



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

4 April - 10 April 2009

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

IMMEDIATE ACTION NEEDED

The House and Senate both released their 09-11 budget proposals this week, joining the Governor's plan that was presented in January. At some point before adjournment on April 26, the two houses and the governor will reconcile their proposals into one agreed upon budget.

Status -- After using spending reductions already made in this current year's budget and the several billion \$\$ infusion of federal funds from the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, lawmakers are still left with a \$4 billion shortfall. While there are differences in priorities among the 3 budgets, what is not different is that they all rely on spending cuts alone to make up the remaining \$4 billion. And, the cuts being proposed will have devastating effects on just about every area of state-funded services and programs.

Here are just a few of the cuts being considered:

- Eliminate 10,000 higher ed. enrollments or raise tuition by 10-13% for community colleges and 14-17% for universities
- Reduce or eliminate I-728 funds for smaller class sizes in K-12
- Cut 75% of funds to help equalize funding for poorer school districts
- Reduce state pre-school program slots for 179 children
- Reduce number of people on the Basic Health Insurance Plan by 40,000
- Reduce funding for WorkFirst program (at the very time there are no jobs)
- Cut spending on habitat and wildlife protection, land management, water management, watershed planning and implementation, flood management
- Move all money from dedicated funds into the operating budget – for example, the Clean Water and Model Toxics Control accounts

ACTION – Contact your legislators immediately. Tell them we must come up with a reasonable budget solution, one that looks at all of our options, including raising revenue. Urge them to consider eliminating outdated tax incentives to redirect the funds to industries and activities that support our health, welfare and environment. These budgets create painful cuts in the social safety net that hurt the very people most burdened in this economic environment. The cuts in education – pre-school to college – hamper investment in our future. And, cuts in climate change and environmental protections put us all at risk.

The budgets reflect both the current economic downturn and the flaws in the state's tax structure. Not only is our tax system one of the most regressive in the nation, it also provides one of the least dependable sources of revenue to the state, creating a "boom and boost" cycle in the state budget that is an exaggeration of the ebb and flow of the economic cycle. The League of Women Voters of Washington believes that it is time to reform the tax system and to correct some of its flaws through a progressive tax on income. We look forward to working with our state legislature to develop a balanced tax structure that is fair, adequate, flexible, and has a positive economic impact.

Contact - Barbara Bush, omi.bush@verizon.net, 425 349 5184

Action Items

Support - **HB 1250** - Concerning the Housing Trust Fund (HTF)

The current biennium's capital budget appropriation for the HTF is \$200 million. **HB 1250** eliminates the prohibition of the use of capital bond proceeds for administration costs directly related to project application, selection contracting and development. It also eliminates the restriction that not more than 5% of the funds available for the HTF program may be used for administration. The Senate's proposed Capital Budget has cut the Housing Trust Fund from \$200 million to \$133 million. However, this includes \$61 million from the federal government for weatherization. This means that, instead of \$133 million, the HTF will have only \$72 million for housing construction. This program contributes new construction jobs to the economy. Every 1,000 multifamily affordable units built creates 1,330 jobs and \$70 million in local income.

League Position - League believes that policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family should be supported and that all levels of government and the private sector share the responsibility to help alleviate the housing shortage in the low-income sector.

Status - **HB 1250** is in Senate Rules and has been made eligible to be placed on second reading. Rules will decide if the bill will be placed on the floor calendar.

ACTION - Ask your Senator in Rules (**Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens** and **Zarelli**) to place this bill on the floor calendar for a second reading. Ask that other sources of revenue be considered so that this program, and others, will not suffer devastating cuts.

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

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 in government.

Status - **HB 2132** passed the House, had a public hearing in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 16 and was passed out of Committee on March 26. It is now in the Rules Committee.

ACTION - Contact your Senator if a member of Rules (**Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens** & **Zarelli**) and ask for support to move **HB 2132** out of Rules to the floor of the Senate. 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. This is a bill with no fiscal note.

Contact - Catherine Ahl, cathahl@hotmail.com, 360 697 7924

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** passed the House March 10. It was reported out of Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee March 24 and sent to Rules Committee. It has been to be placed on 2nd reading by the Senate Rules Committee on 31 March.

ACTION – Everyone, please contact your Senator and urge her/him to vote for this bill.

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

Support - **E2SSB 5854** - Reducing climate pollution in the built environment

This is the "efficiency first" bill, the Senate version of HB1747 and the one that is going forward. The state energy code for home and buildings constructed from 2013 through 2031 must increase incrementally towards a 70 percent reduction in energy use. The Department of Community, Trade & Economic Development must

develop a strategic plan for enhancing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gases in homes, buildings, districts and neighborhoods.

League Position - The League supports an emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies.

Status - This bill is in the House General Government Appropriations Committee.

ACTION - If your Representative is on the above committee (**Darneille, Takko, McCune, Hinkle, Armstrong, Blake, Crouse, Dunshee, Hudgins, Kenney, Pedersen, Sells, Short, Van De Wege, & Williams**) ask her/him to vote for the bill.

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

Support – **HB 1184** - Extending the loan repayment period for municipally funded conservation projects
Municipal utilities may help customers finance conservation projects that allow the utility's customers to produce all or a portion of their own electricity through installation of a system that uses renewable resources such as wind, solar, geothermal, or hydropower that are available on-site. Municipal utilities may offer assistance to customers that includes providing inspections of homes or equipment; lists of businesses that provide services; and arranging for the installing of conservation materials and financing of the purchase and installation of approved energy efficient materials and equipment.

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

Status - In the Senate Rules Committee

ACTION - If your Senator is on the above 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 pull the bill, and vote for the bill.

Everyone please ask your Senators and Representatives to remove the approximately \$33 million a year in tax breaks for the oil industry and for the one coal plant in Washington and redirects that money to renewables and energy conservation and efficiency.

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

Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral Network (R&R)

ACTION - Contact your legislators to ask for a \$4 million conference budget amendment to fund childcare resource and referral agencies through Child Care Development Block Grant targeted quality federal stimulus funds the Department of Early Learning will receive. The R&R Network is facing 41% cuts to services in Washington, which would result in severely decreased support for parents who need childcare options in order to work, along with substantial job loss in the R&R system. During these tough economic times there is an increased demand for flexible childcare options as parents seek to find and maintain employment. The R&R Network provides crucial information and referral services to new and working parents looking for childcare for infants, toddlers, preschool and school age children.

Contact - Pat Dickason, p.dickason@comcast.net, 360 753 7647

Support - **2SSB 5945** – Creating a Washington Health Partnership plan

The bill was amended in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. It still includes extending coverage to individuals below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The goal for covering all Washington residents at an affordable cost was changed from 2012 to 2014. This bill keeps Washington State in a good position to take advantage of Federal funding for health care reform.

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 out of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on March 26, had a hearing in the House Committee on Health & Human Services on April 1, and was passed out of this committee on April 3 and moved to House Rules.

ACTION – Contact your representatives and ask her/him to support this important policy bill. This bill puts Washington State in a good position to receive Federal funding for real health care reform.

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

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

This bill 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 – This bill passed the Senate and had a hearing in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on March 24 and was passed on to House Rules on March 30.

ACTION - Contact your representatives and ask her/him to support **SSB 5891**. This bill requires no new money.

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

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 - The bill was rewritten in committee. However the result was unchanged. It is the Rules committee.

ACTION - Please ask your Representatives to work to bring the bill forward and to support it.

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

Support - SB 5282 - Safe Baby Bottle Act

The Senate 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. Despite changes that have reduced the scope of the bill and have eliminated further studies of BPA in other food containers for children, League continues to support the bill because it addresses effectively the main health concern for very young children, which is the exposure to BPA from the usual containers intended to be filled with 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; LWVWA Toxics in the Home.

Fiscal provisions - The 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 -The House bill (**HB 1180**) passed 76-12. When it went over to the Senate, it got stuck in the Health & Long Term Care Committee. In fact, the House bill died Monday in the Senate. BUT, on Tuesday supporters in the Senate were able to bring the bill back to life again by pulling the Senate bill (**SB 5282**), which had been residing in the Senate Rules committee for over a month, from Rules. It now awaits a floor vote in the Senate.

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

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

Issue Background Items

TRANSPORTATION

ESSB5352 – The Senate Transportation Budget Bill for 2009-2011 was passed by the full Senate on Wednesday, April 1 and now will go to the House. One of the issues decided was that the Transportation Commission be given extended authority to set toll rates rather than the Legislature.

SHB1314 – The House Transportation Budget Bill for 2009-2011 was passed out of committee and is now in Rules review for consideration. The House bill should come to the floor very soon. It is expected to pass. There are very few differences in the two bills and it should be reconciled sometime next week. The one major difference, which I noted last week, was the number and type of ferry vessels to be built. There are still some

tolling issues that need to be addressed since the appropriations for major projects such the Alaskan Viaduct and the 520 corridor rely on tolling.

ESSB 5768 – The Alaskan Viaduct Bore Tunnel Replacement Project passed out of the House Transportation Committee on Thursday, April 2 with a number of language changes having to do with tolling and contractual arrangements with the city of Seattle and King County.

HB 2211 – Tolling of the 520 bridge corridor will be considered in executive session on Monday, April 6.

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

GOVERNMENT

Watch – **SB 5599** – National Popular Vote Compact

Approving the entry of Washington into the agreement among the states to elect the President by national popular vote.

League Position – LWV does not yet have a position on the National Popular Vote Compact. Local leagues are conducting consensus discussions with reports due in May.

Status – Passed the Senate March 12. Reported by House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs, referred to House Rules Committee March 27.

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

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.

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

LWVWA 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.