

Issue: Voter Accessibility

Supporting: HB 1745/SB 5668: WA Voting Rights Act
HB 1866/SB 5259: New Tenants VR
HB 1428/SB 5527: 11 Day Registration
SB 5140: Motor Voter Pre Registration
HB 1039: access for voters with disabilities
HB 1724/SB 5344: Prepaid Postage for Ballots

Author(s)/Sponsor(s): Sarah Kohout and Patrick Eckroth

Endorsements:

Proposed Action Agenda Item Title: Voter Access

1) Describe the Issue in two sentences (what is the problem & what is the solution).

Washington State elections are not very accessible, especially to people with marginalized identities and working students, including the processes of voter registration and submitting ballots. By making the voter registration and ballot submission process more accessible to all identities and therefore all students, these proposed bills will provide a lot more opportunity for students' voices to be heard and represented.

2) Please fill out a Strategy Chart. The Strategy Chart serves as an outline of campaign and is intended to be flexible, not binding

3) Please explain briefly how/if this issue meets the following qualifications:

1. Is it winnable?

These issue are winnable, they will just need to be discussed advocated for over longer periods of time like most issues. SBs: 5527 (11 Day VR), 5259 (New Tenants VR), and 5668 (WA VRA) all made it to the Senate Rules Committee in the 2015 Legislative Session-progress from previous years. SB 5140 (Motor VR) is making progress and continues to gain support from legislators and county auditors. Finally SB 5344 (prepaid ballot postage) also made it through the Senate Gov. Operations & State Security committee and was referred to Ways and Means.

2. Does it directly impact and improve students' lives?

All of these issues directly impact and improve students' lives by increasing the ability for their voices to be heard and represented in our government and reducing the costs associated with the process of voting. Since these costs disproportionately affect people with a lower income, like most students and people with marginalized identities, they decrease voter registration and turnout and therefore the representation of these groups.

3. Does it have a clear target?

There is a clear target for each of these different proposed bills.

4. Does it have a clear and realistic time frame?

Yes, there is a clear and realistic time frame for each of the bills next session.

5. Does it have a local/state/federal organizing and lobbying angle?

The Voter Access bills we have listed have a state lobbying angle. The WSA and individual campuses, including WWU, have had some of these bills on their agendas for the past couple years. We have specific targets to lobby and allies who have been supportive in the past.

6. Could students build a diverse campus coalition around this issue?

Students for the past few sessions have been building a coalition around these issues. We have the possibility to continue our coalition with the Vote Coalition into session and work on making voter registration more accessible for students in the state of Washington.

7. Is it likely to be debated and acted upon by the Legislature in the next year?

Yes, all of these bills are likely to be debated and acted upon next session. They've been discussed the last few session and with pressure from stakeholders, the conservation will likely continue.

8. Will it strengthen and expand efforts within WSA?

Each of the voter access bills ensuring more students will be voting in their local, state, and federal elections. By expanding and building our electoral power we will strengthen our legislative power in city halls across the state, Olympia, and in Washington DC.

9. Can you provide background information and the current context of the issue?

SBs: 5527 (11 Day VR), 5259 (New Tenants VR), and 5668 (WA VRA) all made it to the Senate Rules Committee in the 2015 Legislative Session-progress from previous years. SB 5140 (Motor VR) is making progress and continues to gain support from legislators and county auditors. Finally SB 5344 (prepaid ballot postage) also made it through the Senate Gov. Operations & State Security committee and was referred to Ways and Means.

10. What creative and/or innovative tactics could we employ to engage the media and excite new students around this issue

Doing a turn out for what video series to let students and legislators know why voting is important to students, a letter writing campaign to legislators from students about the difficulties of registering to vote and the barriers that prevent students from voting, and pressure from constituents.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, & Opponents	Targets	Tactics
<p>Long term: Get all of the proposed voter access passed and signed into law.</p> <p>Intermediate term: Have them pass out of the Senate Government Operations and State Security committee.</p> <p>Short Term: Have the bills be on WSA Legislative</p>	<p>Western has the Legislative Action Fund, Western Votes, the Legislative Affairs Council, and Representation and Engagement Programs Office</p> <p>Western would have more time to register voters, easier access into the residence halls, and when it came to our GOTV efforts we could encourage young people to mail their ballot if they are unable to get to campus to put it in the ballot box.</p>	<p>Constituents and allies are students, young people, and people with marginalized identities who have historically had barriers to voting or voter registration.</p> <p>Opponents: A few of the Legislators on on the Senate Governmental Operations and State Security as well as Ways and Means.</p>	<p>Primary: Our primary targets are Senator Roach and Senator Benton.</p> <p>Secondary: All of the other members on Governmental Operations and Security Committee.</p> <p>Another secondary target could be Senator Schoesler, the Senate Majority Leader.</p>	<p>Senator Roach and Senator Benton: Have constituents and their families to reach out to the senators about the importance of voter access.</p> <p>This is probably effective for all of the senators.</p> <p>Have WSA and other members of the Vote Coalition have of days of action surrounding Voter Access and the proposed bills.</p>

