

## Weekly Legislative Update: Elections

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**January 29, 2023**

### 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.

#### **Ask your Senator to support:**

##### **SB 5082 Abolish Advisory Votes**

Advisory votes are questions that appear on the ballot regarding state tax revenue increases for 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 By having voters mark "repealed" or "maintained", the wording suggests that they are a binding referendum.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.

This bill is on second reading in Senate Rules, and support is needed to get it to a floor vote by the entire Senate. Please ask your Senator to support this bill and help get it to a vote!

##### **Contact your SENATOR here**

#### **Sign in PRO here for bills in committee hearings this week:**

**SSB 5112 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 eligible voters.

**Sign in PRO here by 3 pm Mon., 1/30**

### 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 1/20/23, Substitute bill passed out of committee; 1/20/23 Referred to Rules 2 Review*)

**HB 1229/SB 5112 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 eligible 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. (*In HOUSE State Gov. & Tribal Relations*)

### **HB 1158 / SB 5082 Abolish Advisory Votes**

Advisory votes are questions that appear on the ballot regarding state tax revenue increases for 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: Exec session 1/18 scheduled, no action taken. Senate Ways & Means: 1/23 Exec action taken; Majority without recommendation, Minority do not pass. 1/25 Passed to Rules Committee for second reading, placed on second reading. Action alert 1/29, urge Senators to support.*),

### **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. Scheduled for executive session 1/25 at 1:30 pm.*)

### **HB 1241 Addressing Harassment**

This bill modifies crimes of harassment and cyber harassment to cover conduct that is lewd or threatens bodily injury, property damage, confinement, or other malicious threats. Increases penalty for harassment of an election official to a class C felony. Allows election officials who are harassed to apply for the address confidentiality program. (*1/11 First reading; referred to House Committee on Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry. 1/17 Public hearing. 1/26 Exec action; 1st substitute bill substituted, do pass. 1/27 referred Rules 2 Review.*)

**HB 1443/SB 5208** Updating the online voter registration process by allowing voter applicants to provide the last four digits of social security number for authentication. *(House State Gov't & Tribal Relations public hearing 1/27.)*

**HB 1541/SB 5616** Establishing the Nothing About Us Without Us Act *(House SG & TR public hearing 2/3)*

**HB 1592/**Ranked Choice Voting for Presidential Primaries.

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 for the public and training for county auditors.

**SSB 5047/HB 1048** 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. *(Senate State Gov't & Elections public hearing 1/20, Exec. session 1/27, passed out of committee)*

**SSB 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 Ways & Means: 1/23 Exec action taken; Majority w/o recommendation, Minority do not pass. 1/25 Passed to Rules Committee for second reading; placed on second reading. Action alert 1/29, urge Senators to support.)*

**SSB 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 unanimously, moved to Transportation committee, 1/30/23 Scheduled for public hearing in Senate Transportation Committee, 4:00 pm Sign in PRO by 3 pm 1/30.)*

**SSB 5208/HB 1443** 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 public hearing 1/17/23, Exec. Session 1/20/23 passed out of committee, 1/27 placed on 2nd Review by Rules Comm.*)

**SB 5616/HB 1541** Establishing the Nothing About Us Without Us Act (*bill filed 1/28*)

## Bills We Are Watching

**HB 1220/SB 5209** Universal Civic Voting (*Senate State Gov't & Elections public hearing 1/31*)

**HB 1475** Increasing access to elections by allowing ballot submission via online portal for certain populations. (*HOUSE SG & TR public hearing 1/25*)

**SB 5153** Concerning information of underage applicants for driver's license/registration to vote. (*Senate State Gov't & Elections public hearing 1/17, Exec. Session 1/20, passed out of committee*)

**SSB 5182** Concerning candidate filing deadlines and procedures. (*Senate State Gov't & Elections public hearing 1/17, Exec. Session 1/20, passed out of committee*)

### **(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@lwvwa.org](mailto:csullivan@lwvwa.org).