

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 Priority

30 January - 5 February 2010

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

Support - **HB 3141** - Redesigning the Delivery of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Prime Sponsor: Rep. **Kagi**.

This bill makes changes to Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), the state's major child care subsidy program for low-income working families, and WorkFirst, the state's public assistance program, to reduce the effects of poverty on children, improve continuity of care for children, and increase education and training opportunities available to low-income families. The Department of Early Learning is directed to establish and implement policies for WCCC that promote stability and quality of care for children. Twelve-month authorizations for families served through WCCC would be phased-in starting in 2011. This responds to parent and provider concerns about the effects of short authorization periods on continuity of care for children, stability for providers, and work disruptions for parents. Other bill provisions include revisions to current programs, making them more supportive of families and children.

League positions - This bill supports LWVWA 2010 Legislative Priorities under "Strengthens Education and Early Learning," and is consistent with the League's positions on welfare as described in the "Program in Action 2009-2011."

Bill status - The bill was heard in the House Early Learning & Children's Services Committee on January 29 and now **must be voted out of the committee by its members by February 2nd**.

ACTION - Please contact your House member, especially if she/he is a member of the Early Learning & Children's Services Committee (**Kagi, Roberts, Haler, Walsh, Angel, Goodman, Seaquist**) urging support for this bill by voting it out of committee.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Margie Reeves 360-966-7507, mpreeves@comcast.net; Pat Dickason 360-753-7647, pdickason@comcast.net; Karen Tvedt, 360-915-7243, tvedtkl@msn.com.

Action Items

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Support - **SB 6759** - Requires a plan for a voluntary program of Early Learning as a part of basic education

Prime sponsor: Senator **Kauffman**

Establishes a work group to identify and recommend a plan to implement including early learning in the definition of basic education. The Superintendent of Public Instruction with the assistance and support from the Department of Early Learning will convene a technical working group to begin April 1, 2010. The working group shall review early learning programs in this state including ECEAP and Head Start and other states programs.

League Position - Strengthens education and Early Learning by expanding the definition of basic education to include children from birth to five.

Bill Status - Public Hearing in the Early Learning & K-12 Committee held Wednesday January 27. Executive action not scheduled.

ACTION - Contact your legislator if she/he is on the Senate Early Learning & K-12 committee ([McAuliffe](#), [Kauffman](#), [Oemig](#), [King](#), [Brandland](#), [Gordon](#), [Hobbs](#), [Holmquist](#), [McDermott](#), [Roach](#) & [Tom](#)) to pass **SB 6759** out of committee.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Margie Reeves 360-966-7507, mpreeves@comcast.net; Pat Dickason 360 753 7647, pdickason@comcast.net; Karen Tvedt, 360 915 7243, tvedtkl@msn.com.

TRANSPORTATION

Support – **HB 2816** – Concerning fuel taxes on exported fuel.

This bill creates a 2.5 cent export fuel tax when exporting within the U.S; provides funding to the Puget Sound Capital Construction Account to be used for the construction and preservation of the Washington State Ferry System (60%); provides funding to the newly created Columbia River Crossing to be used for construction and preservation for the Columbia River Crossing (40%). It allows excess funds after 2017 to be used for high capacity transportation. This bill essentially imposes a small surcharge on fuel that is being transported by Washington distributors to Idaho and Oregon. It would take effect in August, 2010. The proceeds from this bill could speed up the construction of the much needed 144 vehicle ferry vessel. Sponsors of the bill are: Representatives Jeff [Morris](#); Jim [Moeller](#); Maralyn [Chase](#); Lynn [Kessler](#); Jim [Jacks](#); and Sharon [Nelson](#).

League Position – The League supports increases in funding to provide adequate revenue and flexibility for a multi-modal system of transportation.

Bill Status - A public hearing on the bill was held on January 29 and we can expect a vote soon.

ACTION – If your Representative sits on the Transportation Committee, ([Clibborn](#), [Lias](#), [Roach](#), [Rodne](#), [Armstrong](#), [Campbell](#), [Dickerson](#), [Driscoll](#), [Eddy](#), [Erickson](#), [Finn](#), [Flannigan](#), [Herrera](#), [Johnson](#), [Klippert](#), [Kristiansen](#), [Moeller](#), [Morris](#), [Nealey](#), [Rolfes](#), [Sells](#), [Shea](#), [Simpson](#), [Springer](#), [Takko](#), [Upthegrove](#), [Williams](#), [Wood](#)) please contact him/her urging support for the bill. If your Representative is a sponsor of the bill, please thank him/her for that sponsorship.

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

NATURAL RESOURCES

Support - **SB 6248/HB 1180** - Safe Baby Bottle bill

Priority of Environmental Priorities Coalition.

This bill phases out BPA in baby bottles, cups or other containers (except for metal cans) intended for food or drink for children three and under. More and more evidence shows that the industrial chemical bisphenol A (BPA) is harmful to children's health. Laboratory studies have linked BPA to cancer, miscarriage, obesity, reproductive problems, and hyperactivity. Yet manufacturers can still legally use BPA in products such as baby bottles and cups, infant formula cans, and other drink and food containers. Alternative non-BPA containers are now readily available. Of great significance for this bill is the action of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) two weeks ago reversing an earlier decision that BPA in food and drink containers was not a health hazard. From the FDA website here is part of their statement: "...on the basis of results from recent studies using novel approaches to test for subtle effects [from low levels of human exposure to BPA] both the National Toxicology Program at the National Institutes of Health and FDA have some concern about the potential effects of BPA on the brain, behavior and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and young children." See last week's newsletter for further information about the FDA decision; also go to FDA website, www.fda.gov for its full report (BPA update 2010).

League Position – 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.

Bill Status - Great news: the bill passed out of the House on Monday, 95-1! Bill passed Senate, 36-9, on January 29!

ACTION – Thanks for your contacts with your representatives and senators. The House bill includes sports water bottles (no age limit); the Senate bill does not. In the process of reconciling these bills, please urge your senator to support adding sports water bottles to their bill; young children DO drink from them!

Support – PSSB 5279/2SHB 1165 – Secure Medicine Return

What does one do with old meds - unused, unwanted, and/or expired? Not down the toilet, not into the landfill, we now know. When they collect in homes, the chances of improper or accidental use increase. These bills provide for a producer provided and funded product stewardship program. Producers of drugs sold in WA must prepare a plan for these unwanted 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. A recent survey of people's responses to having a medicine take-back program found that a strong majority of people are willing to use drop-off or mail-back disposal programs. The complete report can be found at: medicinereturn.com/resources, which is full of information about medicine take-back programs.

League Positions - LWVUS Natural Resources: support for protection and improvement of water quality, and reduction of pollution. LWVUS Early Intervention for Children at Risk: support for action to remove threats to the health and development of very young children.

Bill Status - The House bill (**HB 1165**) has been pulled from the Rules Committee, which means it can have a floor vote at any time. The Senate bill (**SB 5279**) is in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

ACTION – Now is the time to contact your senator and representatives to urge their support for this bill.

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

HOUSING

Support - HB 2623 - Regulating the foreclosure of residential real property

Provides a one-year forbearance on foreclosure for a borrower who is receiving unemployment benefits. **HB 2623** would apply only to owner-occupied residential property where the borrower has granted a deed of trust, creating a lien on the property, to a trustee who holds the deed as security. Deeds of trust may be non-judicially foreclosed if the borrower defaults on the loan obligation.

League position - The League generally supports home ownership by low-income residents and consumer protection that would assist low-income buyers in an economic downturn, where foreclosure is a possibility.

Bill Status - **HB 2623** has been scheduled for executive session in Judiciary on February 1st at 1:30.

ACTION - Contact your House members to request that they ask the committee for a YES vote on this bill. Contact Rep. **Pedersen** and express your interest in this bill's receiving a YES vote.

Support - SB 6648 - Protecting and assisting consumers and homeowners from unfair lending practices and during foreclosure proceedings

Would create the Protect Washington Homeowners Act. This act would require the trustee, beneficiary or authorized agent to conduct a good-faith review of the borrower's financial situation and, when eligible, to offer a loan modification or other option to assist the borrower in bringing the arrears current. A mediation program is part of the Act. Mediation ensures that proper and timely contact information is given to the borrower and it fully describes each party's responsibilities.

League position - The League generally supports home ownership by low-income residents and consumer protection that would assist low-income buyers in an economic downturn, where foreclosure is a possibility.

Bill Status - **SB 6648** has been heard in the Senate Committee on Labor and Commerce & Consumer Protection. It has not yet been scheduled for a vote.

ACTION - Contact Senator **Kohl-Welles**, chair of the committee, and request that a vote be taken on this bill. Call your senator to request that they ask the committee members to vote YES on this bill.

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

GOVERNMENT, CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Support - HB 1738/SB 5912 - Providing public funding for supreme court campaigns

The bill would establish a program of optional public financing of campaigns for the Washington State Supreme Court thereby allowing candidates the opportunity of financing their campaigns solely or primarily on

public financing. It creates a State Judicial Campaign Fund, sets out qualifications for participating in the program, establishes a formula for grants, provides for rescue funds, and authorizes private fundraising if state funds are insufficient to meet funding obligations. The bill also requires that the program will not become operational until at least \$3 million is appropriated and deposited in the State Judicial Campaign Fund.

League position - LWV supports campaign finance reform and a public campaign finance option. Public funding for Supreme Court campaigns furthers our organizational position to take action to combat corruption and undue influence in elections, to enable candidates to compete more equitably for office, and to promote citizen participation in political process.

Bill Status – A public hearing and executive session has been scheduled for **HB 1738** in the House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs, at 1:30pm on 2 February. **SB 5912** is also scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections at 1:30pm on 2 February.

ACTION - If you live in districts of members of the House State Government & Tribal Affairs committee (**Hunt, Appleton, Armstrong, Alexander, Flannigan, Hurst, Miloscia & Taylor**) or the Senate Government Operations & Elections committee (**Fairley, Oemig, McDermott, Roach, Benton, Pridemore, Swecker**) **please contact members before Feb. 2nd** and ask that they support this bill and move the bill out of their committee by voting on the bill in executive session. Note: If you write to Rep. Hunt or Sen. Fairley, please write a short thank you for scheduling the bill for public hearing on February 2.

Support - **HB 2418** - Making the names and addresses of persons signing initiative or referendum petitions public records.

It is reasonable for us to believe that an issue, in order to get to the ballot, has been vetted, meets certain qualifications, and that it really is an issue that other people are for and against. The public should always be able to depend on the fact that an initiative has qualified to be on the ballot by acquiring the required number of signatures. The government should not be the only institution ensuring that this is true. **HB 2418** would allow external organizations to verify, through independent review, the legitimacy of gathered signatures.

League position - The League of Women Voters supports openness and transparency in government and to further open government the initiative process must remain open to public oversight.

Bill Status – In House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs.

ACTION - Please contact members of the House's State Government & Tribal Affairs Committee (**Hunt, Appleton, Armstrong, Alexander, Flannigan, Hurst, Miloscia & Taylor**) and ask them to pass this bill out of the committee by voting on the bill in executive session.

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

HEATH CARE

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. This proposed tax increase would require voter approval, so the fact that it is defensible is important.

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.

ACTION - Contact members of the House Committee on Finance (**Hunter, Hasegawa, Orcutt, Parker, Condotta, Conway, Ericks, Santos, and Springer**) who represent you and 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.

Support - SCR 8409 – relating to the implementation of Federal Health Care Reform

Senate Concurrent Resolution **8409** 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 January 28th this bill received a do pass vote in the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee. This bill will now go to the Rules Committee.

ACTION – Contact members of the Rules Committee (**Owen, Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens, Zarelli**) who represent you and ask them to support this bill by bringing it up for a floor vote. This is proactive legislation that has the potential to improve the access to health care for all residents of Washington State.

Oppose - Proposed Reductions in 2010 Supplemental Budget

Senators and Representatives are working on the 2010 Supplemental Budget. The governor released her all cuts budget in December and released a letter on the budget in January. The governor's letter contained fewer proposed reductions, but health care access was cut substantially in 2009 and more cuts are recommended for 2010. 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 House Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee continues to have hearings and work sessions to help them determine what health care systems will be funded and from where the money to fund them will come.

ACTION – Contact members of the House Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee (**Pettigrew, Seaquist, Schmick, Alexander, Appleton, Cody, Dickerson, Fagan, Johnson, Miloscia, Morrell, O'Brien, Roberts, Walsh, Wood**) 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, who serve on this committee, suggestions for raising more revenue in a fair, progressive manner. If you have a personal story concerning yourself, a member of your family, or a friend who has experienced negative effects from the reduction in funding of any of these programs, tell your legislators about it.

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

ENERGY, CLIMATE CHANGE

Support - HB2561 - Funding construction of energy cost saving improvements to public facilities

This bill would authorize the State Finance Committee to issue \$861 million in general obligation bonds, to be known as the Jobs Act Bonds, for the purpose of creating jobs by constructing capital improvements that lead to energy-relation cost savings in public schools, state colleges and universities, and other public facilities. It also appropriates funds for grants to public school districts, public higher education institutions, state and locally-owned facilities and facilities owned by subdivisions of the state. This bill directs the Secretary of State to submit the short title, intent and bond authorization sections of the Act to the people for adoption and ratification or rejection in the next general election to be held in the state.

League Position - The League supports this bill on the basis of its support for state programs that increase job opportunities as well as establishing incentives for the efficient use of energy resources.

Bill Status - This bill has passed the House and now rests in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.

ACTION - Please contact the members of the State 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**) who represent you and ask that this bill be passed out of Committee.

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

WATER RESOURCES

Support - **SHB 2591** - Water Right Permits

This substitute bill has been changed to specify specific fees for water right applications. Although the maximum amount has not change from the original bill the step amounts have increased. These amounts are more in line with the actual processing costs. This bill as the original is a significant changes to how we recover costs for processing water rights. It is a increase but long overdue. If fees had kept up with the costs of processing this change would not be as significant. Remember this is a right to use the public's water resource.

League Position - "Strict enforcement of laws affecting water quality and quantity management in WA state. Enforcement requires emphasis upon corporation and coordination among the many agencies as well as the funding levels adequate to accomplish effective controls."

Bill Status - In House Ways & Means

ACTION - Please call your legislator if a member of the House Ways & Means (**Linville, Ericks, Alexander, Bailey, Dammeier, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Sullivan**) in support of this bill.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Denise Smith, groundwatersmith@msn.com, 425 392 9339

Bills to Watch

WATCH HB 3048/SB 6710 - Concerning Administration of the Medicaid Program

These bills were requested by the Governor Gregoire. The administration of the Medicaid Program would be removed from DSHS and transferred to the control of the governor. The purpose of this legislation is government reform rather than health care reform. This legislation may put Washington State in a position to receive more funding for health care because the state is being more accountable in controlling health care costs. This legislation may lay the foundation for health care coverage for the six agencies of government that purchase health care coverage.

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 1st the House Health Care and Wellness Committee will have a hearing on **HB 3048**. On that same day the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee will have a hearing on **SB 6710**.

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

WATCH - HB 2746/SB 6740, HB 2776, SB 6761, and SB 6760/HB 2132

These bills all have something to do with funding basic education. Last year **HB 2261** established what should be funded but not how it would be funded. These bills address the "how" in different but somewhat similar ways, and it is thought the different approaches will be brought together in one comprehensive bill.

League Positions - The state has the responsibility for amply funding education. All programs mandated by the legislature and maintenance and operations costs of local school districts should be fully funded by the state.

Bill Status - The House Education and Education Appropriations Committees and the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee all have either held hearings or scheduled hearings for these bills.

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

WATCH - SB 6452 - Limited Service Pregnancy Centers

This bill is now a consumer protection bill. It provides several protections to their clients and requires that "All

reproductive health information by a limited service pregnancy center, whether provided orally or in writing, must be medically and scientifically accurate.”

League Position - Support Reproductive Rights

Bill Status - Hearing by the Senate Health & Long-Term Care Committee.

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

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. 5 – Last day to read in committee reports in house of origin, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

Feb. 9 - Last day to read in committee reports from House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees in house of origin.

Feb. 16 - Last day to consider bills in house of origin (5 p.m.).

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

[LWWWA 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.