

# VOTER



DONT MISS  
THE  
OCTOBER  
CANDIDATE  
FORUMS -  
DETAILS IN  
THIS ISSUE

## LWVSJ HAPPENINGS

### Immigration & Immigrant Integration SJI Library - September 11th 12pm

Please join us for the September LWVSJ monthly meeting. It will focus on immigration and immigrant integration in San Juan County. The meeting is part of a larger study that is part of the LWVWA program of work for 2023-24. Our league proposed the study and LWVSJ President Susan Martin is chairing the study committee. The meeting will focus on the integration of immigrants and their families along a number of different dimensions.

Speakers include **Yubi Schollmeyer**, the Family Resource Center; **Andrea Hillman**, Friday Harbor High School; and **Sergeant Zac Reimer**, the Sheriff's Department. Among other issues, we will discuss the needs of immigrants and their families, barriers to addressing those needs, and things that can be done to welcome and assist newcomers as well as immigrants and their citizen children who have been here for longer periods.

To join the Zoom Meeting use the following link:  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83364651803?pwd=OUhtWHJJKOFQQUduYU5aS3BUT0NwUT09>

Meeting ID: 833 6465 1803  
Passcode: 498480  
One tap mobile  
+12532158782,,83364651803#,,,,\*498480# US (Tacoma)  
+12532050468,,83364651803#,,,,\*498480# US

## Meeting Dates 2023

Board Meetings	Monthly Meetings
September 6 <i>Special Meeting – Candidate Forums</i>	September 11 <i>Immigration and Immigrant Integration in San Juan County and Beyond</i>
October 2	October 11 and 12 <i>Forums – Orcas &amp; San Juan</i>
November 6	November 13
December 4	December 11 <b>Holiday Luncheon</b>

*All members are welcome to attend our board meetings – please send any board member an email and we will send you the zoom link.*

### September 19<sup>th</sup> is Voter Registration Day!



It's September. That means back-to-school, football season and pumpkin spice everything. It also means as we say farewell to summer, it is time to turn our attention to elections.

This year, civic organizations around the country recognize September 19th as National Voter Registration Day, registering hundreds of thousands of voters in a single day. This year, Leagues will host over 600 registration events and virtual activities in communities nationwide.

#### [Why You Should Celebrate National Voter Registration Day](#) (Blog)

This year, we've seen firsthand how registering people to vote creates a stronger, more representative America. Americans are taking part in our democracy in full force – and now is our chance to make sure they're ready to vote in the sure-to-be historic 2022 midterm elections.

#### [It's National Voter Registration Day!](#)

With each voter we register, we are helping to get as many people participating as possible. Help us make sure no one is left out.

The League works year-round to make sure all eligible Americans – especially first-time voters, non-college youth, new citizens, communities of color, and low-income Americans – have the opportunity to register and vote.

# The SJI League and Media keep the focus on Local News

We are excited to share the following article by Mary Coltrane and Dee Anne Finken that ran in the Salish Current and was also carried by the Kitsap Sun.

The League has published articles outlining the link between the loss of a community’s newspaper with higher government costs, reduced voter participation, reductions in the number of candidates for local office, increased political polarization and less effective public health campaigns

Read more at <https://salish-current.org/2023/08/29/league-chapters-media-keep-the-focus-on-local-news/>

## Observer Corps Update

The success of our Observer Corps has been really exciting. Under Necia Quast’s expert guidance we are now covering many local meetings and receiving very positive feedback from both the public and the local news outlets. Read more:

<https://lwvwa.org/This-Month-in-the-League/13237777?emci=2f748296-6835-ee11-a3f1-00224832eb73&emdi=7e968984-6838-ee11-a3f1-00224832eb73&ceid=10166817>

The Observer Corps consists of League of Women Voters members who regularly attend the meetings of a specific public body, such as a city council, school board, or any other board or commission in the region. They then report back to the League any significant policy discussions or issues of transparency, civility, and process that they observe.

Everyone who signs up to attend meetings and take notes will get guidance on how to do notes and Necia will prepare a monthly calendar of meetings. Please contact Necia at [collquas@netscape.net](mailto:collquas@netscape.net) or 360-370-5502, if you are interested in learning more or in taking part. A complete archive of all Observer Corps notes can be found on our webpage.

Organization	Frequency	When	Time	Where	Virtual	Volunteer
SJI School Board	Monthly	4 <sup>th</sup> Weds	5pm	HS Library	No	S. Bowman
SJI Public Hospital District	Monthly	4 <sup>th</sup> Weds	5.30pm	535 Market St #E	Yes	B. Sharp
Port of FH	2 x Month	2 & 4 <sup>th</sup> Weds	12pm	Yacht Club	No	J. Belcovson
SJI Fire District 3	Monthly	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday	3pm	Mullis Firehouse	No	M. Martin
FH Town Council	2 x Month	1 & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thurs	12pm	Council Chambers	Yes	
County Council	2-4 x Month	Tues/some Mon/Weds	9am	County Office	Yes	

## October Candidate Forums

The League will be hosting Candidate Forums on the following islands:

Lopez Island – October 3 – Grace Parish Hall

Orcas Island – October 11 - The Eastsound Fire Hall

San Juan Island – October 12 – The Grange in Friday Harbor

The General Election date is November 7 and ballots will be mailed out on October 17.

We will be covering contested races on all the above islands as well as presenting pro and con statements on any Propositions on the ballot.

Come out to get to know your candidates!

You can access the full voter information booklet at

<https://www.sanjuanco.com/DocumentCenter/View/28771/2023-Generel-Election-Voters-Guide?bidId=>

## Around the League – State & National Issues The LWV of Washington at Work

What do local news, VOTE411, and an amicus brief filed on behalf of the State of Washington in **State of Washington v. Meta Platforms** have in common? These are all areas where the State League has been active in recent weeks.



### The LWVWA Acts to Protect Voter Access to Campaign Expenditure Information

In August, the League of Women Voters of Washington filed an *amicus curiae* (friend of the court) brief in the Washington Court of Appeals together with two other parties in the case of *State of Washington vs. Meta Platforms, Inc.* (doing business as Facebook). The State sued Meta for violating provisions of Washington's campaign finance laws requiring disclosure of information about political ads hosted on Facebook. LWVWA took this action in

support of the State of Washington because of its long-standing commitment to defending democracy and empowering voters.

Meta has appealed a trial court decision ruling that it violated the law hundreds of times and imposing a penalty of nearly \$25 million. As LWVWA President Mary Coltrane stated, "The League of Women Voters calls upon the Washington State Court of Appeals to uphold the lower court ruling affirming that Meta violated our state's campaign transparency law."

Washington state law requires media platforms that host political advertising—such as Meta-owned Facebook—to retain certain information and respond to public requests about advertising. The League of Women Voters supports full disclosure of campaign finance expenditures so that voters can cast an informed ballot," said LWVWA President Mary Coltrane. "Microtargeting unsuspecting voters with campaign ads that fail to tell who is trying to influence them harms democracy. Finding out who paid for these ads is challenging at

best. Voters, and the journalists that serve them, should be able to readily access information about campaign ads.” she added.

The other parties to this amicus brief include [Fix Democracy First](#), a nonpartisan nonprofit advocacy organization focused on achieving fair elections and government policies that reflect the will of the people, not the power of money. FDF has been working on campaign finance reform to expand transparency and disclose in Washington state for more than 10 years and is a long-standing partner of LWVWA, and co-host of the annual Lobby Week event. Another organization, and the one that wrote the legal brief, is [Campaign Legal Center](#), a nonpartisan nonprofit organization that advances democracy through law at the federal, state and local levels, fighting for every American’s rights to responsive government and a fair opportunity to participate in and affect the democratic process. The third organization is the [Brennan Center for Justice](#), an independent, nonpartisan law and policy organization that works to reform, revitalize, and when necessary, defend our country’s systems of democracy and justice.

Local League Presidents have been provided with background to help them answer questions from members, and additional information about this case is [available on the LWVWA website](#). Please direct press calls to Lyn Whitley, [lyn.whitley@lwvwa.org](mailto:lyn.whitley@lwvwa.org).

The amicus brief asserts that voters are entitled to know who is paying for campaign ads posted on social media; finding out must be possible so voters can cast an informed ballot. News regarding **a local news organization in Kansas** speaks to the importance of keeping local communities informed about what's happening so voters can cast an informed ballot. Finally, Vote411, when it goes live on October 9th, will offer voters a way to learn about candidates' views in their own words. All of these are integral to empowering voters and defending democracy. This is what League does—in these ways and many more!

After hearing about the events in Kansas, the Local News Committee decided an op-ed was needed. Below is the op-ed created by Local News Committee Chair Dee Anne Finken (Thank you Dee Anne!) and sent out to newspapers across the state:

"News of the police raid at the Marion County Record in Kansas on Aug. 11 ignited outrage across the nation. Similarly newsworthy was the announcement by the county’s top prosecutor days later that he had insufficient evidence to justify the search or the seizure of the newspaper’s property or material.

Few of us know much about what happens in Marion County, an hour and a half southwest of Topeka and home to fewer than 12,000 people. The last time national attention focused on that section of Kansas was in 2010, over construction of the controversial Keystone Pipeline.

Condemnation of the raid by news organizations like The Seattle Times and free-press advocates is understandable. But beyond the police action, the events of the past week or so also should remind us of the vital role local newspapers play throughout the country, serving us all.

The county’s oldest newspaper, the Record has seen a number of owners, publishers and name changes in its 154-year lifetime. With a newsroom across the street from the Marion County Courthouse, it provides an accounting of the administration of justice in the region every Wednesday. Both its print and online pages keep readers informed about decisions by elected officials, developments in the schools and the ups and downs of local business, like recent coverage of the 50th anniversary of a local furniture store and an area dairy’s award-winning cheese.

Why does this matter?

In the past 15 years, for a variety of reasons, a quarter of local newspapers nationally have gone out of business; if the trend continues, we'll have lost one-third by 2025. Washington has lost more than a fifth of its local newspapers and more than two-thirds of their newsroom staff members.

Research by the League of Women Voters of Washington as well as by scholars and others tells us local newspapers are critical to healthy communities. "[\*\*The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy\*\*](#)," which the League published earlier this year, along with reports by Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and others, have linked the loss of a community's newspaper with higher government costs, reduced voter participation, reductions in the number of candidates vying for local office, increased political polarization and less effective public health campaigns.

When they are robust and independent, local newspapers also fulfill the vital role of watchdogs, keeping an eye on the work of government and politicians, allowing the rest of us to sleep more soundly.

The League of Women Voters is about defending democracy and empowering voters. Local news is critical to this enterprise."

*Mary Coltrane,  
LWVWA President*

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## Some Legal Trends to Watch in 2023

From January – August 2023, state legislatures nationwide passed various bills into law. While following these developments, the League noticed several important trends. Some laws made voting less accessible, like those requiring photo IDs or limiting absentee ballots. Others restricted women's access to reproductive care and attacked the LGBTQ+ community.

There were also laws that expanded voting rights, restoring voting rights, automatically registering voters, and protecting election officials. Additionally, there was movement on the Equal Rights Amendment at the state level.

Dive into the trends we've seen in 2023 so far to better understand the challenges ahead. <https://www.lwv.org/blog/legal-trends-watch-2023>



### Upcoming Events - LWVWA

#### 9.13 WED | Forests—Climate Solutions! Webinar

Join us to learn about the rare lowland forests on public lands in our state that are subject to logging in the near future. What is their value? How can we preserve them? [Register here](#).

#### 9.13 | WA Secretary of State 2023 Voter Registration Training Webinar

Learn about the guidelines to registering voters, best practices for interacting with the public, Online Voter Registration process, and new SMS text message subscription feature. There are two trainings available—10AM ([10AM Meeting Link](#)) and 6PM ([6PM Meeting Link](#)). No preregistration required. Meeting materials include a [Guide to Registering Voters](#).

## Major Victory in Lawsuit against Texas Anti-Voter Law

*A Judge has ruled in favor of civil rights groups, stating mail-in ballot ID matching provisions of Senate Bill 1 violate federal law*

**AUSTIN, TEXAS** - A federal court ruled late last week in favor of civil rights groups who filed a lawsuit against anti-voter legislation, [Senate Bill 1](#). The lawsuit, filed in 2021 by the [Texas Civil Rights Project](#), [American Civil Liberties Union](#), the [ACLU of Texas](#), [Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#), [Disability Rights Texas](#), and the law firm [Jenner & Block LLP](#), argued that the law's mail-in ballot identification matching provisions violate federal law.

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of the [League of Women Voters of Texas](#), [Register, Educate, Vote, & Use your Power - Texas \(REV UP Texas\)](#), and [OCA Greater Houston](#).

Senate Bill 1 requires mail voters to provide an ID number that matches the number contained in their voter file in Texas's voter registration database, which is riddled with incorrect and missing information. During the 2022 elections, this resulted in the disenfranchisement of tens of thousands of Texans who voted by mail. After reviewing extensive briefing and evidence on the issue, the district court ruled that the matching requirement violates the Materiality Provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because it throws out votes that have irrelevant paperwork errors.

View the summary judgment ruling [here](#). The remainder of the case will go to trial on Sept. 11, 2023, on the group's other challenges to Senate Bill 1, which prohibits certain forms of mail ballot assistance and protected speech.

"All Texas voters should have a voice in democracy, and the court's ruling will help to ensure this," **said Joyce LeBombard, President of the League of Women Voters of Texas**. "The ID matching provisions have continued to harm the voters we serve, and we are grateful the court ruled these anti-voter requirements are unlawful."

"SB1 is a dangerous anti-voter law that threatens our democracy," **said Celina Stewart, chief counsel and senior director of advocacy and litigation at the League of Women Voters of the US**. "The court agreed the law's ID matching requirements disenfranchise voters and the League is proud to stand up and fight against any attempts to suppress voters in Texas and elsewhere in the country."

"This win illustrates what we've long known: Senate Bill 1 violates federal law," **said Zach Dolling (he/him), senior staff attorney, Voting Rights Program at the Texas Civil Rights Project**. "By illegally imposing restrictive mail voter ID matching laws, Senate Bill 1 directly targeted older voters, voters with disabilities, and college students. This victory will help reduce the rejection rate of mail-in ballots, strengthen vote by mail, and ensure Texans are able to make their voices heard at the ballot box."

"Yet another voter suppression provision of Senate Bill 1 fails under federal law," **said Susana Lorenzo-Giguere, associate director of AALDEF's Democracy Program**. "We celebrate this win for Texas's mail-in ballot voters, a voting method preferred by Asian Americans, many of whom are elders and limited English proficient with languages that do not use numerals. The right to vote is fundamental and should not be taken away due to immaterial clerical errors."

"We are very pleased with the district court's decision," **said Alex Trepp, partner at Jenner & Block**. "We are also proud to work with incredible co-counsel to represent these plaintiffs in standing up against attempts at voter suppression."

"We are ecstatic that the court agreed that voters should be able to vote by mail without worrying that their vote will be arbitrarily rejected because of the State's unlawful and flawed

ID requirements,” **said Ashley Harris, attorney at the ACLU of Texas.** “We’ve spoken to countless Texans whose votes were rejected when attempting to comply with the State’s broken ID-matching system – and we are proud to secure this win on their behalf.”

“Tossing out mail ballots and mail ballot applications due to irrelevant paperwork errors undermines voters and democracy, and it also violates federal law,” **said Ari Savitzky, senior staff attorney with the ACLU’s Voting Rights Project.** “This provision had blocked nearly 40,000 ballots or mail ballot applications during the 2022 elections. The court rightly concluded that this mass disenfranchisement was illegal.”

"This ruling indicating SB 1’s ID matching requirements are unlawful per the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is a great victory for voters with disabilities who vote by mail,” **said Bob Kafka, state coordinator of REV UP Texas.** “The ID matching provisions create additional barriers for many voters with disabilities, leaving them with unequal access to the vote. Voting is a precious and fundamental right, and with this ruling, we are a step closer to removing these barriers thereby making it easier for voters with disabilities to vote and to use their power. NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US"

“The court’s ruling last week proves that every vote matters, and that Texas’ SB1 mail-in ballot restrictions are a direct violation of the federal Civil Rights Act,” **said Debbie Chen, OCA-GH.** “This is a win for limited English-speaking Asian American voters; a win for older voters; and a win for voters with disabilities. We are thrilled to see the court’s movement towards ensuring each person’s mail-in ballot is rightly accepted — without SB1’s unnecessary administrative barriers.”



A great way to stay current and involved is to sign up for the Legislative Newsletter from the WA League. This provides a weekly update on key issues in the legislature, including Action Alerts for upcoming votes and information on current activity on major bills. Newsletters come out every Sunday during the Legislative Session. Click here: [sign up for the Legislative Newsletter](#)

### **Join Your Local League!**

Are you passionate about democracy and looking for a community of like-minded people? The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person 16 and older may become a voting member of the League. When you join a local League, you automatically become a member of the state and national Leagues, as well.

The League has many active volunteers and not everyone can be active at different points in their life; but if this is a time that works for you, check out your [local League](#) or [contact the state League](#) office to find out how to plug in. Democracy thanks you!

### **Follow Us on Facebook!**

Follow what local, state and national league are up to at our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVSanJuans>. We are working on our website – stay tuned for updates and check it out at <https://www.lwvwa.org/San-Juan>

**COMING SOON!** Our new website is under construction. We are updating the design and expanding the content. Once launched, we hope you will visit the site to stay up to date on all our local activities.



# Board Members of the League of Women Voters of the San Juan's

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*Nominating Committee: Audra Adelberger, Mary Campanella, Leslie Veirs and Barbara Marrett*

When you join the League, your dues go to three different places: to National League to help support voting rights advocacy efforts; to State League for voter education as well as advocacy for state issues that League supports; and then there are a few dollars left to support our local forums and programs. Below are the different levels of dues payments and the PO Box number. If you choose to give at a higher level than the “Regular” level, the extra money stays with our local League to support our important work here. Thanks for supporting LWV at all levels!

YES! I want to become a member of the League of Women Voters of the San Juan's.

**Name(s)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:

	<b>Regular</b>	<b>Carrie Chapman Catt</b>	<b>Susan B. Anthony</b>
<b>Individual</b>	\$60	\$100 to \$249	\$250 and up
<b>Family</b>	\$90	\$150to \$374	\$375 and up
<b>Student</b>	\$35		

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the League of Women Voters of WA Education Fund and have enclosed a separate check (to LWVWA–EF) in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**PLEASE RETURN TO:** League of Women Voters of the San Juans  
PO Box 784  
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

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