



League of Women Voters of Washington

Linnea Hirst, President // Kim Abel, Action Chair // Newsletter edited by Stasha McBride

www.lwvwa.org/advocacy

Legislative Newsletter, Vol.42, No.5

League office: 4730 University Way NE #720, Seattle 98105 / 206-622-8961 / 800-419-2596 / lwvwa@lwvwa.org

ACTION ALERT

We need YOU to make a difference by attending the **Rally to Protect our Future on President's Day, Monday, February 15th at noon on the Capitol Steps in Olympia!** As part of the Rebuilding Our Economic Future Coalition, the League needs to show that Washington supports a positive, balanced approach to our state budget that includes new revenue, not just cuts.

Action Priority

14 February - 20 February 2010

REVENUE

Support – **SB 6130** (formerly SB6843) Amending provisions related to I-960.

Will lift the lid on the revenue restrictions imposed by I-960 to help the Legislature deal with the revenue shortfalls from the economic downturn. Contact your Rep and say you support this. Otherwise all shortfalls in revenue will come from already depleted budgets strained by increased demand for services. Health, education, and environment: all depend on passage of this bill.

League positions - 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 - Passed the Senate and referred to the House. Will be voted on Sat., Feb 13 in the Finance Committee followed by a vote of the full House.

ACTION - Contact your house representatives encouraging them to support **SB 6130** regarding lifting the restrictions on new revenue imposed by I-960. They need to hear your support. They are hearing a lot from the "no new taxes" opposition. If it does not pass, all shortfalls will result in even more drastic program cuts. Critical League programs depend on this vote.

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

Action Items

SHORELINES, WETLANDS, LAND USE

Support – **HB 3181** - Working for Clean Water

This bill and companion bill **SB 6851** would triple the "hazardous substances" tax created in 1987 by voter initiative (I-97). This could raise as much as \$250 million a year to clean up stormwater, the number one water pollution problem in the state. By allocating the bulk of the dollars to the general fund in the near term and transitioning back to clean water purposes over time, over \$600 million over the next five years would be available for core public services: education, health care, and social services. Monies would also be allocated to fund stormwater costs for Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and the administration of local government stormwater funding through a competitive grant process. The "Hazardous Substance tax" was approved over 20 years ago by Washington voters and is also known as the "state superfund law". It is levied upon substances that are the most significant pollutants: petroleum, pesticides, and other toxic chemicals (around 8,000 different chemicals in total). Extending the tax to cover stormwater pollution cleanup is a common-sense solution to our biggest water quality problem.

League Position - League participated in and supported Initiative 97 in 1987.

Bill Status - The bill will be heard in the House Capitol Budget committee on Wednesday, February 17th at 3:30. Possible executive session on Feb. 18th.

ACTION - Please contact your House member and urge support of "Working for Clean Water". Stormwater pollution is the most immediate threat to clean water, and must be addressed if we are to clean up Puget Sound by 2020. This bill puts people to work while cleaning up our water. This bill is a top priority for cities and counties all over the state.

LWWWA Lobby Team Contact - Ann Aagaard, 425 488 8418, ann_aagaard@verizon.net

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Support - **SHB 2867** - Promoting Early Learning

Previously it was reported that this bill created an ALL START voluntary preschool to make preschool universally available to all 3 and 4 year olds by 2020. In the House Early Learning & Children's Services Committee the original bill language was stripped and replaced with new language focusing on supporting services and programs for children birth to three. It was amended in the House Ways & Means Committee that the cost related to this effort in the Department of Early Learning would be handled within existing revenue. The Department of Early Learning agreed.

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

Bill Status - House Rules

ACTION - Call your Representatives to support **SHB 2867**

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

ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

Support - **EHB 2561/SB6547** – Funding construction of cost-saving improvements to public facilities. This bill is known as the "Jobs Bill" and would require the raising of the State's bond level, which would have to be enacted by referendum. The result would be the raising of funds through a state-wide bond issue to provide for public works which would retrofit public buildings for the purposes of saving energy resources. The bill is meant to create approximately 38,000 new green jobs in the State.

League Position - Includes establishing incentives for the efficient use of energy sources and the greater use of alternative energy sources. The League also supports state government programs that increase job opportunities.

Bill Status - This bill passed the House on January 20th and will be heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee within the next week.

ACTION - Please contact your Senators on the Ways & 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 move this bill on.

Support - **SB 6656**

This bill would establish a pilot financing mechanism for energy conservation services for cities and towns located within the electric service territories of Tacoma Public Utilities, Seattle City Light and Puget Sound Energy that will enable local governments to expand and improve existing energy conservation and energy efficiency loan programs to aid the private and nonprofit sectors in undertaking residential, commercial, and industrial energy efficiency upgrades.

League Position - The League's position is the same as stated above.

Bill Status - The bill has been placed on second reading by the Senate Rules Committee.

Support - **SSB 6244**

This bill would require the State Building Code Council to adopt rules to define “green home” and “energy efficient home” for certain residential units and apartment houses.

League Position - The League supports uniform building codes with standards based on performance as well as housing codes to protect the health and safety of all citizens. The League also supports the greater use of alternative energy sources.

Bill Status - This bill is currently on its second reading in the Senate and must go to the third reading and passage as soon as possible.

ACTION - Please alert your Senators to the usefulness of this simple bill.

Support - **SB 6656** – Repeals the sales tax exemption for coal used at a coal-fired thermal generation facility.

There are several bills that would repeal tax exemptions for nonrenewable energy sources. This is one and would profoundly affect Trans-Alta coal plant in Centralia, the state’s only coal-fired facility.

League Position - All state efforts to curb the use of non-renewable energy sources and encourage renewable energy sources are encouraged by the League.

Bill Status - This bill is currently sitting in the Senate Ways & Means Committee awaiting the outcome of the temporary repeal of I-960 or **SB6130**.

ACTION - Please call your Senator if on 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 that it be moved out of the committee with expedience.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact - Mary Y. Moore, 360 357 3712, mymtrain@comcast.net

HEALTH CARE

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 February 11th **SCR 8409** was passed unanimously on the Senate Floor. This bill will now go to the House where there is a public hearing scheduled for February 19th in the House Health Care & Wellness Committee.

ACTION - Contact your Representative if a member of House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (**Cody, Driscoll, Ericksen, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn, Green, Herrera, Hinkle, Kelley, Moeller, Morrell, Pedersen**) and ask them to support this bill. This is proactive legislation that has the potential to improve the access to health care for all residents of Washington State.

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.

Bill 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. (Bills dealing with revenue, like **HB 2388**, will be on hold until **SB6130**, which is written to amend provisions relating to I-960, passes both the Senate and the House.)

ACTION - Contact members of the House Committee on Finance who represent you (**Hunter, Hasegawa, Orcutt, Parker, Condotta, Conway, Ericks, Santos, 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.

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 and 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@harbournet.com, 253 572 9305, Lounette Templeton, lounettet@wavecable.com, 360 504 2060

HOUSING

Support - **HB 3177** - This bill concerns funds for certain affordable housing purposes.

This bill would authorize the State Finance Committee to issue G.O. bonds in the amount of \$100 million to finance housing projects for the Housing Trust Fund program in the Department of Commerce. This funding would provide more than 4,000 residents with affordable housing. 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.

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

Bill Status - **HB 3177** is scheduled for executive session in the House Committee on Capital Budget at 3:30 p.m. on February 18th.

ACTION - 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 when it comes to the floor.

Support - **SB 6701** - Addressing real property warranties.

Under current Washington law, there are different construction standards for condominiums than for new homes or remodels of existing homes. Homeowners are not currently given the same protections that condominium owners have. Homeowners need assurance that: homes have been built according to code and

acceptable standards, and are safe to live in. Many homeowners have been forced to abandon their homes because they cannot, under current law, hold the builders accountable for repairing health and safety defects, and they cannot afford the cost of repairs on their own. **SB 6701** will extend the same housing construction warranties and standards to residential construction that already exist for condominium owners. Under current law, the state's common-law implied warranty of habitability extends only to the first owner of a home, not to subsequent buyers. This warranty can, and often is, inadvertently waived by homebuyers when they sign "express warranties" that are offered by the builder. These warranties may appear to offer additional protections, but in fact result in owners waiving their existing rights. **SB 6701** makes the implied warranty of habitability non-claimable and passes these protections on to subsequent buyers. The implied warranty of construction is more complete.

League Positions – "The state should set minimum standards for safe and decent housing and provide for their enforcement." (Housing, 1970); "LWVWA supports measures to reduce the exposure of the population to toxics in the home." (Toxics in the Home, 1991)

Bill status –**SB 6701** was passed by the Senate Labor, Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee on February 1st and was made eligible to be placed on second reading by Rules Committee on February 2nd.

ACTION - Contact all Senators with a request to support this bill with a YES vote on the floor. If your Senator is **Rockefeller, Haugen, Ranker, McCaslin, Hatfield, Hargrove, Shin, Benton** or **Roach**, we especially need you to contact them, to urge them to vote in favor of this measure.

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

NATURAL RESOURCES

Support – **SB 6248/HB 1180** - Safe Baby Bottle bill

Priority Legislation for Environmental Priorities Coalition

This bill phases out 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 phases out BPA in sports water bottles (at least in the House bill). More and more evidence shows that the industrial chemical bisphenol A (BPA) is harmful to children's health. Laboratory studies have linked BPA to cancer, miscarriage, obesity, reproductive problems, and hyperactivity. Yet manufacturers can still legally use BPA in products such as baby bottles and cups, infant formula cans, and other drink and food container intended for very young children. Alternative non-BPA containers are now readily available. Of great significance for this bill is the recent action of the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) reversing an earlier decision that BPA in food and drink containers was not a health hazard. From the FDA website, here is part of their statement: "...on the basis of results from recent studies using novel approaches to test for subtle effects [from low levels of human exposure to BPA] both the National Toxicology Program at the National Institutes of Health and FDA have some concern about the potential effects of BPA on the brain, behavior and prostate gland in fetuses, infants, and young children." For more information about the FDA decision, go to FDA website, www.fda.gov for its full report (BPA update 2010).

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 - While the bill has passed in both the House (95-1) and the Senate (36-9), there is a significant difference between the bills. The House bill includes sports water bottles in the BPA ban; the Senate bill does not. This week each bill has a public hearing in the opposite chamber: in the House Committee on Environmental Health on Monday, February 15 at 8:30 am, where Representative Dickerson will be offering an amendment to add sports water bottles to the Senate bill; in the Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care on February 17 at 8:00 am, where supporters will urge committee members to accept the House bill with sports water bottles included.

ACTION - Thanks for your contacts with your representatives and senators that have resulted in getting this bill this far. Please urge your senator and representatives (especially House Committee on Environmental Health members: **Campbell, Chase, Shea, Orcutt, Dickerson, Dunshee, Finn, Hudgins, Kretz, Rolfes** and Senate

Health & Long Term Care Committee members: **Keiser, Franklin, Pflug, Becker, Fairley, Marr, Murray, Parlette**) to support adding sports water bottles to their bill; young children and pregnant women DO drink from them! All the reasons for banning BPA from baby bottles and sippy cups apply to sports water bottles.

Support - PSSB 5279/2SHB 1165 – Secure Medicine Return

What does one do with old meds - unused, unwanted, and/or expired? Not down the toilet, not into the landfill, we now know. When they collect in homes, the chances of improper or accidental use increase. These bills provide for a producer provided and funded product stewardship program. Producers of drugs sold in WA must prepare a plan for these unwanted drugs by 1.1.12. The plans must provide for a collection system from residential sources in all counties of the state. Fees will be charged to the producers for the costs of administering the program. There will be no charge to consumers to dispose of these drugs at the collection places. A recent survey of people's responses to having a medicine take-back program found that a strong majority of people are willing to use drop-off or mail-back disposal programs. The complete report can be found at: <http://medicinereturn.com/resources>. That website is full of information about medicine take-back programs.

League Position - LWVUS Natural Resources: support for protection and improvement of water quality, and reduction of pollution. LWVUS Early Intervention for Children at Risk: support for action to remove threats to the health and development of very young children.

Bill Status - The Senate bill passed out of Ways & Means this week. Both bills are in their respective Rules committees; a floor vote could come any day.

ACTION - Please contact your legislators, especially if he/she is on the Rules Committee of the House (**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, Warnick**) or Senate (**Owen, Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens, Zarelli**). In addition to the bill's positive effect in reducing improper or accidental use of these unwanted/expired drugs, such a take-back program will reduce their pollution of the waters of the state due to improper disposal.

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

GOVERNMENT

Support - 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 – The bill is in the Senate's Rules Committee waiting to be placed on the floor to be voted upon in the Senate.

ACTION - If you live in districts of members in the Senate's Rules Committee: please contact them (**Owen, Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens, Zarelli**) and ask that they pull this bill from the Rules Committee for a vote on the floor by Feb. 16th. Now is also the time to contact your Senator and ask that they vote for the bill.

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 – Is on the Senate’s Floor Calendar for a second reading.

ACTION - Please contact your Senator and ask that they vote in favor of this bill.

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

Bill Status – In Senate Rules Committee.

ACTION - If you live in districts of members in the Senate’s Rules Committee: please contact them (**Owen, Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens, Zarelli**) and ask that they pull this bill from the Rules Committee for a vote on the floor by Feb. 16th. Now is also the time to contact your Senator and ask that they vote for the bill.

Support – **HB 2614** Concerning Signature Gathering.

This bill is similar to **SB 6449** 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 position - 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 – In Senate Rules Committee

ACTION - If you live in districts of members in the Senate’s Rules Committee: please contact them (**Owen, Franklin, Hewitt, Brown, Eide, Fraser, Haugen, Kauffman, Keiser, King, Kohl-Welles, Marr, Murray, Parlette, Pridemore, Regala, Schoesler, Stevens, Zarelli**) and ask that they pull this bill from the Rules Committee for a vote on the floor by Feb. 16th. Now is also the time to contact your Senator and ask that they vote for the bill.

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

WATER RESOURCES

Watch - **2SSB 6803** - Stock watering/groundwater

This substitute Senate bill addresses the long standing issues of stock watering, another exempt water right stemming from our history as a pioneer community. The stock watering provision was established for individual family farms and ranches. This bill extends that right beyond its original intent to farms and dairies using more than the 5000 gal or 13.8 acre/ft/year. We agree there is a need to provide adequate water for farming and dairy industries as well as other industries that require water, but we no longer have the luxury of doing that under an exemption. Allowing a 2 year grace period until Dec 2012 to register dairies using more than 13.8 acre/ft/year is risky with so many watersheds over appropriated. In order to fairly manage public water resources, these uses should be processed and evaluated within the watershed just as other water rights. This was a compromise bill for an issue in negotiation for many years. If everything goes well and water use is monitored and rules are enforced it might work ok short of that it may cause significant over appropriation. There is no wiggle room with this bill.

League position - “Strict enforcement of laws affecting water quality and quantity management in WA state. Enforcement requires emphasis upon corporation and coordination among the many agencies as well as the funding levels adequate to accomplish effective controls.”

Bill Status - Senate Rules Passed to Rules Committee for second reading

ACTION - Please tell your legislator we do not support this bill and any changes with less restriction would bring opposition to the bill.

Oppose - **SB 6402** - Consolidation of permit exempt wells

This Senate bill addresses the problem created by the proliferation of exempt wells, particularly those supplying the “six pack” communities in rural or suburban communities outside the Growth Management boundaries. This bill establishes a process that, instead of addressing a specific public health problem, creates a loop hole for developing in areas without sufficient water availability. It may be a solution for existing systems on exempt wells but should not be used for new exempt well development as a way to bypass threatened or closed basins.

League position - “Strict enforcement of laws affecting water quality and quantity management in WA state. Enforcement requires emphasis upon corporation and coordination among the many agencies as well as the funding levels adequate to accomplish effective controls.”

Bill Status - Senate Rules, made eligible to be placed on second reading.

ACTION - Please call your legislator if 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**) to express opposition to this bill.

LWVWA Lobby Team Contact – Denise Smith, groundwatersmith@msn.com, 425 392 9339

REVENUE PROPOSALS

Support with Concerns – **HB 3176**

Increases 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. There will be a battle from many sources over this bill from the industries affected by the proposals.

League position - The League is for funding the many programs we support like education, basic health, and the environment but we do not have positions on what or whom should be taxed other than the position that revenue generating proposals should be progressive with ability to pay as a guiding principle and taxes should not fall disproportionately on the poor.

Bill Status - It will be voted on Sat. Feb 13 in the House Finance Committee and then on to the full house.

ACTION - We do support increased revenues for the programs listed. This bill has many elements to it, so cannot be a League action recommendation the specific items being put for regarding which taxes. We do support loop holes being closed and fairness for taxes. Please contact your representatives and support the move to increase revenues for the critical programs facing cuts.

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

Issue Background Items

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

SHB 6759 An Act relating to a plan for a voluntary program of early learning within the overall program of basic education; was amended to clarify that the legislature's intent is to examine recommendations made by the DEL, OSPI, Thrive by Five, and the Quality Education Council through the development of a working group that will recommend a comprehensive plan. The Attorney General's opinion is to also be examined. The working group is to examine at least two options. 1) An early learning program within basic education or 2) An early learning plan as an entitlement, statutorily or constitutionally protected. The working group is to report in December 2010.

League position - Expand the definition of basic education to include children from birth to five.

Bill Status - Passed the Senate has yet to be scheduled in the House Early Learning and Children's Services Committee.

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

EDUCATION

The full Senate adopted the following Education bills this week:

ESSB 6604 would provide school districts with additional flexibility by repealing, suspending or amending a series of unfunded mandates.

SSB 6629 would convene a working group to make recommendations defining a basic education program for highly capable students.

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.

2SSB 6760 would replace the current education funding formulas with the new prototypical school funding formulas using the baseline values as determined by the Funding Formula Technical Working Group.

The following bills are on second reading and will probably pass the House this weekend:

SHB 2776 is similar to **2SSB 6760** above, and these two bills might be combined into one before final passage.

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

HB 2746/SB6740, which set out a plan of increasing basic education funding, didn't pass their respective committees by the deadline.

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

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES COALITION

Safe Baby Bottles

This bill has passed both houses. At issue is whether or not the final bill will include sports water bottles in the BPA ban. See article in this Legislative Newsletter.

Working for Clean Water

The issue addressed by this bill is storm water, the number one pollutant in the waters of the state, and petroleum products, the number one pollutant in storm water. In the 2009 session this bill provided for a per barrel fee on petroleum in state commerce. In the 2010 this proposal has been replaced by a proposed increase in the hazardous substances tax. See article in this Legislative Newsletter.

Sustain Environmental Protections in the Budget

Action on this priority is mostly occurring behind the scenes as legislators wrestle with the state's needs and declining revenues. Final decisions on the budget most likely will not occur until the last few days of session which ends on March 11.

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

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. 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

LWVWA positions

RESOURCES

League action website - <http://www.ckwebsites.com/lwvwa/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.