

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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Action Priority

11 April - 17 April 2009

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

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** has passed out of the Rules Committee and is eligible to be brought up for a vote in the Senate.

ACTION - Next Friday, April 17, is the last day **HB 2132** can be voted on in the Senate. Please contact your Senators and ask them to urge Senate Leader Brown to bring the bill up for a vote. Message: 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. This is a bill with no fiscal note but of great value to our state and country.

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

Action Items

Support - Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program full funding in Capital Budget

The Washington Wildlife & Recreation Program (WWRP) is a State program that funds parks, wildlife habitat, natural areas and farmland conservation, and riparian areas. WWRP projects are in every county in the state. Funds come from the sale of state general obligation bonds. WWRP began in 1989 and was funded at \$50 million per biennium until 2007. In 2007 WWRP was one of the four priorities for Priorities for a Healthy Washington (now the Environmental Priorities Coalition); the goal was to increase funding to \$100 per biennium. The legislature passed the capital budget with that new amount.

League positions - LWVWA Parks, Open Spaces and Greenbelts; LWVUS Natural Resources, Resource Management and Land Use.

Status - The Governor's budget cuts funding for WWRP by 50%, back to \$50 million for the biennium; the Senate budget concurs with the \$50 million (that will fund 62 projects), the House budget provides for \$80 million (94 projects).

ACTION - Please contact your legislators urging their support for full funding (\$100 million) for the WWRP program. Most legislators support the program; in addition to the benefits for the natural resources and recreation opportunities in their districts, it also provides revenue, projects that are a source for jobs, and matching grants. To see what WWRP has done in your area, check wildliferecreation.org. In the upper right hand corner of the home page, under advanced search/My Backyard, you can search for past and proposed projects in your city, county and/or district.

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

Support - **SSB 5282** - Safe Baby Bottle Act

The Senate bill bans the sale after 7/1/10 of baby bottles and sippy cups or other containers that are intended to be filled with a liquid beverage for consumption by children age 3 or younger, that use bisphenol A (BPA) in the plastic. BPA is a hormone-disrupting chemical that is linked to development effects in children, and heart disease and diabetes in adults. BPA leaches out of these containers. Despite changes that have reduced the scope of the bill and have eliminated further studies of BPA in food containers for children, League continues to support the bill because it addresses the main health concern for very young children, which is the exposure to BPA from the usual containers intended to be filled with their drinks. □

League Positions - LWVUS Early Intervention for Children at Risk: support for action to reduce or eliminate threats to young children's full growth, development and safety; LWVWA Toxics in the Home.

Fiscal provisions - The bill provides that the administrative costs to set up the program shall be paid from the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) account. Penalties for non-compliance are also assessed; they would go into the MTCA account.

Status -The House bill (**HB 1180**) passed 76-12. When it went over to the Senate, it got stuck in the Health & Long Term Care Committee. After a life and death experience, the bill is still alive and awaits a floor vote in the Senate.

ACTION - Please contact your Senator ASAP urging support for the bill when it comes to a vote on the floor.

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

Support - **SB 5452** - Concerning the debt limit of the housing finance commission.

This bill would increase the debt limit of the housing finance commission from \$5 billion to \$7 billion at any time. Federal law authorizes state housing finance agencies to issue tax-exempt revenue bonds to fund low-cost housing assistance. The Commission's bonds are not debts of the state or any agency of the state, except the Commission. Its administrative costs may not be paid from state funds.

League Position - The LWVUS housing position reads, "Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American Family." The LWVWA housing position reads in part, "All levels of government and the private sector share the responsibility to help alleviate the housing shortage in the low income sector" and "The state government should provide information, assistance and coordination for housing programs at all levels."

Status - **SB 5452** has been sent to the floor of the House and placed on the calendar for a 2nd reading.

ACTION - Ask House members to vote to approve this bill.

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

Support - **SSB 5219** - Establishing a focus group to examine the need to provide housing for certain populations at risk of being homeless

The focus group would invite broad participation from agencies that are working on this issue. The group would make recommendations on identification and removal of barriers for individuals at risk of being homeless, inventory and review of existing programs, methods to encourage private landlords to provide housing to at-risk populations, statutory changes to the residential Landlord-Tenant Act, and quality controls to ensure housing standards for at-risk tenants. The report would be due to the Governor and Legislature by November 15, 2009. No appropriation was requested, as non-legislative members must serve without compensation and legislative members may not be reimbursed for travel expenses.

League Position - All levels of government and the private sector share the responsibility to help alleviate the housing shortage among low-income residents.

Status - This bill passed the 5th cutoff and is now in the House Rules Committee, which will decide if the bill will be placed on the floor calendar for a second reading.

ACTION - If you have a representative in the House Rules Committee, (**Chopp, DeBolt, Armstrong, Bailey, Eddy, Ericks, Green, Hasegawa, Hinkle, Hudgins, Johnson, Kelley, Kessler, Kretz, Kristiansen,**

Lias, Moeller, Morrell, Morris, Santos, Schmick, Springer, Van De Wege, and Warnick) ask that **SSB 5219** be pulled from Rules and given a floor vote in the House. Ask your representatives to support this bill with a yes vote.

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

Support - **E2SSB 5854** - Reducing climate pollution in the built environment

Deals with developing super-efficient energy codes which initially will apply to the state buildings as requirements. It also includes MPG rating for commercial buildings and a CTED study on residential efficiency ratings.

League Position - The League supports an emphasis on conserving energy and using energy-efficient technologies. There are no general fund monies for the bill and therefore the League supports this bill.

Status - The bill is currently in the Rules Committee for a second reading.

ACTION – Ask all your House representatives to support this bill

Contact - Toni Potter, antoniapotter@comcast.net, 206 365 8949

E2SSB 5735 - Concerns greenhouse gas emissions

It was initially known as the “Cap and Invest” bill introduced by Governor Gregoire. The legislature has weakened it greatly.

League Position - The League supports it in principle, but can not support its funding coming from the general fund this year. It will be interesting to watch what eventually becomes of it.

Status - It is currently on second reading in the Rules Committee.

ACTION – Watch.

Of Interest - The House Committee on Technology, Energy & Communications is currently studying the topic of algal bioenergy. Look for legislation on this issue to come up next year

Contact - Toni Potter, antoniapotter@comcast.net, 206 365 8949

Support – **HB 1244** - Making operating appropriations for fiscal years 2007-2009 and 2009-2011.

Adds amendments to the Department of Early Learning budget including:

+ \$500,000 to the Quality Rating and Improvement Rating System (QRIS) using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds

+ Modified timing on use of ARRA Child Care and Development Funds (CCDF) by shifting \$1.7 million to the 2009-11 biennium

+ Set-aside \$2.7 million in AARA/CCDF quality dollars to fund programs to improve the quality of infant and toddler child care through training, technical assistance, and child care consultation

+ Moved the due date for the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee overview of the Department of Early Learning implementation and operation from July 1, 2010 to July 1, 2012

+ Allocated \$127,000 in state General Fund for 2010 and \$262,000 in state General Fund for 2011 to fund health care costs for licensed family child care providers

ACTION - Contact your legislators and urge their support of the House budget bill **HB 1244** as passed by the House Ways & Means Committee.

Contact - Pat Dickason, p.dickason@comcast.net, 360 753 7647

Support - Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP):

The House budget proposes a vendor rate reduction in the 2009-11 biennium for enrolled slots in ECEAP. The current enrollment level is funded in the House budget, although the average rate per slot is reduced by 2.5 percent.

ACTION - Contact your legislators to urge support of the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) as in the House budget.

Contact - Margie Reeves, mpreeves@comcast.net, 360 866 7507

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

The bill was amended in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee. It still includes extending coverage to individuals below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The goal for covering all Washington residents at an affordable cost was changed from 2012 to 2014. This bill keeps Washington State in a good position to take advantage of Federal funding for health care reform.

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 out of the House Health Care & Wellness Committee on March 26, had a hearing in the House Committee on Health & Human Services on April 1, and was passed out of this committee on April 3 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 to receive Federal funding for real health care reform.

Contact - Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbournet.com, 253 572 9305

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

This bill 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 – Health care system should provide seamless coverage and continuity of care. This bill encourages the medical home concept, which 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 30.

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

Contact – Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbournet.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 – **SB 5629** passed the House on Apr 9 by a vote of 67 to 31. It will return to the Senate for a concurrence action which should be routine and on to the Governor for her signature.

ACTION - None.

Contact - Wayne Martin, MD docmartin924@aol.com 425-746-9960

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.

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.lwwwa.org/about/officers.html>
Legislators – <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/Default.aspx>
Legislative Committees – www.leg.wa.gov/legislature/committeelisting.aspx

LEAGUE POSITIONS

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

RESOURCES

League action website - http://www.lwwwa.org/advocacy/advocacy_index.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.