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

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Referendum 90: Sexual Health Education Legislation Faces Challenge

By Ann Murphy, Lobby Team Chair, LWV of Washington

The 2020 Washington State legislature passed, and Governor Jay Inslee signed into law, ESSB 5395, the [Comprehensive Sexual Health Education law](#) requiring comprehensive sexual health education in Washington schools. Opponents of that new legislation are in the process of gathering signatures on Referendum 90, which, if successful, would put the fate of the legislation on the November 2020 ballot by asking voters to decide on the bill.

The LWVWA Board has recognized continued support for comprehensive sexual health education and will provide messages to discourage voters from signing the referendum petition. The referendum petition signature gatherers have until June 10, 2020, to submit 129,811 valid signatures in order to place the referendum on the ballot.

Process Background

Referendum measures are laws recently passed by the legislature that are placed on the ballot because of petitions signed by voters. Petition signatures must be submitted within 90 days of the end of the legislative session in which the bill was passed.

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If a sufficient number of valid signatures are collected, Referendum 90 will appear on the November ballot asking voters to approve or reject ESSB 5395. The LWVWA encourages voting to approve ESSB 5395 to maintain the bill as signed into law by the governor. The following is the wording of the [referendum](#):

Ballot Title

The legislature passed Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 5395 concerning comprehensive sexual health education.

This bill would require school districts to adopt or develop, consistent with state standards, comprehensive age-appropriate sexual health education, as defined, for all students, and excuse students if their parents request.

Should this measure be: Approved Rejected

"Vote for Access" Video Series Launched This Week

By Kathy Sakahara, Democracy Issue Chair, LWVWA



For a hundred years, the core mission of the League of Women Voters has been to expand access to the ballot. Without doubt, we have seen tremendous progress, but our efforts need to continue. From deliberate attempts to suppress voting and requiring citizens to risk illness in order to vote, to systematic barriers that present overwhelming obstacles, we need to be vigilant until every eligible voter has convenient and safe access to the ballot.

One of the communities still fighting for access is people with disabilities, and we are excited about the launch of a video series called "Vote for Access." These five short videos focus on the barriers that many disabled voters still face when trying to vote. This nonpartisan project is produced by [Rooted in Rights](#) and [Block by Block Creative](#), in collaboration with a number of [protection and advocacy agencies](#) across the country. The goal is to push for better resources, funding, and awareness to improve accessibility and outreach for disabled voters.

Each episode showcases a specific issue that directly impacts voters with disabilities: attitudinal barriers, access to information, access to the polls, access to alternative voting options, and voter suppression. The host, [Imani Barbarin](#), introduces considerations that often aren't included in conversations about voting rights. Imani is joined by 16 guests from around the country who speak to their experiences as voters, poll workers, and researchers who can help us understand a better way to ensure equality at the polls.

The series started Wednesday, April 29, and new episodes premiere each week. You can view a trailer on [Facebook](#) or [YouTube](#).

events (likely virtual) to educate advocates about the challenges here in Washington. If you are interested in advocating on behalf of the League around this issue or being involved in planning events, contact kathysakahara@LWVWA.org.

GiveBIG on May 5 and 6

GiveBIG is a program devoted to helping nonprofit organizations throughout Washington State. It's an opportunity to make a tax-exempt donation to those organizations that invest in healing our communities through health and social services, expand our horizons through art and learning, and fight for a more just world.

In this election year, the League of Women Voters of Washington is working hard to register voters, educate voters through nonpartisan and multilingual discussions of ballot issues, sponsor candidate forums statewide, and develop educated future voters with our textbook, *The State We're In: Washington*. We're working to support mail-in voting across the nation and to ensure fair legislative districts.

We're fighting every day to make democracy work for everyone. Please show your commitment to the League and its values and work by [Giving BIG](#) on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 5 and 6.

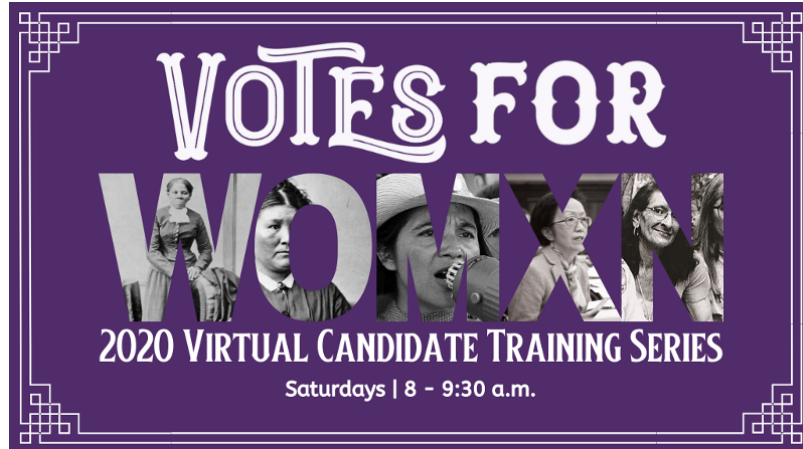


Registering Voters and Helping Every Eligible Citizen Participate in the Electoral Process

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Annually, the National Women's Political Caucus of Washington (NWPC-WA) gathers women leaders from around the state to discuss how to run for office. Each Saturday morning in May and June, from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m., the caucus provides virtual online training in which attendees (and future candidates!) can learn from local campaign experts about campaigning, messaging, fundraising, and more. The fee is \$65 for NWPC-WA nonmembers and \$40 for members. For a list of topics and to register, contact the [NWPC-WA](#).



Film: *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote*

As we watch national developments around the 2020 election, the League is carefully tracking and responding to any attempts at voter suppression. In doing so, it's helpful to reflect on recent examples of deliberate voter suppression. One recent film that documents this is [Suppressed: The Fight to Vote](#), a new documentary about the 2018 gubernatorial election in Georgia that weaves together stories from across the state showing the extensive voter suppression many Georgians faced. In that election, Stacey Abrams fought to become the first black female governor in the United States, a race that she ultimately lost by fewer than 55,000 votes.

Voters in the state faced polling place closures, voter purges, missing absentee ballots, extreme wait times, and a host of voter ID issues—all of which disproportionately prevented students and people of color from voting. The documentary features experts, poll watchers, and voters sharing their experiences of voter suppression, talks about the threat voter suppression poses to the 2020 election, and exposes how our basic constitutional right to vote continues to be under siege in America.

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Trailer for *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote* by Brave New Films.

One viewer had these thoughts after watching the film:

"Unfortunately the reality of voter suppression remains an ongoing issue here in the United States. *Suppressed: The Fight to Vote* clearly illustrates this by highlighting Georgia's 2018 midterm election. The abuse of power is prominently on display with their then Secretary of State Brian Kemp, who was running for governor, but also in charge of Georgia's elections at the time. Manipulating and purging voter rolls, losing registrations, delaying absentee ballots, closing polling locations, and creating havoc on election day were all part of a deeper plan to suppress the vote of black Georgians to influence the governor's race. A blatant example of why our election system needs to be monitored and stronger voter protections enacted."

We want to thank our friends at Fix Democracy First for hosting a recent showing. We encourage you to view this film on your own or to sponsor a virtual event. [Brave New Films](#), the documentary's producer, has multiple ways for you to host a screening. If you decide to host a screening event on behalf of your local League, please let us know so we can help promote it.

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.

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Friday, May 15—Last day to file a declaration of candidacy.

Monday, May 18—LWV of Washington Board meeting, virtual with Zoom, 9:30 a.m. Anyone is welcome to listen and be on the agenda. If you want to be on the agenda please send an email request to president@lwvwa.org by May 10. Email info@lwvwa.org for the Zoom link.

Friday, May 29—Kickoff of LWVWA 2020 Council, meet and greet with state board members, 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., online.

Friday, May 29- Sunday, June 3—LWVWA 2020 Council, online. The complete schedule and descriptions will be sent to all members around the first of May. Details will be posted on the [LWVWA website](#).

The LWVWA state office in Seattle will be closed until the governor reopens office buildings, however, League business can be conducted via internet or phone.

Currently scheduled office closures (staff available for urgent matters only) include:

May 29-June 3 (State Council)

June 23-June 30 (National Convention)

June 2020

Thursday through Saturday, June 25-27—[LWVUS National Convention 2020](#), online

July 2020

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.

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

August 2020

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

Tuesday, August 4—Primary Election

Saturday, August 15—LWV Clallam County Centennial Celebration Finale and Quilt Raffle, Olympic Cellars Winery, 255410 US-101, Port Angeles.

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

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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