

## **LOBBY CORPS UPDATE**

The first year of the Lobby Corps has been a busy one! Lobby Corps members reviewed over 60 bills, then chose those that seemed most important, fit within our focus areas, and for which there are established League positions. In addition, Lobby Corps members commented on draft testimony, attended Committee work sessions, and provided important advice. We have a great Corps crew! Thank you all!

The League testified on 13 bills ranging from voter registration and election procedures to term limits, lobbying and legislative ethics. Most of these bills died in Committee, as we had advocated, in general. With one exception, the rest died on the floor.

As of June 11<sup>th</sup>, one bill remains unresolved. LD 1008, which we supported, was the result of a 6-month Presiding Officer's Legislative Study and would have tightened legislative ethics, particularly "conflict of interest" issues, and permitted citizens to file ethics complaints against legislators. Unfortunately, a recent amendment to this bill would completely gut it, merely directing instead that the Ethics Commission report to the Legislature on the number of ethics complaints received in the past.

Beyond these 13 core bills, the Lobby Corps closely tracked 19 other bills to determine how they were resolved. These involved ballot questions and citizen initiative topics, modifying term limits by extending the number of permissible terms, bills to reduce the size of the legislature, and others on topics such as instant run-off voting and the political activities of corporations. In addition, we seriously considered 14 other bills before determining that they were either not within our focus areas, were mere "housekeeping" bills, or were otherwise not of vital interest.

As the legislative session winds to a close in June, the Lobby Corps will embark on new activities. First, we'll do a thorough self-evaluation to increase our impact in the future. Second, we will determine what legislative studies will be conducted this summer and whether any should be monitored by Lobby Corps members. Third, we'll follow what work may be done on any of "our" bills that are being carried over to the next session. Finally, we will monitor rule-making hearings and work sessions by agencies, such as the Ethics Commission and the Secretary of State's office, that deal with issues of interest to the League.

This has been a very busy, interesting session. Thanks to ALL Lobby Corps members for their help. To learn more about the bills we covered or to get involved with our activities: *Suzanne Carmichael, Lobby Corps Director, 348-2791, leaguelobby@gwi.net.*