



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF NORTH CAROLINA**

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Legislative Update for February 20, 2009

The idea of Tax and Budget Fairness is on everyone's mind these days. Our state representatives in the General Assembly are no exception. For this reason, The League of Women Voters of North Carolina will be focusing on this issue during the 2009 Regular Session.

North Carolina legislators are currently facing a \$2 billion dollar deficit for the current fiscal year and may be looking at a \$3 billion dollar deficit for the 2009-2010 fiscal year. Departments across North Carolina have been asked to present to the Governor 3%, 5% and 7% budget cuts across their divisions. We are starting to see these documents circulated through the General Assembly. Budget leaders in the Senate and the House are both expressing deep cuts and no new money for the biennial.

The Senate passed a de facto limit on legislative sessions Thursday, to limit the number of days lawmakers will receive their daily expense reimbursement for food and lodging. The idea has been around for a couple of years, and said to have passed this year to help our state budget and current financial state. The idea is that if legislators don't receive their \$104 a day for expenses, they won't want to stay in session. They would be limited to 135 days in Regular Session years and 60 days in Short Session years. According to "Under the Dome", of the News and Observer, "the bill's chief sponsor, Sen. Rand said he is taking this approach after several attempts to put a limit on the number of days for a session, which the Senate passed in previous years but the House rejected." "If we do not get some control over the length of time we spend here', a Senate majority leader, 'we do damage to the institution of the legislature.'"

We saw a flurry of bills being filed this week after Speaker of the House, Joe Hackney, appointed the House committees last week. Here are a couple bills to keep an eye on in regards to tax fairness. For a complete list of bills filed, please visit www.ncga.state.nc.us.

H 159-Taxpayer Bill of Rights-An act to provide governmental accountability and protection to the taxpayers by limiting increases in the general fund budget, reforming the budget process, establishing an emergency reserve trust fund, and to amend the NC Constitution to establish a general fund expenditure limit. Reps.

Blust, Setzer, Holloway, Cleveland. Ref to the Com on Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House, if favorable, Judiciary I, if favorable, Appropriations on 02/16.

S 87-Taxpayers' Protection Act-An act to impose constitutional limits on the growth of the state budget. Rep. Tillman. Ref To Com On Ways and Means on 02/10.

The League will be sending legislative updates and calls to action during the 2009-2010 Session. This is the fourth update of the session.

For additional information on The League of Women Voters of North Carolina and our policies and partners, please visit www.lwvnc.org.

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