

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

6 February – 12 February 2010

Support - **SB 6843** - Suspending I-960 revenue restrictions

An act to preserve essential public services by temporarily suspending the 2/3 vote requirement for all tax increases as outlined in the Initiative Measure No 960 adopted in 2007. This is the key to help raise revenue for beleaguered programs hit by our failing economy.

League positions - The League believes that flexibility and recognition of changing times and needs is important in tax policy. The League supports universal access to affordable health services for all residents in Washington state and adequate and stable state funding of common schools.

Bill status - It was introduced Feb. 4 and referred to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. They are waiting for the Office of Financial Management (OFM) to determine the 10-year cost to the taxpayer (press release will be issued the day the report is issued). They will act fast on this. If it passes, revenue bills will follow to stem the bleeding from the past drastic cuts.

ACTION - Support **SB 6843**, which will suspend initiative 960 during this difficult economic downturn. Ask Senate Ways & Means Committee members (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler**) to vote **6843** out of committee and send it on to Senate Rules.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Nora Leech, 206 328 0445, bluewatermelt@yahoo.com

Action Items

CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Support - **SJM 8027** – Corporate Campaign Contributions.

Asking Washington State legislators to approve a petition to the President of the United States and Congress asking them, in accordance with Article V of the Constitution of the US, to transmit to several states for ratification an amendment to the Fourteenth Amendment of the US Constitution so that corporations will not be considered as persons for the purposes of electioneering communications or direct contributions to candidates for public office. This is in response to the recent US Supreme Court decision unleashing corporate contributions across the US to local candidates.

League position - Campaign contributions should be limited. Limits should apply to in state and out-of-state contributions.

Bill Status - First read Feb. 4 and referred to the committee on Government and Operations and Elections.

ACTION – Contact representatives on the Senate Government Operations & Elections committee (**Fairley, Oemig, McDermott, Roach, Benton, Pridemore, Swecker**) encouraging them to support the **SJM 8027**.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Nora Leech, 206 328 0445, bluewatermelt@yahoo.com

GOVERNMENT

Support - **HB 1738/SB 5912** - Providing public funding for Supreme Court campaigns

The bill establishes a program for voluntary public financing of campaigns for the Washington State Supreme

Court. It creates a State Judicial Campaign Fund, sets out qualifications for candidates participating in the program, establishes a formula for grants, and provides for rescue funds. 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 – **HB1738** was scheduled for a hearing on Saturday, Feb. 6th in the House Ways & Means Committee. **SB 5912** has not yet been scheduled public hearing.

ACTION - If you live in districts of members in the Senate Ways & Means Committee please contact them (**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 that they schedule the bill for a public hearing. If you have a representative in the House Ways & Means committee (**Linville, Ericks, Alexander, Bailey, Dammeier, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Sullivan**) ask that they support this bill and move it out of their committee by voting for the bill in executive session.

Support – **SB 6754** - Making the names and addresses of persons signing initiative or referendum petitions public records. It is reasonable to believe that an issue, in order to get to the ballot, has been vetted, meets certain qualifications, and that it really is a legitimate issue. 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. **SB 6754** 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 the Senate’s Ways & Means Committee.

ACTION - Please contact members of the Senate’s 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**) and ask them to pass this bill out of the committee by voting for the bill in executive session.

Support – **SB 6665** Raising the Initiative/Referendum fees. This bill would raise the fees for filing an Initiative/Referendum from \$5.00 to \$250.00. Currently, Washington has the lowest fee in the country and it has not been raised since it was first implemented in 1912.

League positions - We have a very specific position to raise the filing fee for initiatives and referenda to a minimum of \$100.00.

Bill Status - The bill is currently in the Senate’s Ways & Means Committee. Please call in and support this bill if one of your Senators is in this Committee (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler**).

Support – **HB 2614** Concerning Signature Gathering. This bill is similar to **SB 6449** (see background items) in that it requires signature gatherers to identify themselves on the petition and sign a declaration attesting to their good faith efforts to collect signatures on the petition. There is no requirement for registration and there is no fiscal note attached.

League positions - We believe that this furthers the goal of preventing fraud by ensuring that the signature gatherer will be held accountable for the signatures they collect.

Bill Status - The bill is currently in the House’s Ways & Means Committee. Please call in and support this bill if one of your Senators is in this Committee (**Linville, Ericks, Alexander, Bailey, Dammeier, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Sullivan**) and ask that it be passed in executive session.

Support – **SB 6344** Establishing Contribution Limits for City Council Campaigns (Substitute Name: Concerning Campaign Contribution Limits). This bill limits campaign contribution limits 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.

League positions - The League of Women Voters of Washington has a position that campaign contributions should be limited. These limits should apply to both in-state and out-of-state contributions. 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.

Bill Status - The bill is currently in the Senate's Ways & Means Committee. Please call in and support this bill if one of your Senators is in this Committee (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, Schoesler**).

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

HEATH CARE

Support - **HB 3176** - Increasing state revenues to preserve funding for education, public safety, health care, and safety net services for elderly, disabled, and vulnerable people by preventing abusive tax avoidance transactions, narrowing or eliminating certain tax preferences, and providing equitable tax treatment. This bill addresses several means of increasing state revenue in order to preserve government services for those most in need. Some of the means to increase state revenue in this bill deal with extending the state's business and occupation tax to out-of-state businesses that do not have a physical presence in Washington but earn significant income from Washington residents, ending the preferential business and occupation tax treatment received by directors of corporations, and repealing the nonresident sales tax exemption.

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 – **HB 3176** is in the House Finance Committee and will have a public hearing next week. This public hearing does not yet have a scheduled date and time.

ACTION - Contact members of the House Finance Committee who represent you (**Hunter, Hasegawa, Orcutt, Parker, Condotta, Conway, Ericks, Santos, and Springer**) and ask them to support this bill. Let them know you believe in the need to increase state revenue so that our state can continue to provide a safety net for those most vulnerable.

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.

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 who represent you (**Hunter, Hasegawa, Orcutt, Parker, Condotta, Conway, Ericks, Santos, and Springer**) 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 is in the Rules Committee.

ACTION – Contact your Senator if she or he is a member of the Senate Rules Committee (**Owen, Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens, Zarelli**) and ask them to support this bill by bringing it up for a floor vote. This bill will hopefully be scheduled for a floor vote next week. Contact your Senator and ask she or he to support this resolution with a yes 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 who represent you (**Pettigrew, Seaquist, Schmick, Alexander, Appleton, Cody, Dickerson, Fagan, Johnson, Miloscia, Morrell, O'Brien, Roberts, Walsh, Wood**) 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

HOUSING

Support - SB 6648 – protect and assist consumers and homeowners from unfair lending practices and during foreclosure proceedings

This bill 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 -1 Substitute **SB 6648** was passed by the Senate Labor and Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee on February 4th and was referred to Senate Ways & Means.

ACTION - Contact your Senator if s/he is a member of Senate Ways & Means (**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 him/her to vote YES on this bill. Contact all Senators with a request to ask members of W & M to vote YES on this bill and that all senators support this bill with a YES vote on the floor.

Support - HB 3177 - concerns funds for certain affordable housing purposes

Essentially a replacement for **HB 2906**, which failed to be heard in the Local Government & Housing Committee, this bill would authorize the State Finance Committee to issue G.O. bonds in the amount of \$100,340,000 to finance housing projects for the Housing Trust Fund program in the Department of Commerce. Revenues to retire the bonds are to be generated through a \$62 surcharge on each assignment or substitution of a previously recorded deed of trust that is recorded with a county auditor. The remaining parts of **HB 2906** have been omitted in the new bill.

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

Bill Status - **HB 3177** is scheduled for a work session and public hearing in the House Committee on Capital Budget at 8:00AM on February 8th.

ACTION - Contact Capital Budget Chair **Dunshee** and request that a vote be scheduled for this bill following the hearing. If you have a Representative on the Capital Budget Committee, (**Dunshee, Ormsby, Warnick, Pearson, Anderson, Blake, Chase, Hope, Jacks, Maxwell, McCune, Morrell, Orwall, Smith & White**) ask that member to vote YES on this bill. All Representatives should be asked to vote YES on the floor vote.

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

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Support – SHB 3141 – Redesigning the Delivery of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

This bill makes changes to Working Connections Child Care (WCCC), the state's major childcare subsidy program for low-income working families, and requires a study of WorkFirst, the state's public assistance program. As approved by the committee of origin, the bill requires the Department of Early Learning 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. Provisions that would have required changes to WorkFirst have been eliminated and replaced with a study to be conducted by the WorkFirst Cabinet in consultation with the Governor.

League positions – This bill supports LWVWA 2010 Legislative Priorities under "Strengthens Education and Early Learning."

Bill Status - The House Early Learning & Children's Services Committee approved **SHB 3141**. Because of possible fiscal implications, the bill was referred to House Ways & Means.

ACTION - Please contact your House member, especially if she/he is a member of the Ways & Means Committee (**Linville, Ericks, Alexander, Bailey, Dammeier, Chandler, Cody, Conway, Darneille, Haigh, Hinkle, Hunt, Hunter, Kagi, Kenney, Kessler, Pettigrew, Priest, Ross, Schmick, Seaquist, Sullivan**) urging support for this bill.

Support – Working Connections Child Care

We must protect the childcare services children need to thrive and low-income parents need to hold onto their

jobs. The Governor's December budget proposes cutting \$88.5 million from Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). Targeted to low-income families, WCCC helps pay for childcare for parents who need it to find or keep jobs. The Governor's "buy back list" reduces the cut somewhat, but even this proposal would deny services to eligible families. Cuts of this drastic magnitude would mean that up to 17,000 families would be turned away—and up to 2 in 3 families seeking and eligible for WCCC would lose their child care subsidy or be denied services each month. Also, these proposed cuts would hurt thousands of childcare providers statewide, particularly those in low-income communities, who are already struggling small businesses. We need the WCCC funding restored by \$88.5 million to meet these critical child care needs for children, their parents, and child care providers and so no working families are denied or lose the child care services they need.

ACTION - Please ask your legislators to restore the full \$88.5 million funding for Working Connections Child Care.

LWWA Lobby Team Contact - Margie Reeves, 360 866 7507, mpreeves@comcast.net; Pat Dickason, 360 753 7647, p.dickason@comcast.net; or Karen Tvedt, 360 915 7243, tvedtkl@msn.com

Issue Background Items

EDUCATION

The biggest news on Thursday occurred outside the Legislature — although the potential impacts on the legislative process cannot be overstated. The morning of Feb. 4, King County Superior Court Judge John Erlick issued his ruling in the school funding case, McCleary v. State of Washington. The lawsuit brought by the McCleary and Venema families and the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools (NEWS), a coalition of which LWWA is a member. Judge Erlick ruled for the plaintiffs on all elements of the lawsuit, saying that the State is failing to meet its "paramount duty." He clearly stated, "This court is left with no doubt that under the State's current financing system the State is failing in its constitutional duty." For more information and links to Judge Erlick's full written opinion, visit www.waschoolexcellence.org. The Judge ruled that the word paramount in Article IX, Section 1 of the Constitution, means "preeminent, supreme and more important than all others" and that funding K-12 education is "the State's first and highest priority before any other State programs or operations." The Judge also stated, "First, the constitutional mandate provides for ample, i.e., more than adequate provision for education. Secondly, even this 'adequate' standard is not being maintained by State funding, but rather with supplementation through local levy funding and other funds 'cobbled together' by school districts and local schools." The court declared the State out of compliance with the Constitution and ordered the State to determine the actual cost of providing an ample education to all K-12 students and to determine a stable and reliable source of funding. We will be watching closely the bills, [HB2746/SB 6740](#), that may begin to address the costs.

LWWA Lobby Team Contact: Catherine Ahl, 360 697 7924, cathahl@hotmail.com

GOVERNMENT

Watch – SB 6449 Regarding signature gatherers for petitions. This bill requires all businesses collecting signatures for initiatives/referendum that are using paid signature gatherers and the signature gatherers themselves to register with the Public Disclosure Commission. It does not affect volunteer signature gatherers. The League believes that the Initiative and Referendum Process provides access to citizens and voters to initiate and modify legislation. However, some regulations should be adopted for paid signature gathering. We are particularly supportive of the provision requiring that the paid signature gatherer to identify him or herself on the petition. We believe that this furthers the goal of preventing fraud by ensuring that the signature gatherer will be held accountable for the signatures they collect. There is a fiscal note attached to the bill and, small as it is, it draws money from the General Fund. For this reason we cannot offer our full support for the bill. We would happily support a bill which does not include a fiscal note.

The bill is currently in the Senate's Ways and Means Committee.

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

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

SB 6452 was heard on 4 Feb in executive session and received a do not pass recommendation. With no bills pending I will close up shop. However I would ask that you put in a good word for Family Planning if you contact your legislators.

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. 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/lwwwa/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.