

The League of Women Voters of Spokane Area *The Voter*
February 2024 Issue
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LWVSA Civic Education

Many times we think that civic education is solely for students in K-12 schools. We might remember our own civics class in high school and wonder what is taught now. In Washington State, a semester of civic education is required for graduation from high school, legislation strongly supported by the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) in 2018.

However, civic education is also for adults, for those of us out of high school a few years or a few decades. As adults we learn civics through teachable moments; we learn because we are motivated to learn. League members learn how government works (one definition of civic education) when we study how a bill becomes a state law or how a city council passes ordinances.

Those of us working in voter education must learn Washington State election processes to answer questions about voting deadlines, signatures on the ballot, and the security of our state's mail-in ballot system. From our own learning about elections, we teach others.

On January 6, League members from across the state had several teachable moments by attending the LWVWA Speak-up School. We learned how to research state legislation, write testimony, and possibly testify on legislation. [Speak-up School PowerPoint](#) covers these few hours of instruction and discussion and was preparation for [LWVWA Lobby Week](#) held January 22- January 26.

This article focuses on one part of Speak-up School, how to use <https://leg.wa.gov/>, the comprehensive guide to state-level legislation. While I have used leg.wa.gov many times, until Speak-up School, I had never seen such clear depictions of that website's information. Here were my civic education teachable moments from the LWVWA Speak-up School.

Using leg.wa.gov to look up and connect with my legislators: A few years ago, I was a new member to the League as well as new to Spokane. I was flummoxed at one of my first League meetings when asked to identify myself by legislative district. I had no idea!

This is basic and critical information in a democracy. Who is representing me? How do I contact my representatives? These first two slides should help you "Look up your legislators" and "Connect with your legislators." When we make these connections to send an email or testify, we don't speak for the League unless authorized to do so, but we make

our concerns known as constituents. (The following slides were created by Cynthia Stewart, LWWA Board, Advocacy Chair.)

<https://leg.wa.gov> Look up your legislators

The screenshot shows the Washington State Legislature website. At the top, there is a search bar and navigation links. The main content area includes a sidebar with various links, a central section with news and a table of scheduled hearings, and a right-hand menu titled 'Let Your Voice Be Heard'. Three red arrows originate from the text 'Look up your legislators' and point to the 'Contact Your Legislators' link, the 'Find Member Information/Rosters' link, and the 'Your District & Legislators' link in the right-hand menu.

Interested in helping to improve the Legislature website? We want to hear from you!
We are redesigning our website and want your feedback. We are looking for volunteers to participate in future research. [Start survey](#)

What's happening on the floor?
The Legislature will convene for a Regular Session on January 8, 2024.
[House Floor Calendar](#) | [House Display Board](#) | [Senate Floor Calendar](#) | [Senate Display Board](#)

Please check the [Committee Schedules](#) website for the most up-to-date information concerning individual committee meeting dates and agendas.

Scheduled hearings and floor sessions: 01/04/2024

Committee	Agenda	Date/Time	Location	View Video	Last Updated
JLARC - Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee (J)	Agenda	1/04/2024 10:00 AM	HHR C and Virtual	View Video	12/28/2023
JLARC I-900 Subcommittee for SAO Performance Audits (O)	Agenda	1/04/2024 1:00 PM	HHR C and Virtual	View Video	12/28/2023
Joint Transportation Committee (J)	Agenda	1/04/2024 1:30 PM	SHR 1	View Video	11/20/2023

* Pilot for 2024 Session

Highlights
Legislative Hotline: 1.800.562.6000
ASL Interpretation Pilot for Committee Hearings
For information about the 2024 session pilot program providing ASL interpretation for select committee hearings, see the [Accessibility information](#) page.
[Employment Opportunities](#)
Public Records Requests
For information about submitting a public records request to either the House or the Senate, please follow the links below:
[House Public Records Request](#) | [Senate Public Records Request](#)

Let Your Voice Be Heard
[Contact Your Legislators](#)
Communicate with a Legislator or Participate in a Committee Hearing
[Find Member Information/Rosters](#)
[Accessibility Information](#)
Find
[Laws & Rules](#)
[Your District & Legislators](#)
[Bills](#)
[Committee Meeting Schedules & Agendas](#)
[Audio & Video on TVW](#)
About the Legislature
[House](#)
[Senate](#)
[Committees](#)
[Legislative Agencies](#)

Connecting with your Legislators

The image shows a screenshot of the Washington State Legislature website. The top navigation bar includes "Member Information", "Rosters", "Member Directory Pages", "Member Caucus Home Pages", and "E-mail Forms". The main content area is titled "Member Rosters & Information for 2023-2024" and includes sections for "Members", "Committee Members by Member", "Committee Members by Committee", and "Members by District and Counties". A red arrow points from the "Member Directory Pages" link in the navigation bar to the "Roster of All Members" section. Below this, there is a table titled "Roster of All Members" and "Members of the 68th Legislature 2023-2024".

Member	District	Position	Room	Phone	Email	Legislative Assistant (LA)	LA E-mail	Chamber
Abbarneo, Peter (R)	20	1	JLOB 411	(360) 786-7896	Peter.Abbarno@leg.wa.gov	Word, Catherine	catherine.word@leg.wa.gov	H

Get bill information: Read more about legislation for yourself. It is important to understand the nuances of the legislation that interests you the most. In 2018, I learned that legislation written to support civic education as a high school requirement was not the same as legislation making civic education a high school graduation requirement. The LWVWA pushed hard for that graduation requirement. One word made all the difference in implementation! (Read [Washington State Civic Education History](#) by Catherine Ahl, LWVWA Education Issue Chair).

<https://leg.wa.gov>

Get Bill Information

The screenshot shows the Washington State Legislature website. A red arrow points from the URL 'https://leg.wa.gov' to the 'Bill Information' link in the left sidebar. The main content area features a table of scheduled hearings and floor sessions for 01/04/2024. The table has columns for Committee, Agenda, Date/Time, Location, View Video, and Last Updated. Below the table, there are sections for 'Highlights' including a legislative hotline, ASL interpretation pilot program, and public records requests. A right sidebar contains navigation links under 'Let Your Voice Be Heard'.

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JLARC 1-900 Subcommittee for SAO Performance Audits (O)	Agenda	1/04/2024 1:00 PM	HHR C and Virtual	View Video	12/28/2023
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Check the calendar: The current legislative session, called a short session, is swift; it is over in a matter of weeks. Within this flurry of committee meetings and House and Senate voting, League members work on your behalf in the legislature. These [Issue Chairs](#) speak for the League, write testimony, and testify on priority legislation based on League positions.

You can amplify their voices and testimony by signing up for the [LWVWA Legislative Newsletter](#) and sending your own support for specified legislation, as a constituent of your district. In Speak-up School, we learned that personal stories lend substantial weight to your support of or opposition to any legislation.

<https://leg.wa.gov>

Check the calendar

The screenshot shows the Washington State Legislature website. A purple text label 'Check the calendar' has three red arrows pointing to: 1) the 'Committee Meeting Schedules & Agendas' link in the right sidebar, 2) the 'Scheduled hearings and floor sessions' table, and 3) the 'House Floor Calendar' link in the left sidebar.

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Finally, if you are a new League member, **take in this information in parts**. I am seven years in as a League member, and I know I am still learning. We learn and then we teach others through civic and voter education; this is how we Empower Voters and Defend Democracy.

Check out the LWVSA Webpage for more information:

<https://my.lwv.org/washington/spokane-area/information-voters/keeping-legislature-understand-follow-and-influence-legislation>

Keeping Up with the Legislature: Understand, Follow and Influence Legislation

Today neither distance or weather prevent us from understanding and participating in the legislative process. Citizen engagement keeps government transparent, inclusive, and accountable.

my.lwv.org