Weekly Legislative Update: Elections
Issue Team Chair: Carol Sullivan
Contact: csullivan@lwvwa.org

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Bills Needing Action This Week
Please read Bills We Support *to see the latest status of other bills.*

As of March 8, all important cutoff dates have now passed, and only bills clearing the house of origin are still viable. Now committees in the opposite chamber will be holding public hearings. Bills in RED below are in the opposite chamber. The companion bill may be now forgotten in favor of the twin moving forward. Several bills will see no further action this session, but may appear again in January. Each bill's history is reflected in the green notes at the end of the bill description.

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.

Contact YOUR legislators:

Sign in PRO below for bills in committee hearings this week:

ESHB 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. After passing the House(57 - 38 - 0 -3), it is now in the Senate with a public hearing on Tues., March 14 .

Sign in PRO here by noon Tuesday

Bills We Support

ESHB 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. *(3/4 passed **House** 57 - 38- 0 -3. **SENATE**, public hearing 3/14 and executive session in the Senate Committee on State Government & Elections 3/17/23)*

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. *(3/8 **House**: passed 90-7-0-1. **Senate**: 3/10 referred to Law & Justice)*

HB 1541 Establishing the Nothing About Us Without Us Act (Lived Experience) (Senate 5616 not active) provides the means for including underrepresented populations in policy making discussions where their lived experience can impact decisions made that would affect their group. A bill last year provided stipends enabling certain populations ability to participate; this bill gives them access. *(**House:** passed, 3/7 83-12-0-3. **Senate:** in State Gov't & Elections committee)*

SSB 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. *(**Senate**: 2/8 passed 30-18-0-1. **House:** Public hearing 3/10, State Gov't & Tribal Relations. 3/10, Executive session scheduled for 3/17.)*

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 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**: 2/15 E2SSB passed Senate 38-10-0-1, **House:** State Gov't & Tribal Relations public hearing 3/10, Exec. session scheduled for 3/17)*

SSB 5208 Updating the online voter registration process by allowing voter applicants to provide the last four digits of social security number for authentication. *(**Senate:** 2/1 Passed 29-18-0. **HOUSE:** 2/3 SG&TR, Public hearing 3/10, Exec. session 3/17)*

Bills We Are Watching

SSB 5182 Concerning candidate filing deadlines and procedures

Companion Bill Moving Forward

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.

SSHB 1229/ESSB 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.

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.

SSB 5047/HB 1048 Enhanced Washington Voting Rights Act (House bill still active)
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 5616/HB 1541 Establishing the Nothing About Us Without Us Act (Lived Experience)
provides for including underrepresented populations in policy making discussions where their lived experience can impact decisions made that would affect their group. A bill last year provided stipends enabling certain populations ability to participate; this bill gives them access.

Bills with no more action this session

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, Exec. Session 1/31, SHB passed w/ do pass recommendation, 2/2 referred to Appropriations)*

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

[HB 1567](#) **Commissioning a study on Conservation District election costs** This bill is in response to concerns expressed last session from conservation districts about the cost burden of moving their elections to the general ballot. The League published the results of our study on their election methods and procedures in May 2011 in this [report](#). Our position is these elections should be held in regularly scheduled elections to increase public engagement and voter participation. *(House SG & TR public hearing 2/7, scheduled for exec session 2/10 passed out of committee w/ do pass recommendation, 2/14 ref. to Rules 2nd Review.)*

[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. *(House: 1/25 in State Gov't & Tribal Relations)*

[SB 5209](#) Universal Civic Voting *(Senate State Gov't & Elections public hearing 1/31, Exec. Session 2/7, 2/8 to Rules Committee)*

[SB 5153](#) Concerning information of underage applicants for drivers license/registration to vote. *(Senate State Gov't & Elections public hearing 1/17, Exec. Session 1/20, passed out of committee, 1/23 to Rules for 2nd reading.)*

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.