

LEGISLATIVE LETTER<sup>®</sup>  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF COLORADO  
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January 13, 2014

LL#1:1

## FACTS ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage informed and active participation of citizens in government and influence public policy issues through education and advocacy. **It is a non-profit, non-partisan organization. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.**

The League was founded in 1920 as an outgrowth of the long struggle to win voting rights for women in the United States. Membership is open to all citizens of voting age. There are 800 Leagues throughout the U.S. The League of Women Voters of Colorado has over 1500 members in 19 local leagues. They are: Adams County, Jefferson County, Arapahoe County, La Plata County, Archuleta County, Larimer County, Boulder County, Mesa County, Chaffee County, Montezuma County, Montrose County, Denver, Estes Park, Pikes Peak Region, Greeley/Weld County, Pueblo, Gunnison Area, Routt County, and Sterling.

The League is organized around two main functions: **VOTER EDUCATION and PROGRAM.**

**VOTER EDUCATION** provides a vital service to the citizens of Colorado. The Education Fund provides the public with factual and unbiased information about ballot issues and candidates to help them in making informed decisions at election time. In addition to encouraging eligible voters to register and vote, the League provides information to help them understand the political process and promote active participation in government. Voter Education efforts are administered by the League of Women Voters Education Fund, a 501 (c) 3 non-profit. Financial support for the voter education area comes from grants and in-kind and financial contributions.

The **PROGRAM** area is separate from Voter Education. The League studies many public policy issues. In this area we may take action in support of or opposition to the issue after thorough study and consensus by our members. The studies include issues related to government, natural resources, and social policy. The League takes action at all levels of government on public policy issues. These actions include briefings and workshops to inform our members, lobbying before government bodies, petition drives, publishing information for the general public and the news media, and holding open informational meetings. Program efforts are administered

by the League of Women Voters of Colorado, a 501 (c) 4 non-profit. Financial support for the program area comes from membership, conferences and special events, contributions, and publications.

Board members and volunteers donate hundreds of hours to the above activities including: writing publications, researching ballot issues, lobbying at the legislature, and answering the voter hotline.

### **HOW DOES THE LEAGUE ADOPT POLICY POSITIONS?**

League Program consists of governmental issues chosen by members for study and ultimate action. These may range from educational activities in the community to legislative lobbying. Study makes action possible by bringing members the knowledge that makes League action uniquely credible and respected. The process gives members an opportunity to examine facts, pro and con arguments, and political realities. Reaching consensus is a technique used traditionally in the League of Women Voters to discuss and arrive at conclusions on issues. Consensus is not a simple majority vote, nor does it mean unanimity. It is the "sense of the group" as expressed through the exchange of ideas and opinions. League action can take place only after consensus or concurrence has been reached and a position formulated.

The League of Women Voters of Colorado determines what legislation to follow and to support or oppose based first and foremost on our program positions. We can support or oppose only topics on which the League has conducted studies and arrived at positions on the local, state and/or national level. The Legislative Action Committee meets biweekly during the legislative session to review pending bills and determine which to follow based on our stated program. Positions of support, oppose or "watch" are arrived at by consensus after reviewing all information available at the time. As bills change, it is sometimes necessary to change positions, and those decisions are also made by consensus of the committee.

### **ADVOCACY AGENDA 2014**

**Elections and Voting**  
**Fiscal Balance and Prioritization**  
**Preserving Quality of Life**

The Advocacy Agenda reflects the priority issues that will be addressed by League in both legislative and citizen-education activities across Colorado. In the area of elections and voting, we will continue to be active in the evolving nature of voting in Colorado to protect accessibility of the ballot for all. We are mindful that the improving economy will make it possible to fund more statewide needs but that priorities must be established. Our focus will be on those needs most severely impacted by budget cuts of the last few years, including education and transportation. We remain committed to a healthy environment and to social justice as essential elements of quality life in Colorado.

### **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF COLORADO**

<b>President</b>	Bobbie Heisterkamp	303.333.6818
<b>Legislative Action Chair</b>	Sally Augden	303.455.5800
<b>Staff Lobbyist</b>	Christine Watson	303.250.1796
<b>Executive Director</b>	Julie Leonard	303.863.0437

## LEGISLATIVE LEADERSHIP IN 2014

### SENATE

President of the Senate	Morgan Carroll
President Pro-Tem	Lucia Guzman
Majority Leader	Rollie Heath
Asst. Majority Leader	Irene Aguilar
Minority Leader	Bill Cadman
Asst. Minority Leader	Mark Scheffel
Majority Caucus Chair	Jeanne Nicholson
Majority Whip	Gail Schwartz
Minority Caucus Chair	Scott Renfroe
Minority Whip	Kevin Grantham

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Speaker of the House	Mark Ferrandino
Majority Leader	Dickey Hullinghorst
Asst. Majority Leader	Dan Pabon
Majority Caucus Chair	Lois Court
Majority Whip	Elizabeth McCann
Minority Leader	Brian DelGrosso
Asst. Minority Leader	Libby Szabo
Minority Caucus Chair	Kathleen Conti
Minority Whip	Kevin Priola

## CAPITAL DIRECTORY

Information Center/Bill Room	303.866.3055
Governor's Office	303.866.2471
Joint Budget Committee	303.866.2061
Legislative Council	303.866. 3521
Legislative Legal Services	303.866.2045
Reviser of Statutes	303.866.2045
House Members—both parties	303.866.2904
Democratic Senators	303.866.4865
Republican Senators	303.866.4866
State Planning & Budgeting	303.866.3317

### Toll-free number from outside Metro area

Governor	800.238.7215
Senate	800. 473.8136
House	800.811.7647

Legislative Home Page:

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

View House or Senate Floor action on  
Comcast Channel 165.

## 2014 HOUSE COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE

### **AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, & NATURAL RESOURCES**

Representatives Fischer (Chair); Vigil, (Vice-Chair); Becker, Buck, Coram, Garcia, Lebsock, McLachlan, Mitsch Bush, Rankin, Saine, Scott, Sonnenberg

Staff: Brooke Maddaford  
Mon., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 0107)  
Wed., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 0107)

### **APPROPRIATIONS**

Representatives Duran (Chair); May, (Vice-Chair); DelGrosso, Dore, B. Gardner, Gerou, Hamner, Labuda, Pabon, Singer, Sonnenberg, Tyler, Young

Staff: Megan Davisson  
Fri., 7:30-9:00 (LSB-A)  
Other times as announced

### **BUSINESS, LABOR & ECONOMIC and WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

Representatives: A. Williams (Chair); Kraft-Tharp (Vice-Chair); Exum, Hamner, Holbert, Navarro, Nordberg, Rosenthal, Ryden, Szabo, Wright

Staff: Erin Vanderberg  
Tuesday, All Day (LSB-A)  
Thurs. 1:30-6:00 (LSB-A)

### **EDUCATION**

Representatives Hamner (Chair); Peniston (Vice-Chair); Buckner, Court, Everett, Fields, Holbert, McNulty, Murray, Pettersen, Priola, Wilson, Young

Staff: Lisa Gezelter  
Mon., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 0112)  
Wed. Adj.-Noon (Rm. 0112)

### **FINANCE**

Representatives Court (Chair); Labuda (Vice-Chair); Becker, DelGrosso, Foote, Joshi, Kagan, Melton, Pabon, Priola, Saine, Swalm, Wilson

Staff: Matt Kiszka  
Wed., 1:30-6:00 (LSB-A)  
Thurs., Adj.-Noon (LSB-A)

### **HEALTH, INSURANCE & ENVIRONMENT**

Representatives McCann (Chair); Schafer (Vice-Chair); Fields, Ginal, Humphrey, Joshi, Landgraf, McNulty, Primavera, Singer, Swalm

Staff: Amanda King  
Tuesday, Adj.-Noon (Rm. 0107)  
Thurs., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 0107)

### **JUDICIARY**

Representatives Kagan (Chair); Lee (Vice-Chair); Buckner, Court, B. Gardner, Lawrence, McLachlan, Murray, Pettersen, Salazar, Waller

Staff: Bo Pogue  
Tuesday, All Day (Rm. 0112)  
Thurs., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 0112)

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Representatives: Fields (Chair); Singer (Vice-Chair); Dore, Exum, Garcia, B. Gardner, Landgraf, Lebsock, Navarro, Rankin, Rosenthal, Vigil, Wright

Staff: Damion Pechota  
Wed., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 0107)  
Thurs., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 0107)

### **PUBLIC HEALTH CARE & HUMAN SERVICES**

Representatives Primavera (Chair); Young (Vice-Chair); Conti, Everett, Ginal, Joshi, Landgraf, McCann, Schafer, Singer, Stephens, Tyler, Wilson

Staff: Elizabeth Burger  
Tuesday, 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 0107)  
Friday Adj.-Noon (Rm. 0107)

### **STATE, VETERANS, & MILITARY AFFAIRS**

Representatives Ryden (Chair); Salazar (Vice-Chair); Conti, Dore, Foote, Humphrey, Labuda, Melton, Moreno, Nordberg, Williams

Staff: Jessika Shipley  
Mon., 1:30-6:00 (LSB-A)  
Wed., Adj.-Noon (LSB-A)

### **TRANSPORTATION & ENERGY**

Representatives Tyler (Chair); Moreno (Vice-Chair); Buck, Coram, Everett, Fischer, Ginal, Kraft-Tharp, Lawrence, Lee, Mitsch Bush, Peniston, Scott

Staff: Kelli Kelty  
Wed., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 0112)  
Thurs., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 0112)

## 2014 SENATE COMMITTEES OF REFERENCE

### **AGRICULTURE, NATURAL RESOURCES & ENERGY**

Senators Schwartz (Chair); Jones (Vice-Chair); Brophy, Guzman, Harvey, Roberts, Tochtrop

Staff: David Beaujon  
Wed., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 353)  
Thurs., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 353)

### **APPROPRIATIONS**

Senators Hodge (Chair); Steadman (Vice-Chair); Grantham, Harvey, Lambert, Todd, Ulibarri

Staff: Kevin Neimond  
Fri., 7:30-9:00 (Rm. 356)  
Other times as announced.

### **BUSINESS, LABOR, & TECHNOLOGY**

Senators Tochtrop (Chair); Jahn (Vice-Chair); Balmer, Baumgardner, Kefalas, Rivera, Schwartz

Staff: Jeanette Chapman  
Mon., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 354)  
Tues. Adj.-Noon (Rm. 354)  
Wed., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 354)

### **EDUCATION**

Senators Kerr (Chair); Johnston (Vice-Chair); Marble, Renfroe, Scheffel, Todd, Zenzinger

Staff: Rachel Kurtz-Phelan  
Wed., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 356)  
Thurs., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 356)

### **FINANCE**

Senators Johnston (Chair); A. Kerr Vice-Chair); Grantham, Hill, Ulibarri

Staff: Kori Donaldson  
Tues., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 354)  
Thurs., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 354)

### **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

Senators Aguilar (Chair); Newell (Vice-Chair); Crowder, Hill, Kefalas, Lundberg, Nicholson,

Staff: Dave DeNovellis  
Wed., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 354)  
Thurs., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 354)

### **JUDICIARY**

Senators Guzman (Chair); Newell (Vice-Chair); Johnston, S. King, Lundberg

Staff: Hillary Smith  
Mon., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 352)  
Tues. Adj.-Noon (Rm. 352)  
Wed., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 352)

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Senators Nicholson (Chair); Kefalas (Vice-Chair); Balmer, Marble, Schwartz

Staff: David Beaujon  
Tues., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 353)  
Thurs., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 353)

### **STATE, VETERANS, & MILITARY AFFAIRS**

Senators Ulibarri (Chair); Jones (Vice-Chair); Aguilar, Harvey, Herpin

Staff: Julia Jackson  
Mon., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 353)  
Tues. Adj.-Noon (Rm. 353)  
Wed., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 353)

### **TRANSPORTATION**

Senators Todd (Chair); Jahn (Vice-Chair); Jones, S. King, Rivera

Staff: Mistia Zuckerman  
Tues., 1:30-6:00 (Rm. 352)  
Thurs., Adj.-Noon (Rm. 352)

## **DEADLINE SCHEDULE FOR THE 2014 COLORADO GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

January 8	<b>General Assembly convenes.</b>
January 24	Final deadline for introduction of <b>Senate</b> bills, except for supplemental bills recommended by the Joint Budget Committee.
January 29	Final deadline for introduction of <b>House</b> bills, except the Long Bill and supplemental bills recommended by the Joint Budget Committee.
February 3	Final deadline for introduction of supplemental bills recommended by the Joint Budget Committee.
February 6	Deadline for <b>House</b> committees of reference to report House bills introduced on or before the 7 <sup>th</sup> legislative day.
February 13	Deadline for <b>Senate</b> committees of reference to report <b>Senate</b> bills.
February 20	Deadline for <b>House</b> committees of reference to report remaining <b>House</b> bills.
February 26	Deadline for final passage of <b>Senate</b> bills in the <b>Senate</b> .* Deadline for final passage of <b>House</b> bills in the <b>House</b> .*
March 24	Deadline for introduction of the <b>Long Bill</b> in the <b>House</b> .
March 28	Deadline for final passage of the <b>Long Bill</b> in the <b>Senate</b> .
March 21	Deadline for committees of reference to report bills originating in the other house.
March 31	Deadline for final passage in the <b>Senate</b> of <b>House</b> bills.*
April 4	Deadline for final passage of the <b>Long Bill</b> in the <b>Senate</b> .
April 7	Deadline for final passage in the <b>House</b> of all <b>Senate</b> bills.*
April 11	Deadline for adoption of the conference committee report on the <b>Long Bill</b> . Deadline for Appropriations Committee in house of introduction to report bills referred to Appropriations Committee.
April 17	Deadline to introduce resolutions and bills.
April 18	Deadline for final passage in house of introduction of all bills referred to the Appropriations Committee in that house. Deadline for final passage for any school finance bills.
April 24	Deadline for committees of reference in second house to report bills referred to the Appropriations Committee in that house.
April 28	Deadline for Appropriations Committee in second house to report bills referred to it.
May 1	Deadline for final passage in second house of all bills referred its Appropriations Committee.
May 7	Adjournment sine die.

\* All bills in the Appropriations Committee in either house on the day of the asterisked deadline are excluded from the final passage deadline until April 18.

# GOVERNMENT

## JUVENILE JUSTICE

### JUVENILE DEFENSE BILL INTRODUCED

**NEW** **HB 1032 Defense Counsel for Juvenile Offenders (Rep. Kagan; Sen. Guzman) (support)** is a bill that comes from the work of the 2013 Interim Committee to Study Juvenile Defense.

In 1967 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that children have a constitutional right to defense counsel in juvenile court. It would be easy to assume that children would indeed be provided defense counsel when they appeared in court. However, in a 2012 report, the National Juvenile Defender Center found wide disparities in access to and quality of counsel for children in Colorado. The Colorado Juvenile Defender Coalition (CJDC) looked at the data and found that over the past 10 years in Colorado over 40% of children in juvenile delinquency cases had no representation by a defense attorney at any stage in their case. The CJDC also sent observers into juvenile courtrooms around the state. Some of the problems they observed were a lack of a juvenile defense attorney in the courtroom, children waiving their right to counsel without understanding the long term consequences, cumbersome procedures for applying for a public defender, and judges appointing guardian ad litem as a substitute for a defense counsel. The observers also noted that courtroom practices were inconsistent across the state.

The bill addresses these issues by:

- Requiring that the juvenile and his/her parent, guardian, or legal custodian be advised of the juvenile's right to counsel and that counsel will be appointed if the parent, guardian or custodian cannot afford to retain counsel or refuses to.
- Requiring that a juvenile be represented by counsel at the detention hearing or at the first court appearance if the juvenile is appearing as the result of a summons.
- Allowing only the juvenile to waive the right to counsel and listing the conditions

under which the juvenile can do so. The waiver can only be granted if the juvenile made a knowing, intelligent, and voluntary waiver of the right to counsel. In certain cases of serious offenses the juvenile may not waive his/her rights.

- Requiring the court to appoint a public defender to represent the juvenile unless the juvenile has retained his or her own counsel or has waived the right to counsel. If a public defender is appointed to the case, indigence will be determined by the juvenile's assets and income alone.
- Not allowing a guardian ad litem to be a substitute for defense counsel for the juvenile. The role of a GAL is different from that of a defense lawyer.

As of this writing, there is no fiscal note. However, it is expected that there will be one, and it could be large driven by the provision to treat all juveniles as indigent when appointing defense counsel. This is an issue that needs to be addressed and it is our hope that, as the bill progresses, an affordable and fair fiscal solution will be found. However, since juveniles have a constitutional right to counsel, it is up to the state to ensure that they are granted that right. We need to come up with a way to provide that right without bankrupting their families. Paying for an attorney is an expense that can be problematic for many families who are not defined as indigent.

The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee but not yet calendared.

Carla Bennett 303.757.2930



## NATURAL RESOURCES

### WATER

#### THREE NEW BILLS ADDRESS WATER AND DISASTERS

The natural disasters of 2013 brought a myriad of problems for communities to address their water and wastewater infrastructure. The legislature is introducing legislation to assist the affected communities in order to protect human health and the environment. **HB 1002 Water Infrastructure Natural Disaster Grant Fund (Rep. Young; Sen. Jones) (support)** is asking for the creation of a natural disaster grant fund to be directed and administered by CDPHE to award grants to local governments for planning, design, construction, improvement, renovation or reconstruction of domestic wastewater treatment systems impacted in a natural disaster. The bill requests \$12 million to the fund to be distributed in the next 2 fiscal cycles. The bill is assigned to House Agriculture. No date has been set for a hearing.

Related to this issue is **SB 25 Wastewater Treatment Small Communities Grants (Sen. Hodge; Rep. Fischer) (support)**, a bill that came from the interim Water Resources Review Committee, to clarify that severance tax dollars credited to small communities to address water and wastewater needs may be used for domestic wastewater treatment works. The bill also repeals a statute that separately governs the funding through grant making which is already addressed in the bill provisions. This grant program would be administered by CDPHE and for communities of 5,000 people or less. The bill has been assigned to House Agriculture, but no hearing has been scheduled.

**HB 1005 Relocate Ditch Headgate Without Change Case (Rep. Sonnenberg; Sen. Brophy) (support)** amends an 1881 statute to allow the owner of a ditch to relocate the ditch's headgate if changes have been made in the stream preventing the headgate from being used. In 1969 the "Water Right Determination and Administration Act of 1969" required changes of water rights to be adjudicated. The flooding of 2013 disturbed and/or

destroyed many headgates and created new diversions, but did not interfere, per se, with the water users. This is an efficiency move to help many ditch owners address the water distribution of the upcoming season. This has been assigned to House Agriculture but not calendared.

All reported by Jeannette Hillery 303.494.7718

## SOCIAL POLICY

### EDUCATION

#### TAX CREDITS FOR PRIVATE SCHOOLING

**NEW** **SB 33 Income Tax Credits for Nonpublic Education (Sen. Lundberg; none) (oppose)** is a redo of SB 13-69 with minor changes from the original. The bill offers tuition tax credits of one half the state's previous year's per-pupil expenditure (\$3,323) or the cost of tuition, whichever is less, to individuals who enroll a student in a private school or to domestic or foreign corporations that provide a scholarship to a student enrolling in a private school. The bill also includes a \$1000 tax credit for full time home-schooled students or \$500 for half-time. Qualified students must be enrolled for a year in public school prior to enrollment in the private school but will be eligible for the tax credit for as long as they are in school. While there can be no tax credit for both the individual enrolling a child in a private school and the taxpayer that provides a scholarship, there appears to be no indication in the bill that more than one tax credit per student could not be issued to those who provide scholarships for an individual student. Does this mean that six different scholarship providers could receive tax credits and, thus, fully cover the tuition to a \$20,000/year private school?

LWVCO opposed this bill last time around with essentially the same concerns:

- Private school is not clearly defined, leaving questions about whether religious schools are covered by this bill. The Colorado Constitution prohibits use of tax dollars for sectarian purposes.



- LWV has long stood for equity for students, taxpayers and school districts in public education. This tax credit may work well for citizens in neighborhoods where private schools are located and for families that have the resources and flexibility to transport their children to private schools out of their neighborhood; but for those who lack these advantages or for families in rural communities where there are no private schools, this credit is not even an option.
- Accountability is not addressed in this bill. Tax supported public schools, which include charter schools, are held to some account through the common tests that are required by the state. Private-school students are not required to take these tests. Home schooling is lightly regulated in Colorado. Home-schooled students are required by state law to take a test determined by their school district every two years. The score requiring return to public school is the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile.
- One of the consequences of “choice” has been that our schools are increasingly being re-segregated. The LWV believes that economically and racially integrated schools are a key to equal access to education. This bill continues the erosion of a well-integrated public school system.

The bill has been assigned to the State, Veterans and Military Affairs committee.

Sally Augden 303.455.5800

## **HEALTH CARE**

### **EXTENDING CANCER TREATMENT**

**NEW** **HB 1045 Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment (Rep. Primavera; Sens. Aguilar and Crowder) (support)** concerns the continuation of the breast and cervical cancer treatment program. It extends the repeal date by 5 years, facilitates funds transfer from the sale of the breast cancer awareness license plates, and includes language concerning annual appropriation for the program for the next budget year and budget years thereafter. League supports the bill as an extension of advocacy for access to health care.

Introduced in the House on 1/8/14, the bill was assigned to Public Health Care & Human Services and Appropriations.

Carol Pace 303.751.4125

### **ELIMINATING WAITING LIST FOR SERVICES**

**NEW** **HB 1051 Dev. Disability Services Strategic Plan (Reps. Schafer and Landgraf; Sens. Kefalas and Crowder) (support)** addresses development of a strategic plan by the Department of Health Care Policy and Financing (HCPF) for enrolling persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities at the time services are needed and requires annual reporting on the number of persons waiting for supports and services. League supports this bill as part of provision of quality and efficient health care services.

Introduced in the House on 1/8/14, the bill was assigned to Public Health Care & Human Services.

Carol Pace 303.751.4125

### **PEDIATRIC DENTAL BENEFITS**

**NEW** **HB 1053 Consistent Requirements Pediatric Dental Benefits (Rep. McCann; Sen. Aguilar) (watch)** provides the authority for the commissioner of insurance to adopt rules to ensure that the requirements for pediatric dental benefits in health benefit plans offered in this state are consistent regardless of whether a plan is purchased via the Colorado health benefit exchange or outside the exchange. League supports efforts for clarity and consistency in pediatric dental benefit coverage as well as other health care benefit coverage, which this would provide.

Introduced in the House on 1/8/14, the bill was assigned to Health, Insurance & Environment. A fiscal impact note was added on 1/10 which concluded there would be minimal workload increase and no new appropriation to implement the bill.

Carol Pace 303.751.4125

## HIGHER EDUCATION

### SUPPORT FOR HIGHER ED

**NEW** SB 1 College Affordability Act (Sens. Jahn and Kerr; Reps. Garcia and McLachlan) (support). During the recession, state aid to higher education suffered considerably. Higher education support has neither federal nor state mandates, and no obligation to fund rising case loads, as with corrections. When revenues dropped, programs without such protections suffered more than others. State colleges and universities responded with cutbacks to programs and by raising tuition.

SB 1 uses some of the growing state revenues to support colleges and universities. The bill proposes to allocate over \$100 million to financial aid in various forms. These are both need and merit based financial aid programs. Vocational education will also receive increased funds. About \$60 million will go to institutional support directly, both through fee for service contracts and through the College Opportunity Fund, in a sense increasing “per pupil spending” at the state college and university level.

In return, the institutions are limited to increasing tuition by no more than 6%, as compared to 9% increases – or higher if specific plans were approved – that they were allowed by SB 10-003, in 2010. Only Colorado School of Mines did not seek tuition increases over 9%.

League supports this return of state aid to higher education of Colorado students. Education is an essential foundation for a stable and growing state economy. We agree that this is an appropriate spending priority now and for the future. However, we are also concerned that the continued tuition increases far above the rate of inflation may signal lack of prioritization of programs and functions at the institutions and hope to see renewed attention to keeping total costs affordable for students and taxpayers.

The bill awaits hearing by the Senate Education committee.

Christine Watson 303.250.1796

## INCOME ASSISTANCE

### INCREASE AID TO DISABLED

**NEW** SB 12 Aid To The Needy Disabled Program (Sen. Kefalas; Rep. Exum) (support) While waiting to find out if they’re eligible for federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) disability benefits, low income Coloradans can receive help through Aid to the Needy Disabled (AND). The majority eventually get SSI and the state is then reimbursed by the Federal Government. Because of the growing number of AND recipients, monthly payments have gone down from \$238 in 2007 to \$180. The bill would set the monthly benefit at 28% of the federal poverty level, bringing it back to 2007 levels.

The bill has been assigned to the Health and Human Services committee. There will be some fiscal impact as some of the claims undoubtedly would be denied. There is no fiscal estimate as yet.

Julie Leonard 720.384.8421

### IMPROVED SUPPORT TO STAY IN HOMES

**NEW** SB 14 Prop Tax Rent Heat Fuel Grants For Low-income (Sen. Kefalas; Rep. Pettersen) (support in part) Since 1972 the Dept. of Revenue has been administering the PTC rebate program to help low-income seniors with property tax or rent, later extended to people with disabilities and to assistance with energy expenses. An audit completed in August, 2013, found that the system used to determine eligibility and rebate amounts was not being properly updated. Of the participants sampled, 40% were underpaid, 120 qualifying applications were denied, and 483 ineligible applicants were accepted. Several hundred more applications were denied for reasons not established in statute. Outreach efforts have not met the statutory requirements either, and it is estimated that only 37% of eligible Coloradans are receiving rebates to help them afford to stay in their own homes. LWVCO supports the measures in SB 14 to require regular updates of the database, and outreach through development of an electronic form and through the Dept. of Human Services. This is particularly disturbing, since one of the stated

purposes of the Homestead Amendment (passed in 2000 and cutting senior's property taxes in half on first \$200,000 in valuation) was to help seniors stay in their homes as property taxes rose.

SB 14 would also raise the maximum property tax grant from \$600 to \$700 for individuals with annual income of \$6639 or less (\$10,731 for couples). The rebates decrease as income rises until the upper limit of \$14,937 (\$20,163 for couples). LWVCO is

waiting for the release of the fiscal note to see what the increased cost would be. Ironically, the grant amount may well exceed the amount of property tax reduction from the Homestead Amendment when it is funded.

The bill has been assigned to the Health and Human Services committee.

Julie Leonard 720.384.8421

### STATUS SHEET

The Status Sheet is a constantly updated list of bills being followed by Legislative Action Committee members.

New bills are in **boldface**.

S=Support O=Oppose SIP=Support in Part OIP=Oppose in Part W=Watch or Monitor

POLICY AREA	S/H	BILL #	BILL TITLE	S/O	PAGE	STATUS
Education	SB	<b>33</b>	<b>Tax Credits For Non-Public Education</b>	O	8	S-SVM
Health Care	HB	<b>1045</b>	<b>Breast &amp; Cervical Cancer Treatment</b>	S	9	H-PHC
Health Care	HB	<b>1051</b>	<b>Dev Disability Services Strategic Plan</b>	S	9	H-PHC
Health Care	HB	<b>1053</b>	<b>Consistent Requirements Pediatric Dental Benefits</b>	W	9	H-HIE
Higher Education	SB	<b>1</b>	<b>College Affordability Act</b>	S	10	S-Ed
Income Assistance	SB	<b>12</b>	<b>Aid To The Needy Disabled Program</b>	S	10	S-HHS
Income Assistance	SB	<b>14</b>	<b>Prop Tax Rent Heat Fuel Grants For Low-income</b>	S	10	S-HHS
Juvenile Justice	HB	<b>1032</b>	<b>Defense Counsel For Juvenile Offenders</b>	S	7	H-Jud
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