

Weekly Legislative Update: Elections

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Bills Needing Action This Week

Please read Bills We Support to see the latest status of other bills.

Detailed instructions are in this week's Legislative Newsletter. Remember, only authorized members can speak for the League; the Issue Chairs will do that, so please leave the "Organization" box blank. A more powerful influence is many voices speaking for themselves rather than many voices speaking for the League.

Sign in PRO for these bills:

SB 5047 Enhanced Washington Voting Rights Act

This bill amends sections of the Washington Voting Rights Act to clarify what constitutes a violation of the act. It seeks to protect members of classes who do not have an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice through methods that have created vote dilution or polarized voting.

Please sign in PRO to the Senate State Government & Elections public hearing by 7:00 am on Friday, Jan. 20. Leave the Organization box blank!

[Sign in PRO here](#)

SB 5208 Enables citizens to register online without a Driver's License. Many citizens - often people of color, young people and lower income - do not have a WA License. Using the last 4 digits of their Social Security number to authenticate, they are able to register online.

Please sign in PRO to the Senate State Government & Elections public hearing by NOON on Tues., Jan. 17. Leave the Organization box blank!

[Sign in PRO here](#)

Bills We Support

HB 1048 /SB 5047 Enhanced Washington Voting Rights Act

This bill amends sections of the Washington Voting Rights Act to clarify what constitutes a

violation of the act. It seeks to protect members of classes who do not have an equal opportunity to elect candidates of their choice through methods that have created vote dilution or polarized voting. (*House State Gov't & Tribal Relations: public hearing 1/13/23. Executive session 1/18/23*)

HB 1139 Harassment of election workers

This bill makes harassing an election worker a Class C felony. It clearly states that violating our democratic election process by harassing or threatening election officials and/or front-line temporary or permanent staff who count, tabulate, and process our ballots, is a Class C felony.

HB 1158 / SB 5082 Abolish Advisory Votes

Advisory votes are questions that appear on the ballot regarding state expenditures that have already been passed by the legislature. By having voters mark "repealed" or "maintained", the wording suggests that they are a binding referendum. However, the results have no impact, and therefore are inconsistent with League principles. Required to be first on the ballot, they confuse and discourage voters. In addition, they add significantly to the costs of elections. (*House State Gov't & Tribal Relations: Public hearing 1/11/23, Executive Session 1/18*)

HB 1174 Improving Access and Removing Barriers to Jail-Based Voting.

Provides access to registration and voting to those incarcerated in county jails while awaiting trial. (*House State Gov't & Tribal Relations: public hearing 1/13/23. Executive session 1/18/23*)

SB 5082/ HB 1158 Abolish Advisory Votes Advisory votes are questions that appear on the ballot regarding state expenditures that have already been passed by the legislature. By having voters mark "repealed" or "maintained", the wording suggests that they are a binding referendum. However, the results have no impact, and therefore are inconsistent with League principles. Required to be first on the ballot, they confuse and discourage voters. In addition, they add significantly to the costs of elections. (*Senate State Gov't & Elections: Public hearing 1/10/23, Executive session 1/13/23; passed, moved to Ways & Means Committee*)

SB 5112/HB 1229 Secure Automatic Voter Registration.

Using identifying documents as a prompt, Automatic Voter Registration registers voters and updates existing voter registrations at Dept. of Licensing. Transaction time is shorter, less costly, and registers more voters. Accurate and updated registration reduces undeliverable election mail, provisional ballots, and same-day registration. Confirmation of the registration is mailed to the voter by the appropriate election agency, and the recipient then has the option to decline the registration. This automatic registration process is used successfully in Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, Delaware, and Massachusetts, and is deemed safe, secure, and efficient from beginning to end. (*Senate State Gov't & Elections public hearing 1/10/23, Exec. session 1/13/23, passed, moved to Transportation committee*)

SB 5208 Updating the online voter registration process by allowing voter applicants to provide the last four digits of social security number for authentication. (*Senate State Gov't & Elections 1/17/23, Exec. Session 1/20/23*)

Ranked Choice Voting for Presidential Primaries. (Bill number not yet available)

This bill would eliminate “wasted” primary votes and produce choices with broad voter support for delegates representing their party’s candidates at their National Convention, where presidential candidates are selected. If one or two candidates are running,

The current election method is used (Republican side of the ballot in 2020). If there are more than two candidates, Ranked Choice Voting is used to rank up to five candidates. (Democrat primary ballot in 2020). Post-election, counties send certified election data to the SoS for tabulation and publishing of the statewide election results. SoS office is also charged with developing public educational materials and training for county auditors.

Bills We Are Watching

[SB 5153](#) Concerning information of underage applicants for drivers license/registration to vote.

[SB 5182](#) Concerning candidate filing deadlines and procedures

(Bill numbers not yet available) Concerning Conservation District Elections

These bills would have made changes to the election process to increase public engagement and voter participation

How You Can Be Involved

- During the legislative session we will send Action Alerts in the [Legislative Newsletter](#). Please respond to these, which will direct you to an application to facilitate communicating with your legislators on an important vote in committees or on the chamber floor.
- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have democracy teams to take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out and join.
- 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. Carol Sullivan, Elections Issue Chair, csullivan@lwwva.org.