This session of the legislature has been most unusual, from the closing of the Capitol and Annex because of the COVID-19 pandemic, to the final passage of the photo ID bill when we were not able to advocate in person, to the House voting remotely from their cars or offices with votes texted to members of Leadership on the floor of the House. This has been historic.

Our pleas in mid-March for legislators to focus on the budget and COVID-19 related issues were heeded to some extent after their March 19 sessions. Legislative leaders, after indicating they would continue to meet, recessed on March 19, returned March 25 for one day when they passed budget bills. However on April 13 and 14 they returned to override everything the governor had vetoed including the photo ID bill for voting, and passed several other of their priority bills. They will have stayed home for seven days of their 60-day session. The session won’t be final until the governor decides on additional vetoes. He has 10 days to do that. At this point, with the session closed, any bills passed on those final days cannot be overridden.

The League limited our focus this year to several key bills aimed at protecting the right to vote and assuring a fair an open redistricting process. Summaries of those bills follow.

**VOTER PHOTO ID Bill - Senate Bill 2 PASSED, VETOED, VETO OVERRIDDEN**

*Senate Bill 2*, sponsored by Sen. Robby Mills, requiring a photo ID to vote, passed as a Free Conference Committee Report in both chambers on March 19 and was vetoed by Governor Beshear. We opposed the Senate version of the bill but had been pleased that many of the more egregious provisions had been deleted by the House, but we were not in favor of the changes made by the Free Conference Committee. This was done after the Capitol and Annex had been closed and despite the fact that all state offices that could provide a photo ID had been closed because of the pandemic. As a last resort, we asked all legislators to sustain the VETO. However both chambers voted to override the veto. SB 2 is now law, scheduled to go into effect for the fall general election.

**Felony Disenfranchisement: PASSED SENATE, HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE BUT DIED AWAITING ACTION ON HOUSE FLOOR**

*Senate Bill 62*, sponsored by Sen. Jimmy Higdon, would have put an amendment to the KY Constitution on the ballot in November to allow most persons with felonies in their past, who have completed sentencing, the right to vote. It passed in the Senate in a form we could not support, but passed unanimously in the House Elections Committee with amendments that we fully supported.

**Fair Maps Act – House Bill 326 DEAD FOR THIS SESSION**

*HB 326* sponsored by Rep. Joe Graviss, never got a hearing. League leaders will group to determine our next steps in advocating for an open and fair redistricting process as we wrap up the work covered by our redistricting grant from LWV US.

**COVID-19 Helps PASSED AND SIGNED**
SB 150 includes provisions that allow much more flexibility during the COVID-19 crisis. It has passed both chambers and been signed by the Governor. Summary here. The bill will:

- allow waiver or suspension of KRS Chapter 341 provisions (unemployment insurance);
- permit the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet to seek assistance from the federal government and use other resources to reimburse the unemployment insurance trust fund;
- allow the Governor to provide administrative directives to the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet based on United States Department of Labor guidance;
- require the Department of Revenue to adhere to tax payment requirement changes made by federal authorities and provide the same for comparable Kentucky payment requirements and require that penalties and interest not be imposed for any extensions;
- delete and replace language relating to telehealth services;
- provide when health care providers shall be considered in compliance with Executive Orders and directives related to elective procedures;
- establish immunity for health care providers who in good faith render care or treatment during the state of emergency; provide definitions for "emergent" and "urgent";
- amend language relating to alcohol sales;
- extend deadline for responding to Open Records requests;
- suspend Open Meetings laws to allow for live audio or live video teleconference meetings;
- allow for live audio or live video teleconference for court-ordered counseling and educational classes;
- suspend deadlines for hearings and decisions by local legislative bodies, boards, or commissions relating to land use, planning, or zoning pursuant to KRS Chapter 100;
- suspend deadlines for code enforcement proceedings or hearings arising from or related to KRS 65.8825 and KRS 65.8828;
- provide that a tax district may suspend or otherwise extend applicable deadlines for filing taxable net profit or taxable gross receipt returns;
- establish immunity for businesses that make or provide personal protective equipment or personal hygiene supplies that do not make or provide these types of products in the normal course of their businesses;
- provide that a real-time video teleconference shall be considered in the presence of one another for the purposes of complying with testimony, signature, or notarization requirements;
- suspends requirement to obtain temporary restricted CDL licenses for farm-related services under certain circumstances;
- provide that the State Boards of Medical Licensure, Emergency Medical Services, and Nursing may waive or modify certain laws;
- require the Governor to declare, in writing, the date upon which the state of emergency in response to COVID-19 has ceased

HB 351, a bill related to tobacco taxation, has a recently added-on provision that makes it easier for the Governor and Sec of State to jointly change the time and/or manner of an election in an
emergency. The governor line item vetoed it, but that was overridden, and with an emergency clause added, it becomes law immediately.

**Easy to Vote Bill: DEAD FOR THIS SESSION**

HB 596 sponsored by Rep. Jason Nemes and developed with Secretary of State Michael Adams, was never heard in committee and is dead for this session. The League supported this bill and will promote and support similar legislation in the future. It would have:

- provided voting centers in some situations;
- changed the deadline for voter registration to 21 days prior to the election (now 28 days);
- provided that precinct officers may not serve more than 6 ½ hours in certain situations;
- allowed one voting location to serve more than one precinct.
- allowed children and parents as voters who could request a mail-in absentee ballot in medical emergencies.
- allowed those who cannot vote on election day because of employment conflicts, work as essential personnel, injury or illness of a family member or bereavement may vote absentee.
- extended polling hours from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

In January, the Kentucky League began using MailChimp, a new emailing system, that made our work sending Action Alerts much easier. Thank you for responding to it and for helping make our voices heard in Frankfort during this 2020 Legislative Session.

You helped us make a difference. Thank you.

Cindy Heine  
Mary Jo Rodgers  
Legislative Liaisons