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The Voter

MONTHLY UPDATES FROM THE LWVWA

February 5, 2021

In This Issue

(Note: these links may not work in some browsers)

1. [Democracy Lobby Week 2021](#)
2. [What's Coming Up for Voter Services](#)
3. [Observer Corps Tool Kit Available for Local Leagues](#)
4. [Learning to Talk About Race](#)
5. [State Active Transportation Plan Is Rolling—Comments Due by Feb. 15](#)
6. [The History We Were Not Taught: Public Forum on the State's History Through a Racial Equity Lens](#)
7. [Understanding the Growth Management Act](#)
8. [Affinity Discussion Groups](#)
9. [Calendar](#)

Democracy Lobby Week 2021



**Please Join the League of Women Voters of Washington
and Fix Democracy First
February 22-26, 2021**

The pandemic has changed so much about how we go about our lives, and this certainly applies to the legislature. They are conducting all their business this session online, which means we need to change how we lobby. For the last three years, the LWVWA has co-sponsored a Democracy Lobby Day with Fix Democracy First in Olympia. This year's Democracy Lobby event will be virtual and contain programs spread out throughout the week of February 22 through February 26. It will offer all the key components of previous Democracy Lobby Days, but with important and valuable additions.

Register Now

How will this democracy lobby event be like previous ones?

As in the past, we will hear from executive and legislative leadership. Invited speakers include Governor Jay Inslee, Secretary of State Kim Wyman, and Attorney General Bob Ferguson as well as chairs of the committees that deal with democracy bills and leaders of the two Members of Color Caucuses. We will hear from the lawmakers who are championing our priority democracy issues. Once again, Rep. Tarra Simmons has been invited to discuss the Voting Rights Restoration Bill.

Our organizations are also supporting bills this session to expand voting opportunities and empower underrepresented communities, reduce the influence of special interest money, allow for more representative election systems, and protect election security.

Of course, the key component of any lobby event is the actual lobbying, and you will meet with your legislators to advocate for democracy-related bills. The meetings will be set up for you and guidance provided on speaking comfortably with your representatives. Your personal participation has a direct impact!

We have many volunteers already working hard scheduling appointments with

week. [Register now.](#)

We will also set up virtual meetings beforehand for members of your district to discuss strategy. This is a great way to meet others in your district.

How will this democracy lobby event be different than previous ones?

This virtual event makes it possible for anyone with internet access to attend this event. No long road trip, no need for expensive overnight stays. We are taking advantage of the flexibility that this virtual format offers by scheduling optional programs of interest throughout the week.

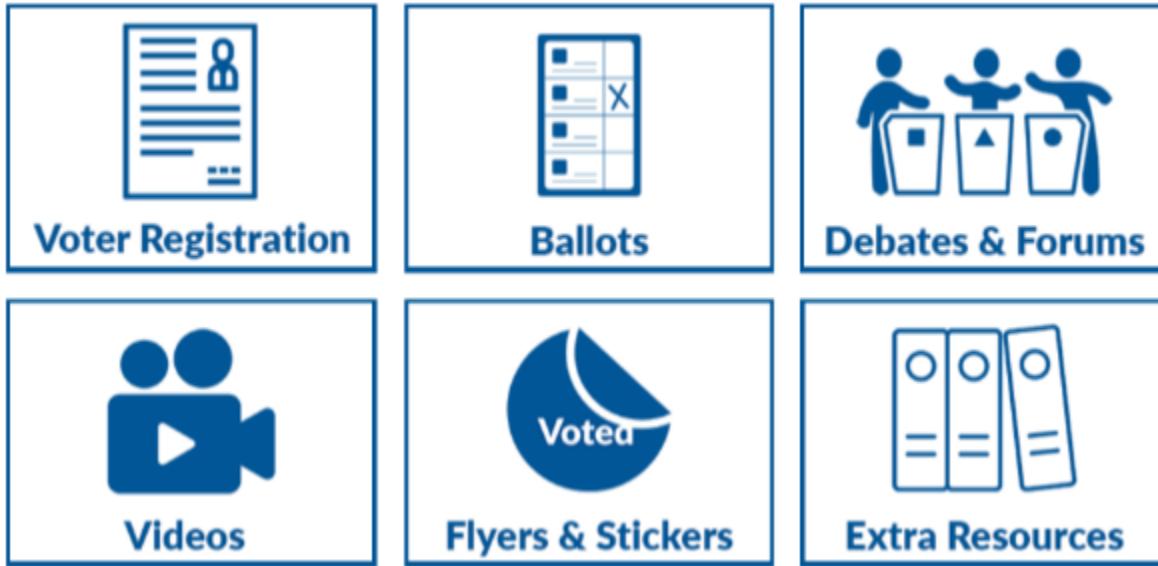
You will have the opportunity to:

- Take a deep dive into the key democracy issues we will be working on this year.
- Hear from national leaders on the state of our democracy issues.
- Discuss how to apply diversity, equity, and inclusion to all advocacy.
- Meet League allies, including leaders from diverse communities.
- Learn advanced lobbying and advocacy skills.
- Network with others from your area.
- Join others to debrief and socialize at a Happy Hour at the end of the week.

All events will be recorded. If you are not sure you can make it to one or more of the events, please register anyway, as we will send links to all who register. A complete itinerary will be available prior to the start of Democracy Lobby Week. Sadly, another difference is that we will not be able to distribute our now-famous Democracy Rocks.



If you would like to make suggestions for optional programs and/or volunteer to help, please contact Kathy Sakahara (ksakahara@lwwa.org) or Cindy Black (cindy@fixdemocracyfirst.org).

[Subscribe](#)[Past Issues](#)[Translate ▾](#)**By Mary Coltrane, Voter Services Portfolio Director**

Now that the elections are over, we have a little time to think about what to do to promote an informed electorate in 2021. We all know this work will be more important than ever and there's much to do. If you would like to serve on a state Voter Services committee, please let me know (mary.coltrane@lwwa.org). This committee will be tasked with developing and implementing the state League voter services program.

What should this program look like? The state League strategic plan calls for enhancing voter services. Board input and oversight is part of the process and is the framework for committee ideas and work. From chatting via email with many local League folks, I know League members have ideas about how the League can most effectively promote an informed electorate. How about you? What are your ideas? Please join me in reviewing some of the ideas already being discussed, and help by adding your ideas:

- Work with local county auditors to get voter information materials translated into other languages.
- Hold a voter services workshop in late April/early May to cover topics of interest to members and the public.
- Plan ahead for simplified summaries of ballot issues—get them done and get them out.
- Update the *Your Vote* tabloid that discusses voting in Washington State.
- Assist local Leagues as needed.
- Other??? What are your ideas and how can we get them in the hopper and out into the community?

It's been a great pleasure and honor for me to work in voter services over the last three years. I've been joined at various times by a host of folks and I thank them all. A committee can solidify this important work by creating an ongoing

work is worth the effort, please contact me today. I'll send out a Doodle to find a time that works for most and we can get started!



Observer Corps Tool Kit Available for Local Leagues

The League has a long tradition of being the “public’s eyes and ears” in governmental meetings. The League’s fight to secure the right for the [public to be included in meetings](#) is important, and being present reinforces how seriously the public takes these meetings. A growing number of League members have become invaluable for keeping track of important issues and their impact as they develop. Among the benefits of having a League observer is that deliberative bodies tend to be a little more conscientious when making decisions (especially about money) when someone is present, League members become more engaged with their communities, and civic knowledge is spread.

The LWV of Pullman Observer Corps leader Judy Stone accepted her League’s Community Award (2019) and subsequently worked with Heather Kelly (LWV of Seattle-King County) and Lunell Haught (LWV of Washington) to gather Observer Corps documents from local Leagues and consolidate them into a tool kit—just in time to increase awareness of the importance of this role. The kit is available in the members-only section of the [LWWA website](#), ready to be adapted to local needs. Although the documents haven’t been finalized and will be updated, local Leagues can start using them now to inform how they can develop and manage an Observer Corps.

Zoom meetings provide a greater opportunity for people to watch in the convenience of their own space. Being an Observer Corps member is an excellent and opportunity for new members as well as veterans. It requires no speaking, just observing, and letting others know what happened by using a report system designed by and for local Leagues. The influences about how our

their communities and inform Leagues about how they can influence those decisions.

Learning to Talk About Race

By Katherine Murphy, LWV of Kittitas County



The topic for the next session of Cultivating Civic Conversations (CCC) will be “Learning to Talk About Race,” and begins Monday, March 1, with two sessions, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. The 13-week conversational journey will focus on Ijeoma Oluo’s best-selling book, *So You Want to Talk About Race*. Each week we will tackle the questions she so generously asks and answers through the lens of her lived experience and extensive research. In the introduction, she writes: “These conversations will not be easy, but they will get easier over time. We have to commit to the process if we want to address race, racism, and racial oppression in our society.” To get a taste of her style, candor, and grace, check out this May 2018 “In My Humble Opinion” segment from the *PBS NewsHour*: https://youtu.be/WL5Vip_G4Zc.

We pair her chapters with podcasts from *On Being* with Krista Tippett (<https://onbeing.org/our-story/>) and *All Ears* with Abigail Disney (<https://www.forkfilms.com/all-ears/>). We listen to podcasts for two reasons. First, we get to hear thoughtful conversation on civic engagement modeled well. Second, we access a large array of voices and resources that paint the expansive landscape of nuance, historical context, and challenges that race poses in our society.

During the hour-long Zoom sessions, participants discuss the question(s) of the week in large groups, small groups, and dyads. In the dyads, participants tell a story about how this week’s topic intersects with their lives. The dyads are a time to practice listening and storytelling—both are critical to becoming a more skillful communicator. We adapt methods and tools used by the educational nonprofit Facing History and Ourselves (<https://www.facinghistory.org>) to create storytelling prompts that help us see our lives, biases, and values more clearly.

Katherine Murphy (Kittitas County League) and Wende Sanderson (Skagit County League) created the CCC program to meet the needs of many League

because we believe that it is easier to learn, grow, and thrive in community of learners. CCC has five goals for each session:

- Increase understanding of historical context and governmental structures
- Encourage and expand the individual's civic engagement
- Share new tools, information, methods, and ideas
- Cultivate and expand communication skills in community
- Nurture humor, insight, joy, and perspective

Participants have the option of attending either of the two Monday sessions as well as the option of following the discussion virtually through Sutra, an online conversation platform that we are piloting with this new session. For more information and to participate, email Katherine Murphy at kbmurphy@lwvwa.org



State Active Transportation Plan Is Rolling—Comments Due by Feb. 15

Every Washingtonian uses active transportation connections at some point in a trip, whether crossing the street from their parking spot to their destination, walking to a bus stop, or bicycling to school or work. That is why the Washington State Department of Transportation is asking for comments on its draft of the new *State Active Transportation Plan, 2020 and Beyond*.

The draft plan assesses the needs for accessible pedestrian and bicyclist facilities, highlights safety concerns, and provides the first ever examination of state right-of-way and its suitability for active transportation. In the [online open house](#), you can review a copy of the draft active transportation plan and provide feedback. Deadline for comments is Monday, Feb. 15.

Free, temporary internet access is available to those who do not have broadband service in locations throughout the state. To find the nearest Wi-Fi hotspot, visit the [list maintained by the Department of Commerce](#).

active transportation news updates, including grant opportunities, webinars, and WSDOT activities and partners, subscribe to the [WSDOT Walk and Roll E-News](#).

The History We Were Not Taught: Public Forum on the State's History through a Racial Equity Lens



Many of the equity issues that organizations and policymakers face today have their roots in intentional laws, policies, and practices that were created decades ago but which continue to impact every sector of our society today.

Knowing our history provides insight and a better understanding of why the inequities we see in our organizations, neighborhoods, and communities exist. This knowledge then equips us to address these inequities through our advocacy efforts, decision-making, and resource-allocation choices to eliminate structural barriers that continue to negatively impact historically marginalized people and communities today.

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County, in collaboration with the NAACP and Vibrant Schools, invites you to a public forum that will cover facts about Washington State's history that most of us were never taught, and how these events, laws, policies, and practices are connected to disparities across sectors today.

For more information about the forum and to register, visit the [LWV of Tacoma-Pierce County website](#).

Understanding the Growth Management Act

By Kate Lunceford, President, LWV of Snohomish County



The LWV of Snohomish County supports Futurewise's Washington Can't Wait Campaign and will be co-sponsoring a webinar on Wednesday, Feb. 10 with Sno-Isle Sierra Club. Please join us at 6 p.m. as Tim Trohimovich, Director of Planning & Law for Futurewise, helps us understand how Growth Management Act (GMA) regulations make it into county law. Then he'll explain the Washington Can't Wait Campaign bills currently in the legislature that will add climate change, housing, and equity provisions into the GMA. Please [RSVP in advance](#) to get the Zoom link.

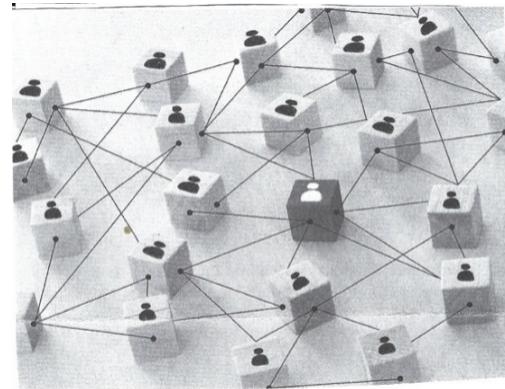
Climate justice requires insistent, persistent, consistent demands of our government. We are in a crisis. In January, the (Everett) *Daily Herald* ran our commentary [State, County Can't Wait for Climate Change Action](#) about the Washington Can't Wait Campaign, listing the changes we are seeking in the GMA. To learn more, visit the [Washington Can't Wait Campaign](#) website.

Right now, the Washington Can't Wait Campaign is asking for our support on a bill in the Washington State Legislature, [HB 1099](#) (improving the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework). This bill would require local governments to plan for mitigation of climate change and how they will aid in achieving the state's greenhouse gas reduction levels. Another bill, [HB 1220](#) (supporting emergency shelters and housing through local planning and development regulations) would update the GMA to require planning for a diversity of housing types available for all income levels, emergency housing, permanent supportive housing, and address racially disparate impacts, exclusion, and displacement in housing. Please contact your House representative to ask them to support these bills.

The LWV of Snohomish County Natural Resources will further support the Washington Can't Wait Campaign in Snohomish County with a Tree Campaign to be reported on soon.

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The LWV of Washington has been forming affinity groups of persons interested in discussing and working on a specific topic. There has been great interest, and so far the following groups have started meeting. If you're interested in one of them, contact the person indicated.



Criminal Justice: Deb Carstens,
dcarstens@lwvwa.org

Gun Safety: Pat Griffith,
pgriffith@lwvwa.org

Health Care: Kim Abbey,
kabbey@lwvwa.org

Observer Core: Linda Benson lbenson@lwvwa.org

Public Bank: Ruth Fruland, rfruland@lwvwa.org and Stoney Bird,
sbird@lwvwa.org

Responsible Journalism: Dee Anne Finken, dfinken@comcast.net

Treasurers: Myra Howrey, edfundtreasurer@lwvwa.org

Webmaster/Communication: Delores Irwin, deloreslwv@gmail.com

All are welcome to join. If you would like to create a new group, contact Linda Benson, lbenson@lwvwa.org.

League Calendar

February 2021

Saturday, February 6—Redistricting 101 with Alison McCaffree, LWV Skagit County, 1 p.m. Information, registration links, and full schedule of [Speak Up Schools](#) on the LWVWA website.

Wednesday, February 10—Growth Management Act webinar, presented by LWV Snohomish County, Futurewise, and Sno-Isle Sierra Club, 6 p.m. [Registration required](#).

Sunday, February 14—Anniversary of the League of Women Voters.

Monday, February 15—Day One Speak Up School Training, LWV Spokane Area, 1 p.m. [Speak Up Schools](#).

Monday, February 15—LWVWA Education Fund Board Meeting, noon-3:30

Tuesday, February 16—LWVWA Board Meeting, noon-3:30, p.m., contact [Amy Peloff](#) to attend.

Tuesday February 16—Redistricting Workshop put on by the LWV of Clark County and the Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom. [Registration required](#).

Wednesday, February 17—“The History We Were Not Taught: Washington State History Through a Racial Equity Lens,” online public forum presented by the LWV of Tacoma-Pierce County, 7 p.m. [Registration required](#).

Thursday, February 18—Redistricting 101 with Alison McCaffree, LWV Snohomish and Skagit Counties, 10 a.m. morning session or 6:30 p.m. evening session. Information, registration links, and full schedule of [Speak Up Schools](#) on the LWVWA website.

Thursday, February 18—[Immigration 2021: What Happens Now? \(LWV of Thurston County\)](#), 6:30 p.m. via Zoom.

Saturday, February 20—Day Two Speak Up School Training, LWV Spokane Area, 1 p.m., [Speak Up Schools](#).

Monday, February 22-26—Democracy Lobby Week, virtual. [Registration required](#).

Thursday, February 25—[Immigration 2021: What Happens Now?](#), LWV of Thurston County, 6:30 p.m., via Zoom.

Saturday, February 27—Redistricting 101 with Alison McCaffree, LWV Kitsap County, 10 a.m. Information, registration links, and full schedule of [Speak Up Schools](#) on the LWVWA website.

Saturday, February 27—Day One Speak Up School Training, LWV Clark County, 1 p.m. [Speak Up Schools](#).

March 2021

Tuesday, March 2—Redistricting 101 with Alison McCaffree, Delta Kappa Gamma, Fix Democracy First, and LWVWA, 6 p.m. Information, registration links, and full schedule of [Speak Up Schools](#) on the LWVWA website.

Thursday, March 4—[Immigration 2021: What Happens Now?](#), LWV of

Saturday, March 6—Day One Speak Up School Training, Delta Kappa Gamma, Fix Democracy First, and LWVWA, 9:30 a.m. [Speak Up Schools](#).

Saturday, March 6—Day Two Speak Up School Training, LWV Clark County, noon, [Speak Up Schools](#).

Thursday, March 11—Data Lenses Tool Speak Up School Training, Delta Kappa Gamma, Fix Democracy First, and LWVWA, 6 p.m. [Speak Up Schools](#).

Monday, March 15—LWVWA Education Fund Board Meeting, noon-3:30 p.m., contact [Amy Peloff](#) to attend.

Tuesday, March 16—LWVWA Board Meeting, noon-3:30, p.m., contact [Amy Peloff](#) to attend.

Saturday, March 20—Testimony & Testifying Speak Up School Training, LWV of Snohomish and Skagit Counties, 9 a.m., [Speak Up Schools](#).

Monday, March 22—Testimony Speak Up School Training, LWV of Snohomish and Skagit Counties, 6 p.m., [Speak Up Schools](#).

Tuesday, March 23—Data Lenses Tool Speak Up School Training, LWV of Snohomish and Skagit Counties, 6 p.m. [Speak Up Schools](#).

Thursday, March 25— Redistricting 101 with Alison McCaffree, LWV of the San Juans, 2 p.m. Information, registration links, and full schedule of [Speak Up Schools](#) on the LWVWA website.

Thursday, March 25—Testifying Speak Up School Training, LWV of Snohomish and Skagit Counties, 6 p.m., [Speak Up Schools](#).

April 2021

Monday, April 19—LWVWA Education Fund Board Meeting, noon-3:30 p.m., contact [Amy Peloff](#) to attend.

Tuesday, April 20—LWVWA Board Meeting, noon-3:30, p.m., contact [Amy Peloff](#) to attend.

Wednesday, April 21—LWVUS webinar on How to Effectively Assess Litigation Opportunities, noon, [registration required](#).

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May 2021

Saturday, May 2—Redistricting 101 presentation by Alison McCaffree, Delta Kappa Gamma Convention, 8:30 a.m., [Speak Up Schools](#).

June 2021

Wednesday, June 23–Sunday, June 27—LWV of Washington Convention, details to come.



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