



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

14 March - 20 March 2010

During the special session, your voice needs to be heard by your legislators. Your Senators and Representatives have worked very hard, making tough decisions about what needs to be in the budget so that our State can maintain important programs. Many have been cut to the bone, but they remain in the budget because those programs are important to citizens of this state. Both the Senate and the House's budgets must find more revenues to balance. If they are not hearing that you support their efforts to raise revenue, then more cuts must happen to balance the budget. As last week's Action Alert advised, each portfolio chair knows of important work that will face cuts without additional revenue.

ACTION - Call your Senators and Representatives and ask for no more cuts, ask them to find additional revenues to support the great programs in the budget and tell them thank you for all their hard work! (Find your Legislator's phone number [here!](#))

Action Items

Support - **2SHB 2731** - A program of early learning for educationally at-risk children

September 1, 2011 a voluntary early learning program is established in the Department of Early Learning for a developmentally appropriate and comprehensive service to eligible 3 and 4 year olds and their families. The program will be an entitlement program when fully implemented in the 2018-19 school year. Entitlement refers to the intent to protect the current levels of funding. During the initial phase the program will use the same eligibility criteria and program standards used by ECEAP. Families with lowest-incomes, children in foster care and from families with multiple needs are priority for enrollment. A child who qualifies for special education is also eligible. Beginning in December 1, 2013-14 school year additional funding will be phased in incrementally in school districts providing state-funded full-day kindergarten.

League position - Support quality improvements to child care programs

Bill status - Passed the legislature; Referred to the Governor

ACTION - Contact Governor Gregoire at 360-902-4111 or www.governor.wa.gov ask her to sign **2SHB 2731** into law.

Support - **SSB 6759** - The Development of a plan for a voluntary program of early learning.

A technical working group is created on April 1, 2010 to develop a comprehensive plan for a voluntary program of early learning. The working group is convened by OSPI and DEL but must be monitored and overseen by the Quality Education Council. A progressive report is due to the Early Learning Advisory Council and the Quality Education Council July 1, 2011 and a final report and plan is due by November 1, 2011. The plan must examine the opportunities and barriers of at least two options: an early learning program under basic education and a program as an entitlement. Also the working group must review early learning programs in Washington State and elsewhere.

League position - Support quality programs to childcare programs

Bill status - Passed the legislature; Referred to Governor Gregoire

ACTION: Contact Governor Gregoire at 360-902-4111 or www.governor.wa.gov and ask her to sign the bill into law.

Support - **HB 2867** - Early Learning

The Department of Early Learning is to collaborate with Thrive by Five and the Early Learning Advisory Council to develop a comprehensive birth-to-three plan for offering education and support by a continuum of options. These may include home visiting, infant and toddler childcare subsidies, quality improvements for

programs serving infants and toddlers, professional development, early literacy programs, and informal supports to Family, Friends and Neighbor caregivers. The plan is to be prepared within existing services. A report is due to the legislature by December 1, 2010.

League position - Promote policies and programs that promote the well-being and safety of all children

Bill status - Passed the legislature; Delivered to the Governor

ACTION: Contact Governor Gregoire to sign **HB 2867** into law. Call 360-902-4111 or www.governor.wa.gov.

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

Further Updates

NATURAL RESOURCES

Safe Baby Bottles – SB 6248, HB 1180 - BILL PASSES!

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 bottles. The bill's provisions become effective on July 1, 2011; sports bottles ban on July 1, 2012.

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; and the LWVWA position Toxics in the Home.

Bill status - At last, the bill finally passed in both the Senate and the House, and now goes to the Governor.

Mercury Lights Recycling - ESSB 5543 - BILL PASSES

This bill 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 position - LWVWA Hazardous Waste Management, Toxics in the Home.

Bill status - This bill passed the Senate, 37-9. This week it passed in the House, 71-27. The bill now goes to the Governor for signing.

Reducing copper in brake pads - SSB 6557 – BILL PASSES!

This bill 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 position - LWVUS Natural Resources, Resource Management, Environmental Protection and Pollution Control, Water Resources positions.

Bill status - This bill has passed in the Senate, 39-8. This week the bill passed in the House, 86-12. It now goes to the Governor.

Washington Food Policy Forum – SSB 6343 - BILL PASSES!

The bill 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 position - LWVWA Agricultural Lands. LWVUS Land Use, Federal Agricultural Policy, Early Intervention for Children at Risk.

Bill status - The bill passed the Senate 45-3. This week it passes in the House 72-26. It now goes to the Governor.

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

TRANSPORTATION

ESSB 6381 - The Transportation Supplemental Budget for 2010-2011 has been passed. This year's version amounts to \$1 billion more than last years biennial budget. The increase amount comes from federal stimulus dollars which are earmarked to pay for such projects as the \$590 million high-speed rail corridor to run from Oregon to British Columbia, \$10 million for design work on new ferries and \$35 million for the North Spokane Corridor of which the State has already appropriated about \$500 million. The budget does not add any other new projects and those projects already in progress will be completed on time and under budget due to low bids. That is the good news. The bad news is that revenue has dropped \$168 million since the beginning of the biennium and is expected to continue to drop as fewer people are driving and/or are driving more fuel efficient vehicles. Cuts that are being made to the departments of transportation and licensing include a hiring freeze, abolishing 67 management positions and continuing the closure of up to 25 licensing offices. Increasing revenue to combat the growing deficit will be left until the next biennium lawmakers. These will include a higher gas tax and increased tolling.

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

EDUCATION

Important Education bills that passed:

SHB 2776 would replace the current education funding formulas with the new prototypical school funding formulas. It is a start to implementing **HB 2261**, passed last session, but contains NO funding, and the projected date for it to be fully implemented is school year 2017-18. To put it on a personal level, a child presently in the 5th grade will graduate from high school and I will be in my mid-70s before full funding of Basic Education is implemented.

E2SSB 6696 would make changes to educator preparation, educator evaluation and tenure, and establish a new education accountability system. This is the bill intended to implement education reforms to enhance Washington's application for federal Race To The Top funds.

SHB 2893 would increase the levy lid by four percent and increase Local Effort Assistance (levy equalization) from 12 percent to 14 percent.

Although it's not known what the final budget will be, when each was released there was over \$200 million cuts in the Senate budget and over \$100 million cuts in the House budget to K-12 Education. Obviously the House budget is preferred, and a much larger revenue package is needed in order to protect our children – the future of this state and country.

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

For Reference

K 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.

March 15 – The 2010 1st Special Session will begin.

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.