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January 3, 2020

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Empowering all Washingtonians to engage in a more responsible and responsive democracy

In this issue

[Democracy Lobby Day: Register Now!](#)

[Nisqually Tribe Awards Grant to Thurston County League](#)

[Gearing Up for the Legislative Session](#)

[Translating LWVWA's Civics Textbook](#)

[Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy](#)

[Happy New Year, Happy Centennial!](#)

[Shining Light on Digital Political Advertising](#)

[Meet the Washington State Women's Commission and New LGBTQ](#)

[Commission](#)

[LWVWA Calendar](#)



Fix Democracy First Hosting Democracy Lobby Day 2020

January 21, 2020, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Washington State Capitol, Olympia

Are you someone who makes New Year's resolutions? Or someone whose daily life won't change just because the calendar says it's a new year? Either way, we know you're starting out the new year committed to having a positive impact on our society and public policy.

What's one thing you can do *right now* that will have a direct impact on our democracy and, ultimately, other issues that you care about? You can register for [Democracy Lobby Day 2020](#) and join us in Olympia on January 21 to stand up and speak out for issues that will create a more fair, equitable, accessible, and representative government.

What happens at Democracy Lobby Day?

You will hear from legislative leadership and democracy bill champions, who will provide an insider's perspective on how decisions are made in Olympia. You will be trained by professional lobbyists, learn about key bills impacting our democracy, and have an opportunity to network with folks from your community and across the state. We will provide coffee, lunch, and snacks.

Most importantly, you will meet with your own legislators (don't worry, we'll set up the appointments for you) to talk with them about these key bills and why they're important to you as a constituent.

And you will have fun!

Isn't Washington pretty good on democracy issues? What more do we need to do?

It's true, in many ways Washington is seen as a leader on some election issues, particularly voter access. But we still have work to do in **campaign finance**, including **blocking foreign interference** in our elections. We need to **close the revolving door** between legislators and lobbyists, reform **redistricting**, provide **options for more representative election** systems, strengthen **election security**, and improve **access to the ballot** for those released from prison. [Learn more about the bills we'll be advocating.](#)

I'm not sure I know enough to talk with my legislator.

Well, first of all, you do! You will receive training about how to effectively advocate in the legislature, speak comfortably with lawmakers, and testify in committee. You'll also learn a lot about the particular bills you will be advocating for. No need to be an expert on policy. Just bring your passion for democracy and a readiness to learn how to take action!

What about the "Democracy Rocks" I've heard about?



Last year, volunteers painted almost 200 "Democracy Rocks," which were a huge hit with legislators. Some walked down the hall showing them off and comparing theirs with others.

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What do I need to do?

First, you need to [register](#). You will be asked to help defray the cost of the room and your meal. If this is a challenge, payment is not required. We want you to be there whether or not you can pay.

When you sign up, you'll also be asked whether you need overnight accommodations in Olympia the night before the event and if you are interested in carpooling.

Next, invite your family, friends, neighbors, anyone who cares about strengthening our democracy.

Can't I just wait until the last minute to sign up?

We strongly encourage you to **sign up now**. We need to know that you're coming so we can set up legislative appointments, help you with carpools and overnight lodging, and make sure we have sufficient refreshments and materials.

So please [register NOW!](#)

If you have any questions or would like to help with this event, please email [Kathy Sakahara](#).

Nisqually Tribe Awards Grant to Thurston County League

By Sandra Herndon, President, LWV of Thurston County

On December 17, 2019, the LWV of Thurston County Education Fund received a \$2,500 grant from the Nisqually Indian Tribe Charitable and Local Government Program for the League's ongoing [Water Realities Study](#) for 2018-2021. League members working on this study are focusing on the most urgent issues facing Thurston County as it encounters increasingly longer and drier summers, shorter and wetter rainy periods, a growing population, and the prospect of sea level rise. Some of these issues include local streams supporting fewer and fewer salmon and groundwater reservoirs not being sufficiently recharged. The League has been interviewing experts in various city, county, and state agencies about the latest research regarding fresh water in Thurston County as well as the impact of such state water issues as water rights and the [Hirst decision](#).

In 2019, the Thurston County League held five public forums emphasizing different aspects of the water issues, such as water volumes in aquifers and streams, threats to water supplies, the role of various government agencies, and what we can do to protect and improve our resources. Presenters at these forums included David Troutt, director of Natural Resources for the Nisqually Indian Tribe; Kevin Hansen, a hydrogeologist with the Water Resources Division of Thurston County; Maia Bellon, director of the Washington State Department of Ecology; and George Walter, supervisor of the Environmental Program for the Nisqually Indian Tribe. Attendance at the five forums averaged 110, and programs were videotaped for wider distribution. Two more forums are scheduled for March 2020, after which the study committee will prepare and publish its findings.

The Thurston County League is grateful for the support of the Nisqually Indian Tribe in providing this information to the public and enabling the League to be informed and active citizens. Although the final figures for 2019 have not been announced, in 2018 the Nisqually Tribe gave \$2.4 million in funding to more than 190 organizations and area agencies through a competitive application process. Funds are awarded to 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations dedicated to public safety, children's services, community health, cultural preservation, and environmental protection.

The League also wants to acknowledge Paula Holroyde, chair of the water study, as well as steering committee members Karen Fraser, Betty Tabbutt, Karen Verrill, and Sue Bredensteiner.

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Julie Frick, Thurston County League board member, receiving the grant from the Nisqually Tribe at the annual Nisqually Awards banquet (photo by Michael Frick).

Gearing Up for the 2020 Legislative Session

By Ann Murphy, LWVWA Lobby Team Chair

The 2020 session of the Washington State Legislature will convene on Monday, January 13. As always, LWVWA is ready to represent the League and our positions, as well as keep members and supporters apprised of action and progress on bills that the League supports.

Beginning Sunday, January 12, the LWVWA Legislative Newsletter (LNL) will be sent out electronically every Sunday throughout the session. The LNL will bring you updates on pertinent legislation and activities in Olympia as our 13 Lobby Team Issue Chairs advocate on legislation. The newsletter will carry Action Alerts, asking you to send an email message to one or all of your legislators. The newsletter also carries links to the [issue web pages](#) where our Lobby Team will be posting updates. Check out the issues of most interest to you. Those pages are currently being fine-tuned for the start of the session and will be regularly updated.

How can you be part of the Legislative Action?

1. Read the Legislative Newsletter—the goal is to send it out by 11 a.m. every Sunday for the next 60 days.
2. If you do nothing else, please respond to the Action Alerts provided in the newsletter.
3. Follow an Issue that is important to you—you don't have to read all of the web pages; just follow the ones where you have interest/passion.
4. Share the newsletters with others who share the League's progressive public policy goals. Better yet, encourage them to [sign up](#).
5. If you have a strong interest in a particular issue area and want to make a difference yourself, please contact the [Issue Chair](#), listed on each issue page and let them know how you would like to be involved.

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[Ningston](#). Other workshops were held in [Seattle](#), Olympia, and Spokane, providing 275 people with lobbying and legislative information.

LWVWA Civics Textbook Being Translated Into Three Languages

By Karen Verrill, Project Manager, *The State We're In: Washington*



We are pleased to announce that the League of Women Voters of Washington's civics/history textbook, *The State We're In: Washington* (TSWI), is being translated into three foreign languages: Chinese, Spanish, and Japanese.

About a year ago, the Seattle Public Schools received a grant from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Open Educational Resources (OER) department to translate TSWI for use in their Dual Immersion classes.

The Chinese translation is already complete and is [available here](#). OER is currently working on the Spanish version and expects to complete a Japanese translation soon. The original English version of TSWI is [available here](#). All versions of the textbook are shared online by LWVWA at no cost under a Creative Commons license, allowing anyone to access the materials.

Barbara Soots, director of OER, expressed her appreciation to LWVWA for making the digital version available. "It enables projects like [the translations] to happen," she said, "and provides access to the materials to a more diverse audience of students."

Teachers in Seattle's Dual Immersion programs have told us about an added benefit to the translation process: student involvement. They said their students have helped with the translations, which has greatly enhanced the dual-language learners' understanding of English and their engagement in their community.

In January, OSPI will host a webinar to highlight these new resources. We will post a link to this in the *The Voter* when it is available.

Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

By Lunell Haught, LWVWA President



Linchpin—it's what keeps the wheels from slipping off an axle. It's a small piece, but essential.

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important issues. The League has positions on many of them, falling into the categories of natural resources, government, transportation, and social policy.

If you are a member or friend of the League, most likely you are engaged in one or more of these four areas. You share your involvement with many like-minded folks in the issue landscape. Defending democracy and empowering voters are not just issues—they *make up the process of how we decide public policy about those issues*. They tell us *how we decide*, not necessarily what we decide and do. It answers the question, “Who decides who decides?”

This is the League’s unparalleled commitment and service. Democracy is not just “majority rule,” that could just as easily be mob rule. Integral to democracy is an informed electorate and a secure election system. As one of our state legislators once said, “Democracy and voting are the League’s particular space.”

The League’s attention to and relentless presence in empowering voters through access to facts and dialogue is crucial to well-informed and independent-minded voters. This is the linchpin. It includes moderating forums and debates, publishing ballot summaries, hosting ballot parties, producing civics education, and more—all the things League members do to ensure votes are grounded on something other than blind following. This empowerment gives legal authority to the kind of society we want to live in. We work for power *with*, not power *over*.

We defend democracy from the kind of manipulation that passes laws people don’t really want but which make it easy for a person or group to have power over others (such as approving torture to justify confessions). With our commitment to open meetings, public records disclosure, and sometimes painful searches through history, we defend democracy from those who would manipulate public opinion.

Keeping the wheels on the cart—that’s the job of the linchpin called democracy and empowered voting.

Happy New Year, Happy Centennial!



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promises to bring heightened activity among League members and volunteers. But it's much more than that. This year marks two significant historic milestones: the passage of the 19th Amendment granting women the right to vote, and the formation of the League of Women Voters.

We hope you'll take part in many of the local, state, and national celebrations that will mark these centennials. Throughout the year, LWVWA's *Voter* will highlight events designed to educate, energize, and inspire. You can also find a calendar of events and programs (and much more!) at the [Washington Suffrage Centennial website](#).

At the national level, the League of Women Voters has created the "[She is Me](#)" [campaign](#) to "explore diverse stories of women who have shaped past and present progress for voting rights." We hope you'll take a look.

Happy New Year! Here's to a 2020
filled with peace, hope and democracy.

Big Data, Big Dollars: Shining Light on Digital Political Advertising



Transparency in campaign funding and communication is a high priority for the League of Women Voters. We have worked closely with the [Public Disclosure Commission](#) (PDC) since its founding and encourage you to attend their upcoming event, "Big Data, Big Dollars: Shining Light on Digital Political Advertising" on January 16. Details are below.

Special Meeting of the Public Disclosure Commission

Jan 16, 2020 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

Helen Sommers Building

106 11th Avenue SW

Olympia, WA

The meeting, which will stream live on [TVW](#), will examine the growing influence of online political campaigning and how to ensure transparency in this rapidly evolving area. Participants will include national experts, transparency advocates, political consultants, and commercial advertisers. Among the confirmed presenters are representatives of the Campaign Legal Center and the National Institute on Money in Politics, researchers from Washington State University, the University of Utah, and New York University; consultants

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For the latest on event details and speaker lineup, visit the [PDC website](#).

You're Invited! Meet the WA State Women's Commission and New LGBTQ Commission in Olympia Jan. 30

The public is invited to attend an outreach meeting of the [Washington State Women's Commission](#) and the newly formed [LGBTQ Commission](#) in Olympia on January 30:

WHEN: Thursday, January 30, 5 p.m - 6:30 p.m.

WHERE: Office of Secretary of State

WHAT: Learn about the Women's Commission and the new LGBTQ Commission. Enjoy some refreshments and meet the commissioners

The event is co-sponsored by the Washington State Supreme Court Gender and Justice Commission, the Rainbow Health Center, and Debra and Craig Stephens.

NOTE: This is a fragrance-free event. For the health and safety of facilitators and participants, it is important that everyone come fragrance-free to this event. For information on how and why to be fragrance-free, [see this link](#).



Calendar

2020 is the Centennial of women's suffrage in the United States. Events and celebrations are planned across Washington to mark the occasion. It's also the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters. You will find League-related events below. For additional suffrage events across the state see the [Washington Suffrage Centennial website](#).

January 2020

Saturday, January 4—[Action Workshop, Kingston](#) Village Green Community Center, 26159 Dulay Rd NE, Kingston, 9 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Monday, January 13—2020 WA Legislature opens, State Capitol, Olympia

Monday, January 20—LWVWA Board Meeting 3 p.m. - 5 p.m., Olympia

Tuesday, January 21—Democracy Lobby Day, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., State Capitol, Olympia. [Register here](#)

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Friday, February 1—100th anniversary of League of Women Voters

Saturday, February 14—100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters

Saturday, February 14—[League 100 Year Anniversary Gala Celebration, Bellingham](#)

Monday, February 17—LWVWA Board Meeting, Virtual

Thursday, February 27—Special event with Elaine Weiss, author of *The Woman's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*, Center for Performing Arts, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA. More information [available here](#).

April 2020

Thursday, April 2—Exhibit Opening, [VOTES FOR WOMEN: 100 Years and Counting](#), Washington State History Museum, Tacoma, WA. On display through August 30, 2020.

May 2020

May 30—LWVWA Council—location and dates being finalized

June 2020

June 25-28—National LWV Convention, Washington DC

August 2020

Saturday, August 22—LWV of Bellingham/Whatcom County [community celebration](#), marking Women's Equality Day and the passage of the 19th Amendment. Maritime Park, Bellingham, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Saturday, August 22—Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebration hosted by the Washington State Women's Commission and the Washington State Historical Society at the Washington State Capitol, Olympia. Free, daylong event featuring speakers, exhibits, vendors, music and more.



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