



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF NORTH CAROLINA**

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

NC League of Women Voters issues in the General Assembly:

HEALTH CARE

House Bill #H1897, An Act to Establish the Bill Martin and Ruth Easterling Health Care Policy Council (The House Bill has not been submitted as of May 19.)

Short Title: Health Care Policy Council

Sponsors: Verla Insko, District 56 (Orange County)

Senate Bill #1668, Health Care Policy Council was filed on May 19.

Primary Sponsor: William R. Purcell, Co-sponsors: Senators Charlie S. Dannelly, James Forrester, Floyd B. McKissick, Jr. and John Snow.

Explanation: This bill establishes a Health Care Policy Council that is authorized to analyze the health care system in our state and to make recommendations on how we can move from the current fragmented system to a more integrated system that will result in affordable, appropriate health care system for all residents in the state.

Committee Meetings Scheduled: The bill has not yet been introduced or assigned to a committee.

League Action: On Monday, May 19, 2008, President Judie Burke and Evelin Brinich, LWVNC Point Person for Health Care, attended a briefing held by Representative Insko, indicating League support for this bill.

For More Information: Go to the LWVNC Web Site, www.lwvnc.org

ENVIRONMENT/WATER QUALITY

From the NC Conservation Network:

On March 11, Governor Easley unveiled a package of water conservation proposals for the state legislature to consider in its upcoming 2008 session. Overall, we like the Governor's emphasis on conservation and efficiency. However, it doesn't require local governments to link growth decisions to water availability, and doesn't mention the long term need for a comprehensive water law. It will be up to citizen advocates to keep those ideas on the table as legislators prepare for the 2008 summer session and the long session of 2009.

League Action: All Leaguers are invited to attend Clean Water Lobby Day on June 4 in Raleigh. It is sponsored by the NC Conservation Network. Contact Jeri Gray (jerigray@mindspring.com) if you can attend.

TAX REFORM

From Meg Gray of the Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition we have this Action Alert:

We have learned and confirmed through many sources that House leaders are seriously considering increasing the state EITC to 5% as a part of their budget plan. Anticipating that they may consider some sort of economic stimulus package given our current economic conditions, I put out a brief last week making the case that an increase to the state EITC would be a good stimulus for both working families and local economies:

http://www.ncjustice.org/assets/library/1184_btcbriefeitc12may08.pdf

I have been told- and as we could expect- that the uphill battle for an increase will be in the Senate, however, we first must make sure the House includes it in their budget plan. So, I put together an action alert. See the entire action alert at: <http://capwiz.com/ncjustice/issues/alert/?alertid=11399536>

A Portion of the The Action Alert from the Earned Income Tax Credit Coalition:

As legislators in Raleigh make decisions about the 2008-2009 budget, your participation is critical in helping inform our leaders of the need to increase the state Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Increasing the state EITC to 5% would be a relatively inexpensive (\$20.6m) and targeted investment that would help North Carolina's working families who are suffering the most from the current economic downturn.

In 2007, state lawmakers adopted a refundable version of the federal EITC worth 3.5% of the federal credit. This year, an estimated **845,000** working households (1 in 5 North Carolina households) will be eligible to benefit from the new credit. As it currently stands, around **\$48 million** will circulate to households in all 100 counties, and the average household benefit will be **\$56**. The average benefit of a 5% state EITC would be \$80.