

Weekly Legislative Update: Elections

Issue Team Chair: Carol Sullivan
Contact: csullivan@lwvwa.org

March 5, 2023

Bills Needing Action This Week

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

Two important cutoff dates have now passed. Policy bills had to be out of the house of origin by Feb. 17, and some bills with fiscal implications were passed out by Feb. 24. Bills with larger fiscal implications have until March 8 to leave the house of origin. Work will be done in executive committees, and on the floor of the House and Senate, with not as many public hearings. Bills in **RED** below are in the opposite chamber. One companion bill may be now forgotten in favor of the twin moving forward. And some bills will see no further action this session. 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 here for bills in committee hearings this week:

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 By having voters mark "repealed" or "maintained", the wording suggests that they are a binding referendum.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.

Sign in PRO by Fri., 7 am: **Sign in HERE**

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.

Sign in PRO by Fri, 7 am: **Sign in HERE**

SSB 5208 Updating the online voter registration process by allowing voter applicants to provide the last four digits of social security number for authentication.

Sign in PRO by Fri., 7 am: [Sign in HERE](#)

Bills We Support

HB 1048/SB 5047 Enhanced Washington Voting Rights Act (Senate bill not 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. *(House State Gov't & Tribal Relations: public hearing 1/13/23. Executive session 1/20/23, Substitute bill passed out of committee); 1/24/23 Referred to Rules 2 Review (Scheduled for public hearing in the HOUSE Committee on Transportation 2/20 at 1:30 PM) (In HOUSE, Rules Committee relieved of further consideration. Placed on second reading, 3/2)*

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. *(1/26 Exec action taken in House Committee on Community Safety, Justice, & Reentry. 1st substitute bill be substituted, do pass. 1/27 Referred to Rules 2 Review.)*

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 SG & TR public hearing 2/3, 2/10 Exec. session out of committee w/ do pass recommendation, 2/14 ref. to appropriations, pub. hearing 2/22, Exec. Session 2/24 passed w/ do pass rec.)*

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. *(2/8 Senate Rules committee: 1st substitute bill substituted (SGE 23); floor amendment(s) adopted. Rules suspended. Placed on Third Reading. Third*

reading, passed 30-18-0-1. 2/10 **House** 1st reading, referred to State Gov't & Tribal Relations. 3/10 scheduled for a public hearing at 8:00AM.)

SSB 5112/SSHB 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, public hearing 1/30/23, 2/2 Exec. Session to Rules Comm. do pass recommendation, SENATE Transportation Committee; with do pass recommendation, 2/2 referred to Ways & Means, 2/15 E2SSB passed Senate 38-10-0-1, House: first rdg. 2/17 State Gov't & Tribal Relations*) In **SENATE**, EESB 5112 referred to Rules 2 Review, 2/24.) (In **SENATE**, ESSB 5112 scheduled for public hearing in the House Comm. on Gov't & Tribal Relations on 3/10 @ 8:00 AM 3/10)

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. On Senate Floor Calendar, 2/1 Passed Senate*) 29-18-0-**HOUSE**: 2/3 referred to SG&TR, 1st rdg.)

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. (*House State Gov't & Tribal Relations: 1/18 Exec session scheduled, no action taken.*)

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. (In **HOUSE State Gov. & Tribal Relations**, Public hearing 2/7, Scheduled for executive session in the House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations 2/15/23,, passed unanimously, do pass recommendation, 2/15.) (First reading, ESSB 5112 referred to **HOUSE State Govt & Tribal Rel.** 2/17.) (In , **HOUSE**, HB 1229 scheduled for public hearing in the House Committee on Transportation 2/20.) (In **HOUSE**, SSHB 1229 passed out of Transportation committee, do pass recommendation 2/23.) (In **SENATE**, ESSB 5112 scheduled for public hearing in the House Comm. on Gov't & Tribal Relations on 3/10 @ 8:00 AM 3/10)

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, Exec. Session 2/1 no action, Exec. Session 2/7, Do Pass, 2/9 referred to Rules 2nd Review, 2/14 placed on 2nd reading)

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. (**Senate State Gov't & Elections** public hearing 1/20, Exec. session 1/27, passed out of committee, referred to Rules Comm. 2nd Rdg. 1/30)

Bills We Are Watching

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, 1/23 passed to Rules for 2nd reading, 2/22 placed on second rdg, on floor calendar)

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.*)

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. (*Senate: 1/3 first rdg.,*)

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.