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ACTION ALERT

Protect House and Senate Budget Amendments!

IN BRIEF

The House and Senate Budget conferees have been chosen and are working now to consolidate the two budget plans that have been passed. The next step will be to get one budget ready to go to the Governor.

The League has been following several critical amendments and we need to encourage the conferees to keep them in the budget.

Please write to the conferees, especially if they represent you, to ask them to keep these line items in the budget.

House Budget Conferees

Luke Torian
Mark Sickles
David Bulova
Betsy Carr
Terry Austin
Robert Bloxom, Jr.

Senate Budget Conferees

L. Louise Lucas
R. Creigh Deeds

Mamie Locke
Jennifer Boysko
Ryan McDougle
Todd Pillion

Write to the Conferees about all of these amendments or just a few.

TALKING POINTS

Voting and Elections

The League has been fighting to keep \$2.8 million from the ARPA money designated for voting improvements in the budget. As you see below this money would be used to upgrade poll books, and election systems in general. This money is vital to keep our election system secure and modern.

Maintain Item 486 - #2

Which redirects the use of \$2.8 million from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds

To the Department of Elections to be distributed to localities via a grant.

Page 198, after line 52, insert:

\$2,800,000 in the second year to the Department of Elections (132) to be distributed to

Localities as follows: (i) \$324,000 for localities that are paper-based and need to implement electronic poll books: and (ii) \$2,476,000 to provide grants to location to upgrade and maintain their systems, if needed, to implement ballot-on-demand systems.

Notwithstanding Item 483.10, Chapter 1, 2023 Special Session I, Acts of Assembly, \$2,800,000 from the amount of funding provided for the Department of Social Services for redetermination and appeals work shall be reallocated to the Depart of Elections pursuant to the preceding paragraph. -

Education

According to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report and the League of Women Voters' extensive two-year Education Equity Study, the state has been deficient in its support of children and public education in Virginia. Twenty-first century students need twenty-first century schools with current technology, educators and support personnel, and up-to-date school construction. Moreover, English Language Learners (ELL) are our fastest growing population in Virginia's schools and need support. We urge you to make education a high priority and would like to support the following budget allotments.

- \$385 million investment in high-poverty schools
- Lifting the support cap
- Increasing teacher salaries by 3.4% each year
- \$95 million to support our English Language Learners
- \$11.1 million for the Community Schools and Community Builders pilot
- \$535 million for school construction via the Literary Fund, reversing the Governor's diversion

Environment

The League is a strong supporter of Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) which not only is beneficial to the environment but brings money into the Commonwealth. This item supports RGGI and the reduction of carbon emissions.

Item 4-5, 12 #1h

The House budget anticipates \$100,000,000 in revenue from RGGI to support lowering energy costs for low-income households and for flood protection. It clarifies the roles of the legislature and the executive branch. It will continue the reduction of carbon emissions from power plants in Virginia.

We support keeping Virginia in RGGI and keeping this money in the budget.

Housing

The League supports increased low-income housing subsidies and homeowner initiatives for low wage workers. (This is also another way that RGGI supports other programs in the Commonwealth.)

Item 102 #27h Item 102 #5s

Increase base budget from \$75 M to \$150 M each year of the Biennium. House budget included \$37.5 million for the Biennium. Senate budget did not include anything. We are hoping for some increase but hope it will be in the \$75- \$150 million range.

Homeownership Initiative for Low Wage Workers

Item 102 #19h Item 102 #12s

Requested \$20 million for the Biennium House budget including \$5 million for the Biennium using RGGI funds.

Remember, you are speaking for yourself not as a member of the League.

Thank you!

Joan Porte
LWV-VA President



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For more information, visit the League of Women Voters of Virginia at lwv-va.org and on social media @lwvva and @leagueofwomenvoters.

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