

LWV Wyoming Report #1 -- 2-14-22
2022 Wyoming Legislature
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The 2022 Legislature consumed much of the first week with taking introduction votes on filed bills. Now, the Legislature takes up the 2023-24 state budget on Monday, and that will dominate the week. However, there are several issues that will progress and require attention. See below for opportunity to advocate for LWV position against cross-over voting.

SF1 and HB1 budget bills

The House and Senate will hear explanation of the proposed budget during the Committee of the Whole of HB1 and SF1 on Monday and Tuesday. Second reading amendments will be debated (ad infinitum) on Wednesday, and third reading amendments will be debated before final votes of the chambers on Friday. Identical amendments from the House and Senate will be locked into the bill. Amendments that differ between the two versions will be up for negotiations in the inevitable conference committee, which will work out a compromise budget version that can pass the House and Senate and get the governor's signature. Gov. Gordon promises to line-item veto any attempt to legislate issues through the budget.

There will be scores of amendments to the budget bills. On the 2020 bills page on the LSO Website, check out the "amendments" tab. You can lobby your legislators to oppose or support amendments by reference to the amendment numbers. (Let me know if you have questions about that process.)

HB100 Redistricting

The redistricting bill passed the House and heads to the Senate. Check with your county clerks and consult the LSO Website to determine if you want to lobby for/against maps. It's a little complicated, but you start with the Joint Corporations Committee version and then check out the House amendments (which deal with regions). The districting plan that is in play right now includes 62 House seats and 31 Senate seats (adding 3 total legislators). That means districts can be smaller to comply with the one-person-one-vote requirement, which eases pressure to combine disparate areas. Sen. Scott's 60-30 proposal awaits possible action in Senate Rules, where leadership can bring it out at any time.

House members had LSO attorneys write 155 bills and eight resolutions. A third survived for the session: 44 failed their introduction votes or were withdrawn, and another 51 were never considered. The results were a little better in the Senate: 114 bills and 2 resolutions, 1 not considered and the rest failing introduction. Check the session legislation on the LSO Web page for details.

SF97 Change in Party Affiliation

We have strongly opposed barriers to voting, including attempts to stifle ability to participate in primaries, and we must do so again this week. Partisan interests and national politics are pushing SF97 Change in Party Affiliation, sponsored by Sen. Biteman, which *is scheduled for Senate Corporations on Tuesday*. The bill would allow party changes only up to 30 days before a primary. The state GOP is frustrated with the ability of Wyoming voters to participate in selecting GOP primary nominees, and that is enhanced with the party officials' fear that newly-minted Republicans will help incumbent U.S. Rep. Liz Cheney win her re-election primary this year. LWVWY has consistently supported the ability of Wyoming voters to select/change their affiliation at any time to vote for the candidates of their choice in public elections. A political party may not use our statutes to solve its own perceived problem, and outside pressure against one of the candidates only underlines our stand.

Tell Senate Corporations members to stop this bill right now and affirm Wyoming values of letting Wyoming voters cast their ballots for the best candidates.

We do support the bills that strengthen campaign finance reporting integrity (HB49) and that will help county clerks conduct elections (HB52).

HB20 – Medical opportunity act

This was the Medicaid expansion bill approved (twice) by the Joint Revenue Committee. House leadership determined it did not have adequate support in the House or Senate, so it was not brought up for an introduction vote. Adequate support would have been majority support in the Senate and 40 introduction votes in the House. However, stay tuned for attempts to bring the issue to a vote on a possible budget bill amendment. That will be an opportunity to lobby your representatives to expand Medicaid and make health care accessible to about 24,000 uninsured low-income Wyoming people. The amendment would be debated on Wednesday or Friday. More to come... .

See the accompanying summary list of bills that are of interest to LWVWY members.

Note:

- Floor sessions and committee meetings are streamed on the Wyoming Legislature's YouTube channel. The committee meetings have a Zoom option to testify, if you register on the committee's schedule listing. (See next item.)
- The LSO Website has lots of information about the bills and the legislators. But one of the features to check before the session and every day are the schedules for the session, the House and Senate chambers and the committees. You will see opportunities to testify and to lobby lawmakers on individual bills and amendments.
- The other LSO Website page you will use every day is the bill page, which provides the previous action for each proposal, bill versions as they pass from one chamber to the other and amendments coming up in debate.
- Electronic handouts are required for the chamber floors and are recommended for committees. LSO no longer handles large deliveries (of anything) during sessions.
- The LSO online hotline is activated to leave messages for ALL members of a chamber on a specific bill. The telephone hotline is 866-996-8683 or 307-777-8683.
- Find links to LSO guides "Attending Legislative Sessions" and "Attending Legislative Meetings" at the top of the home page.
- The LSO Website has information about legislators, and I am attaching an electronic version of a directory compiled by the Wyoming Truckers' Association (has a lot more personal info)

If you need help navigating the LSO Website or the Capitol, I am happy to help. My cell is 307-630-8095. Also, Margaret Brown of the Laramie and Wyoming Leagues is a great resource and sends updates to an email list of interested League members, so let her know if you want to join that.

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