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The Voter

MONTHLY UPDATES FROM THE LWWVA

May 7, 2021

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By Kathy Sakahara, Elections, Voting Rights, and Campaign Finance Issue Chair, LWWVA

What is a Citizens' Initiative Review (CIR)? According to [Healthy Democracy](#), CIR processes “bring randomly selected and representative panels of voters together to fairly and thoroughly evaluate ballot measures and give voters information they can trust.”

The average person does not spend much time deliberating on complex issues such as car tabs, climate protection, or tax policy. Even those of us heavily involved in politics have a hard time figuring out the real-world consequences

reaching and long-lasting ways.

How does CIR help with this? Much like a jury, CIR gives citizens the opportunity to spend the time needed to deliberate on the various questions and concerns that arise from an initiative. At the most recent Democracy Lobby Week, John Gastil, co-author of *Hope for Democracy: How Citizens Can Bring Reason Back into Politics*, gave an overview of how the CIR works and how other jurisdictions have used the process to bring a greater understanding to complex subjects. A [replay of that presentation](#) is available.

The LWVWA is building a coalition to bring this new tool to Washington to strengthen our democracy. [SB 5250](#) has been introduced to the state legislature to establish a CIR pilot program, and the Senate State Government and Elections Committee will hold a work session on it over the legislative interim. We fully expect a hearing in that committee early in the 2022 session. We need to spread the word to build momentum going into next year. Would you like to be on the team building the communications package? We need to create PowerPoint presentations, graphics, videos, and written documents to explain what CIR will do for Washington state. Does this sound like something you would like to help make happen? If your answer is yes, please contact [Kathy Sakahara](#).



The LWVWA Voter Services Committee is presenting a workshop on issues important to carrying out the League's mission of "Empower Voters, Defend Democracy." The Statewide Voter Services Workshop is Thursday, May 13, 2021, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Featured presentations include:

- The Spokane County Auditor, who will explain what we can do that government can't.
- An invitation to join our statewide Be a Voter campaign and learn about the advantages for your League.
- Learning how to shape the questions you submit for your local candidate forums.

You don't have to be a member of the Voter Services team. For more information, see the [LWVWA website](#). [Join us!](#)



By Linda Benson, Membership Development Director

All of the affinity groups are going strong. The Criminal Justice, Health Care, and Responsible Journalism discussion groups have written proposals for our convention Program of Work business in June. Your local delegates will have an opportunity to vote yea or nay on these statewide projects. Much more information will be coming soon on the convention, which is Thursday through Monday, June 24-28. Head to the LWVWA website and register now.

Some of the affinity groups meet monthly and some every two or three months. The most important thing you need to know is that joining one is not a permanent commitment. They are like book clubs, where you can come and go depending on your schedule. The very best thing is that you have emails for members whom you can contact with questions anytime. If you have a topic of interest to you and would like to start a new affinity group, email me, [Linda Benson](#) and I'll help you get started. It will be fun to actually meet in person one day, maybe at the State Council in 2022? It could be an in-person celebration of all the accomplishments that Leagues throughout the state have achieved.

Here's the list of current affinity groups and contact persons:

- **Criminal Justice:** Deb Carstens, dcarstens@lwvwa.org
- **Gun Safety:** Pat Griffith, pgriffith@lwvwa.org
- **Health Care:** Kim Abbey, kabbey@lwvwa.org
- **Membership Development:** Linda Benson, lbenson@lwww.org
- **Observer Corps:** Linda Benson, lbenson@lwww.org
- **Public Bank:** Ruth Fruland, rfruland@lwvwa.org, and Stoney Bird, sbird@lwvwa.org
- **Responsible Journalism:** DeeAnne Finken, dfinken@comcast.net
- **Treasurers:** Myra Howrey, edfundtreasurer@lwvwa.org
- **Webmaster/Communication:** Deloris Irwin, deloreslwv@gmail.com



LWVUS Opposes Voter Choice Ballot

A new proposal for electoral college reform, known as the “Voter Choice Ballot,” has some groups advocating for individual states to enact laws that could unilaterally award their electoral votes to the national popular vote winner. A ballot question would appear alongside the presidential vote, asking if voters “want the candidate who receives the most votes in the nation to become the president?” The votes for those who vote yes on the question, but who vote for someone other than the national popular vote winner, will be transferred to the candidate who won the national popular vote, for purposes of determining the winner of that state's electoral votes. The LWVUS National Popular Vote Task Force opposes this measure. Simply put, this proposal would not make every vote equal, would not guarantee the presidency to the candidate who wins the most votes in all 50 states and D.C., and would not solve the problem of most states and voters being ignored in the general election. We expect to have more information available in the coming weeks. In the meantime, Leagues working on the Electoral College in your states and communities should refer to our [LWVUS National Popular Vote Task Force](#) page.

American’s Well-Being Takes Center Stage at the Civic Health Conference

On April 23 and 24, the LWVUS partnered with VOT+ER and others on a virtual [Civic Health Conference](#), which affirmed civic engagement as a social determinant of health. Social workers, policymakers, nurses, students, academics, and others gathered to discuss everything from the importance of local elections to the power of community organizing. LWVUS president Deborah Turner served as one of the keynote speakers. Her experience as both a gynecological oncologist and a [nationally recognized voting rights advocate](#) made her an ideal speaker on the juncture between health care and democracy reform.

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League Calendar

May 2021

Thursday, May 13—Voter Services Workshop, via Zoom, 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m., [information and agenda](#). [Registration](#) required.

Monday, May 17–Friday, May 21—[Washington Nonprofits Conference](#)

Monday, May 17—LWVWA Board Meeting, noon–3:30 p.m., contact [Amy Peloff](#) to attend.

Tuesday, May 18—LWVWA Education Fund Board Meeting, noon–3:30 p.m., contact [Amy Peloff](#) to attend.

Wednesday, May 19—LWV of Kitsap County Annual Meeting welcomes Keynote Speaker, Washington State Supreme Court Justice Raquel Montoya-Lewis, via Zoom, 12:30 p.m. For meeting information, check the [LWV of Kitsap County website](#).

Tuesday, May 25—Southwest Washington Listening & Mapping Session with Alison McCaffree, 2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. Contact [Judy Zeider](#).

Thursday, May 25—Responsible Journalism Affinity Group, via Zoom. Contact [Dee Anne Finken](#).

June 2021

Wednesday, June 2—Dave's Redistricting Mapping App Training, LWV of Snohomish County, 6 p.m.-7:30 p.m. [Registration](#) required.

Thursday, June 24–Monday, June 28—LWV of Washington Convention, details to come through local League presidents and on the LWVWA website after mid-May.



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