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The Voter

MONTHLY UPDATES FROM THE LWVWA

June 4, 2021

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Remote testimony processes implemented this year for the legislative sessions have helped more citizens participate in our legislative process and we should keep using them even after the pandemic is over. Recently the LWVWA and the Washington Policy Center published an [op-ed in the Seattle Times](#) asking the state legislature to keep remote testimony processes in the future.

For those with no access to the Seattle Times, the letter is reproduced here in its entirety.

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leadership for the remote testimony processes they established in the challenging legislative session that just ended. That session was historic in its approach to conducting meetings—the COVID-19 pandemic and need for distancing caused the Legislature to build on the prior remote testimony process and add new virtual participation options, with great benefits to both legislators and the public.

While this fully remote session had its share of frustrating moments, the greater than average degree of remote public engagement in the legislative process was a step in the right direction. Full remote testimony along with the ability to send written testimony and sign on as for or against bills without having to travel to Olympia was a clear win for citizens. As a result, tens of thousands of individuals let legislators know their opinions. After initial challenges, the process improved for the most part, allowing citizens to conclude their thoughts within the allocated time and be heard completely.

The opportunities for enhanced engagement extended beyond hearings and into meetings with legislators. Virtual group meetings are impossible when limited to the telephone, and we (that is, the League) were able to organize hundreds of virtual meetings for constituents. People from Eastern Washington and areas north and south of Olympia who would have traveled for hours and a full day or more to testify or meet in person were able to be heard. In the past, it took paid lobbyists to get the attention not available to average citizens. This new method is clearly a gain for our democratic process and for transparency.

We are encouraged to hear that legislators are considering making similar opportunities available in future sessions, and we strongly urge that they do so. We also encourage another improvement for transparency: Make proposed bills and budgets available more than a few hours in advance of the public hearings on them. This includes bill substitutes, strikers and conference committee reports.

While we recognize that producing things like the budget is a complex process—the length and breadth of the topics and funding streams make this highly specialized and sensitive—only paid lobbyists with staff have the opportunity to comment substantively in the current time frames. The Legislature should also finally ban “title only” bills. For citizens to be informed on the bills they are testifying on, much greater transparency is needed for all versions of the proposals. We urge the Legislature to consider revising the timelines for these documents to allow meaningful public participation.

Democracy requires public awareness, engagement and transparent processes. Our legislators want to hear from constituents. The League of Women Voters of Washington and the Washington Policy Center consider full

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advocate employing this type of remote citizen participation in future years.

Lunell Haught is president of the League of Women Voters of Washington.

Jason Mercier is the government reform director for Washington Policy Center, a nonprofit research organization with offices in Tri-Cities, Spokane, Seattle and Olympia.



Happy 102nd Anniversary to the League!

Today, June 4, is the anniversary of the U.S. Senate passing the 19th Amendment in 1919. After the House of Representatives passed the Susan Anthony Amendment to the Constitution two weeks earlier, on May 21, 1919, by a vote of 304 to 89, the Susan Anthony Amendment to the Constitution passed the Senate, 56 to 25.

You can read all about suffrage and the women of the Senate on the [U.S. Senate's website](#). Or visit the [National Archives](#) section on the 19th Amendment, including a link to the "Rightfully Hers: American Women and the Vote" virtual exhibit.

The New York Times's [Digital History](#) section contains a compilation of articles detailing the congressional process surrounding the 19th Amendment (including the details of who voted for and against).



Convention Updates

The LWV of Washington Biennial Convention is in three weeks and the state League is busy at work. The following are key dates leading up to the start of

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- **Tuesday, June 8:** Final day to submit proposed amendments to the Proposed Standing Rules of the Convention via email to [Jean Snider](#), the secretary of the convention.
- **Thursday, June 10:** Final day to submit notice of intent to consider Not-Recommended Program of Work via email to [Linda Benson](#).
- **Thursday-Monday, June 10-14:** Electronic voting on Proposed Standing Rules of the Convention and proposed amendments, if any. Ballots will be emailed on June 10.
- **Tuesday, June 15:** Results of electronic voting on Proposed Standing Rules of the Convention announced.
- **Tuesday, June 15:** Board may vote to change Recommended Program.
- **Thursday, June 17:** Final day to submit amendments to the Recommended Program of Work via email to [Linda Benson](#).
- **Thursday, June 17:** Final day to submit amendments to the Not-Recommended Program of Work via email to [Linda Benson](#).
- **Thursday, June 17:** Final day to submit Resolutions via the [Resolution Submittal form](#).
- **Wednesday, June 23:** Meeting of the Resolutions Committee, 6 p.m.

Voter Services “Be a Voter” Workshop at the Convention

In this workshop, on Saturday, June 26 at 5:30 p.m., we will discuss the progress a group of Leagues has made on our new statewide Be a Voter campaign. We welcome all Leagues to join us and network on this idea. Campaigns work! The goal is to create materials, messaging, and communication ideas and share them freely. We have proposed a caucus to produce a toolkit for Voter Services on Sunday evening after the workshop.



Notes from National

Election Impact Report Reflects League Influence in 2020

In the face of unprecedented hardships and a nation-defining election, League members advocated tirelessly for a fair and safe voting process in 2020. The

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- Fighting for fair voting rules in court.
- Providing people, particularly those in marginalized communities, with voting tools.
- Making [VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org), our voting information hub, available in both Spanish and English.
- Defending the U.S. Postal Service.
- Partnering both with nonprofits like the American Library Association and businesses like Sweetgreen to empower Americans in the electoral process.

VOTE411 Wins Three Telly Awards

The League of Women Voters Education Fund recently announced that [VOTE411.org](https://www.vote411.org), its one-stop shop for election information, has won three [Telly Awards](#), which honor excellence in video and television across all screens.

The awards were given for the following League videos:

- “[Election Information You Need](#)”: Silver Award for Social Video Series: Public Service & Activism
- “[Election Information You Need](#)”: Silver Award for Social Video: Instructional
- “[Six Facts About Voting in 60 Seconds](#)”: Bronze Award for Social Video: Public Service/Activism

“The conditions of the 2020 election cycle required our organization to pivot our work entirely online to reach voters in the digital space, and we are so proud of the video series we produced in both English and Spanish to ensure voters had the information they needed to make their voices heard,” said Sarah Courtney, senior director of communications and digital strategy for the League of Women Voters. “VOTE411 served more than six million voters in 2020, providing updated information on election dates, changes to polling sites, and nonpartisan candidate guides. It was a pleasure to work with our video partner, Vanguard Communications, to build content that resonated with voters and provided them with trusted election information.”

The League Celebrates Pride Month with Rainbow Logos



June is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer+ (LGBTQ+) Pride Month! To celebrate and stand in solidarity, many organizations change their social media avatars (profile pictures) to a version of their logo that incorporates a rainbow.

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community. The League has followed suit by adapting its logo to help celebrate Pride Month.

Learn about the [history of Pride Month](#) from the Library of Congress website.

The League has put together a logo package for social media that includes .png and .jpeg versions of the League's pride logo sized for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. You can use as many of these as you want. The League recommends adding your new logo on June 1 and replacing it with your previous avatar on July 1.

[Download the pride logo package](#)

Remaining Nonpartisan in Hyper-Partisan Times

So many issues today are framed in partisan terms that it can feel impossible to communicate at all without being accused of taking a side. "If you believe this, then you must be a progressive." "If you oppose that, then you align with conservatives." Being painted into ideological corners because of a stance the League takes is not a new phenomenon, but it continues to be one that undermines a vibrant democracy: discussion, discourse, and listening to other points of view are what makes democracy work.

More than 100 years ago, the League of Women Voters of the U.S. was founded to be a nonpartisan voice for American women who wanted free, fair, and open elections, above all else. Our founders believed that voters must always have the facts, no matter how difficult those facts could be to accept, especially when it challenges one's deeply held beliefs about a candidate or political party. Our founders were attacked for taking positions rooted in fact back then, and not much has changed today. League leaders continue to face this challenge and often stand accused of being partisan for our efforts to advance democracy.

A few reminders from the national League:

Issues are not partisan: The League's advocacy work is issued based, and we arrive at our positions after careful study and input from our members in communities across the country. We never derive our positions from politicians, and even when candidates or parties support the same issue, we never endorse them.

Nonpartisan does not mean apolitical: League members represent opinions and positions from across the American political spectrum. What brings us together is our commitment to voter empowerment—especially empowering women voters—and defending democracy. Standing up for these values is not a partisan narrative but a way to advance inclusion.

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changed is the need to defend democracy in the face of voter suppression and the wealth of misinformation that threatens to divide us as a nation and undermine our democracy.

Even though it may be a challenge, especially at the state and local level, we must avoid the appearance of partisanship when publicly addressing racial injustice in this heightened climate. We must stand on the side of justice, even at the risk of being accused of partisanship. It is our moral obligation to demand a more just and equitable world for everyone in our communities.



June 2021

Monday, June 14—Public Forum: Puget Sound Regional Council's Transportation Plan for Vision 2050, 6:30-8 p.m., via Zoom. [Register now.](#)

Thursday, June 24–Monday, June 28—LWV of Washington Convention. [General information](#), including a draft agenda. [Registration now open.](#)

Note: *The Voter* will be on summer hiatus in July and August and will return on September 3.



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