



LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Published by the League of Women Voters® of Oregon

Volume 17, Issue 12

May 4, 2007

In This Issue

- Welcome—1
- 5 MINUTE ACTIVIST—1
- Bills Drop Dead—2
- Measure 37 Fix Moving Forward—2
- Party Lines Drawn Around Taxes—2
- Domestic Partnerships Approved—2
- Election Laws Proposals Are Dropped, Stuffed, or Making Progress—3
- The Future of Redistricting—3
- Legislative Reform—4
- Legislature in Action Near You—4
- Initiative Reform—4
- Women's Issues—4
- Volunteer—5
- Follow Key Bills—5
- Quick Links—5
- Action Committee—5

Welcome

Welcome to issue 12 of the *Legislative Report*. This report covers many governance updates, as well as news on Measure 37.

If you have not yet subscribed, just click on the "Subscribe" button on our web site, www.lwvor.org or call 503-581-5722.

Sincerely,
Norman Turrill, Action Chair
Marge Easley, Action Vice Chair

5 MINUTE ACTIVIST

Come and participate in the Homeless Youth Rally at the Capitol on Monday, May 14, from 11:30 to 1:00 on the Capitol steps.

Funding for helping this population has been proposed in the Oregon Commission on Children and Families Budget, SB 5504, which will be heard in the Human Services Subcommittee of Ways and Means that week. Public testimony will be taken on May 15 at 1:00 p.m. in Hearing Room F.

Please JOIN US to show the leaders of Oregon how much we need support for the local services to runaway and homeless youth!!

The days activities include:
9:00-11:00 am
Meet in Room 50 for debriefing, networking,

and passing out information.
Then join us for a RALLY on the front steps of the Statehouse
11:30 – 12:30 pm
Refreshments will be provided by Alison S. Kelley, Attorney & Mediator
Come when you can, Leave when you must!

1:00 – 4:00 pm
Schedule a meeting with your Legislators
Scheduled Rally Speakers:
Senator Avel Gordly
Representative Deborah Boone
From the Governor's Office, Erinn Kelley-Siel
Executive Director Oregon Commission on Children and Families, Mickey Lansing
Chair, State Commission on Children and Families, Samuel Henry
AND YOUTH FROM AROUND THE STATE

For more information, contact Don Schweitzer at 503-588-5825

Bills Drop Dead

The drop dead date of April 30 caused 1,189 bills to do just that. And 142 were crammed into the final day. There is urgency in the discussion of bills, myriad amendments, "gutting and stuffing," early morning and late afternoon hearings - all in the rush to get proposals heard and either shelved or moved to the respective chamber floors for votes. Strangely, many are headed for Ways and Means, even when there is no apparent fiscal impact. Under the rules adopted by the legislative assembly soon after its beginning, only five committees will be open after the next few weeks. If patterns from previous sessions are unchanged, critical decisions will be made without public scrutiny. We argue for transparency, but whether that will occur is yet to be seen.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Measure 37 Fix Moving Forward

[HB 3540B Engrossed](#), a compromise fix of Measure 37 clarifying many of the issues surrounding the more than 160 lawsuits and setting an express lane for property owners requesting 1-3 homesites, passed the full Ways and Means Committee May 1st, and **today passed the House**. [HB 3546B Engrossed](#) (a year extension to process existing claims), also is being debated in the House for a vote today, but as of publication, the bill was still under discussion. The League delivered a [floor letter](#) in support of both bills.

The compromise may go to the voters in September or November of this year. Stay tuned!

Peggy Lynch, Portfolio Member

Party Lines Drawn Around Taxes

With the defeat of the tobacco tax proposal, [HB 2201B](#), to fund the Healthy Kids program, a line has been drawn in the sand by the minority party in the House - no new revenue by taxation. This may well preclude new revenue to fund such proposals as more state police troopers, increases for mental health and disabled programs, improved service for the Oregon Youth Authority. These services are part of the Governor's proposed budget for 2007-09, which recommends funding by increases in auto insurance, the minimum corporate tax (\$10) and the beer and wine taxes. The corporate tax has not been increased since its inception in the 1930s, and beverage taxes have not been increased for 30 years.

The Ways and Means Co-Chairs' proposed budget would pay for the Healthy Kids pro-

gram (but less kids) from the General Fund. The Ways and Means budget also allocates less money than the Governor's budget for community colleges and for mental health and disabled services, and would provide a less stable source for increased state troopers by using an ending balance percentage rather than an auto insurance surcharge. An increase in revenue without taxes could be provided by repeal or reduction in some tax credits and deductions, but this is a difficult sell to lawmakers who continue to add to the tax credit list. The League, as well as other members of the Revenue Coalition, are seeking support from the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee Chair and sympathetic legislators to pass a measure to require much more substantive reviews and audits of tax credits as to purpose, benefits, and outcomes received, and a plan for early attention to cutting those credits no longer credible.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Domestic Partnerships Approved

The bill allowing domestic partnerships has passed the Senate this week, and is expected to be signed into law by the Governor. [HB 2007A](#) allows same sex couples to have many of the same privileges and responsibilities as married couples. With the passage of this bill,

along with [SB 2](#), banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation for housing, employment and public accommodation, Oregon joins six states in their protection of these human rights. We are pleased to finally see the success of an issue that the League and many others have supported for years.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Election Laws Proposals Are Dropped, Stuffed, or Making Progress

The revision of the "double majority" requirement in property tax elections is probably on its way to a public vote, possibly in November 2007. (The double majority requires more than a 50 percent voter turnout as well as a majority of yes votes for a measure to pass.) Revising it requires a constitutional amendment, only a simple majority to pass, and it is not subject to the 50/50 rule! If passed, the double majority would not apply to any elections held in May or November of any year. The bill, [HJR 14A](#) has passed the House and will be moved to the Senate floor soon. This bill, along with [SB 512](#), which sets the election date, is in Senate Finance and Revenue.

[HB 3270](#), requiring that there be a random hand count of ballots after each primary or general elections to determine accuracy, has been dropped by the Rules Committee.

[SB 951](#), which directs community colleges and state institutions of higher education to adopt a plan to increase student voter registration and voting in elections, is moving. The plan would be done in consultation with recognized student governments and requires distribution of informational materials, provisions for voter registration with wide accessibility, campus-wide advertising campaigns for deadlines, and (by amendment) ensuring that all students receive information about activities relating to voting that are prohibited by law and the penalties for those activities.

[SB 78](#), originally allowing voter registration cards mailed by midnight on the deadline day to be effective, has been stuffed with four changes: allowing an additional person to file a candidate's electronic contribution and expenditure reports (now candidate or treasurer); shifting the filing deadline from 5 p.m. to midnight on the deadline date; requiring

The Future of Redistricting

[HJR 31](#) moves implementation of the new redistricting plan after the 2010 census to the second Monday in January 2013 (the starting date of next legislative session) rather than Dec. 31, 2011. It is scheduled for a work session in the House Elections, Ethics, and Rules Committee. The League questions the implementation date because it clouds the issue of whether, in the election of 2012, members of the Legislature would be elected based on old district lines or new.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

that anything required to be reported between January 2 and the beginning of the legislative session must be reported within 48 hours; and giving the [Secretary of State](#) the ability to deliver to any person a statewide list of electors for a fee of \$500.

[SB 74](#), deleting all polling place references from law, has passed the Senate and was heard May 2 in House Elections, Ethics, and Rules. It is expected to be passed by the House, finally making Oregon the only state to formally have vote-by-mail elections.

[SB 630](#) designates as voter's choice offices (included in the Primary regardless of party affiliation) all statewide and legislative office elections and also any state, county, city or district elections. The bill was passed out of Senate Operations and Legislative Reform on April 30. It was amended to add in language from Initiative Measure 86 (Open Primary 2006) which would allow a candidate not of a major party to list their name on the Primary ballot if qualified by the party in question, and also state that if any candidate on the ballot receives more than 50% of the vote, only that candidate would appear on the General Election ballot. Otherwise, the two candidates, regardless of party, receiving the highest number of votes would proceed to the General Election.

The Secretary of State's budget, [HB 5042A](#), has passed. We are pleased that this budget includes funding for the *Voters' Pamphlet* and for an investigator position in the Elections Division dedicated to election fraud complaints.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Legislative Reform

[SB 474](#), launched by Senators [Schrader](#), [Morse](#), and [Westlund](#), would change the way in which the Legislature operates. There would be target spending, changes in the rules of operating a session, and sustainable revenue sources. The ideas have been taken around the state and had one formal hearing plus myriad discussions around the Capitol. The bill was heard several weeks ago in Senate Operations. Whether it will surface again during the next few weeks is questionable.

The members have not yet decided whether to send a constitutional amendment ([SJR 22](#)) to voters regarding annual sessions before this session ends, but the thought seems to be to have a bill ready to go following the February 2008 annual session pilot project. Still being discussed is what the timeline should be, whether it would deal only with fiscal matters, if policy issues would be considered, and if bills not considered would be carried over from the prior session. The 44 states which have some form of annual sessions vary widely in their procedures.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Legislature in Action Near You!

Many of our legislators will be having coffee meetings and Town Halls in their districts during the remainder of the session. These are a great way to meet your legislator. These can be casual personal meetings and can be a great opportunity to discuss issues with them. They would like to hear about your concerns and discuss why they are voting the way they have.

Check with your local [senator](#) or [representative](#) (call, look on their web site, or check your local paper) to find out more about whether they will be having any of these functions over the next month or two.

These events make the legislator more accessible to the voter and you can use this opportunity to start or continue a relationship and dialogue with them.

Paula Krane, Citizen Access Coordinator

Initiative Reform

[SB 125](#), a constitutional amendment that would have directed chief petitioners to confer with Legislative Counsel regarding legal and drafting issues raised in petitions, is being gutted and stuffed. However, the revision has not yet surfaced so we cannot comment on its meaning or impact. Since it had one hearing in its original form, whether or not the reincarnation would be allowed is up in the air.

[SJR 29](#), requiring that a specified number of signatures for initiative petitions must be collected in each congressional district, had been scheduled for a hearing, but didn't make it and is presumed null and void. The League op-

posed this bill.

We are waiting for action on [HB 2082A](#) from Senate Rules. This is the omnibus initiative reform bill which we believe will greatly improve the system, but not solve all of the problems.

[SB 73](#), which bans payment by the signature for candidate petitions and voter registration cards, passed the Senate this week.

The bill to establish citizen review panels for initiatives was never heard, but has now become [Initiative 93](#), and may qualify for the ballot in 2008.

Kappy Eaton, Governance Coordinator

Women's Issues

A number of the bills supported by the Women's Health and Wellness Alliance have been heard and two have passed the House. Those include coverage for prescription and emergency contraception, [HB 2700](#), and workplace breastfeeding, [HB 2372B](#), which passed the House this week. Senate hearings have been held on these bills. The breastfeeding bill has been modified to indicate "space for

expressing milk." None have passed the Senate.

The Senate has passed workplace leave for victims of domestic violence, [SB 946](#).

The Family Leave Act expansion to establish a fund for unpaid leave, [HB 2575](#), had a House Committee work session and is expected to move to the House floor.

Kappy Eaton, Women's Issues Portfolio Chair

Volunteer

Help is needed to monitor legislative committees and report back to the Action Committee. If you live close to Salem or have an Internet connection, you can learn to track bills and listen to hearings. It is a fascinating experience if you have time to dedicate to the legislative process. Contact LWVOR at 503-581-5722 or lwvor@lwvor.org to volunteer.

Follow Key Bills

The League's bill matrix, which lists key bills that we are following this session, is updated weekly. The matrix includes legislative action taken, League action taken, and links to our testimony. To see the matrix, link to www.lwvor.org/currentissues.htm.

Quick Links

League of Women Voters of Oregon

[Www.lwvor.org](http://www.lwvor.org)

Past issues of the Legislative Report

[Www.lwvor.org/legislative-reports.htm](http://www.lwvor.org/legislative-reports.htm)

Oregon State Legislature

[Www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us)

League of Women Voters of the US

[Www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

Legislator Quick Card (printable page of names, districts, phone numbers and addresses)

http://www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide/legislator_quickcard.pdf

State Senators

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/senate/senateset.htm>

State Representatives

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/house/houseset.htm>

Committee Information

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/commset.htm>

Find Your Legislator

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/findlegsltr/home.htm>

Email Your Legislator

<http://www.leg.state.or.us/writelegsltr/writeset.htm>

Sample Letter to a Legislator

http://www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide/letter_sample.htm

The Oregon Channel

[Http://www.oregonchannel.org](http://www.oregonchannel.org)

LWVOR Action Committee

Chair:

Norman Turrill

Vice Chair:

Marge Easley

Citizen Access Coordinator:

Paula Krane

Governance Coordinator:

Kappy Eaton

Natural Resources Coordinator:

Liz Frenkel

Social Policy Coordinator:

Karen Nibler

Legislative Coordinator:

Brena Lopez

Portfolio members and committee representatives:

Bob Adams

Debbie Aiona

Jane Baumgarten

Diana Bodtker

Anna Braun

Barbara Browning

Sarah Chaplen

Anita Francis

Barbara Fredericks

Norma Jean Germond

Gail Holmes

Peggy Lynch

Ellen Maddex

Janet Markee

Erin Miller

Margaret Noel

Barbara Ross

Nancy Stevens

Pam Vavra

Intern:

Terra Ashford

Legislative Report Editor:

Rebecca Smith

League of Women Voters of Oregon
1330 12th St. SE, Suite 200
Salem, OR 97302

503-581-5722
Fax: 503-581-9403
[Www.lwvor.org](http://www.lwvor.org)
Lwvor@lwvor.org