



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER MARCH 2008



REPORT FROM JUDIE HOFFMAN

LEGISLATURE NARROWING THE NUMBER OF BILLS LEFT AND WORKING TOWARD CLOSURE

You have no doubt seen the list of bills that have made the list of major bills that are DEAD or ALIVE. I am pleased that some of the bills that League is tracking are still alive.

STATEWIDE OPTICAL SCAN SYSTEM SIGNED BY GOVERNOR CULVER APRIL 1

By the November 2008 presidential election, all Iowans will be using a secure paper-backed voting system. The national and state league have been working toward this goal for several years. This is a victory for the voters and the League.

HF 2537 BOTTLE BILL

It has been difficult, but with a lot of work and help from Governor Culver, this bill still is alive. However, it is gasping for life. The bill expands the kinds of containers to be covered, keeps the deposit at five cents and raises the fee paid to redemption centers to two cents. It has been sent to the House Ways and Means Committee so we need to contact members of that committee immediately.

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TOP REASONS FOR EXPANDING THE BOTTLE BILL

- Iowa’s environment would have less litter if we had a deposit added to the on the 235 million tea, water and sports drink containers disposed of each year in our state. Deposits provide a disincentive to litter. Cities, counties and the DOT would not have to spend as much money to cleanup roads and streets as they currently do.
- Deposits are completely refundable.
- Deposits are more effective than curbside programs alone. A combination of deposits and curbside programs in 10 deposit states leads to recycling on average, 490 containers per capita per year vs. 191 containers per capita in the 40 non deposit states.



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HOW TO MAKE CONTACT WITH YOUR LEGISLATORS

When you **e-mail** legislators, make sure to include your name and address so the legislator knows you live in her or his district. The generic form of e mail address for legislators is: type the first name, put a period, type the last name of the legislator, then @legis.state.ia.us. Example: Mark.Davitt@legis.state.ia.us Also, you can link with them through the Legislative Web Site at www.legis.state.ia.us .

Phone calls:

Governor’s Office515 281 5211 or email at: contact.igov@iowa.gov
 Senate Switchboard515 281 3371
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- Recovery rates in deposit states are 2 ½ times higher than in states without bottle bills. The present bill keeps 56,407 tons of waste out of landfills annually.
- Deposits are popular. All polls taken in Iowa have shown that the bottle bill is very popular with the people. Deposits make the environment safer. Following enactment of a bottle bill, Kentucky found that glass related sutured lacerations at the emergency room decreased dramatically, dropping by 60%, due to a reduced incidence in lacerations outside of the home.

TAKE ACTION ON ODOR MITIGATION STUDY

One of League's priorities this session was to improve the air and water quality near confined animal feeding operations (CAFOS), but the proposed 5 year, \$28.3 million odor study at Iowa State University wasn't what we had in mind. Even after the study is completed, there are no requirements that CAFOS will have to use bio filters or equipment to meet higher environmental standards than presently required.

A 5 year study of CAFOS was proposed by an interim study committee studying odor from livestock. The League has long been at the forefront of efforts to protect air, land and water resources. We support the preservation of the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem and maximum protection of public health and the environment. **However, our national pollution control and environmental protection position states "waste management, should be considered a cost of providing a product or service". This means the producers should pay for the study, not the Iowa tax payers. Also the information received from the producers will remain confidential. LWVUS supports full disclosure of pollution data.**

TAKE ACTION: URGE LEGISLATORS NOT TO FUND THE STUDY WITH TAXPAYERS DOLLARS. IF THE STUDY IS DONE, IT SHOULD BE PAID FOR BY THE COMMODITY GROUPS. STUDIES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DONE BY OTHER STATES AND COUNTRIES. THESE PLACES HAVE

ENACTED STRICTER REGULATIONS AND CONTROLS AS A RESULT OF RESEARCH. IOWA HAS NOT.

OPEN MEETINGS AND OPEN RECORDS

The League strongly supports changes to open meeting and open records laws. During the summer a study was conducted to look at changes that need to be made in the present law. The Senate committee working on this issue is made up of very knowledgeable legislators, but they have differences of opinion on just how open government should be. The state ombudsman, Bill Angrick's office has received 1,050 complaints or inquires about freedom of information issues in the last four years. One of the questions yet to be decided is whether there should be an increase in penalties and who should do the enforcement.

As an observer of the legislature every day, I find these discussions very interesting in that legislators spend more and more time each year in closed Democratic and Republican caucuses. Also, more and more committee time is spent with both parties caucusing before they actually do their committee work. It is time for more openness under the golden dome in Des Moines as well as in city halls, court houses and at school board meetings.

BILLS WITH DOUBTFUL OUTCOME

VOTER OWNED IOWA ELECTIONS (VOICES) in Ways and Means

It probably isn't correct to say that VOICES died because it is in Ways and Means. While there is some interest in the issue, there is not support among party leaders and the topic has seen no action since last session. It went to Ways and Means last year and is still there, so there is still a possibility of action.

BILLS THAT DIED

WETLAND PROTECTION

A bill to require greater separation distances between CAFOS and city and county owned wetlands came out of committee, but was not debated on the floor.

Many thanks to three special people who volunteer their time to help distribute this newsletter: Selva Lehman, Jeannette Bohnenkamp and Mary Huneke.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.