



# League of Women Voters of Washington

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

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

Legislative Newsletter, Vol.41, No.9

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

## Action Priority

14 March - 20 March 2009

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

### 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 it's original form. It now goes to the Senate for final passage. First stop is a hearing in the Government Operations & Elections Committee, where it has not yet been scheduled.

**ACTION** - Help is needed urgently to keep this bill moving. Everyone please call or email your Senator. Ask them to support **HB 1517** OR if your Senator was one of the sponsors of the Senate bill **SB 5534**, (Senators **Kohl-Welles, Kline, Fairley, McDermott, Regala, Hargrove, Fraser, Kauffman**) please call or email them and thank them for their support and ask them to help get **HB 1517** moving through the Senate process. 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

## Action Items

### 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 is scheduled for this bill in this committee on Friday, March 20.

**ACTION** – If you have a representative on the House Health Care & Wellness Committee, (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) ask him/her 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** – Both bills passed out of the house of origin. **2SHB 2114** is in the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee. **SSB 5891** is in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee.

**ACTION** - If your senator is on the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee, (**Keiser, Franklin, Pflug, Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray, Parlette**) ask her/him to support **2SHB 2114**. 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 her/him to support **SSB 5891**. These bills require no new money.

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

**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. 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 Senate bill passed out of Senate and is in the House Committee on Ecology & Parks scheduled for a hearing on Tuesday, March 17. The chair of the committee has promised to strengthen.

**ACTION** – Attend the Ecology & Parks Public Hearing 10am on Tuesday 3/17/09. If your representative is on the Ecology & Parks Committee, (**Upthegrove, Rolfes, Short, Newhouse, Chase, Dickerson, Dunshee, Eddy, Finn, Hudgins, Kretz, Kristiansen, Morris, Orcutt, Shea**) call and ask her/him to support 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** – **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, respectively last week, but it will be heard again.

**ACTION** – Ask your legislators to remove the clause in the Senate bill that replaces the Washington Energy Code with the International Building Code, which is the weaker of the two and would have to be purchased. Federal stimulus money is anticipated to cover the funding for this bill.

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

**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 was passed by the Senate and may be heard in the House Technology, Energy & Communication 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**) tell him/her 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

**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** has passed the Senate and will receive a hearing on March 19 at 8:00 AM in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee.

**ACTION** - If your Representative is a member of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, 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](mailto:docmartin934@aol.com), 425 746 9960

**Support - 2SHB1180** - 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 have been removed from both bills. Despite these changes, 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 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** - Bill passed the House 76-12. It is presently in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee.

**ACTION** -If your Senator is on the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee, (**Keiser, Franklin, Pflug, Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray, Parlette**) please contact him/her asking that the bill be passed out committee. Please contact your Senator urging support for the bill when it comes to a vote on the floor.

**Contact** - Elizabeth Davis, [elizabethd@whidbey.com](mailto:elizabethd@whidbey.com), 360 331 4184

**Support - SSB 5219** - Establishing a focus group to examine the need to provide housing for certain populations at risk of being homeless

This bill would create a focus group to examine the need to provide housing for certain populations at risk of being homeless. The focus group would invite broad participation from agencies that are working on this issue. The group would make recommendations on identification and removal of barriers for individuals at risk of being homeless, on inventory and review of existing programs, on methods to encourage private landlords to provide housing to at-risk populations, on statutory changes to the residential Landlord-Tenant Act, and on quality controls to ensure housing standards for at-risk tenants. The report would be due to the Governor and Legislature by November 15, 2009. No appropriation was requested, as non-legislative members must serve without compensation and legislative members may not be reimbursed for travel expenses.

**League position** - All levels of government and the private sector share the responsibility to help alleviate the housing shortage among low income residents.

**Status** - This bill passed its third reading on March 12<sup>th</sup> and is now being considered in the House Local Government & Housing Committee.

**ACTION** – Ask your representatives to support this bill.

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

**Support** - **HB 1492** - Addressing the independent youth housing program

This bill 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, provided the subcontractor determines that these expenditures are necessary to assist participating youth in accessing and maintaining independent housing.

**League position** - League supports stable and adequate funding for a coordinated continuum of services for children at risk. This should also apply to independent youth.

**Status** - **HB 1492** passed its third reading in the House and has moved to the Senate, where it was referred to the Human Services & Corrections Committee. It is scheduled for a public hearing in that committee on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 3.30pm.

**ACTION** - Ask your senator in the Senate Committee on Human Services & Corrections (**Hargrove, Regala, Stevens, Brandland, Carrell, Kauffman, McAuliffe**) to support this bill.

**Contact** – Betty Sullivan, [jaybetty2@msn.com](mailto: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 and is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Monday, March 16 in Senate Hearing Room 1 at 1:30pm.

**ACTION** - Contact your Senator if he/she 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

**Watch** - **ESB 6048/ESHB 2261** - Concerning the state’s education system

These bills would establish a new structure for funding Basic Education.

**League Positions** - LWVWA believes the state has the responsibility for fully funding Basic Education, all programs mandated by the Legislature, and maintenance and operations costs.

**Status** - **ESB 6048/ESHB 2261**, originally introduced as “intent only” bills, were both amended on the floor and now contain more details. **ESB 6048** passed the Senate on March 9, and **ESHB 2261** was the last bill to pass the House on the March 12 cut-off. Work will continue between legislators and education groups to come up with more specific legislation that hopefully will result someday in full funding for basic education.

**ACTION** - Contact your local Legislators and remind them of the state Constitution’s Article IX, Section 1: “It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders...” Ask them to support a new funding system that is transparent, stable, and ample and that provides for a local levy system to fund extras, not basic education.

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

## 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 in 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, and Mental Health.** We need to preserve our health care safety net.

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

## Issue Background Items

### HEALTH CARE

#### **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. This bill is passed through the Senate and is now in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. This bill does require new funding.

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

#### **SB5279/SHB1165** - Providing for the safe collection and disposal of unwanted medicines.

This bill requires that producers of all drugs sold in Washington State must provide a plan and funds to collect any of their unwanted/unused 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. 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. The League supports protection and improvement of water quality, and reduction of pollution, as well as actions to remove threats to the health and development of very young children.

This bill failed to receive a vote on the floor of the House (the bill's house of origin) by the cut off date of March 12. The bill is dead for this year.

**Contact** - Elizabeth Davis, [elizabethd@whidbey.com](mailto:elizabethd@whidbey.com), 360 331 4184

## For Reference

### **K**EY 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.

## **C**ONTACT 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](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx)

## **L**EAGUE POSITIONS

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

## **R**ESOURCES

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