



League of Women Voters of Washington

Linnea Hirst, President // Kim Abel, Action Chair // Newsletter edited by Stasha McBride

www.lwvwa.org/advocacy

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Action Priorities

28 February - 6 March 2010

ACTION! - Call and E-mail your Senators and Representatives NOW! Tell them of your support for raising enough revenue to do good.

Why? - It is important to let them know you support their efforts because you understand the dire situation of families in need during this horrible recession. We know they are receiving negative phone calls and email regarding raising revenue. It is not enough to only close loopholes, they must find new revenue to support items like the Basic Health Plan for folks out of work, funding for the Working Connections Child Care program and for K-12 and Higher Education for our children.

Support – HB 3181/SB 6851 - Working for Clean Water - We have the opportunity to do something big for Puget Sound right now. Polluted runoff from our city streets is poisoning our waters; some call it an Exxon Valdez spill in slow motion. The implications for Puget Sound and our rivers and streams are just that deadly. We know what to do to stop it: retrofitting urban streets, digging storm ponds, building better storm drains, and encouraging low-impact development. To complete these stormwater projects on a scale that will make a difference, significant sustained funding from the state is needed. Taxing the pollutants that are harming our waters, provides a long-term source of funding for these desperately needed infrastructure projects. If it passes, Working for Clean Water will be one of the most significant steps forward for Puget Sound and waterways around Washington in the last twenty years. **HB 3181/SB 6851** would triple the "hazardous substances" tax created in 1987 by voter initiative (I-97). This could raise as much as \$250 million a year to clean up stormwater. By allocating the bulk of the dollars to the general fund in the near term and transitioning back to clean water purposes over time, over \$600 million over the next five years would be available for core public services including education, health care, and social services.

League positions - League participated in and supported Initiative 97 in 1987.

Bill status – HB 3181 was heard in House Committee on Finance Friday morning, Feb. 26. **SB 6851** was heard in Senate Ways & Means Monday Feb. 22.

ACTION - The goal is to get 2000 emails and phone calls to legislators in support of Working for Clean Water. Your help is needed to make this happen. Join the hundreds of other citizens who already took action this week and contact your legislator by **e-mail** or call 1-800-562-6000. Let them know that you think Working for Clean Water is an essential step towards a healthy future for Washington. This bill is a top priority for cities and counties all over the state.

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

Support – EHB 2561/SB 6547 – Funding construction of cost-saving improvements to public facilities This bill is known as the "Jobs Bill" and would require the raising of the State's bond level which would have to be enacted by referendum. The result would be the raising of funds through a statewide bond issue to provide for public works that would retrofit public buildings for the purposes of saving energy resources. The bill is meant to **create approximately 38,000 new green jobs** in the State.

League positions - Includes establishing incentives for the efficient use of energy sources and the greater use of alternative energy sources. The League also supports state government programs that increase job opportunities.

Bill status – Passed the House on January 20 and has been stuck in the Senate Ways & Means since that time.

ACTION - It is very important that you contact your senator on the Committee (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler**) and ask her/him to move this bill on as soon as possible.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Mary Moore, 360-357-3712, mymtrain@comcast.net

Action Items

NATURAL RESOURCES

Support - **SB 6248/HB 1180** - Safe Baby Bottle bill - Priority Legislation for Environmental Priorities Coalition. This bill bans BPA in baby bottles, cups or other containers (except for metal cans) intended for food or drink for children age three and under. It also bans BPA in sports (water) bottles. The bill's provisions become effective on July 1, 2011.

League positions - LWVWA supports this bill based upon the LWVUS positions, *Early Intervention for Children at Risk*, and the general premise in our Natural Resources positions of support for prevention of harm before the damage occurs; and the LWVWA position *Toxics in the Home*.

Bill status - Has passed in both the House (95-1) and the Senate (36-9). This week the Senate bill (amended to include sports bottles) passed out of the House General Government Appropriations Committee and is now in Rules Committee. The virtual tie in the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee was broken when Senator Marr indicated that he would vote for the House bill including sports water bottles; the bill passed 5-3 and is now in the Senate Rules committee. And, yes, you are right: one bill says sports bottles, and the other says sports water bottles. Stay tuned....

ACTION - For those in Senator **Marr's** district (#10, Spokane area), please thank him for his decision to support the inclusion of sports water bottles in this bill.

Support – **SSB 6343** - Washington Food Policy Forum - Establishes the Washington Food Policy Forum, and builds upon the Local Farms-Healthy Kids Act, an environmental priority for 2008 that was supported by LWVWA and passed in 2008. The intent is to better integrate food related policies and programs statewide. The goals of the forum are to increase production, sale, and consumption of Washington grown foods; promote healthy Washington grown foods to state residents; support nutrition programs and avoid burdens of obesity and other diet-related diseases; protect land and water resources needed to sustain local food production; encourage retention of farmers and economic viability of local foods; reduce food insecurity and hunger.

League positions - LWVWA Agricultural Lands. LWVUS Land Use, Federal Agricultural Policy, Early Intervention for Children at Risk.

Bill status – Passed the Senate 45-3. This week the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee passed the bill 10-3. It is now in the House Rules Committee.

ACTION - If you have not already done so, please contact your representatives, urging support for this bill.

Support – **ESSB 5543** - Mercury Lights Recycling - Establishes a producer-financed product stewardship program for the collection, recycling, and disposal of mercury-containing lights. It requires that the producers of such lights participate in and fully implement a product stewardship program by 1/1/2013; and, it prohibits the sale of bulk mercury by 6/30/2012. Effective 1/1/2013, mercury-containing lights may not be disposed of in waste incinerators or landfills. Currently, only an estimated 2% of these mercury-containing lights are properly handled. This legislation establishes a producer-financed program that will provide for the safe disposal of these mercury-containing products in every county in the state.

League Positions - LWVWA Hazardous Waste Management, Toxics in the Home.

Bill status – Passed the Senate, 37-9. This past week **ESSB 5543** passed out of the House General Government Appropriations; it is now in the House Rules Committee.

ACTION - If you have not already done so, please contact your representatives urging support for this bill.

Support – **SSB 6557 - Reducing copper in brake pads** - Addresses the problem that arises from the presence of copper in storm water run-off that flows into Puget Sound and other waters of the state. Copper is a highly toxic substance and is of particular concern for the health of salmon. NOAA research has shown that copper interferes with the salmon sense of smell, essential to knowing the presence of predators, finding a mate, and returning to home waters. Vehicle brake pads are a significant source of the copper and other toxic substances that are found in storm water run-off. The bill restricts some of these toxins beginning 1/1/2014; it prohibits the use of brake friction material (brake pads) that exceeds 5% copper by weight beginning 1/1/21.

League Positions - LWVUS Natural Resources, Resource Management, Environmental Protection and Pollution Control, Water Resources positions.

Bill Status - Passed in the Senate, 39-8. This week the bill passed out of the House Environmental Health Committee, 9-1. It is now in the House Rules committee.

ACTION - If you have not already done so, please contact your representatives to urge passage of this bill.

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

GOVERNMENT

Support – **SB 6344 - Establishing Contribution Limits for City Council Campaigns (Substitute Name: Concerning Campaign Contribution Limits)**. This bill limits campaign contribution for city council campaigns, including charter county, non-charter county, city council, and mayoral offices. Contributions from an individual, union, or business may not exceed \$800.00 per election. This bill encourages better democracy by ensuring that a candidate has broad support of a community. Contribution limits also prevent individuals and organizations with a great deal of money from controlling elections purely because they can afford to do so.

League position - LWVWA has a position that campaign contributions should be limited. These limits should apply to both instate and out-of-state contributions.

Bill Status – In House Rules.

ACTION - If you live in districts of members in the House's 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, Warnick**) please contact them and ask that they pull this bill from the Rules Committee for a vote on the floor. Now is also the time to contact your Representative and ask that they vote for the bill.

Expressing Concerns – **HB 2483 – Concerning Overseas and Service voters** - Allows Service and overseas voters to request that they receive all future ballots by fax, email, or other available electronic means and that they may return a voted ballot by fax or email if the voter's signature on the declaration accompanies the ballot. County auditors are required to establish policies to protect the secrecy of the ballots

League position - Voting procedures should serve the voter with a maximum of convenience, simplicity and efficiency while insuring that the requirements of secrecy, accuracy, and impartiality are maintained. Voting procedures should also provide for voter verifiable ballots that can be recounted when a recount is needed.

We are concerned that this does not go far enough to protect the security of our voting procedures. While email is easy and convenient, it is not completely secure. Voting procedures should contemplate an effective way to counteract the risk of fraud and tampering *before* electronic formats are employed in our elections.

Bill Status – The bill is in the Senate's Rules Committee

ACTION – If you live in districts of members in the Senate's Rules Committee (**Owen, Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens, Zarelli**) please contact them and tell them that the League is concerned that this bill does not protect the security of our voting procedures. While we recognize that **HB 2483** improves convenience, simplicity and efficiency of voting procedures, it does not provide enough protection with respect to secrecy, accuracy, and impartiality. We suggest that auditors provide for public review, a sample of the security policies they intend to implement which will ensure ballots are verifiable, secure and secret *before* passage of the

bill or *before* the bill takes effect.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Katy Sheehan, katysheehan@gmail.com, 360-250-0431

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Support – Family Planning Funding

As of Thursday, February 25 the House budget contains \$3 million to fund family planning while the Senate contains \$3.5 million. Either would be adequate.

League Position - LWV supports reproductive rights.

Bill Status - The current budgets are adequate.

ACTION - Ask your Senators and Representatives to support the proposed funding levels. This is not only sound social policy but it is sound fiscal policy as it will reduce costs to the State by about \$8 million.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact –Wayne Martin, MD, docmartin934@aol.com, 425-746-9960

HEALTH CARE

Support – **SCR 8409** – relating to the implementation of Federal Health Care Reform - Would create a joint select committee of Senate and House members who would work together to determine how best to implement Federal legislation in Washington State. This is proactive legislation to improve the access of health care to all residents of Washington State.

League Position - LWVWA supports universal access for all residents to a comprehensive, uniform, and affordable set of health services regardless of one's health status or financial status.

Bill Status – On February 11th **SCR 8409** was passed unanimously on the Senate Floor. On February 23 **SCR 8409** was passed in executive session in this committee. This bill will now go to the Rules Committee.

ACTION - Contact your Representative if she or he is a member of 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, Warnick**) and ask them to support bringing this bill to a vote on the House Floor. This is proactive legislation that has the potential to improve the access to health care for all residents of Washington State.

Support – **HB 2388** – relating to public health financing using a sales tax on candy – Public health financing in local health jurisdiction has steadily declined during the past two or more years. Public health needs a more stable dedicated funding system by providing a dedicated state revenue stream. This bill eliminates the sales and use tax exemption on candy and dedicates those funds for public health. Even though the sales tax is a regressive tax, the exemption from sales tax of candy as a food, may not be health producing for people of Washington. Taxing candy would provide an adequate and sustainable source of revenue for public health.

League Position - LWVWA supports universal access for all residents to a comprehensive, uniform, and affordable set of health services regardless of one's health status or financial status. LWVWA believes any tax exemption proposal should be carefully evaluated for purpose, benefit and cost; and, all tax exemptions should be periodically reviewed.

Bill Status – A public hearing was held on January 22 in the House Committee on Finance, but no executive session has been scheduled to vote on this bill. The governor signed **SB 6130** on February 24, so **HB 2388** will probably move to executive session soon.

ACTION - Contact members of the House Committee on Finance who represent you (**Hunter, Hasegawa, Orcutt, Parker, Condotta, Conway, Ericks, Santos, Springer**) ask them to request that this bill be brought up for a vote of the committee. Let them know you approve of eliminating the sales and use tax exemption on candy, and having the funds generated from the tax used to fund public health.

OPPOSE - Proposed Reductions in 2010 Supplemental Budget – Senators and Representatives have written 2010 Supplemental Budgets. The Senate and House budgets contain different sources of revenue and different reductions. The House budget preserves the Basic Health Plan (BHP) and General Assistance – Unemployable, while the Senate budget makes reductions in both of these programs. Currently there are more people on the waiting list for the Basic Health Plan (BHP) than there are people on the BHP. General Assistance – Unemployable (GAU) may be limited to six months of lifetime benefits per person. For the BHP to remain at its current level, \$160.6 million of revenue needs to be appropriated. For GAU to remain at its current level, \$118.9 million of revenue needs to be appropriated.

League Position - LWVWA supports universal access for all residents to a comprehensive, uniform, and affordable set of health services regardless of one's health status or financial status.

Bill Status – The Senate and the House are currently having hearings on their 2010 Supplemental Budgets.

ACTION - Contact members of the House Ways and Means Committee ([Linville](#), [Ericks](#), [Alexander](#), [Bailey](#), [Dammeier](#), [Chandler](#), [Cody](#), [Conway](#), [Darneille](#), [Haigh](#), [Hinkle](#), [Hunt](#), [Hunter](#), [Kagi](#), [Kenney](#), [Kessler](#), [Pettigrew](#), [Priest](#), [Ross](#), [Schmick](#), [Seaquist](#), [Sullivan](#)) and the Senate Ways and Means Committee ([Prentice](#), [Fraser](#), [Tom](#), [Zarelli](#), [Brandland](#), [Carrell](#), [Fairley](#), [Hewitt](#), [Hobbs](#), [Honeyford](#), [Keiser](#), [Kline](#), [Kohl-Welles](#), [McDermott](#), [Murray](#), [Oemig](#), [Parlette](#), [Pflug](#), [Pridemore](#), [Regala](#), [Rockefeller](#), [Schoesler](#)) who represent you and ask them to preserve the health care safety net by not making reductions in the Basic Health Plan, GAU, public health, children's health, family planning, and mental health. Give your Representatives and Senators, who serve on these committees, suggestions for raising more revenue in a fair, progressive manner and thank them for their willingness to raise revenue rather than sacrifice our safety net.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contacts – Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbornet.com, 253-572-9305, Lounette Templeton, lounettet@wavecable.com, 360-504-2060

HOUSING

Support – **HB 3177/SB 6817** - Would authorize the State Finance Committee to issue \$100 million in state G.O. bonds for the Housing Trust Fund program at the Department of Commerce. Investing in housing now will allow the state to take advantage of lower construction and land costs, so more housing can be built. This bill will create jobs at a time when Washington needs them most. The construction industry has been the hardest hit sector, with a third of the year's job losses coming from that industry. A surcharge of \$62 would be collected on each assignment or substitution of a previously recorded deed of trust recorded with a county auditor to pay debt service payments on the bonds.

League Position – League generally supports the use of public funds for the creation of low-income housing.

Bill Status—**SHB 3177** was passed by the Capital Budget Committee and went to Rules for a second reading. **SB 6817** was passed and referred to Senate Ways & Means. **SB 6817** has had no activity since February 5th. Housing Alliance information notes that these bills are necessary to implement the budget, and so may not be subject to the Monday (March 1) cutoff.

ACTION - Call on both of these bills. Message to Senators on the Ways & Means Committee ([Prentice](#), [Fraser](#), [Tom](#), [Zarelli](#), [Brandland](#), [Carrell](#), [Fairley](#), [Hewitt](#), [Hobbs](#), [Honeyford](#), [Keiser](#), [Kline](#), [Kohl-Welles](#), [McDermott](#), [Murray](#), [Oemig](#), [Parlette](#), [Pflug](#), [Pridemore](#), [Regala](#), [Rockefeller](#), [Schoesler](#)) should be to hear the bill, vote YES, and send it forward. **SHB 3177** is waiting in Rules to be scheduled for a floor vote. If you have a representative on House Rules, ([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](#), [Warnick](#)) call and ask that **SHB 3177** be scheduled for a floor vote.

Support – **ESHB 2753** - Creating a workforce housing program - Requires that \$1 billion of outstanding debt be used for implementing the Washington Works Housing Program to increase opportunities for nonprofit organizations and public agencies to purchase, acquire, build, and own real property used for affordable housing if state subsidies are available.

League Position - League generally supports the use of public funds for the creation of low-income housing.

Bill Status - ESHB 2753 has passed the House had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on February 22nd.

ACTION - If your Senator is on the Ways & Means Committee, (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler**) let her/him know that you want **ESHB 2753** to survive because more low-income housing is greatly needed in Washington State. All League members should write or call committee chair Senator **Prentice** with this message. Prime sponsor Representative **Orwall** is working to get **ESHB 2753** scheduled for an executive session in Senate Ways & Means. The deadline is Monday, March 1, so call Senate Ways & Means immediately and request a committee vote of YES to keep this bill moving.

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

Issue Background Items

ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

This was not a year for much of any movement in the area of energy and climate change legislation. Other bills in these areas that have been listed in this newsletter have not made it successfully out of one committee or another. The good news is that there is always next year when we are sure that we will see many of these good pieces of legislation again.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Mary Moore, 360-357-3712, mymtrain@comcast.net

WATER RESOURCES

ESSB 6402 - Concerning the consolidation of permit exempt wells is a compromise to address the proliferation of exempt wells and the problems of Group A or B systems with limited water rights and seems to be moving through. There are safeguards and notices included in the engrossed substitute bill to limit problems but like many water issues it depends on oversight.

League Position - "Strict enforcement of laws affecting water quality and quantity management in WA state. Enforcement requires emphasis upon cooperation and coordination among the many agencies as well as the funding levels adequate to accomplish effective controls". We support the goal of limiting exempt wells and strengthening local water systems but do not want to use this as a way to by pass land use restrictions. This bill is in the House for a second reading.

E2SSB 6267 - Regarding water right processing improvements is similar to one we supported earlier (**SHB 2561**). It addresses an alternative cost-reimbursement process for an applicant for a water right with DOE. There are many positive aspects of this bill and some concerns about increasing privatization of an approval process by authorizing prequalified consultants. This is a reality of government business in a time of limited financial resources and a change requested by the DOE. DOE retains the authority to make final decisions however the process will have been sped up. The legislation requires DOE must report to the Legislature and governor on improvements in self-sustainability and efficiency to the Water Resource Program by September 2010. It will be important for stakeholders to demand the quality of the analysis remains high and the evaluation of impacts to other users is thorough.

League Position - "Strict enforcement of laws affecting water quality and quantity management in WA state. Enforcement requires emphasis upon cooperation and coordination among the many agencies as well as the funding levels adequate to accomplish effective controls". This bill is in the House Ways & Means committee.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Denise D Smith, groundwatersmith@msn.com

For Reference

KEY SESSION DATES

The 61st Washington State Legislature opened its short session on Monday, January 11. The 2010 legislative session in Olympia runs from January 11 to March 11. Every day (including Saturday, Sunday, and holidays) is counted in the 60-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.

Feb. 26 - Last day to read in committee reports from opposite house, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

March 1 - Last day to read in opposite house committee reports from House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

March 5 - 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).*

March 11 - Last day allowed for regular session under state constitution.

* After the 54th 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

Legislators

Legislative Committees

LEAGUE POSITIONS

LWWA positions

RESOURCES

League action website - <http://www.ckwebsites.com/lwwa/positions.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.