



# League of Women Voters of Washington

Barbara Seitle, President // Barbara L. Bush, Action Chair // Newsletter edited by Stasha McBride

[www.lwvwa.org / advocacy](http://www.lwvwa.org/advocacy)

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## Priority Action Items

28 March - 3 April 2009

We have reached the point in the session where many bills have died and the ones remaining for our issues need support now from everyone. Below is a list by subject of the Priority Bills for this week. Reports on the bills can be found immediately below this list.

Civic Education - **HB 2132**

Voting Rights - **HB 1517**

Climate Change - **HB 2129**

Children's Issues - Calls Needed This Weekend!

Health Care - **2SSB 5945**

Pregnancy Prevention - **SB 5629**

Housing - **SB 5452**

### Support - **HB 2132** - Relating to instruction in civics

The State Board of Education establishes high school graduation requirements. This past year it proposed "Core 24," the 24 credits required for admission to state universities. A half-credit was added to the required social studies credits without designating what course that should be. **HB 2132** would make that half-credit a civics class when, or if, Core 24 is funded and takes effect.

**League Position** - LWV believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government.

**Status** - **HB 2132** passed the House, had a public hearing in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Monday, March 16 and was passed out of Committee on March 26.

**ACTION** - Contact your Senator and ask for support to move **HB 2132** out of Rules and to get it passed by the Senate. Tell her/him that preparation for citizenship is as important as preparation for college and a career and should take its place as a requirement for receiving a high school diploma.

**Contact** - Catherine Ahl, [cathahl@hotmail.com](mailto:cathahl@hotmail.com), 360 697 7924

### Support - **HB 1517** - Restoration of voting rights

For people who were convicted of felonies and who have come out of the criminal justice system.

**Status** - **HB 1517** passed the House March 10. It was reported out of Senate Government Operations & Elections Committee March 24 and sent to Rules Committee. It has been made eligible to be placed on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading preparatory to a vote on the floor of the Senate.

**ACTION** - Everyone, please contact your Senator and urge her/him to vote for this bill.

**Contact** - Barbara Seitle, [bseitle@whidbey.com](mailto:bseitle@whidbey.com), 360 221 3792

### Support - **HB 2129** - Regarding the greenhouse gas emissions performance standard

Specifies that no more than 12% of emissions in a long-term financial commitment of a power plant may be from unspecified sources of power. This will prevent some "dirty power" (that emits lots of climate change gases) from being bought off the grid.

**League Position** - LWVUS Climate change position

**Status** - Passed to Senate Rules

**ACTION** - If your Senator is on the Senate Rules Committee, ([Franklin](#), [Hewitt](#), [Brown](#), [Eide](#), [Fraser](#), [Haugen](#), [Kauffman](#), [Keiser](#), [King](#), [Kohl-Welles](#), [Marr](#), [Murray](#), [Parlette](#), [Pridemore](#), [Regala](#), [Schoesler](#), [Stevens](#) and [Zarelli](#)) ask her/him to pull the bill and vote for it.

Contact - Toni Potter, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net), 206 365 8949

### Budget Related Children's Issues

**ACTION** - Please contact your legislators this weekend and ask them to:

1. Fund Child Care Resource and Referral Services in the House and Senate budgets. The Governor's budget cuts funding by 44%, which would decimate the childcare resource and referral system. Calls to the system have increased by 50% during March 2009. Parents who cannot find childcare cannot return to work! Childcare providers would lose referrals and support, and might be forced to close their business without R&R.
2. Maintain funding for the state-funded Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) which provides quality preschool for low-income children ages 3-4. Kids can't wait until after the economic crisis to grow up. There is no second chance to get a child the early learning support he or she needs to succeed in school and life. Head Start federal stimulus funds cannot be counted on to replace state funding for ECEAP.

**It's critical to call or e-mail this weekend!**

Contact - Pat Dickason, [p.dickason@comcast.net](mailto:p.dickason@comcast.net), 360 753 7647  
or Margie Reeves, [mpreeves@comcast.net](mailto:mpreeves@comcast.net), 360 866 7507

### Support - **2SSB 5945** – Washington Health Partnership plan – relating to health care reform

The bill establishes the Washington Health Partnership as a working group to focus on health reform goals, which include implementation of health reform in phases. **SB 5730** is rolled into this bill extending coverage to individuals below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). This bill includes consolidating purchasing of health coverage and streamlining administration along with examining health reform proposals and selecting one for consideration. A goal of covering all Washington residents by 2012 at an affordable cost is included in the bill.

**League Position** - "Quality health care at an affordable cost" is a basic goal for health stated by the LWVUS. This bill moves us closer to affordable health care for all Washington residents.

**Status** – **2SSB 5945** was passed in the Senate and had a hearing in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on March 20. It was passed out of this committee on March 26 and moved to House Rules.

**ACTION** – Contact your Representatives and ask them to support this important policy bill. This bill puts Washington State in a good position for real health care reform.

Contact - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com), 253 572 9305

### Support – **SB 5629** - Pregnancy Prevention Programs

The bill removes the requirement that the Department of Health (DOH) apply for abstinence only funds and allows DOH to apply for comprehensive sex education funds.

**League Position** - LWV supports reproductive rights.

**Status** - **SB5629** was heard in executive session on March 26 and passed out with a do pass recommendation by a 9 to 4 vote. Three amendments were added (title change, reference to TANF, and insert abortion). None change the substance of the bill but may require further action by the Senate.

**ACTION** - Please ask your Representatives to work to bring the bill forward and to vote for its passage.

Contact - Wayne Martin, MD, - [docmartin934@aol.com](mailto:docmartin934@aol.com), 425 746 9960

### Support - **SB 5452** - Increasing the debt limit of the Housing Finance Commission

This bill would allow the outstanding indebtedness of the commission to increase from five to seven billion dollars at any time. This should make it easier for agencies and non-profits to acquire the funds needed to increase the stock of low-income housing. Passage will allow the HFC to be prepared to issue bonds when the market improves. This will help create jobs, which will help the economy. Home ownership programs help the economy because economic activity is generated with construction and home purchase. Demand for HFC's bonds has increased. The HFC issued more than \$1 billion in bonds in 2007. This long-term debt is part of the capital budget, not the operating budget.

**League Position** - League believes that policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family should be supported and that all levels of government and the private sector share the responsibility to help alleviate the housing shortage in the low-income sector.

**Status** - **SB 5452** is in the House Rules Committee for its 2<sup>nd</sup> reading. Rules will decide if the bill will be placed on the floor calendar for a second reading.

**ACTION** - Ask your Representatives in 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, and Warnick**) to place **SB 5452** on the floor calendar for a second reading. Ask all representatives to support this bill on the floor vote.

**Contact** - Betty Sullivan, [jaybetty2@msn.com](mailto:jaybetty2@msn.com), 206 682 5240

## Other Action Items

**Support** - **SSB 5891** – Establishing a forum for testing primary care medical home reimbursements pilot programs

These companion bills would require the health care authority and DSHS to design, oversee implementation of, and evaluate one or more primary care medical home reimbursement pilot projects in the state. A medical home pilot project would include public payers, private health carriers, third party purchasers, and primary health care providers.

**League Position** – The health care system should provide seamless coverage and continuity of care. This bill encourages the medical home concept and would provide continuity of care.

**Status** – This bill passed the Senate and had a hearing in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on March 24 and was passed on to House Rules on March 26.

**ACTION** - Contact your Representatives and ask them to support **SSB 5891**. This bill requires no new money.

**Contact** - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com), 253 572 9305

**Budget Bills** – **HB 1244/ SB 5600** - Health Care Budget Items

As you well know there are many health care programs that may be cut in the 2009-2011 budget. The House and Senate Biennial Budgets will be released soon.

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

**Status** – The 2009-2011 operating appropriations budgets are being considered by the House Health & Human Services Appropriations Committee and the Senate Ways & Means Committee. The Senate Budget will be released on March 30, and the House Budget will be released on March 31. Hearings will be held the same day as the releases. The Federal stimulus will ease this situation, but it will not eliminate the possibility of cuts in health care.

**ACTION** – We need to continue to contact our legislators telling them that we **do not want cuts to Basic Health, General Assistance Unemployable (GAU), Public Health, Long Term Care, Mental Health, and Family Planning**. We need to preserve our health care safety net. You would be **most effective** if you have a **personal story** of the effects that these cuts would have if implemented.

**Contact** - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbornet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbornet.com), 253 572 9305

**Support** - **E2SHB1747** - Reducing climate pollution in the built environment

The state energy code for home and buildings constructed from 2013 through 2031 must increase incrementally towards a 70 percent reduction in energy use. The Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development must develop a strategic plan for enhancing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gases in homes, buildings, districts and neighborhoods.

**League Position** - The League supports an emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies.

**Status** - This bill is in the Senate Ways & Means

**ACTION** - If your Senator is in Ways & Means, (**Prentice, Fraser, Tom, Zarelli, Brandland, Carrell, Fairley, Hewitt, Hobbs, Honeyford, Keiser, Kline, Kohl-Welles, McDermott, Murray, Oemig, Parlette, Pflug, Pridemore, Regala, Rockefeller, and Schoesler**) ask her/him to vote for the bill.

Contact - Toni Potter, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net), 206 365 8949

**Support** - **E2SSB5735** An act relating to reducing greenhouse gas emissions

The bill was amended and now includes, among other things, a requirement that by 2015, coal-fired power plants within Washington that burn over 1 million tons of coal per year reduce GHG emissions by 1 million metric tons and a requirement that regional transportation planning organizations with at least one county with a population greater than 254,000 adopt a regional transportation plan that implements the goals to reduce annual per capita vehicle miles traveled.

**League Position** - LVWUS Climate Change position

**Status** - Passed to Senate Rules.

**ACTION** - If your senator is on the Senate Rules Committee, (**Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens and Zarelli**) ask her/him to pull the bill and vote for it.

Contact - Toni Potter, [antoniapotter@comcast.net](mailto:antoniapotter@comcast.net), 206 365 8949

## Issue Background Items

### GOVERNMENT

**Watch** – **SB 5599** – National Popular Vote Compact

Approving the entry of Washington into the agreement among the states to elect the President by national popular vote.

**League Position** -- LWV does not yet have a position on the National Popular Vote Compact. Local leagues are conducting consensus discussions with reports due in May.

**Status** -- Passed the Senate March 12. Reported by House Committee on State Government & Tribal Affairs, referred to House Rules Committee March 27.

Contact - Barbara Seitle, [bseitle@whidbey.com](mailto:bseitle@whidbey.com), 360 221 3792

### HEALTH CARE

**SSB 5480** – Creating the Washington health care discount plan organization act

This bill establishes standards for discount plan organizations, to protect consumers from unfair or deceptive marketing, sales, or enrollment practices, and facilitates consumer understanding of the role and function of discount plan organizations. This bill was requested by the Insurance Commissioner. This bill has passed through the Senate and had a hearing on March 24<sup>th</sup> in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee and passed out of this committee to House Rules. This bill does require new funding.

Contact - Susan Eidenschink, [susaneiden@harbournet.com](mailto:susaneiden@harbournet.com), 253 572 9305

### TRANSPORTATION

**SB5352** -This past Wednesday, the Senate Transportation Committee unveiled its transportation budget for the 2009-2011 biennium with a press conference and held a public hearing on it on Thursday. Appropriations were more than anyone expected and considerably more than what the Governor had proposed. Although projected revenue sources were down, changes in the bonding period from 20 to 30 years helped considerably as did the federal stimulus package. Major projects such as the Alaskan Viaduct, the 520 bridge corridor, the Columbia River Crossing, and the Ferry Service were all funded in the budget. There are too many highway projects listed in the budget to mention individually in this article, including projects in Spokane, Tri-cities and Yakima to name a few. See the Senate Transportation Committee Report for full details. Rail did not do well, but the Committee expected that there would be considerable federal grant dollars for rail available.

With a sigh of relief for those of us who have been following and advocating for better funding for the Ferry Service, we were pleased to hear that service would not be cut, even the Anacortes – Sidney run, vessels would

be built and fares would increase no more than 2.5%. There were a number of concerns over the type of vessels to be procured first. The Senate budget calls for four 64-car ferries in this budget followed by one 144-car ferry for each of the next five biennia. Two of the vessels would be used on the Pt. Townsend- Keystone run, one on the Pt. Defiance - Tahlequah and another on San Juan inter-island route. WSF director David Moseley recommended building three 64-car ferries and two 144-car ferries, as the 144-car ferries are more flexible, hold more vehicles meaning the cost per vehicle would be less and is more appropriate for the San Juan Island run.

Sometime next week the House Transportation Committee will come out with its budget version. **(HB1314)** It is scheduled for Monday with the hearing on Tuesday, but probably will be postponed due to other scheduled general revenue budget hearings. It will be interesting to see how the two budgets compare and what final adjustments will be made. Stay tuned. It should be noted that the Senate bill as listed on-line is not the budget that I just described. There will be a striker amendment to replace that bill and the House bill is only a placeholder at this time

Contact – Luella Wells, [lawells@wavecable.com](mailto:lawells@wavecable.com), 360 598 3267

## For Reference

### KEY SESSION DATES

The 61st Washington State Legislature opened its long session on Monday, January 12. The 2009 legislative session in Olympia runs from January 12 to April 26. Every day (including Saturday, Sunday, and holidays) is counted in the 105-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.

**Mar. 30** – Last day to read in committee reports from opposite house, except House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

**Apr. 6** - Last day to read in opposite house committee reports from House fiscal committees and Senate Ways & Means and Transportation committees.

**Apr. 17** - 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).\*

**Apr. 26** - Last day allowed for regular session under state constitution.

\* After the 96th 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

Portfolios / Lobby Team – <http://www.lwwa.org/about/officers.html>

Legislators – <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>

Legislative Committees – [www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx)

### LEAGUE POSITIONS

LWVWA positions – <http://www.lwwa.org/advocacy/Program%20In%20Action%20website.pdf>

### RESOURCES

League action website - [http://www.lwwa.org/advocacy/advocacy\\_index.html](http://www.lwwa.org/advocacy/advocacy_index.html)

House Floor Activity as it happens – [flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov/default.aspx?chamber=3](http://flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov/default.aspx?chamber=3)

Senate Floor Activity as it happens – [flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov](http://flooractivityext.leg.wa.gov)

Public hearings as they happen – [tvw.org](http://tvw.org)

Bill information – text, analysis, status, committee action – [apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo](http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo)

Bill room (legislative information center) – **360-786-7573**

State budget information – [www.ofm.wa.gov](http://www.ofm.wa.gov)

Governor's website – [governor.wa.gov](http://governor.wa.gov)

Washington state's official website – [access.wa.gov](http://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.