

**LWVIL Issues Briefing  
January 28, 2012**

**Education Funding Reform  
Claire Flynn McIntyre, Issues Specialists  
Jean Pierce, Issues Specialists**

Legislation monitored and/or acted on by LWVIL In 2011:

SB 7/ P.A. 0008: SB 7 passed to great fanfare in the spring session and was heralded by US DOE Secretary Duncan as a national model. Chaired by Sen. Kim Lightford (D-Chicago), the committee brought all stakeholders to the table and hammered out legislation that changes the way teachers and principals are evaluated and the rules involving tenure, streamlining the dismissal process for poorly performing teachers. It also opened discussion on lengthening the school day and year in Chicago and weakened Chicago teachers' right to strike.

SB 1932: Introduced by Sen. Matt Murphy (R-Palatine) SB 1932 would have established a voucher pilot program for those schools deemed to be failing in Chicago. The bill gained no traction and pursuant to Senate Rule 3-9(b) was referred to Assignments on July 23.

Action: A TFA was sent to League members asking them to oppose this bill.

HB 2984: A similar bill introduced by Rep. Joe Sosnowski (R- Belvidere) would have established a task force to examine the feasibility of a statewide voucher system for schools. The bill gained no traction and did not make it out of committee.

SB 79/ P.A. 97-0152: A bill introduced by Sen. Heather Steans (D-Chicago) proposed a State Charter School Commission. This commission would take over the role of chartering schools. Its decision to grant a charter would override a school district's decision as to whether a charter would be an acceptable addition to their district. In addition, the funding for the charters would come from the school districts where they

were placed. The bill passed and the Commission is now fully appointed and chaired by Greg Richmond,

Action: A letter in opposition to the bill was sent to the sponsors and a TFA was issued asking members contact their legislators asking them to vote no. In November 2011, a letter went to Chairman Greg Richmond explaining the League's position on charter schools and asking several questions about the criteria the commission will use to determine a charter's suitability. A reply was received in December.

HB 1216/P.A. 97-0503: Rep. Linda Chapa LaVia (D-Aurora) introduced a bill to study the Governor's proposed consolidation of schools districts. The bill passed and establishes the School District Realignment and Consolidation Commission to make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly on the number of school districts in this State, the optimal amount of enrollment for a school district, and where consolidation and realignment would be beneficial. The report is due to the Legislature 7-1-2012.

Action: As the League position on school consolidation is minimal, no direct action was taken other than to monitor the bill.

HB 190/ P.A. 97-0624: Roger Eddy (R-Hutsonville) introduced HB 190 as an alternative to vouchers. The bill passed as amended by the Senate. It allows up to 5 charter schools already approved for Chicago to serve the same population in failing or overcrowded schools that the proposed voucher bill would have reached.

Action: The League issued a TFA asking members to support this bill with reservations.

Veto Session: In the veto session, the Legislature allowed the Corporate Personal Property Tax to be used to pay for the Regional Offices of Education until June, 2012. Using these funds as a permanent source was opposed by the cities, counties, and school districts which count on them, even though the ROE portion would represent only a small percentage. During the spring session, a legislative committee will decide how to fund the ROEs after FY 2012 ends.