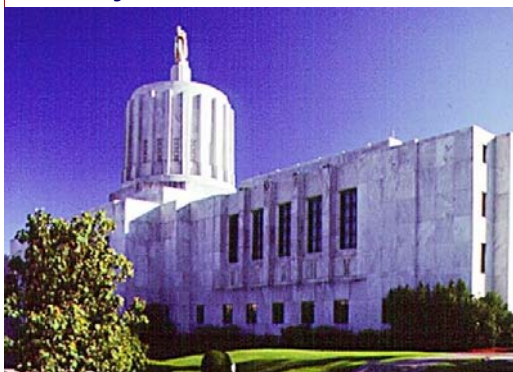


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February 24, 2009

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Legislative Report



League of Women Voters
of Oregon

The Sky is Falling

Chicken Little may prove to be right, or so it seems, with the economic forecast presented by the [Office of Economic Analysis](#) to the joint Oregon House and Senate members on February 20.

The Joint Ways and Means Committee is expected to present its rebalance of the 2007-09 budget on February 25. Four months remain of this biennium, and revenue is down some \$700 million, so the impact is severe. In order to preserve reserve funds for hard times ahead (the Rainy Day Fund, the Educational Stability Fund, and agency reserve funds), there are no easy choices. Although the League questions the idea of shortening the length of the school year, we acknowledge the necessity for major cuts to education, human services, and wages of state officials and employees.

Read the [League's report on State Economist Tom Potiowksy's](#) presentation for more details.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator



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Join us at the Capitol on March 17 for a Day at the Legislature

Experience the legislature in action! Guest speakers include:

- Representative Mary Nolan, House Committee on Land Use
- Senator Alan Bates, Senate committees on Health Care and Veterans' Affairs and the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Services
- Representative Phil Barnhart, House Committee on Environment and Water
- John Lindback, Elections Division Director, Office of the Secretary of State.



Space is limited so [register now!](#)

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Big Look Now a Long Look



Legislation proposed by the Big Look Task Force, [HB 2229](#), is under consideration by the [House Land Use Committee](#).

After holding public hearings, Chair Nolan has assigned Vice Chair Garrett with working the bill through committee. Representative Garrett has divided the bill into sections/issues. The committee will consider each section over the next weeks, with a target of the committee making a determination by

mid-March.

You can listen to the committee's discussion at the Capitol on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3 p.m. or online at the [Legislature's video/audio link](#).

Learn more about the [Big Look Now a Long Look](#).

Peggy Lynch, Natural Resources Coordinator

[About the Legislature's Web Site](#)
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Initiative Reform in the Works

Two proposed initiative reforms being spearheaded by Senator Frank Morse and Representative Larry Galizio were discussed during the meetings of the Task Force on Revenue Restructuring.



These reforms are being followed by the Initiative Reform Coalition, of which the League is a member. The current bill drafts are being amended, but are scheduled to be in the **House and Senate Rules Committees** within two weeks. The bills concepts include:

- **All ballot titles of initiatives or referred legislative measures must contain fiscal information**, including the source of funding if money is required. Currently, there has to be a fiscal statement somewhere in the explanatory material, but not in the title. It is expected that the maximum length of ballot titles will be increased from 15 words to 40 words.
- **All initiatives that qualify for the ballot would be referred to the next session of the Legislature.** This process is known as the **indirect initiative**, which has been supported by the League since our 1987 comprehensive position revision. It provides for the Legislature to hold hearings on each of the qualified initiatives, thus providing public discussion.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Speaking the Language of the Legislature

Initiative: A system of direct legislation by the people. Approved in 1902, it allows the citizenry of Oregon to propose new laws or change the State Constitution through a general election ballot measure. To place an initiative on the ballot, supporters must obtain a specified number of signatures from registered voters. The number required is determined by a fixed percentage of the votes cast for all candidates for governor at the general election preceding the filing of the petition. Initiative petitions for statutory enactments require six percent, currently 66,786 signatures.



For more definitions, see the Legislature's [glossary of terms](#).

150 Years in the Making . . .

In this 150th year of our statehood, it seems appropriate to remember the tremendous obstacles faced by those who claimed the Oregon territory, struggled to get here and live, and established a government that has endured and thrived. We can but hunker down and do the same. At the Economic Summit held last December, the Governor, Congressional delegation and state leaders cautioned of tough times ahead, and admonished Oregonians to use this bitter experience to plan for a better future.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

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