

## Session Wrap-Up: Money in Politics

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### Bills that Passed

**HB 2032 Reducing the size of yard signs that are exempt from certain political advertising disclosure requirements.** This bill improves transparency by requiring disclosure of the sponsor and contributor information be listed on most yard signs.

**SB 5857 Reorganizing statutes on campaign disclosure and contribution.** Recodifies campaign finance and disclosure statutes from 42.17A into a new title 29.B under the Revised Code of Washington. This legislation would separate these statutes from the public records act and move to the election statutes. One benefit is that amending these statutes will be more efficient.

### Bills That Did Not Advance

**HB 1677 Campaign Finance Disclosure**—at request of Public Disclosure Commission. This includes general updates and cleanups to relevant statutes around PDC operations. The most significant update would add an extra contributions and expenditures report in the weeks leading up to an election. Changing the reporting schedules reflects how the way people vote has changed since 1972, with ballots all being mailed. There has been a lot of stakeholder outreach, agreement, and compromise on the provisions of this bill.

**HB 1755 Establishing the democracy voucher program for contributions to state legislative candidates.** This bill will create a public financing system for legislative elections using a statewide Democracy Voucher Program, similar to the Seattle Democracy Voucher Program. It will provide four \$25 vouchers to constituents in each LD to give to participating candidates of their choice. This will strengthen the voice of everyday people in state government by promoting broad, diverse, fair, and undistorted citizen influence and participation in electoral politics.

**SB 5284 Campaign Finance Disclosure**—at request of Public Disclosure Commission. Requires purchasers of political advertising or electioneering communications to disclose to commercial advertisers, upon request, that the purchase includes political advertising or electioneering communications, and any other information required by rule. This provision would require the purchaser to provide information but it does not relieve the commercial advertiser of its own responsibilities under the law. Some digital platforms have expressed concern about the transparency requirements and have refused to sell advertising in

Washington state. This bill addresses some of their concerns, while maintaining the existing law.

**Background:** Existing law requires all commercial advertisers to maintain records for public inspection. Digital platforms sell advertising that can be micro-targeted to specific demographics. Voters need to know the funding source, message nuances, and if they are part of a specific demographic being targeted. We have worked to achieve strong disclosure laws and support legislation to help industry comply, but do not support roll back of this critical law.

The League of Women Voters, along with Fix Democracy First, The Brennan Center for Justice, and Campaign Legal Center filed an amicus brief in support of the ruling against META in *State of Washington v. Meta Platforms*.

The Division 1 Court of Appeals heard arguments on January 18, 2024. [Here is the link](#) to the 33-minute hearing. The judges asked specific in-the weeds questions and I suggest you listen to the Q&A beginning 17 minutes. Cristina Sepe, from the AGO, addressed questions and provided great examples of why targeting information is important, and other clarifications.

## How You Can Be Involved

- If you are interested in a particular bill, use the links above to go to the webpage for that bill. These pages include staff summaries and reports including who testified PRO versus CON on the bill. There is also information about how to access videos of hearings that have been held.
- Read and take action through the [LWVWA Legislative Action Newsletter](#), distributed each Sunday during the legislative session.
- You may also express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA issue chairs. We will take your perspectives under consideration as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Please direct any questions or suggestions to [Cindy Madigan](#), Elections and Money in Politics Issue Chair.