



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NORTH CAROLINA

### LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

*Legislative Update for June 12, 2008*

This week's Legislative Update consists of portions of the **Raleigh Report**, edited by George Reed of the NC Council of Churches. If you would like to subscribe to the **Raleigh Report**, send an e-mail to: [nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org](mailto:nccofc@nccouncilofchurches.org)

*From George Reed:*

Before the deadline on the introduction of new bills passed near the end of May, a flood of bills was introduced. Legislative leaders are still pushing for an early adjournment of the session, and many of these new bills are not likely to see the light of day. Still, many are worthy of consideration, and many will be back again when the new General Assembly is sworn in in 2009.

Here are brief summaries of the new bills, arranged by broad categories:

#### **CAMPAIGN AND ELECTION LAWS**

**H 2650**, Elections Oversight Funds, would create the Joint Legislative Elections Oversight Committee to review campaign finance regulations on an ongoing basis and make recommendations. \$100,000 is allocated. Introduced by Rep. Goodwin; referred to House Appropriations Comm.

#### **ENVIRONMENT**

**H 2526/S 1871**, Motor Vehicle Emissions Study, would require the Environmental Review Commission to study the costs and benefits of adopting California's motor-vehicle emissions standards in NC. Introduced by Reps. Harrison, Martin, Samuelson, and Sen. Clodfelter; referred to House Environment Comm. and Senate Rules Comm.

**H 2527**, Recycle Plastic Bags, would increase the state's goal for recycling plastic shopping bags from 25% to 75% and would require large and medium-sized retail stores which use plastic bags to provide bag recycling. Introduced by Reps. Harrison and Martin; referred to House Environment Comm.

**H 2529**, Extend Climate Change Commission 2008, would extend the final reporting date to April 2009. Introduced by Reps. Harrison, Thomas, Underhill, Wilkins; referred to House Environment.

**H 2532/S 1946**, Codify Energy Efficiency in Public Buildings, would require new and renovated state buildings, including university and community college buildings, to meet tougher standards for sustainable, energy-efficient construction. Specific standards would apply to energy and water use. A separate bill, H 2531, Energy-Efficient Buildings if State Funds, would similarly codify building standards and also apply them to public school districts and anything else funded through the state capital budget. Introduced by Reps. Harrison and Carney and Sen. Cowell; referred to House Energy & Energy Efficiency and Senate Commerce.

**H 2709**, No Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining, would prevent coal-fired plants in NC from using coal mined by mountaintop removal and would allow power companies to pass along their increased costs for coal mined by other methods. Introduced by Rep. Harrison; referred to House Public Utilities.

**H 2710**, Income Tax Credit-Energy-Efficient Homes, would permit corporate and individual income tax credits for building or manufacturing energy-efficient homes. The credits would range from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per home and could not exceed the amount of tax the taxpayer owes. Introduced by Rep. Harrison; referred to House Finance Comm.

**H 2720**, Energy-Efficient State Motor Vehicle Fleets, would require the state to buy new motor vehicles with a fuel economy rating in the top 10% for that class of vehicles. Introduced by Reps. Thomas and Harrison; referred to House Energy & Energy Efficiency Comm.

**S 1769**, Energy Efficiency Sales Tax Holiday, would give an annual one-week exemption to certain Energy Star appliances, heating and cooling units, insulation and skylights, certain home electronics, and lighting, including compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs). Introduced by Sen. Snow. S 1944 would allow an Energy Star sales tax holiday, but in August, as part of the back-to-school sales tax holiday, and not including insulation and skylights, home electronics, or lighting other than CFLs. Introduced by Sen. Hartsell. H 2605 would give a three-day tax holiday in November and would cover items similar to those in S 1944, minus the CFLs. Introduced by Reps. Luebke, Harrison, and Weiss. All three bills have been referred to Finance Committees. The House budget sets up a three-day Energy Star tax holiday in November, covering washers, driers, freezers, refrigerators, room air conditioners, dehumidifiers, programmable thermostats, and CFLs, and allocates \$1.2 million to offset the lost tax revenues.

## HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE

**H 2592**, DPI to Collect Childhood Obesity Statistics, would require the Department of Public Instruction to gather data on childhood obesity and physical education in the schools. Introduced by Reps. Bell and Glazier; referred to House Education Comm.

**H 2660**, Increase Cigarette Tax to 75 Cents. It is currently at 35¢ per pack. This is a large enough increase to have an impact on smoking rates, especially by discouraging youth from starting. Introduced by Reps. Glazier, Luebke, and Weiss; referred to House Finance Comm. The Governor's budget proposed a 20¢ increase; the House budget took it out.

**H 2688**, Health Care Policy Council. Identical to S 1668. RR, May 27. Introduced by Reps. Insko and Holliman; referred to House Health Comm.

**H 2691**, Tobacco-Free Schools/Discretionary. A law enacted last year requires local school boards to prohibit tobacco use, including smoking, on school campuses. H 2691 would make it discretionary, allowing school boards to continue to permit smoking in schools. Introduced by Rep. Allred; referred to House Education Comm.

## IMMIGRATION

**H 2717**, Access to Higher Education, would prohibit the UNC System and the community colleges from adopting admission requirements related to an applicant's immigration status. Introduced by Reps. Harrison, Luebke, and Glazier; referred to House Education Comm.

**S 2019**, Community Colleges Can't Admit Illegal Aliens (sic), would require community colleges to check the immigration status of applicants and prohibit admission of those who are undocumented. Introduced by Sen. Phil Berger; referred to Senate Appropriations Comm.

## **LONG-TERM CARE**

**H 2404/S 1808**, Increase Long-Term Care Insurance Credit, would increase the credit currently in effect to 75% of the premiums paid (currently 15%), with a maximum credit of \$1,000 (currently \$350). Introduced by Reps. England, Farmer-Butterfield, Boylan, and Sen. Malone; referred to House Aging and Senate Finance Comms.

## **TAXES**

All of these bills are in the House or Senate Finance Committee.

**H 2514**, Lower Tax Rate for Certain Corporations, would reduce the corporate income tax rate from 6.9% to 5.0% for all corporations which do not reduce their fulltime workforce during the year and which get at least 60% of their income from doing business in NC. Introduced by Rep. Boylan.

**H 2577**, End Cigarette Export Tax Credits. Current law gives tax credits to companies paying taxes in NC for manufacturing cigarettes for export, with one credit rewarding companies which have increased their export business in the past decade. H 2577 would repeal these credits. Introduced by Rep. Luebke.

**H 2642/S 2097**, Increase Earned Income Tax Credit Percentage, from 3.5% to 5.0% of the federal income tax credit. Introduced by Reps. Wainwright, Weiss, Luebke, and Ross and Sen. Cowell. The House budget raises the state EITC, allocating \$20.6 million to offset lost revenue.

**H 2654**, Repeal Sales Tax on Marina Diesel Fuel, for any and all watercraft. Introduced by Rep. Cleveland.

**H 2695**, Economic Enhancement to Create Jobs, would exempt from corporate income tax the first \$85,000 of income "as an economic enhancement to create jobs." The bill, however, does not require the creation of any jobs, nor does it speculate on how many jobs a corporation would create with the money saved by not paying the 6.9% tax on \$85,000. (You can run the math to see how much money the credit could amount to.) Introduced by Rep. Daughtridge.

**S 1817**, Motor Fuels Tax Holiday, would remove the state excise tax on motor fuels for the months of July and August. Introduced by Sen. Forrester.

**S 1861**, Raise Homestead Exclusion to \$35K, would have the same effect as H 2326. Introduced by Sen. Allran.

## **Appropriations Bills**

The following appropriations bills have been introduced. As you will see, many of them have found their way into the budget passed last week by the House and now in the Senate.

**H 2525**, Funds/Farmland Preservation Trust Fund. \$20 million. (Rep. Harrison)

**H 2649**, Voter-Owned Election Funds. \$3,580,000. (Rep. Goodwin)

**H 2744**, Expand Access to Health Insurance/Children. \$10+ million to add 10,683 children to the Health Choice program. Reps. Insko, England, Weiss, Martin. This money is in the House budget.