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March 20, 2009

Vol 19, Issue 10



Legislative Report



League of Women
Voters of Oregon

When is the Kicker Not the Kicker?



On March 12 the [League testified](#) in support of [SJR 29](#), which would put the reserve fund (now known as the **Rainy Day Fund**), into the Oregon Constitution. Any income tax surpluses would go into reserves until that fund reaches 10% of the General Fund. After the reserve fund is full, any income revenue over the 2% projected for the biennium would be rebated to individual and corporate taxpayers. Although there is no mention of the word "kicker" in the bill, it will remain in effect but will "kick" less often.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

HB 3160: Family Medical Leave Insurance



[HB 3160](#) will provide partial wage replacement for many low and moderate-income families to be at home to care for a sick family member or to welcome a new child. Although most workers are entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid family medical leave, due to the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA), they often cannot afford to go without a paycheck. **The Women's Health and Wellness Alliance**, of which the League is a member, is working on HB 3160.

Funded through a 2-cent per hour payroll deduction from employee salaries, Oregon Family Leave Insurance will give 6 weeks of paid leave for a new child or an ill family member. Read the [League report](#) on the specifics of the bill and check out the "[Time to Care for Oregon Families](#)" website.

Alice Bartelt, Governance Specialist

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[LWVOR Action Team](#)

Messing with Ethics Reform?



[SB 30](#), which started out as a simple bill to remove thousands of public officials and their families from the requirement for filing an Economic Interest Statement, has now become bogged down by a series of amendments that the League and other good government groups deem excessive. **Several loopholes** have been drafted that raise gift amounts and add exemptions for reporting. The League testified again on March 13 in support of the original bill and cautioned against adding items that would weaken [SB 10](#) (passed by the 2007 Legislature). We suggested that a work group should be assembled to discuss other ethics issues rather than hastily passing additions to SB 30.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

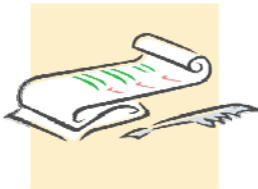
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What about initiative reform?

Two initiative reform concepts have been redrafted and are expected to be heard in the House Rules Committee Monday, March 30: (1) All qualified initiatives referred to the



legislature for discussion would have a statewide vote, and (2) Full disclosure of fiscal impacts and revenue sources would be part of the ballot title. The League expects to support both these proposals.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

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Spring Break for the *Legislative Report*

There will be no *Report* next week. The *Legislative Report* will be back for a March 31 edition. See you then!

What about Initiative Review Panels?



[HB 2895](#), proposed by [Healthy Democracy Oregon](#), would use private money to conduct one or more **citizen initiative reviews** on qualified ballot measures in 2010. The results would be published on an official new page in the Voters' Pamphlet. The review process would then be evaluated to make sure that voters use, trust, and like this new source of information. The Citizens' Initiative Review bill has been assigned to the House Rules Committee where a hearing is expected. The League plans to testify in support.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Where is the National Popular Vote in Oregon?

[HB 2588](#), the National Popular Vote (NPV) concept for electing the president, passed the Oregon House on March 12 with a bipartisan vote of 39-19. Oregon becomes the **16th state legislature** to have at least one house pass the measure. The New Mexico House passed it two weeks ago. Four states, with a total of 50 electoral votes, have now put it into law - New Jersey, Hawaii, Illinois and Maryland. Five states have passed NPV in both chambers but lack a governor's signature. LWVUS is currently taking consensus on the issue, with local League units discussing the issue in March and April.



Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Legislators are Coming to You



On Monday, March 23, legislators are spending the day in their districts talking to constituents. If there is something important you want to talk about, call this week to make an appointment, or ask where and when town hall meetings are scheduled so that you can attend. **This is your opportunity to make your opinions known without having to come to Salem.**

Paula Krane, Public Access Coordinator.

Success and Work Mark "Day at the Legislature"



Participants of the March 17th "Day at the Legislature" received first-hand information from Representatives Phil Barnhart and Mary Nolan, Senator Alan Bates and John Lindback, Director of Elections.

The day, hosted by [LWVOR](#) and [AAUW](#), also involved participants observing floor sessions, interacting with League coordinators and interviewing legislators. The mood of the day was "involvement."

The Legislature is just getting fired up and it is important we [communicate with our legislators](#). Make your voice heard by contacting your [state senator](#) or [state representative](#).

Speaking the Language of the Legislature



Joint Resolution: A measure used for proposing constitutional amendments, creating interim committees, giving direction to a state agency, expressing legislative approval of action taken by someone else, or authorizing a kind of temporary action to be taken. A joint resolution may also authorize expenditures out of the legislative expense appropriations.

A blue oval with a yellow swoosh underneath, containing the text "Mark the Date" in white.

Mark the Date

April 8 (Wednesday) *Health Action Day*, Oregon Health Action Campaign

Legislature Action Dates

April 17 (Friday) Deadline to schedule work sessions in chamber of origin*

April 28 (Tuesday) Deadline for consideration of changes in chamber of origin*

May 20 (Wednesday) Deadline to schedule work sessions in second chamber*

May 28 (Thursday) Committees close*

*Except Joint Ways and Means, Senate Finance and Revenue, House Revenue, Senate and House Rules Committees

March is Women's History Month - Find out more at the [National Women's History Museum](#)

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