

Issue: VOTE

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Endorsements:

2) Please fill out a Strategy Chart.

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

Washington State elections, including the processes of voter registration and submitting ballots, are not accessible, especially to people that have been historically disenfranchised. By making the voter registration and ballot submission process more open and accessible these proposed bills could provide a lot more opportunity for students' voices to be heard and represented.

Motor Voter-HB 1294, SB 5140

This legislation would allow people to pre-register to vote at the department of licensing when they turn 16 and would automatically register them to vote and mail a ballot once they turned 18.

California and Oregon have both implemented these systems in the last year.

Landlord Voter Reg-HB 1866 SB 5259

This legislation would require that landlords provide new renters with a voter registration form, considering people between 18-25, a predominantly student age group, move nearly every year this should help make sure that people can keep their registration up to date.

Voting Rights Act - HB 1745 (ESHB 1745) SB 5668

The Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA) was created to address the systemic exclusion of people of color from the political process. This would provide support to ensure that local elections allow for accurate representation of the district they represent. Recently Yakima, which had up until this election never elected a Latino council member despite 40% of the district being Latino, spent ~\$ 1 million defending their election system against the ACLU and lost.

Extend Deadline-HB 1144 1428 SB 5527

Access for voters with disabilities- HB 1039

Prepaid postage (end poll tax) - HB 1724 SC 5344

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

1. Is it winnable?

These issues are winnable, they will just need to be discussed and 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 conversation 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?

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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.