



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.14

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

Action Priority

17 April - 24 April 2009

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

Support - **HB 2377** - Funding health care and the working families' tax rebate with a voter-approved temporary sales tax increase

This bill would increase the sales tax by 0.3 percent (3 cents on \$10) from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2012. It would provide funding for the Basic Health Plan, public health services, health care, mental health care, hospitals, and long-term care nursing homes. It would also make funds available for the Working Families' Tax Exemption to offset some of the regressive elements of the sales tax. Finally, the sales tax provision would be sent to the voters as a referendum in November.

League Position - League's health care policies support universal access to needed health care for all residents. Our state position on health care also asserts that no one should be forced into poverty because of medical or long-term needs.

Status - **HB 2377** was heard in the House Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee on Friday, April 17. LWVWA testified in favor.

ACTION - Contact your representatives and tell them to support this bill. If you have a representative on the House Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee, (**Pettigrew, Seaquist, Schmick, Alexander, Appleton, Cody, Dickerson, Ericksen, Johnson, Miloscia, Morrell, O'Brien, Roberts, Walsh, Wood**) ask that this bill be supported and voted out of committee.

Message - The League has a longstanding position in opposition to regressive taxes. But, we are supporting this bill because there is a dire need for health care funding in these extraordinary times, the sales tax increase is temporary, and the Working Families Tax Exemption ameliorates the regressive elements of the sales tax. If **HB 2377** passes, it will go to the voters as a referendum, and the people will decide.

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

Action Items

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

Passed the Senate Thursday, April 16, 46-0, after passing the House on March 15, 94-0. Congratulations and thanks to all who called and emailed supporting this bill. It went right up to the wire in the Senate, but we got it done!

ACTION - Please call or write your representatives and senator, and thank them for voting for this bill.

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

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

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). 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** passed a floor vote in the House on April 16. The bill passed by the House contains amendments, making it different from the bill passed by the Senate. The bill will now move to the Senate to

determine if the Senate will concur with the amended bill.

ACTION – If Senator **Karen Keiser** or Representative **Eileen Cody** are one of your legislators, thank them for their leadership as chairs of the Senate and House Health Care Committees in supporting this legislation.

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 a floor vote in the House on April 8. The House added an amendment to this bill, so the bill will return to the Senate to determine if the Senate will concur with the amended bill.

ACTION – This bill had bipartisan support in the Senate and in the House. Thank your legislators for supporting the medical home concept, which will help to increase the number of primary care providers in our communities.

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

Health Care Budget Items in 2009-11 Operating Budget Bills – HB 1244/ SB 5600 - 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 – Draft copies of both the House and Senate bills are available and work continues on both of these budget bills. The Federal stimulus will ease this situation, but it will not eliminate the possibility of cuts in health care.

ACTION – Calls to legislators are most needed to preserve funding for **General Assistance Unemployable (GAU)**. Calls or emails to legislators requesting that they preserve funding for **Public Health, Long Term Care, Mental Health, and Family Planning** are important, too. 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@harbornet.com, 253 572 9305

Support - **E2SSB 5854** - Energy First or Reducing Climate Pollution in the Built Environment

This bill requires the development of highly efficient energy codes. To be used initially on all state buildings, it includes language that would make the disclosure of energy efficiency levels to all prospective home buyers mandatory following a thorough study of residential efficiency ratings by CTED.

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

Status – The bill passed the House as amended and now goes to the Senate for a floor vote.

ACTION – Ask all your Senators to support this bill.

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

E2SSB 5735 - Concerning greenhouse gas emissions

This was initially known as the “Cap and Invest” bill introduced by Governor Gregoire. Weakened considerably by the Legislature, in its present form it does keep Washington involved in the Western Coalition Initiative on Energy, closes the Centralia coal manufacturing plant in 2025, and allows many offsets from Agriculture and Forestry if there is an allowance system. It does not invest anything in green house gas mitigation.

League Position - The League supports some aspects of this bill in principle and on the basis that something is better than nothing. However, no active support can be provided since it does call for a very modest

expenditure of general funds

Status – Passed out of the Rules Committee as amended, it returns to the Senate floor.

ACTION – Watch.

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

Children's Issues

The Washington State Child Care Resource and Referral is facing a potential 41% budget cut, which will result in fewer services for parents needing child care so that they can work. During these tough economic times there is an increase in demand for flexible child care as parents seek jobs or to maintain their employment. League of Women Voters support the quality of the child's early care and education, birth-5.

ACTION - Contact your legislators to support the Senate proposed budget allocation of \$1.7 million in targeted quality funding in the Child Care Development Block Grant federal stimulus funds administered by the Department of Early Learning.

Support - **SHB 2261** - Concerning the state's education system

Includes early learning for at-risk children in the definition of basic education which is significant in that legislators have acknowledged that learning begins in a child's early years before entering school. Due to the economic downturn, it does mean, however, that funding is to be considered in the future.

League Position - The League of Women Voters believes that children from birth to five years should be included in the definition of Basic Education.

Status - The Senate passed **SHB 2261** bringing this legislation closer to the House version where the bill now goes for concurrence.

ACTION - Contact your representative to support **SHB 2261**.

Contact - Margie Reeves: mpreeves@comcast.net or Pat Dickason: p.dickason@comcast.net

Issue Background Items

TRANSPORTATION

ESSB 5352/SHB 1314 - Both budget bills have passed in each house and are now being reconciled by the chairs and co-chairs of the two transportation committees (Senator **Haugen** and **Marr** and Representatives **Clibborn** and **Liias**). Outstanding differences between the two bills are still the type, number and timing of vessel replacement for the ferry system.

ESSB 5768 - The Alaskan Viaduct Bore Tunnel Replacement Project will come to the full Senate possibly today (April 18th).

ESHB 2211 - Tolling of the 520 bridge Corridor including pre-construction tolling passed the House yesterday, April 17th with very few amendments. It is scheduled for public hearing on in the Senate Committee on Transportation at 8:00am on Monday 20 April.

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

GOVERNMENT

HB1517 was passed in the Senate with an unfortunate amendment by Senator Carrell. The amendment would allow only provisional restoration of voting rights to those released from incarceration. If the person missed three LFO payments to the court where the conviction occurred within a period of twelve months, the right to vote would be revoked. This sets up the need for a whole new tracking system; first by the court clerks, then the county auditors and finally the Secretary of State. Rather than providing a bright line for elections officials, it makes their job even harder. The bill was passed in its original form in the House. It could now go to conference. Stay tuned.

Contact - Barbara Seitle, bseitle@whidbey.net, 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. 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.lwwa.org/advocacy/Program%20In%20Action%20website.pdf>

RESOURCES

League action website - http://www.lwwa.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.