

Weekly Legislative Update: Elections

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Bills Needing Action This Week

HB 1485 Recognizing Women's Suffrage Day as a legal holiday.

⚠ Scheduled for a hearing in the House State Government and Tribal Relations Committee on 1/10 at 1:30PM. Please sign in Pro at:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=House&mlid=29409&ald=143587&calid=18569&tld=3>

HB 1652 Concerning conservation district elections

⚠ Scheduled for a hearing in the House State Government and Tribal Relations Committee on 1/12 at 8:00AM. Please sign in Pro at:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=House&mlid=29410&ald=143592&calid=18572&tld=3>

SB 5597 Concerning the Washington voting rights act

⚠ Scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate State Government and Elections Committee at 10:30AM. Please sign in Pro at:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=Senate&mlid=29421&ald=143634&calid=18476&tld=3>

SB 5636 Concerning secure automatic voter registration

⚠ Scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate State Government and Elections Committee at 10:30AM. Please sign in Pro at:

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/csi/Testifier/Add?chamber=Senate&mlid=29421&ald=143634&calid=18476&tld=3>

You may express support for bills in hearings with the [online process](#). Select House or Senate then the committee and the date and time of the meeting, then follow the menus. 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.

Bills We Support

[HB 1485](#) Recognizing Women's Suffrage Day as a legal holiday: This bill designates March 22 to be a state legal holiday. On March 22, 1920, Washington became the 35th state to ratify the amendment that prohibited the denial of the right to vote on the basis of sex.

[SHB 1156/SB 5584](#) Local Options Bill: This bill would allow local jurisdictions the option to use Ranked-Choice Voting (RCV) for local elections. The LWVWA positions clearly support alternative election systems, including RCV, which offers voters more choice; eliminates the spoiler effect; encourages more positive, issue-focus campaigns; and may lower election and campaign costs when jurisdictions choose to eliminate primaries.

[HB 1652](#) Concerning conservation district elections: This bill would make changes to the election process to increase public engagement and voter participation.

[SB 5148](#) Harassment of election workers: This bill makes harassing an election worker a Class C felony. It would clearly outline 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. The bill passed the Senate 46-2 and was scheduled for a vote in the House Committee on Public Safety, but no action was taken last session.

[SB 5182](#) Eliminating 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.

[SB 5597](#) Enhanced Washington Voter 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.

[SB 5636](#) Secure Automatic Voter Registration: “Back End” automatic voter registration, using identifying documents as a prompt, automatically registers voters and updates existing registrations at licensing and other state agencies. Transaction time is shorter, less costly, and registers more voters. Accurate and updated registration reduce undeliverable election mail, provisional ballots, and same-day registration. Confirmation of the registration is mailed to the voter by either the appropriate election agency, and the recipient then has the option to decline the registration. Back End Registration is used successfully in Alaska, Colorado, Oregon, Delaware, and Massachusetts, and is deemed safe, secure, efficient from beginning to end.

TBD Ranked Choice Voting for Presidential Primaries: would eliminate “wasted” primary votes and can produce choices with broad voter support for representation at National Conventions.

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 considerations as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Cindy Madigan, Elections Issue Chair, cmadigan@lwwva.org.