



# 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)

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## Action Priority

21 March - 27 March 2009

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

### 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. This bill amends the initiative by redefining renewable energy to include generation that existed before the initiative was passed. It includes existing hydropower under 35 megawatts. Hydropower is, of course, renewable energy, but the intent of the initiative was to increase new renewable wind and solar. 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. As Washington's demand for electricity is still growing, developing wind and solar will mean less greenhouse gases will be put in the atmosphere because we will not have to buy as much "dirty" energy from the grid.

**League Position** - The League supports predominant reliance on renewable resources

**Status** - The bill will be heard by the House Committee on Technology, Energy and Communications on Wednesday, March 25th at 8 a.m. The bill passed the Senate 27-21.

**ACTION** - If your Representative is on the above committee, (**McCoy, Eddy, Crouse, Haler, Carlyle, Condotta, Finn, Hasegawa, Herrera, Hinkle, Hudgins, Jacks, McCune, Morris, Takko, Van De Wege**) tell him/her to **oppose** the bill as we need the increased renewable energy that the people supported in Initiative 937. We want NEW renewable energy, and old projects and hydropower should not be counted.

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

## Action Items

### Support – **HB 1517** - Restoration of voting rights

For people who were convicted of felonies and who have come out of the criminal justice system.

**Status** – **HB 1517** was passed by the House 53-43, in its original form. It is scheduled for public hearing in the Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections at 10:00 AM on Monday 23 March.

**ACTION** – If your Senator is on the Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections (**Fairley**, chair; **Oemig, McDermott, Roach, Benton, Pridemore, Swecker**) ask them to support **HB 1517**. Everyone, **please contact your Senator**, particularly those in Senate leadership, and ask her/him to support this bill. If you get a response, send to [bseitle@whidbey.com](mailto: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](mailto:bseitle@whidbey.com), 360 221 3792

### 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 Position** - LWV believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation by its citizens.

**Status** - **HB 2132** passed the House and had a public hearing in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Monday, March 16. It must be voted out of Committee by March 30.

**ACTION** - Contact your Senator if she/he is on the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee, (**McAuliffe, Kauffman, Oemig, King, Brandland, Hobbs, Holmquist, Jarrett, McDermott, Roach & Tom**) and ask for support to move **HB 2132** out of Committee.

**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** - **2SSB 5945** – Washington Health Partnership plan – relating to health care reform

The bill 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.

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

**Status** – **2SSB 5945** was passed in the Senate and is now in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. A public hearing was scheduled for this bill on March 20.

**ACTION** – If your Representatives are members of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee, (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) ask them to support this important policy bill.

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

**Support** - **2SHB 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** – The 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** – A hearing has been scheduled for **SSB 5891** in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on March 24 at 8:00 am.

**ACTION** - If your Representatives are on the House Health Care & Wellness Committee, (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) ask them to support **SSB 5891**. These bills require no new money.

**Contact** – Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbournet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbournet.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. The House and Senate Biennial Budgets will be released soon.

**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 & 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, Mental Health, and Family Planning.** We need to preserve our health care safety net. You would be **most effective** if you have a **personal story** of the effects that these cuts would have if implemented.

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

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

This bill will require that by January 1, 2010, qualifying utilities must maintain energy consumption data for all nonresidential and qualifying public agency buildings. This information will then be available to the public, and therefore more actions can be taken to decrease excessive energy consumption. The part of this bill that improves building energy codes and retrofits buildings to make them more energy efficient involves general funds and will not go into effect until the funds are available. This important bill is one of four Priorities for a Healthy Washington, which the League has endorsed.

**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**- Passed the Senate & House by 42-5 and 70-25, but will be voted on again by the House Technology, Energy & Communications Committee

**ACTION** – If your representative is on the above committee, (**McCoy, Eddy, Crouse, Haler, Carlyle, Condotta, Finn, Hasegawa, Herrera, Hinkle, Hudgins, Jacks, McCune, Morris, Takko, Van De Wege**) ask him/her to vote for the bill.

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

**Support** – **2SSB 5735/2SHB 1819** - Reducing greenhouse gases

The bill, known as Cap and Invest, establishes a program to meet our global warming pollution reduction goals. The bill keeps our state involved in the regional negotiations about cap and trade and explores how Washington's forests and agricultural lands can be used to reduce climate change. It requires an independent economic analysis of the impact to Washington consumers, businesses, and citizens if Washington entered into a regional or federal cap-and-trade program. It requires the Washington State Department of Ecology to design voluntary statewide emission targets beginning with calendar year 2009. It is 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. A weak bill passed out of Senate and that has been heard in the House Committee on Ecology & Parks where the Governor appeared asking them to strengthen the bill. It is now scheduled for executive session in the House Committee on Ecology & Parks on Friday 27 March at 8:00 AM.

**ACTION** – If your representative is on the Ecology & Parks Committee, (**Uptegrove, Rolfes, Short, Newhouse, Chase, Dickerson, Dunshee, Eddy, Finn, Hudgins, Kretz, Kristiansen, Morris, Orcutt, Shea**) call and ask her/him to strengthen the bill. Also, call or email Governor Gregoire and ask her to support a strong Cap & Trade bill now!

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

**Support** - **SB5629** - 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** - The bill was heard in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on March 19. One person was opposed. Two of the members had concerns. The bill is waiting for executive action.

**ACTION** - If your Representative is a committee member (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) please ask him/her to support this bill and vote it out with a DO PASS recommendation.

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

## Support - **HB 1250** - Concerns the housing trust fund

The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development (DCTED) administers the Housing Assistance Program and the Affordable Housing Program. Both of these programs, commonly referred to as the Housing Trust Fund (HTF), provide loan and grant monies to eligible organizations to provide housing for low-income and special needs populations. The HTF is available to fund acquisition, new construction, and rehabilitation of low-income housing units. Current law prohibits the HTF administration costs from exceeding 5 percent of the annual funds available for the HTF. Capital bond proceeds may not be used for administrative costs. The 2007-09 capital budget appropriation for the HTF is \$200 million, and the DCTED cost of administering the program for the 2007-09 biennium is \$8.7 million. **SHB 1250** would eliminate the prohibition of the use of capital bond proceeds for administrative costs directly related to project application, selection, contracting, and development. The bill would also eliminate the restriction that not more than 5 percent of the funds available for the HTF project may be used for administration. This bill would allow for more emphasis on management of the portfolio, which is complex, as projects may remain part of the portfolio for many years.

**League position** - League believes that policies should be formulated to encourage the participation of industry, business, local and nonprofit groups in meeting housing needs.

**Status** - **SHB 1250** is now in the Senate Ways & Means Committee, where it had a public hearing on March 18<sup>th</sup>. It is scheduled for an executive session in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

**ACTION** - Ask your Senator to support this bill when it comes to the floor for a vote.

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

## Issue Background Items

### HEALTH CARE

#### **SSB 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. This bill was requested by the Insurance Commissioner. This bill is passed through the Senate and a hearing is scheduled on 3/24 at 8:00 am in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. This bill does require new funding.

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

### TRANSPORTATION

#### **SB6109** – Concerning ferries

The Senate Transportation committee took up a proposed substitute to this bill on March 19. The intent of the substitute was to implement recommendations from the JTC ferry study and other changes to make Washington State Ferries (WSF) more efficient. Procurement, preservation and improvements projects would be held to the same standards as terminal projects as well as some pre-design study requirements. The dollar amount for state work force working on ferries would increase to \$120,000 from \$60,000. The Transportation Commission must adjust fares to cover additional cost of fuel, after exploring ways to reduce fuel cost by other operational means. It also must take into consideration ways of increasing ridership. The intent to implement the recommendations from the JTC ferry study were not at this point expressed in the bill because of conflicting recommendations among the consulting groups and the response from WSDOT Ferry Division. I expect that more will be added, possibly by amendments.

One of the major differences was in the type and timing of vessel procurement and the fare structure. The Cedar River Group recommended the procurement of four small Island Home vessels to service Port Townsend - Keystone and Point Defiance - Tahl, funded in both the 09-11 and the 11-13 biennia. A 144 car vessel would not be funded until the 23-24 biennium. The WSF proposed alternative would fund two Island Home vessels in the 09-11 biennium, another in 11-13 biennium and add two 144 car vessels, one funded in 13-15 and another in 15-17 biennia, and would allow for more capacity, particularly for Mukilteo – Clinton and the San Juan Islands.

Another area of disagreement among the groups, including the Washington State Transportation Commission's consultants Cambridge Systematics, was fare structures. How much of operations and maintenance, and possible capital cost would fares (tolls) be required to cover? It seemed to come down to, if all other explored funding sources failed, the users bearing the cost. The Committee did allow the citizen group that developed the "Plan C" to present its recommendations. Adam Brockes, Martha Burke and Liz Otis who represented the group, emphasized two issues. First, they recommended procuring only one Island Home vessel and moving up the building of four 144 car capacity vessels on the premise of greater capacity, flexibility and reliability. Second, they addressed fares and were opposed to fares that would be more than the 70% recovery amount already previously established. Their contention was that there is a point of diminishing returns and if fares increase too much, then ridership would decrease. They also indicated that people riding the ferries pay a far greater amount in fare (tolls) than people do on other highways and bridges. What modifications will be made to this bill is a big question mark. I'm sure members of the committee will be more influenced by the budget forecast than any recommendations. Senator Haugen keeps reminding everyone that there is no additional money for ferry service.

Contact – Luella Wells, [lawells@wavecable.com](mailto: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. 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](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx)

### LEAGUE POSITIONS

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

### RESOURCES

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