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The Voter

MONTHLY UPDATES FROM THE LWVWA

October 13, 2020

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Vote to Approve Referendum 90

By Catherine Ahl, Education Issue Chair, LWV of Washington

signed by the governor in March of this year. The LWVWA recommends a vote to *approve* ESSB 5395.

The bill requires that comprehensive sexual health education be provided twice in grades 6-8 and 9-12, starting with the 2021-22 school year, and once in K-3 and grades 4-5, starting with the 2022-23 school year. The bill states that K-3 instruction must be in social-emotional learning. This could include stranger danger, good touch/bad touch, and using your words instead of your hands.

ESSB 5395 ensures that all students statewide receive age-appropriate information that is medically and scientifically accurate—parents have the right to opt their student out of the class. No child should be left in the dark without the tools and information they need to be safe and healthy. Sexual health education is effective at driving down rates of sexual abuse, unintended pregnancies, and sexually transmitted infections in young people. Making sure every student across our state has access to high-quality sexual health education is an equity issue.

The LWVWA has joined the [Safe and Healthy Youth Washington](#) campaign, so please visit its website and donate or volunteer. Please write letters to the editor of your local newspaper, using any of the information in this article. If you have questions or concerns, contact Catherine Ahl at cahl@lwvwa.org or 360-697-7924.



League of Women Voters of Washington Named Organization of the Year

The League of Women Voters of Washington is honored to be the 2020 recipient of Fix Democracy First's award for Organization of the Year. The award recognizes 100 years of ongoing work by the League to expand democracy throughout Washington and beyond. In 1920, the League of Women

August 26, 1920. It took several decades for all women citizens to be enfranchised despite the passing of the 19th Amendment.

The League's advocacy work has focused on ensuring civics education as a graduation requirement in Washington high schools, securing accurate census counts throughout the state, and educating the public about redistricting so people are prepared to testify to lawmakers about the importance of an impartial, nonpartisan committee to draw legislative boundaries. The League publishes a civics education text (online in five languages), ballot summaries in at least five languages, and hosts statewide office debates with media partners. The League works with Fix Democracy First on mutually important democracy goals.



New Issue Announcement: Public Bank Advocacy for Washington State

By Ruth Fruland, Public Bank Advocacy Committee, LWVWA

In April of 2019, the LWVWA board authorized the formation of a Public Bank Task Force to explore the need for a public bank (PB) in the context of the LWV privatization position. In July of this year, the task force submitted its recommendations to the board, and the board accepted the recommendations at its August meeting.

The proposed motion included the following wording, taken from the task force's [PB recommendation document](#):

Move to adopt the Public Bank Task Force recommendations as a new position in the Privatization section of the Program in Action (page 13) to read:

1. Support the concept and establishment of a publicly owned bank that could provide financial services and broader investment opportunities to state and local governments or

communities for their public projects with lower interest loans and fees. A portion of any public bank profit can be reinvested within the state or the local communities.

2. Support the establishment of a Washington State-owned public bank that could have increased financing capacity to fund or invest in infrastructures for state and local governments. The governments could rely on the PB to fund long-term projects that private investment institutions might shun. The state-owned PB could accept deposits from local governments, and subpolitical governments (e.g., public water or sewage district) could share the investment profits with them.

It is worth pointing out that there has been an ongoing effort for the past nine years by a dedicated group of citizens led by Cindy Cole and John M. Repp, working with state Senator Bob Hasegawa, to pass legislation to create a public bank. Similar efforts across the United States were initiated following the subprime mortgage disaster of 2007-2008. The most recent Washington State PB bill is SB 5995 (2020), to establish the Washington investment trust, was sponsored by Senator Hasegawa and others.

The task force was duly organized under the leadership of Toyoko Tsukuda (LWV of Clallam County) and the members included the LWV of Bellingham/Whatcom County; Stoney Bird and Jean Carmean of the LWV of Seattle-King County; Ruth Fruland and Adele Reynolds of the LWV of Clallam County; and Marcia Radey, Bill Trione, and Margie Whitmore.

The Public Bank Task Force determined that the merits of a public bank are compelling and the potential public service timely. The task force has been reformed and renamed as the Public Bank Advocacy Committee under the leadership of Stoney Bird and Ruth Fruland, with two major objectives: to distribute their work and advocate pre-session with legislators who will be writing next year's legislation, and to create and provide a toolkit of materials and resources to help educate both League members and the general public.

The Public Bank Advocacy Committee will be sending out [fact sheets](#), relevant information, and news stories to local Leagues shortly. It is important to start raising awareness and asking questions of candidates.



Flirt asking citizens like you to vote. (Photo by Mary Schick)

Woman's Best Friend Helps Promote Vote By Mail

For going on nine years, Mary Schick's pup has been mailing holiday greetings—a postcard printed with a photograph of the adorably dressed Flirt sending best wishes for a Happy Halloween, Happy Valentine's Day, or Merry Christmas.

This year, though, friends and family of Flirt, a 10-year-old Cavalier, will receive a reminder to vote by mail, a suitable message coming from Schick, a member of the League of Women Voters of Clark County.

"She sends out 100 Christmas cards and between 75 and 100 Halloween postcards every year, and so I thought, 'Oh, we have to do this for voting,'" said Schick.

Dressed in an official United States Postal Service uniform, Flirt is pictured holding a ballot envelope. The 4-by-6-inch postcard reads #VoteByMail.

Schick said she does postcard drives for other events and with other important messages. With the general election on Nov. 3, it seemed reasonable to encourage family members and friends to do their civic duty in a manner that would keep them safe from the pandemic.

Schick said that despite Flirt's name, she is anything but suggestive. "She is very shy."



Looking for Some Self-Care After the Election? Join a Whistling in the Dark Group!

By Katherine Murphy, LWV of Kittitas County, and Wende Sanderson, LWV of Skagit County

The Kittitas and Skagit County Leagues are co-sponsoring a second round of Cultivating Civic Conversations (CCC) groups beginning November 9. This session is entitled “Whistling in the Dark” and we will be discussing Brad Montague’s book *Becoming Better Grownups* and selected [On Being](#) podcasts. Montague was the creative force behind the [Kid President](#) videos. In his book, he reports on his wide-ranging listening tour with the young and old on how he could become a better grownup. The On Being podcasts offer conversations between Krista Tippett and everyone from astrophysicists to the Dalai Lama about what it means to be human.

We hope the one-hour conversations will help us all navigate the postelection roller coaster, cope with COVID during the holidays, and settle into winter. Each week we will use tips and stories from Montague’s book and the podcast guests to reflect on how we can cultivate greater resilience, develop practices that allow us to constructively tackle new challenges, and get to know others who are also seeking a more grounded foundation. And yes ... how to keep joy and whimsy alive, even in difficult times.

Participants in the first series, which focused on *The State We’re In: Washington* and selected On Being Civil Conversation Project podcasts, said that the groups “help me start and stay with difficult conversations,” “offer a time to be in community,” and “make me think and make me smile.” The groups will meet using Zoom on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. (Pacific Time). Participants can switch between groups as their schedules dictate.



League 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](#).

October 2020

Tuesday, October 6--Superintendent of Public Instruction Debate, hosted by the LWV of the Spokane Area, 7 p.m., Zoom webinar livestreamed on *The Spokesman-Review* [website](#) and on the LWV of Washington [Facebook](#) page.

Monday, October 12--Superintendent of Public Instruction Debate, hosted by the LWV of Tacoma-Pierce County, 6 p.m., aired lived and recorded by TVW. [Register](#).

Monday, October 12--Lieutenant Governor Debate, hosted by the LWV of the Spokane Area, 7 p.m., Zoom webinar livestreamed on *The Spokesman-Review* [website](#) and on the LWV of Washington [Facebook](#) page.

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.

Monday, October 19—Forum with the King County Bar Association on citizen initiative review, judicial review, and quality control, 11:45 a.m.-1:45 p.m. [Registration](#) required.

Monday, October 19 & Tuesday, October 20—LWV of Washington Board Meeting, noon-4 p.m. Email apeloff@lwvwa.org if you would like instructions on how to attend.

November 2020

Tuesday, November 3—General Election

Monday, November 16—Forum with the King County Bar Association on legislative reforms, noon-1:30 p.m. [Registration](#) required.

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OF WASHINGTON

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

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