan**) ask him/her to vote for **HB 1747**. Federal stimulus dollars will soon be coming to the state. The state department of Community Trade & Economic Development anticipates a sizable increase in federal funds available for energy efficiency from the federal government and Washington needs to be ready to utilize them quickly.

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

**Support** - **HB 1994** - Informing electric customers of the carbon dioxide emissions associated with the customer's electricity consumption.

Requires utilities to inform electric customers of the carbon dioxide emissions associated with their electricity consumption.

**League Position** - The League supports a state energy policy formulated with particular regard to encouraging changes in lifestyle to preserve the environment.

**Status** - **HB 1994** passed out of committee and sent to House Rules Committee.

**ACTION** - If your representative is on the House Rules Committee, (**Chopp, DeBolt, Armstrong, Bailey, Eddy, Ericks, Green, Hasegawa, Hinkle, Hudgins, Johnson, Kelley, Kessler, Kretz, Kristiansen, Liias, Moeller, Morrell, Morris, Santos, Schmick, Springer, Van De Wege, and Warnick**) call him/her and ask for support of the bill. This bill requires no new money.

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

**Support** – **SB 5629** - Pregnancy Prevention Programs

This bill removes the requirement that the Department of Health (DOH) apply for abstinence only funds and allows DOH to apply for comprehensive sex education funds.

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

**Status** - **SB 5629** was heard and received a DO PASS recommendation. It is the Rules Committee and is eligible to be placed on its second reading in other words, it is ready to be put on the Senate calendar.

**ACTION** - Please contact your Senator and ask that she/he support this bill.

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

**Support** – **SB 5730** – Relating to federal financing of health coverage

This bill is a request to the federal Department of Health & Human Services to expand and revise the medical assistance program to include low-income adults at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

**League Position** – Ensure universal access for all residents to a comprehensive, uniform, and affordable set of health services...regardless of one's health status or financial status.

**Status** – **SB 5730** had a hearing in the Health & Long-Term Care Committee on February 12 and passed out of committee on February 19 with a do pass recommendation. It was referred to the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

**ACTION** - If your senator is on the Ways and Means Committee, (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, and Schoesler**) ask her/him to schedule a hearing for this bill.

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

### **Support** - **HB 1492** - Concerning the independent youth housing program

This bill addresses the housing needs of youth who have aged out of the state's foster care system. These youth are between 18 and 23 years old. **SB 1492** would allow subcontractors participating in the Independent Youth Housing Program to use program monies to pay for professional mental health services, as well as tuition costs for court-ordered classes and programs that are necessary to assist participating youth in accessing and maintaining independent housing.

**League Position** - League believes that stable and adequate funding for a coordinated continuum of services for children at risk should be provided. Foster children who have aged out of the system could be included under this provision.

**Status** - **HB 1492** was sponsored by 13 representatives, including Pedersen, Pettigrew, Haler, Kagi, Walsh and others. It was referred to the Local Government & Housing Committee and received a hearing on February 4<sup>th</sup>. The bill was passed and referred to General Government Appropriations and was heard in that committee on February 17. There was no opposing testimony.

**ACTION** - **HB 1492** would allow the use of existing funds in the independent youth housing program to be used for ancillary services to support the mental health, tuition and programs for these youth. **Ask your representatives to support passage of this bill.**

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

### **Support** - **HB 1766** & **SB 5672** Prohibiting discrimination based on lawful source of income in real estate transactions

These bills would make it illegal to discriminate against those using Section 8 housing vouchers, for example, to pay for rent. They would also include any verifiable legal income, including income derived from: employment, social security, supplemental security income, other retirement programs, child support, alimony, and other assistance programs, such as housing assistance, public assistance, and general assistance programs. The bills include a schedule of civil penalties, beginning at \$10,000 for the first unfair practice to a maximum of \$50,000 for two or more instances in a seven-year period.

**Status** - **HB 1766** had a first reading on January 28<sup>th</sup> and was referred to Judiciary. There was a public hearing on February 18<sup>th</sup> and the first substitute bill was voted out of committee on February 19<sup>th</sup> with a do pass recommendation. **HB 1766** is now in the House Rules Committee. **SB 5672**, sponsored by **Kline** and **Kohl-Welles**, had a first reading on January 28<sup>th</sup> and was referred to Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection where it is scheduled for a hearing on February 23 at 6:00pm.

**League position** - League believes that discrimination against low-income people is an injustice that should not be tolerated.

**ACTION** - Thank Representative **Pedersen**, chair of the Judiciary Committee, for hearing **HB 1766** and committing to passing it. If your Senator is on the Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee, and is not a sponsor, (**Keiser, Holmquist, Franklin, Honeyford, and King**) please contact her/him and ask them to support **SB 5672**.

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

### **Watch** - **SB 5942** Concerning the taxation of newspapers

Printing and publishing is subject to the state Business & Occupation Tax (B&O) at a rate of 0.484 percent. This includes printing and publishing of newspapers, magazines, periodicals, books and similar items. The tax

applies to the gross receipts of the business. This bill would reduce the B&O tax on newspapers from 0.484 percent to 0.2904 percent.

**League Position** - League believes that any tax exemption proposal should be carefully evaluated for purpose, benefit, and cost: and, all tax exemptions should be periodically reviewed.

**Status**—This bill was sponsored by 15 senators including Prentice, Zarelli, Kohl-Welles, Kline and others. On February 9<sup>th</sup> it had a first reading and was referred to Ways & Means. On February 18 it received a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Ways & Means.

**ACTION** - If you have a senator on the Ways & Means Committee, (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, and Schoesler**) ask that this bill be voted on.

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

---

## Issue Background Items

### THE STATE BUDGET

This week the legislature received more bad news about the condition of our state's finances. A forecast, preliminary to the official one that will come out mid-March, estimates that the state deficit through 2011 will be around \$8 billion, up from the \$6 billion deficit projected in November. For the remainder of this current 07-09 biennium, they must cut another \$700 million by the end of June on top of the \$635 million in budget cuts the Governor signed into law this week.

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

### TRANSPORTATION

**HB 2044** - Requiring the Washington State Ferry Division to create a comprehensive incident and accident investigation policy and provide a copy to the legislature by November 1, 2009. A public hearing has not been scheduled. The League has no position on safety so cannot speak to this issue.

There are several enabling regional bills that are being considered this session. The following are worth mentioning for individual or local action.

**HB 1677 & SB 5540** – Establishing high capacity transportation corridor areas.

These bills would allow transits to establish sub-taxing districts approved by voters to fund projects like light rail and/or rapid transit within the high capacity transportation corridor. Although several locales were mentioned in the house bill such as Sound Transit in the Puget Sound, Clark, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom and Yakima counties, the main county mentioned was Clark with its need to fund light rail in the Vancouver area and across the bridge to Portland to connect with MAX. Representatives from Clark were the only speakers at the public hearing.

**HB 2211** – An Act relating to the authorization, administration, and enforcement of tolls on the State Route number 520 corridor

This legislation imposes tolls to help finance replacement of the bridge, and generate additional funds to help finance associated projects including connections from Interstate 5 to the floating bridge and from the east end of the floating bridge to State Route number 202. The legislation does not include tolling the I-90 Bridge. This bill is sponsored by Clibborn, Eddy, Maxwell, and Liias. Chairperson, Clibborn who represents Mercer Island is opposed to tolling the I-90. It is understood that her contention is that tolling I-90 is not necessary to secure funding for the 520 bridge as diversion of traffic to the I-90 would be minimal.

**SB 5493** – Creating a regional transportation corridor authority

An Act that creates a limited regional transportation corridor authority that provides a comprehensive and integrated corridor-based multimodal regional transportation system within a defined transportation corridor. The first regional transportation corridor authority established after the effective date would be State route 520 and Interstate 90, between Interstate 5 and Interstate 405. This bill is sponsored by Senators Murray, Jarrett, and Kohl-Welles. Senator Murray believes strongly that it is necessary to toll the I-90 to secure enough funds to finance the 520 bridge. This legislation is much more comprehensive than **HB 2211** as it includes both highway and public transportation projects and services. Both of these bills have had public hearings, but

neither has passed out of committee.

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

## EDUCATION

Basic Education Finance

**SB 5444/HB 1410** and **SB 5607/HB 1817**, proposing a new Basic Education Funding structure are now officially “dead” as Legislators and education groups could not reach consensus on either bill. **SB 6048/HB 2261** were introduced as “intent only” bills – the intent of the Legislature is declared. The work will continue to come up with specific legislation that will result in full funding for basic education.

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

## UNFUNDED MANDATES

**SB 5880**, **SB 5889**, and **SB 5890**, which would repeal, suspend or amend unfunded mandates imposed by the Legislature on school districts, education service districts, and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. In the past LWVWA has supported some of these mandates assuming they would be fully funded by the state. LWVWA believes the state has the responsibility for fully funding all programs mandated by the Legislature. All three bills were passed out of the Senate Education Committee with amendments. In the original **SB 5889**, the requirement for Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) in civics was suspended until July 1, 2011. In the amended bill, only the civics CBAs for elementary students (4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade) is suspended.

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

## HEALTH CARE

### **HB1612 - Neurodevelopment Disabilities Insurance**

The bill has a fiscal note of \$3.8 million for the first year. The lobby team has agreed not to support any bill that imposes additional financial strain on State resources. I will continue to follow the bill and will report if circumstances change.

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

### **HB 1694 – Budget Bill - Health Care Budget Items**

As you well know there are many health care programs that may be cut in the 2009-2011 budget.

**League Position** – Ensure universal access for all residents to a comprehensive, uniform, and affordable set of health services...regardless of one’s health status or financial status.

**Status** – This budget bill was passed by both the House and the Senate and signed by the Governor. There were several health care cuts in this bill. We need to continue to contact our legislators telling them that we **do not want cuts to Basic Health, General Assistance Unemployable (GAU), Public Health, Long Term Care, and Mental Health**. We need to preserve our safety net. More budget bills will be written during this session.

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

**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 for health 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** – House Health Care & Wellness Committee had a hearing on this bill on February 3 and passed out of committee on February 20 with a do pass recommendation.

### **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 for health care 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** – **SSB 5480** received a do pass recommendation by the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

**HB 5945 – Washington Health Partnership plan – relating to health care reform**

The Washington Health Partnership plan was one of the health care reform plans studied by Mathematica last year. The plan is a public-private entity that would provide comprehensive health coverage to all residents of the state of Washington. The plan has a goal of covering all Washington residents by 2012 at an affordable cost.

**League Position** - “Quality health care at an affordable cost” is a basic goal for health stated by the LWVUS. This bill is designed to provide quality health care to all Washington residents at an affordable cost.

**Status** – **HB 5945** had a hearing in the Senate Health and Long-Term Care Committee on February 12. This bill may not move on during this session.

**HB 1892 – Washington Health Security Trust – relating to health care financing**

**HB 1892** is an update of the Washington Health Security Trust (WHST) bill that was introduced in 2007. This legislation creates a single financing entity, which would provide financing for comprehensive health care services for all Washington residents. See **Volume 41 Issue No. 4** newsletter for more details.

**League Position** - “Quality health care at an affordable cost” is a basic goal for health stated by the LWVUS. This bill is designed to provide quality health care to all Washington residents at an affordable cost.

**Status** – **HB 1892** has been referred to the House Committee on Health Care & Wellness. This bill will not move on during this session.

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

~~~~~  
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.lwwa.org/about/officers.html>

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

Legislative Committees – www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx

LEAGUE POSITIONS

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

RESOURCES

League action website - http://www.lwvwa.org/advocacy/advocacy_index.html

House Floor Activity as it happens – flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov/default.aspx?chamber=3

Senate Floor Activity as it happens – flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov

Public hearings as they happen – tvw.org

Bill information – text, analysis, status, committee action – apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo

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

State budget information – www.ofm.wa.gov

Governor’s website – governor.wa.gov

Washington state’s official website – 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.