League Victory!

Governor Signs Firearm Safety Act, SB 941, into Law
At 2:30 p.m., Monday, May 12.

This landmark legislation was made possible through the passion and hard work of gun safety advocates. The League’s Action member, Marge Easley, is one who in conjunction with members of such groups as the Oregon Alliance for Gun Safety helped make SB 941 reach the governor’s desk.

Read Marge Easley’s, LWVOR Action Team Member, testimony

Constitutional Property Tax Amendment, Public Records, and more

Measures #5 (1990) and #50 (1997) Limits Proposal

When Measure #47 (1996), a controversial constitutional property tax limitation initiative (passed 704,554 to 642,613) came into play for implementation in the 1997 legislative session, legislators agreed that it would not work as passed. They spent three months reworking it and sent Measure #50 to voters in a May, 1997 Special Election where many fewer voters cast ballots (429,943 to 341,781), the totals reflecting citizen concerns. These measures have subsequently caused significant funding problems for counties, cities, school districts and special districts. One problem, requiring a 50% turnout, and a greater than 50% passage, was solved in 1998 through the passage of a constitutional amendment.

Currently, and for some years, the Measure #50 consequences of using fair market value instead of assessed value in property taxation along with the Measure #5 (1990) property tax limits of $5 per $1000 of assessed value, and all local governments together limited to $10 per $1000, have created property tax inequities and severe cuts to local education, health care and public safety programs. Measure #50 froze county permanent tax rates at their 1995 level, a significant part of service declines. Also, compression issues among the local entities competing for local option tax funding have caused lower than anticipated dollars. To no avail, local government representatives have urged legislative action for several sessions.
given during the marathon hearing on this bill.

**Revenue Forecast**
May 14, 2015

Many bills in Ways and Means will not be acted upon until the Forecast from the Office of Economic Analysis is released.

Click here to Read the February 19, 2015 Forecast

1,988 House bills were referred to committee, to date 747 (or 37.6%) of those have been vetted and found worthy to continue their journey being passed out of a house committee.

**Session Bills By the Numbers**

Total Measures Introduced - 2,761
Passed by House - 426
Passed by Senate - 385
Signed by Governor - 48

**HB 2666**

What is best for Oregon farmland?

The League strongly opposed the bill that would alter key criteria to allowing mines on EFU land and "shift balance

**HJR 21** is a constitutional amendment to require that all counties have a permanent limit on the rate of ad valorem property taxes of not less than $2. Ten counties, almost a third of Oregon's 36 counties, have operating and local option tax rates of less than $2. These include Columbia, Lane, Klamath, Polk, Clatsop, Hood River, Douglas, Coos, Josephine and Curry. The proposal removes the application of constitutional limits of Measure #5 to the first $2 per $1000, and requires compression of county option taxes first, followed by permanent taxes. The measure would be on the May 2016 primary ballot and go into effect after July 1, 2016. The first hearing was held on May 6 in the House Revenue committee, with subsequent referral to House Rules. Related bills are **HJR 20** and **HJR 12**, both constitutional amendments also dealing with revising Measure #50. They have been referred to House Rules.

**Governance Issues Updates**

**SB 9**, the comprehensive performance audit of Oregon's public record laws, passed the Senate, 30-0, and has been referred to House Rules where passage is also expected. **HB 3505**, the Republican public records proposal, had a hearing in House Rules, but will not move.

Ethics bill **HB 2019A**, proposing an increase in Oregon State Ethics Commission membership and tighter response times to complaints, has passed from House Rules to Ways and Means. **HB 2020** which defines Oregon statewide public officials to include a First Partner and prohibits receiving any reimbursement for public speaking, is scheduled for a hearing and possible work session in House Rules May 13. These are two of the Governor's bills.

**HB 3475**, National Popular Vote Compact, had a work session on May 11, and is up for a House vote within the week.

**Campaign finance contribution limits**, **SJR 5**, is still in Senate Rules with no action since the April 21 hearing.

The minimum wage bills, HBs **2008**, **2009** and **2012**, each phasing in increases in the next two years, have moved to House Rules, but no hearings have been scheduled.

The Joint Tax Credits committee has now had hearings on 20 credit programs scheduled to sunset in the next two years. Among these are children and the elderly with disabilities, contributions to the Office of Child Care, university venture development, medical
and overly favor the mining industry."*
League and other opposition were met with powerful Aggregate Industry interests wanting to push this bill through on the fast track.

(This bill is currently in House Rules)

*Click here to read LWVOR testimony in OPPOSITION.

Legislative Bill Work Session Deadlines:

05/22 - Deadline to post 2nd chamber work sessions
06/05 - Last day to hold work sessions for 2nd chamber.

Natural Resources

Priority Bills, House and Ways and Means Bills - League Support and Opposition

Except for "priority bills", each chamber's committees are now hearing bills that passed the other chamber. If amendments are made in the second chamber, they will have to return to the first chamber for "concurrence" or be sent to a joint committee to see if they can find agreement. Remember, bills must pass both chambers and be signed by the Governor before they become law.

Deadlines are looming. Bills need to be scheduled for a Work Session in their second chamber by May 22, sent to Rules, Revenue or Ways and Means or they "die". Then, by June 5, bills must pass out of the second chamber committee or be sent to one of those limited committees. By this time in the session, fewer bills will be sent for more work. The tentative end of session is June 26, but word is it will last at least until July3. The Ways and Means Subcommittees are finishing work on agency budgets and will be moving to the policy bills that were sent their way. With expected increases in PERS costs, in Medicaid and in public employee health care costs, the Co-Chairs are being conservative as they consider spending requests.

The Ways and Means Capital Construction Subcommittee is meeting every Friday to hear requests for state bonds or other special funding requests. Besides higher education buildings, county courthouses, affordable housing bonding and water bonds are among the mix of "asks". (See HB 5005 and HB 5006 for the complete list.)

Bills in House Rules we SUPPORT: HB 3549 is the promised "aerial spray work group" bill. We are hoping for amendments to strengthen the bill to address the issues from the now-dead SB 613.
It is your support that makes it possible to carry out this advocacy work at the Legislature. Volunteer to work on issues for the 2015 Legislative Session. It's exciting! Contact the LWVOR Action Team.

State Bonding Capacity

For the 2015-17 biennium, the maximum recommended General Fund capacity is $974 million and lottery bonding capacity is $161 million. Both are less than the requests. Although our bond rating is AA+, factors that affect our rating include the Kicker Law, the volatility of our personal income tax and our active initiative process. Capital Construction informational hearing was held March 20th.

Information on bond financing: State Bond Financing in Oregon from the Department of Administrative Services (DAS)

Overview of the 2015 Debt Policy Advisory Commission Report

LWVOR Battle Front! Read the Issues on Social Policy, Governance and...
Natural Resources as captured by our LWVOR Coordinators.

Bill Trackers
Track Oregon Legislature's bills, committees and activities using e-subscribe on OLIS (Oregon Legislature's Information System)
Also, Oregonian Bill Tracker

Quick Links to OLIS
OR State Legislature
Legislative Audio and Video
View the Bills
Find & Contact your State Senator and Representative

Visit the Capitol. Feel the history. Learn about the legislators and staff.

The 2015 Legislative Guides are available in Room 59 for only $3.00.
The Guides provide pictures and information about each legislators, as well as information about Committee Staff.

Next week the SHC Committee has scheduled HB 2934 A, the basic health plan, for a public hearing, the next step in the expansion of health care coverage under the present system. The bill requires the Oregon Health Authority to convene a stakeholder group to provide recommendations to the interim legislative health care committees by December 1, 2015. The bill passed the House floor with a 39 - 21 vote. HB 2828, the extension of the study bill, was sent to Ways and Means for funding and has not been scheduled for a hearing so far. SB 631 had a public hearing in SHC Committee on Monday. This bill would have appointed a Health Care for all Board. Many advocates were heard but the bill could not be passed out of the Senate Committee at this late date.

The House Human Services Committee heard HB 3535, the TANF Redesign bill, on April 20. A workgroup submitted a detailed amendment to make changes to the program to make eligibility clearer, to refer for services prior to eligibility, to provide training for employment, and offer the extension of services to clients who became employed. The population on TANF has been decreasing as recipients have gone back to work, but many had difficulties with that transition. The redesign continues services during the transition. The bill was amended but needed further work. On May 8, the bill was scheduled for a hearing in House Rules when it was again amended and passed with a referral to Ways and Means. A letter was submitted to House Rules in support of the redesign. (Read letter here.)

The Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee considered HB 2232 A on May 7. The Department of Human Services is responsible for services for Runaway and Homeless Youth and the bill creates an advisory committee to inform planning and coordination of services. The bill originally appeared in the House on February 20, was amended and passed early. The House floor approved with 57 ayes to 3 nays. The bill was moved to the Senate floor with a do pass recommendation. A letter was submitted to the Feb 20 hearing and to the Ways and Means Human Services Subcommittee on March 3, including comments on Runaway and Homeless Youth.

The Ways and Means Public Safety Subcommittee reviewed the District Attorney Budget, HB 5015, and Public Defense Services Commission Budget SB 5533 last week. The District Attorney Budget includes the salaries for 36 District Attorneys with a 7 % increase. The Budget was passed to the Full Ways and Means Committee. The PDSC Budget presentation...
In the 2013 Session the Public Defense Services Commission (PDSC) presented the needs for increased salaries for court appointed attorneys for eligible children or defendants. The League submitted a letter arguing the access to justice issue, then (HB3463 (2013). A minimal hourly increase was granted, and a 3% increase was given in the rates for lawyers in consortiums and firms on a per case basis. The defense attorney salary levels are below parity compared with deputy district attorneys. Defense attorneys also pay for their own insurance and benefits. PDSC presented policy option packages for increased case rates and mileage at $7.5 million, increased hourly rates at $6.6 million and administrative staff for Juvenile Dependency Improvement at $313,870, for a total of approximately $14 million in General Funds. The Public Safety Subcommittee will be considering this need along with other agency requests.

The Oregon Youth Authority Budget, SB 5542, presented estimates on construction and deferred maintenance needs in its 10 correctional facilities. The original estimate for projects at all facilities was $47.9 million, but it was reduced to $3.3 million for projects at 3 facilities, MacLaren, Oak Creek and Rogue Valley. Hillcrest in South Salem will close by July 1, 2017, and renovations at MacLaren in Woodburn will allow for intake and mental health units on its campus. The committee discussed the low interest rates on bonds and the wisdom of bonding now for the projects. No decision was made yet. The League submitted a letter on the OYA Budget on Feb 25. (Click here to read Karen Nibler's testimony.)

The Department of Education reported to the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee on the Youth Correction Education Program and the Youth Development Division Programs. ODE contracts with Education Service Districts and School Districts to provide education within the Oregon Youth Authority correctional facilities. The education is provided to 440 students, which is a daily average. The high school graduation rate is increasing to 48% and testing scores are improving in reading, but remain under 50% in science, writing and math. Vocational programs are available in the facilities and higher education classes are available online. SB 240 will allow OYA to add apprenticeship programs.

The Youth Development Division funds prevention programs for at risk children ages 6 to 18. The Priority Youth programs for ages 6-15 are for children at risk of disconnecting from school, which targets economically
disadvantaged youth. Opportunity Youth programs are for 16-20 year olds who are not in school or working. This agency distributed $3 million for 22 intervention programs. Applications for 48 programs were received, but Federal Funds were sequestered for 2014 through 2017. HB 2016 was amended and adopted in House Rules on May 8. This bill requests an educational plan to address the educational low performance in economically disadvantaged black students.

The House Education Committee received detailed presentations on both of these programs on the same day as the Ways and Means Education Subcommittee met. The House Committee also passed SB 321 to lower the mandatory school age from 7 to age 6 for Kindergarten. SB 553 A and SB 556 were also passed to the Senate floor. SB 553 A limits suspension and expulsion from public schools, and SB 556 prohibits the use of expulsion for truancy. Both of these practices contribute to school dropout rates. These bills reflect changes in Early Learning and Youth Development Divisions.