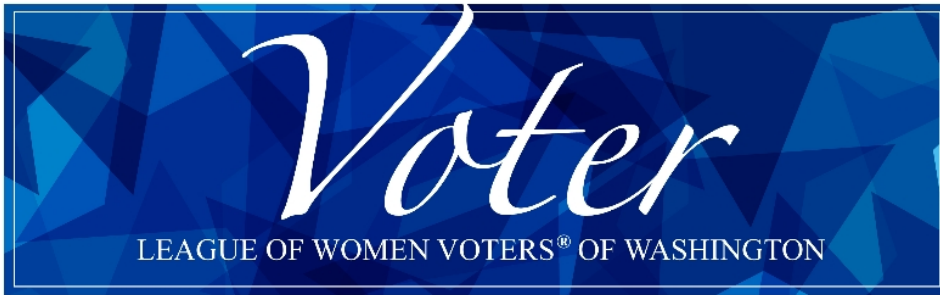


July 3, 2020

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

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League of Women Voters National Convention Roundup

By Lea Galanter, Communications Chair, LWV of Washington

Last week was the League of Women Voters (virtual) National Convention—three days of inspiring caucuses and workshops followed by three days of discussions and voting on the next two years of League work. Forty-three delegates from Washington State represented League members at the convention, participated in debates, and voted on important issues concerning League work.

Virtual workshops Monday through Wednesday of convention week were held on everything from engaging young voters and building trust to the national popular vote and democracy in the criminal justice system. Some sessions also provided important information and details about issues delegates would be voting on. You can listen to recordings of the [caucuses](#) and download convention materials on the [national](#) League website.

Thursday, June 25, attendees were treated to a panel discussion, "Expanding the Vote," with voting rights experts that included Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to President Barack Obama. You can watch the panel discussion on [Facebook Live](#). Friday and Saturday were spent nominating the new board; presenting and adopting proposed bylaws amendments; presenting, discussing, and adopting the proposed national program for 2020-2022, including debating concurrences; presenting and adopting the proposed budget and per-member payment, and presenting awards—and more. A recap of the convention, including motions and vote results, can be found on the [2020 Convention Daily Briefing](#) page on the national website.

The keynote was delivered by CBS Evening News anchor Norah O'Donnell who spoke to the intersection of activism and journalism. The speech is available to view on the [League's YouTube page](#).

League delegates also elected [Dr. Deborah Ann Turner](#) as president of the board of the LWVUS for the 2020-2022 biennium. Turner comes to the League with an impressive resume, as a doctor, attorney, and long-time League member. Her vision for the League includes making VOTE411 a household name; advancing our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work; and embracing intergenerational relationships.



One LWVWA delegate, R. Peggy Smith of the LWV of Thurston County, shared her experiences of the convention:

My two main areas of focus for League work are DEI and criminal justice. I was pleased to see that the bylaws amendment to stress commitment to the DEI policy was right up front. By virtue of being part of the first articles, all Leagues will be expected to follow suit.

It was during the criminal justice pre-convention caucus, and subsequently during the consideration of resolutions, that I was able to see how League process and content really worked together. The caucus content, presented by California Leagues, provided examples of how work done at the state and local levels can really influence governmental policy. And building upon the inequitable impact much criminal justice policy has on Black and other people of color, a resolution emerged. Adoption of that resolution at the convention may address broader DEI impacts as well as guide some League activities. It certainly encouraged me to continue work in these two areas on behalf of the League.

Many Leagues also sold their individual items at a [Wares Market](#), which is still open for the moment. Support your fellow Leagues by buying some of their unique items.

One hit at the convention was the purple [LWV Virtual backgrounds](#) speakers used, which are available to download from the League website.

The national League is still working on a number of follow-up items and will be sharing those over the next few weeks. The LWVWA will also provide more highlights from the convention in the next *This Week in League* on July 17.

Forums, Forums, and Debates

By Liz Kurnitz-Thurlow, LWVWA Debate Steering Committee



Right now, it's just "Forums, Forums" statewide, but add in everything our local Leagues are doing for debates and our plans for the general election, and the headline is certainly true.

We've had to learn to use Zoom for forums. So far, so good. We've gotten used to seeing people in little rectangles, so why not our candidates?

For the primary election, the LWV of Washington and the LWV of Tacoma-Pierce County are presenting the candidates for lieutenant governor on **July 9 at 5:30 p.m.** Moderated by former LWVWA president Kim Abel, you will be able to stream it live on [TVW](#). TVW will also broadcast the forum at a later date and the recording will remain on the TVW website for later viewing thereafter (check the LWVWA website later for the link as well).

It's too late to get your questions in for that one, but it's not too late to submit questions (to forumquestions@lwvwa.org) for the secretary of state forum, which we are co-hosting with the LWV of the Spokane Area. The forum, moderated by Kristi Gorenson of KXLY in Spokane, will stream live on [KSPS](#) and Facebook on **July 16 at 7 p.m.** The recording of this forum will also be available later to view. Please get questions in as soon as possible (the next few days).

We, along with our partner, *The Spokesman-Review*, and local Leagues, are planning multiple debates for the fall. We don't know yet if any of them can be done with an audience, or even with the candidates and moderator in the same room. Stay tuned and look for updates as well on the [LWVWA's Facebook page](#).

For all the forums and debates, we will have links to the LWVWA website, and local Leagues will be able to access a link to share with their members and followers.

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questions make good forums. Good questions might be used multiple times. Please also post question requests on your local website as well as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Solicit questions from all and sundry—and also give out information on how to watch the forums.

The Voter Services committee is led by Mary Coltrane (LWV Seattle-King County), with Mike Bell (LWV Spokane Area), Shelley Kneip (LWV Thurston County), Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow (LWV Tacoma-Pierce County), Judie Stanton (LWV Clark County), and Karen Twedt (LWV Thurston County).

See you on Zoom!

Signature Gathering During a Pandemic: Is Technology the Answer?

By Kathy Sakahara, Democracy Chair, LWV of Washington

The Covid-19 pandemic has upended life in many ways. And we know it is certainly impacting the process of democracy including this fall's elections. It has also made it extremely difficult for a low-budget campaign to collect enough signatures for an initiative to qualify for the ballot. How do we protect the [constitutional](#) "first power reserved by the people" in a no-contact, social-distancing environment?



In Washington and other states, the idea of electronic signature gathering is being explored. Because traditional signature-gathering requires shared pens and paper at large gatherings or busy locations, initiative campaigns across the country have had to suspend their efforts in the name of public health.

[Initiative 1776](#) has been collecting electronic signatures despite the fact that Secretary of State Kim Wyman has not determined whether or not those signatures will be accepted. Crosscut has also published an [article about I-1776](#). It's a complex issue, and courts around the country do not agree. The [Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court](#) ruled that current initiative efforts could utilize electronic signatures. A similar legal challenge in [Arizona](#), supported by that [state's LWV](#) failed. Advocates also do not agree. While electronic signature-gathering would certainly make qualifying an initiative for the ballot easy, does it make it too easy? Or does it help level the playing field for grassroots efforts without deep-pocketed donors?

We anticipate this issue coming up in the next legislative session as well as in the race for Washington's secretary of state. So, what say you? We are forming a discussion group to look at this issue from various perspectives. We will be researching the issue and reaching out to Leagues and other states who have been involved in litigation around this issue.

If you would like to share your opinion, or be part of this discussion group, please contact the LWVWA's Democracy Team Chair [Kathy Sakahara](#).

VOTE411.org Updated for 2020 Primary Election

By Hayley Day, Marketing Volunteer, VOTE411



The updated [VOTE411](#) website, the League of Women Voters' one-stop website for election information, goes live on July 10—a week before ballots are mailed out for the 2020 primary election. Learning about candidates and registering to vote online is even more important during this election, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with people advised to maintain distance from others.

It's easy to use. Starting July 10, visit [VOTE411](#) and type in your address to see a sample of your personalized ballot, including answers from candidates to League questions. You can also register to vote.

Cultivating Civic Conversations



The new online discussion group, [Cultivating Civic Conversations](#) started meeting (virtually) in June, and there's still plenty of time to join. Sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Kittitas and Skagit Counties, this group offers a way to learn how government actually works and see how others have changed the course of our state and nation. In addition to learning, the group seeks to create a virtual community of listeners who in turn will bring these concepts and ideas into their own circles.

The group started meeting weekly through Zoom on June 15 and runs for 20 weeks (through the week of October 19). Participants can choose between morning session on Mondays or evening discussions on Tuesdays. The next session the week of July 6 covers "The Design of Today's Democracy."

The group uses two sources to spark conversation and learning: *The State We're In: Washington*, the LWVWA's acclaimed civics text ([available online for free](#)) and podcasts from On Being's [Civil Conversation Project](#).

For more information, contact [Katherine Murphy](#) or [Wende Sanderson](#).

July 4th National (Virtual) Cookout to "Fire Up the Vote"

The LWV of the United States is proud to partner with the National Historically Black Colleges and Universities Alumni Alliance (HBCUAA) for a July 4th "Fire Up the Vote" virtual cookout! The celebration will feature well-known DJ talent from across the country, LWV videos, and live interviews designed to increase voter awareness and help turn out the vote this year, and lots more!

The virtual party will take place on [Facebook Live](#) starting at 3 p.m. ET/noon PT on Saturday, July 4. If your League partners with HBCU campuses or alumni/fraternity/sorority groups in your area, encourage them to [share the word!](#)

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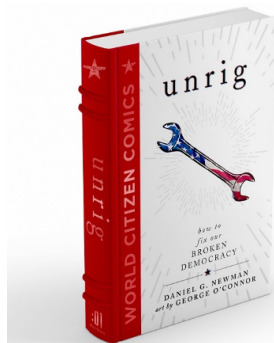
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Unrig: How to Fix Our Broken Democracy Book Launch with Author



Fix Democracy First and the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County are co-hosting the virtual launch of *Unrig: How to Fix Our Broken Democracy* on Tuesday, July 7 at 6 p.m. on Zoom with author Daniel Newman. Newman is a national expert on government accountability and money in politics, and president and co-founder of MapLight, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that promotes transparency and political reform.

Unrig is a nonfiction graphic novel about the role wealth and influence play in American democracy—it exposes the twisted roots of our broken democracy and highlights the heroic efforts of those unrigging the system. The book is illustrated by artist George O'Connor, a best-selling author of graphic novels. Special guest for the evening is Estevan Muñoz-Howard, a program officer working on money in politics reform at the Piper Fund, whose work on the Seattle Democracy Voucher Program is featured in the book. [Registration](#) required.

Calendar

2020 is the Centennial of the 19th Amendment, which granted women in the United States the right to vote. It's also the 100th anniversary of the League of Women Voters. Events and celebrations are planned across Washington to mark the occasions. You will find Washington League history and events [here](#). For additional suffrage events across the state see the [Washington Suffrage Centennial website](#).

Note: In-person events have been canceled across Washington in response to the coronavirus pandemic. For more information about these restrictions, see the [Washington State Department of Health website](#).

July 2020

Saturday, July 4—“Fire Up the Vote” virtual cookout, [Facebook Live starting at 3 p.m.](#)

Tuesday, July 7—Virtual launch of *Unrig: How to Fix Our Broken Democracy* at 6 p.m. on Zoom. [Registration](#) required.

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Thursday, July 16—Secretary of State forum, via [KSPS](#).

Friday, July 17—Start of 18-day Primary voting period (through Election Day). Ballots are mailed out and Accessible Voting Units (AVUs) are available at voting centers.

Thursday, July 23—LWVUS DEI Zoom webinar, 4 p.m. PT, [register](#). Recordings later available on the [LWVUS website](#).

No July LWVWA Board Meeting—Executive Committee will be available for action.

August 2020

Tuesday, August 4—Primary Election

Thursday, August 20—LWVUS DEI webinar, 4 p.m. PT, [register](#). Recordings later available on the [LWVUS website](#).

Saturday, August 22—Women's Suffrage Centennial Celebration, State Capitol, Olympia, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

No August LWVWA Board Meeting—Executive Committee will be available for action.

September 2020

Tuesday, September 22—[National Voter Registration Day](#)

Thursday, September 24—LWVUS DEI webinar, 4 p.m. PT, [register](#). Recordings later available on the [LWVUS website](#).

October 2020

Friday, October 16—Start of 18-day general voting period (through Election Day). Ballots are mailed out and Accessible Voting Units are available at voting centers.

November 2020

Tuesday, November 3— General Election



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