



VOTER

February 2022

www.lwv-bf.org

President's Message ~ Beverly Johnson-Torelli

Happy Valentine's Day to Everyone and Happy 102nd Birthday to League!

February is the month that we commemorate the establishment of the League of Women Voters on February 14, 1920, by Carrie Chapman Catt. Ratification of the 19th Amendment occurred six months later in August at the annual convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association in Chicago, Illinois. Without Carrie Chapman Catt, Susan B. Anthony, Ida B. Wells, Alice Paul, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone and many other Suffragists, the struggle for women's right to vote might have taken much longer or not have been at all. In 2022, as voter suppression efforts take place across the nation, we are reminded to stand united so that all citizens' voices are heard through the act of voting. To have these rights obstructed undercuts our democracy. Traditionally in February, we have celebrated the League's birthday together in-person in a public meeting room where we typically invited a speaker and shared great conversation, food, and laughter. With the advent of COVID and its ongoing variants, we have pivoted to Zoom. We are planning a virtual Table Talk in February, possibly on the 7th to discuss current legislation. An email invitation with the details will go to all members as soon as they are confirmed.

See below: Even though the Program Planning Meeting minutes went to all members by email, they are being included in the February Voter as well. (Reminder: Past and present issues of the Voter can be found on our website www.lwv-bf.org under Publications.)

LWV-BF Program Planning Meeting ~ January 15, 2022

Direction: In the LWV-BF Program Planning Meeting, it was decided that we would carry out National, State and Local Policies and Priorities by holding pertinent Table Talks throughout the year, rather than doing a specific study. If so desired, we can then examine a particular topic in more detail. Although we identified several relevant areas, we also discussed having flexibility as the year unfolds, choosing topics that are of great interest at the moment. It was emphasized that a DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) lens be applied as we examine all of our work. The discussion included pursuing applicable legislation that may occur, either nationally or in WA State in 2022. (LWV-BF members had an opportunity to speak to our WA Legislators during LWV-WA Advocacy week January 25-27. More details are provided in this Voter.)

Making Democracy Work

- Invite personnel from the Benton and/or Franklin County Auditor's office to speak on election processes, security, etc. Benton: Brenda Chilton or Amanda Hatfield; Franklin: Matt Beaton or Rosa Herrera
- The Table Talk on December 2, 2021, featured FairVote WA on Ranked Choice Voting--League will follow any applicable bills in the current legislative session.
- Continue our Civics Ed program for students but expand it to adults, explaining the WA State voting process, how it is secure and emphasizing Why Voting Is So Important. Include short videos, and/or power points, informational articles on how to ensure your ballot is secure, what happens if your ballot signature doesn't match, the time limits on ballots, the locations of the ballot boxes and the local certification process.
- Other Voter Education could include a letter to the editor, using social media or other visuals. Look at the LWV-WA inventory and LWV-WA website for ideas.
- Redistricting--Continue trying to influence fair representation for everyone and educate about the changes.
- Influence legislation for fighting voter suppression and championing the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis VRAA, which restores the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Ensure Quality Health Care for All Americans

- Concentrate on mental health, suicide and COVID issues for adults and students--Invite Michelle Gerber to speak on the Addiction Recovery/Mental Health Facility planned for the Tri-Cities: Ask student members, such as Cassia Vinci, for ideas to get student feedback, perhaps a Table Talk featuring them.

Natural Resources and Climate Change

It was pointed out from some long-term members that the LWV-BF's study on Sustainable (Tri) Cities was used as a reference point for a local group that continues to meet on climate change and environmental issues. It was the last study undertaken by the LWV-BF. Table Talks are certainly appropriate in this area.

The Benton-Franklin League of Women Voters adopted the following consensus position:

The League of Women Voters of Benton and Franklin Counties believes that sustainable practices lead to more cost-effective provision of services, which means a more efficient use of revenue and/or taxes. Sustainable communities attract businesses and people, because of a higher quality of life through reduced energy costs, energy and food security, transportation and recreation options, and a healthier environment.

Media: In addition, it was suggested that we try to get local people more involved by inviting the community or other groups to our Table Talks and other events through media outlets such as the Spanish language newsletter Tu Decides, Tumbleweird, the Senior Times, TV and radio stations, etc. (Sources such as Facebook and the Tri-City Herald weren't specifically discussed in the Program Planning Meeting, as they are regularly used for advertisement purposes. Media partners, such as NWPB also advertise the League's Candidate Forums.)

Related to the topics of discussion on January 15th, several potential **Table Talks** are being planned for February, March, and April. The topics are:

- Bills being brought forward in the current legislative session, which ends on March 10th-A speaker from the LWV-WA will be invited possibly February 7th.
- Voting processes and election security-Brenda Chilton and/or Matt Beaton from the Benton and Franklin Auditors' Offices will be invited.
- Update on the status of the Addiction/Recovery Facility for the Tri-Cities-Michelle Gerber has agreed to speak.

- Climate and Environment-Steve Ghan, nationally recognized climate scientist has offered to speak to community groups.

Additional Table Talk ideas that have been suggested since January 15th:

- Benton Franklin Health District reorganization
- Afghan Resettlement

Please join us for all Table Talks as the details are announced.

Treasurer's Report ~ Shirley Sonnichsen

At December 31 2021:

Checking is:	\$9,151.64
Savings is:	\$1,856.80
Total:	\$11,008.44

Income: \$563.20

We received \$185 in dues and a contribution of \$367.57 from the campaign of Scott Rodgers. He sent a nice note saying the League has carried the torch of Democracy for over 100 years and he has gotten positive feedback for the virtual forums.

Expenses: \$82.44

Paypal fees and reimbursed a member \$75.00 for paying dues twice.

Membership and Dues: We have 86 members including 7 students, 10 second in household members. The National database needs to be updated before the end of January. Our Per Member Payment (PMP) is determined from that database for National and State. We pay \$32.00 per member and \$16.00 for second-in-household to National (LWV-US). We also pay \$19.00 per member and \$9.50 for second-in-household to the State League (LWV-WA). These funds allow them to operate.

Education Fund: At the end of December, the total Washington State Education fund for our Benton -Franklin league is \$4,611.00.

Legislative Action ~ Lora Rathbone

LWV-WA- Lobby Week 2022

The LWV-BF participated in the LWV-WA Lobby Week by meeting with some of our legislators from the 8th and 16th legislative districts. All meetings were held via Zoom. We choose LWV-WA priority bills listed under Making Democracy Work® -

Elections. Read more about them here. <https://www.lwvwa.org/page-18648> Talking Tips for several of these bills were provided for us.

For the 16th LD, Christine Grantham and Leona Hassing met with Senator Schloesler.

For the 8th LD, Beverly Johnson-Torelli, Carla Chiotti, Janet Nail, Peggy Gregory, Polly Parton, JoAnn Bengtson, and Lora Rathbone met with Representative Brad Klippert, and in another meeting, with Rep. Matt Boehnke. It is not too late to add your voice to ours. Just go to <https://lwvwa.org/2022CurrentIssues> and follow directions under the issue updates, or apply to receive weekly advocacy alerts at http://participate.lwv.org/c/9163/p/salsa/web/common/public/signup?signup_page_KEY=7468

Here are the bills and comments from our representatives:

SHB 1156 /SB 5584 Local Options Bill: Gives local jurisdictions up to County Level the option to use Ranked Choice Voting if they choose. Gives people more choice. May be helpful for getting more people to vote, and save money by eliminating unnecessary primaries. Rep. Boehnke said it would be more effective and efficient, and agrees it would save money.

SB 5636 Secure Automatic Voter Registration - Qualified citizens are registered to vote automatically when doing any transaction involving an Automatic Voter Registration agency. This is an improvement bill to last year. More voters would have automatic voter registration, but it also ensures that non citizens don't get registered. Rep. Boehnke said he would support it and wants to be sure it's secure. Thinks it will help stop the misinformation about our voting not being secure.

HB 1618. Establishing restrictions on the possession of weapons in certain locations. Extends existing restrictions on guns in schools and courthouses to include ballot counting centers, college or school campuses, county election offices and voter registration facilities statewide. Weapons are defined as any device, object or instrument intended to be used with the intent to injure.

HB 1630. No Open Carry at Government or Public Meetings. Extends "open carry" restrictions against firearms and other dangerous weapons granted in legislation passed last year that applied to WA State Capitol buildings and grounds to now include government meetings (including school board meetings) and public hearings in a city, town, county or other municipality. It does not apply to military, law enforcement or security personnel at government/public meetings. Rep.Boehnke expressed some support.

Legislative Action ~ Christine Grantham and Leona Hassing

Our meeting on January 26 with Senator Dozier, 16th district was relaxed and friendly. He seemed to be interested and attentive to our concerns. We thanked him for his time and commented that we were unable to schedule appointments with our representatives and we truly appreciated him taking time out of his busy day to meet with us.

Christine gave a brief review of the two Voting Rights Bills 5636 and 5597. When asked if the Senator could comment or support these bills; his reply was that he was unable to make comments because he was not familiar with these bills. He explained that he was not on the committee that would have addressed the bills we were presenting. He suggested that prior to our next meeting in 2023 we should send him a list of the bills we would like to discuss and then, he would have time to peruse them and could be prepared to make comments.

LWV-WA Note: Susan Fleming (Advocacy Director) says all legislators receive a copy of bills that are League priorities.

Presenters' Notes:

Since recent history tells us the topic of voting is an ongoing subject of conversation and is a current issue; having no comment leads us to believe that the Senator is not particularly interested in securing access to the ballot box or expanding voting rights for everyone.

Leona gave a detailed review of Senate Bill's 5584 & 5560

Leona presented talking points regarding Rank Choice Voting.

When Leona asked for any comments or if he would support Rank Choice Voting, Senator Dozier had no reply needing more time for consideration.

Presenters' Notes:

We felt that it was highly improbable that the Senator had not heard about Rank Choice Voting as it was a topic in the last legislative session. Rep. Rude (16th District) has been supportive of it. (2021) We could assume Senator Dozier is not likely to support Rank Choice Voting.

Leona proceeded to speak to Redistricting in detail and before she was finished, he interrupted her to agree with her statement that the Redistricting Commission had appeared to make a last minute and rushed decision when making changes to Pasco Districting.

Before we could continue our discussion, he said he had another meeting and needed to go. I interrupted him to ask if he would be kind enough to assist us in

taking a picture (different computer format) that we liked to post picture of our visit with our legislators)

He then asked his assistant to take our picture. Before he rushed off, we told him again how much we appreciated his taking time out of busy schedule to meet with us.

Civics Education ~ Wendy Espinosa

The Civics Education Committee meets on Zoom, usually once a month, to discuss activities that engage adults and youth in Voter Education and Voter Advocacy. Along with the LWV-WA Civics Committee, an inventory of ideas is being formulated to engage elementary and secondary students on how our government functions and what they can do to Make Democracy Work. Please contact Wendy Espinosa, wkespinosa@comcast.net, if you would like more information on our goals and how to join us in helping people learn more about why their vote counts, how to be active in community government, and what opportunities they have to make a difference.

League of Women Voters Legislative Newsletter ~ Janet Nail

Welcome to the League of Women Voters of Washington Legislative Newsletter! The Washington State Legislature 2022 session opened Monday, January 10. All hearings, meetings, and voting will be virtual again this year. This newsletter is published weekly on Sundays through the legislative session and will provide ongoing updates and avenues to take action. Many hearings are scheduled for the first week, so check the [issue pages](#) for the outlook.

The LWV-WA Lobby Team is poised to take action on relevant bills in our key areas—

- Making Democracy Work®
- Natural Resources and Climate Change
- Social and Economic Policy

See the full 2022 Legislative Issues list below with links to the details and contact data for each Lobby Team Issue Chair. We have a corps of 8 volunteer lobbyists who use League positions to examine, respond to, and inform State League members on proposed legislation. LWV-WA also contracts with Lobbyist Nancy Sapiro to provide logistical and strategic advice.

How to Use this Newsletter

This newsletter will provide future **Action Alerts** on issues where LWV-WA has identified a need for concerted action. These Alerts will provide background information and an editable email sent to your own state Representatives and Senators on bills requiring critical input from the community. Legislators have told us how valuable massive responses are in supporting or killing a bill. Leadership has told us that our emails were the only ones they received on some issues and absolutely made the difference in it passing.

If you find a bill of interest to you or one recommended by an Issue Chair, you may provide written and oral testimony yourself at a Committee hearing. Find suggestions on testimony from the Legislature [here](#). To sign in with your position on a bill, [start here](#). Select the House or the Senate, the Committee, the date and time, then the bill number. Note the instructions along the way. Finally, **the most effective testimony is when you speak for yourself and explain your personal interest in the bill**. The LWV-WA Issue Chair will provide testimony for the League in accordance with League positions and after coordinating with other Issue Chairs.

In the Status and Actions Needed for Legislative Issues section below, you can follow links to our Issue Chairs' updates on the bills they are tracking to either support or oppose, as well as links to our Issue Papers which give a deeper overview into each Issue and what we expect for the upcoming session. You can also [contact an Issue Chair](#) to ask questions or volunteer to help!

Calendar and Events in the final section below will list upcoming legislative process dates, and events you can share and attend.

Getting More Information

Another way to get information is [TVW](#), Washington's public affairs network. The station provides gavel-to-gavel coverage of Washington State Legislature sessions and coverage of the Washington State Supreme Court and public affairs events. And as always, the [Washington State Legislature](#) website has links to helpful legislative information of all kinds.

You are encouraged to [invite others to take action](#) by sharing the Legislative Newsletter [subscription link](#), Action Alerts, and Calendar Events. Expanding the League's impact helps us to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy as a community!

Other Ways to Follow the State Legislature

- Washington State Legislature website, leg.wa.gov.
- Washington State's public affairs TV network, TVW.org

To subscribe go to League of Women Voters of the State of Washington website www.lwvwa.org Click on the About Us category. Here the state league lists their newsletters; click on Legislative Newsletter and there is an online form to complete

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 7, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Table Talk Voting process & Security DATE & TIME NOT CONFIRMED

February 17, 6:00pm ~ Zoom Board Meeting All members are welcome to participate

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