



League of Women Voters of Washington

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

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

Legislative Newsletter, Vol.41, No.8

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COME TO LOBBY DAY THURSDAY, MARCH 12 SEE THE LEGISLATURE IN ACTION MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN

Calls This Week Are Crucial

Next Thursday, March 12, is the last day for the House and Senate to pass bills that originated in their house this session. So, it's especially important that we all respond to our lobbyists' requests for House and Senate contacts this week. Bills need to be out of the Rules Committees in both houses by close of business Wednesday or they are dead for this session. Please remember to let the lobbyist know of your contacts.

Action Priority

7 March - 13 March 2009

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

Support – **SB 5534/HB 1517** - Restoration of voting rights

For people who were convicted of felonies and who have come out of the criminal justice system. **HB 1517** was amended in committee making it a requirement for the Secretary of State to conduct a study of restoring voting rights.

Status – Both **SB 5534** and **SHB 1517** are in their Rules Committees and need to be reported out by this Wednesday.

ACTION - **Help is needed urgently to keep these bills moving.** If your Representative or Senator is on House Rules Committee (**Chopp, DeBolt, Armstrong, Bailey, Eddy, Ericks, Green, Hasegawa, Hinkle, Hudgins, Johnson, Kelley, Kessler, Kretz, Kristiansen, Lias, Moeller, Morrell, Morris, Santos, Schmick, Springer, Van De Wege, and Warnick**) or Senate Rules Committee (**Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens and Zarelli**) or if they are in the leadership, call or email and urge them to move the bills out of Rules. **Everyone please call or email your Senator and Representatives** and ask them to support the bills. If you get a response, send to bseitle@whidbey.com with the information.

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

Action Items

Oppose - **2SSB5840** - Energy Independence Act

This bill will amend Initiative 937 which was passed in 2006 and set certain percentages of utility generation that must be renewable energy, thereby increasing clean energy and green jobs and decreasing climate change. The bill amends the initiative by redefining renewable energy to include generation that existed before the initiative was passed. These changes will cancel the initiative's renewable requirement of 15% by 2020 and deprive our state of much-needed new jobs and other economic opportunities that come from development of new renewable resources.

League Position - The League supports renewable energy.

Status - This bill is placed on 2nd reading and is ready to be voted on in the Senate.

ACTION – Please contact your Senator and ask he/she to oppose the bill. Tell him/her we need the increased renewable energy that the people supported in Initiative 937. We want NEW renewable energy, and old projects should not be counted.

Contact - Toni Potter, antoniapotter@comcast.net, 206 365 8949

Support - **SB5629** – Pregnancy Prevention Programs

The 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 - **SB5629** passed the Senate on March 4 by a vote of 33 to 14. On March 5 it was referred to the House Health and Wellness Committee.

ACTION - If your Representative is a member of the House Health and Wellness Committee (**Cody, Driscoll, Erickson, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) ask that the bill is be given a hearing and voted out with a DO PASS recommendation.

Contact - Wayne Martin, MD, docmartin934@aol.com, 425 746 9960

Support - **SB 5282/HB 1180** - Safe Baby Bottle Act

The House bill bans the sale after 7/1/10 of any bottle, cup or other container containing bisphenol A (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 made with BPA. These two bans remain in the House bill. The ban on sports water bottles containing BPA has been removed from the Senate bill. The provisions authorizing the Department of Ecology to conduct further assessments into BPA alternatives for additional food and drink containers has been removed from both bills. Despite these changes, League continues to support the bill because it addresses the main health concern for very young children, which is the exposure to BPA from containers for their food and drink.

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.

Fiscal provisions - The House bill provides that the administrative costs to set up the program shall be paid from the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) account. Penalties for non-compliance are also assessed; they are paid into the MTCA account.

Status - Success occurred in the House with passage of the bill Thursday 5 March by a substantial margin, 76-21. For those of you who contacted your representatives, well done and many thanks, the bill now goes to the Senate where it was referred to the Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

ACTION - Please contact your Senator urging support for the bill when it comes to a vote on the floor.

Contact - Elizabeth Davis, elizabethd@whidbey.com, 360 331 4184

Support – **SB 5279/SHB 1165** - Providing for the safe collection and disposal of unwanted medicines

This bill provides for a producer provided 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.

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.

Fiscal provisions - The initial costs for Department of Ecology to establish the program are under \$50,000, and would be paid as a loan from the state's Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) fund. That loan would have to be repaid within two years.

Status - The bill remains in the Rules committees of the House and Senate.

ACTION - Immediate action in the House is needed. The bill must get to a floor vote not later than next Thursday, March 12. Please contact your representatives urging their support for this bill when it comes to a floor vote.

Message - Please vote for this bill to prevent accidental poisonings or intentional misuse of drugs in the home; the bill will also reduce degradation of the state's waters by reducing disposal of unwanted medicines into the toilet or down the drain.

Contact - Elizabeth Davis, elizabethd@whidbey.com, 360 331 4184

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. Protected also would be those who use any other 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.

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

Status - **HB 1766** has been sent to the floor of the House and placed on the floor calendar for a second reading. **SB 5672** has been sent to the floor of the Senate and placed on the floor calendar for a second reading.

ACTION - Ask your representatives to keep **HB 1766** alive. Ask your senator to support **SB 5672** on the floor of the senate. The bills should be supported by all legislators.

Contact - Betty Sullivan, jaybetty2@msn.com, 206 682 5240

Support - **HB 1581/SB 5550** - Requiring a minimum of three years' notice on closures or conversions of mobile home parks and manufactured housing communities.

The 1st Substitute House bill revised the minimum notice on closures to two years. In the Senate the bill was also revised requiring a minimum of eighteen months' notice on closures or conversions of mobile home parks. These bills would protect senior citizens and low-income residents from the disruption of having to vacate and find a living site in another mobile home park where few, if any, vacancies exist.

League Position: All levels of government and the private sector share the responsibility to help alleviate the housing shortage in the low income sector.

Status: **HB 1581** has been sent to the Rules Committee, which will decide if the bill will be placed on the floor calendar for a second reading. **SB 5550** has now passed the first of two steps in the Rules Committee, which will decide if the bill will be placed on the floor calendar for a second reading.

ACTION - Contact your Senator and Representatives on the Rules Committees (Senate: **Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens** and **Zarelli**. House: **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**) to ask for a second reading of these bills. Please ask that the longer minimum notice of three years be reconsidered as a floor amendment.

Contact - Betty Sullivan, jaybetty2@msn.com, 206 682 5240

Support - **HB1490** - Transit Oriented Communities

HB1490 would create affordable, walkable communities connected by transit for Washington's families.

League Position - LWVUS position on Natural Resources gives "special attention to maintaining and improving the environmental quality of urban communities."

Status - The bill will be up for a House floor vote by Wednesday, March 11th.

ACTION - Take a moment now to call your Representative and ask her/him to "support the Transit Oriented Communities Bill (**HB1490**)". **If you are in the 1st or 45th east side legislative districts, it is especially important to make your call.**

Contact - Ann Aagaard, ann_aagaard@verizon.net, 425 488 8418

Support - SB 6096 - Concerning the taxation of the manufacturing and selling of fuel for consumption outside the waters of the United States by vessels in foreign commerce

This bill closes an emerging tax loophole before it opens. Without this bill, big oil could receive an additional \$15-20 million a year in tax breaks from the state. The state faces an \$8 billion budget deficit and cannot afford an additional \$15-20 million a year in tax breaks to big oil.

League Position - The league supports environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Status - Passed to the Senate Rules Committee for second reading.

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

Contact - Toni Potter, antoniapotter@comcast.net, 206 365 8949

Support - HB2130 - Concerning tax incentives for renewable energy manufacturing facilities

This bill cuts the B&O tax for renewable energy manufacturing facilities. The fiscal note says this bill will add more to the general funds.

League Position - The league supports environmentally sound policies that encourage the use of renewable resources.

Status - Passed to House Rules Committee for second reading.

ACTION - Please contact your Representative and ask her/him to support this bill.

Message - This bill is about creating jobs. The renewable energy industry is growing very quickly and Washington should be competitive in this market. Our operating costs for renewable energy manufacturing are lower than most other parts of the country. In the next 10 years, the industry is going to more than triple and this bill will encourage many renewable energy companies to look at Washington as a place to invest.

Contact - Toni Potter, antoniapotter@comcast.net, 206 365 8949

Support - SB 5735/2SHB 1819 - Reducing greenhouse gases

These bills, known as Cap and Invest, establish a program to meet our global warming pollution reduction goals. The Senate bill is voluntary and allows polluters to buy permits to pollute (money from sales of the permits will go into the general fund). These important bills have had League input over the last two years and are an essential step in the right direction. They are one of the four Priorities for a Healthy Washington, which the League has endorsed.

League Position - LWVUS Climate Change Position

Status - This is a Governor's request bill. These bills are ready to be voted on in the House and Senate.

ACTION - Please contact your Senator and Representatives and ask them to support these bills. We need to reduce our contribution to climate change.

Contact - Toni Potter, antoniapotter@comcast.net, 206 365 8949

Support - SB 5854/HB 1747 - Reducing climate change in the built environment

These bills are greatly weakened and require only administrative funding, however, they will still advance the cause of energy efficiency.

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 - **SB 5854** was made eligible to be placed on 2nd reading. **HB 1747** was placed on second reading in Rules Committee.

ACTION - Ask your Senator and Representatives to support these bills. Energy efficiency is the cheapest way to have more energy. They are greenhouse gas free so will reduce climate change. Ask for some creative funding.

Contact - Toni Potter, antoniapotter@comcast.net, 206 365 8949

Support - **SHB 2114/SSB 5891** – Establishing a forum for testing primary care medical home reimbursements pilot programs

These companion bills would require the Health Care Authority and DSHS to design, oversee implementation of, and evaluate one or more primary care medical home reimbursement pilot projects in the state. A medical home pilot project would include public payers, private health carriers, third party purchasers, and primary health care providers.

League Position – Health care system should provide seamless coverage and continuity of care. This bill encourages the medical home concept, which would provide continuity of care.

Status – Both bills passed out of committee and are in their respective Rules Committees.

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**) ask her/him to support **SHB 2114**. If your senator is on the Senate Rules Committee, (**Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens and Zarelli**) ask her/him to support **SSB 5891**. These bills require no new money.

Contact – Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbornet.com, 253 572 9305

Budget Bills - 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 – The supplemental budget, and the 2009-2011 budget are being considered by the House Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee and the Senate Ways and Means Committee. The Federal stimulus will ease this situation, but it will not eliminate the possibility of cuts in health care.

ACTION – 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 health care safety net.

Contact – Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbornet.com, 253 572 9305

Support – **ESSB5768** – Concerning the state route number 99 Alaskan Way viaduct replacement project

The final design for the viaduct replacement project as a deep bore tunnel and includes four general-purpose lanes in a stacked formation. State funding is not to exceed \$2.4B and must also include \$400M in toll revenue.

League Position – Transportation projects and programs should be prioritized to develop a balanced and seamless transportation system taking into account population, topography, location of transportation facilities, community livability and character, job/housing, environmental impacts, social factors, energy consumption and political realities. State transportation policy should...manage and reduce single occupant vehicle use on highway facilities and shift solo trips to alternative modes.

Status – This bill has been adopted in the Senate and has been referred to the House Transportation Committee and is expected to pass quickly.

ACTION – Contact your Representative and urge him/her to pass this bill.

Contact – Luella Wells, lawells@wavecable.com, 360 598 3267

Issue Background Items

GOVERNMENT

SB 5912 and **HB 1738** the Supreme Court Fair Elections bills, establishing a program of optional public financing of campaigns for the Washington State Supreme Court, did not move out of their committees of origin in time so they are dead for this session. However, the House State Government and Tribal Affairs

Committee held a hearing Thursday, March 5, to position the bill for next session. LWVWA testified in favor. **SB 5476** – A bill to abolish the death penalty, which the LWVUS supports. The bill was heard in Senate Judiciary on February 10. No further action was taken, so the bill is dead for this session.

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

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

HB1754, an act relating to promoting continuity of care for children enrolled in early learning and care programs receiving working connections childcare subsidies. **HB1754** recognizes that continuity of care in children's early learning and preschool environments supports healthy development and also supports low-income parents to achieve goals relating to education, employment, self-sufficiency, and asset building. It establishes that the maximum co pay be no more than ten percent of the household's monthly gross income for all children in the household. The bill also establishes that eligibility determinations and authorizations for working connections subsidies shall be effective for twelve months unless a parent or caregiver reports a change in circumstances necessitating reauthorization prior to the end of the twelve-month period. The number of child absence days for which a provider is eligible to receive a working connections subsidy for a child's care shall not be fewer than ten days each month. **HB1754** was not heard in Ways and Means by the cut-off date so is dead. There is support, however, for including a proviso in the budget to accomplish as much of **HB1754** as possible, with the hope of using funding from the stimulus package.

HB 1943, a professional development consortium will be developed by the Early Learning Council to develop a statewide system of preparation and continuing education for early learning and the school age workforce. Gaps will be identified in the current system and recommendations will be made for the improvement and coordination in the current system for a statewide plan. **HB 1943** passed the House and was referred to the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Committee.

Contact - Pat Dickason, p.dickason@comcast.net, 360 753 7647
or Margie Reeves, mpreeves@comcast.net, 360 866 7507

WATER ISSUES

HB 1614 "Invest in Clean Water" authorizes fees on first possession of petroleum products that contribute to storm water pollution for a \$100M/year storm water program. The bill is still alive and will be part of the final budget discussions. No action needed at this time.

Contact - Ann Aagaard, ann_aagaard@verizon.net, 425 488 8418

HEALTH CARE

SB 5480 Creating the Washington health care discount plan organization act 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. This bill is now in the Senate Rules Committee.

SSB 5945 Washington Health Partnership plan, relating to health care reform, has been completely changed. The bill now establishes the Washington Health Partnership as a working group to focus on health reform goals, which include implementation of health reform in phases. **SB 5730** is rolled into this bill extending coverage to individuals below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This bill includes consolidating purchasing of health coverage and streamlining administration along with examining health reform proposals and selecting one for consideration. A goal of covering all Washington residents by 2012 at an affordable cost is included in the bill. **SSB 5945** is in the Rules Committee and may be sent to the Senate Floor for a vote on Friday, March 6. This bill does require new money. I will continue to monitor the progress of this bill.

SHB 1493 Prohibiting the use of patient health care information for prescription drug marketing, 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. This bill was withdrawn because federal legislation, HITECH Act, includes the same fix for HIPAA that this bill included.

Contact – Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbournet.com, 253 572 9305

TRANSPORTATION

HB 1677, High capacity transportation corridor areas, would allow transits to establish sub-taxing districts approved by the voters to fund projects like light rail and/or rapid transit within the high capacity transportation corridor. Although several locales were mentioned in the 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. This bill has passed out of committee and now has a second reading in Rules.

HB 2087, Eliminating boards and committees, we were opposed to including the Ferry Advisory committees (FACs) on this list. (See Legislative Newsletter, **Vol.41, No.6**). I have been informed that they have been removed from the list.

EHB 2044 Requiring the Washington State Ferry Division to create a comprehensive incident and accident investigation policy has been adopted and has been referred to the Senate Transportation Committee.

HB 2211 Tolling of the SR 520 corridor died in committee.

All other bills pertaining to the Washington State ferry service died in committee. See Legislative Newsletter, **Vol.41, No. 6** for details. My understanding is that the WSF plans for ferry service will be taken up in the transportation budget later in the session.

Contact – Luella Wells, lawells@wavecable.com, 360 598 3267

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.

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

LEAGUE POSITIONS

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

RESOURCES

League action website - http://www.lwwwa.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 – twv.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.