THE OTER

This Newsletter published by and for the *We* *respectfully* *acknowledge* League of Women Voters of Yakima County *that* *we* *are* *on* *the* *traditional*

PO Box 723 Yakima WA 98907 509-452-3419 *land* *of* *the* *Yakama* *People.*

November, 2020 Vol.20, No 11

**MISSION** **STATEMENT** Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

**VISION**

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire,

the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

**CALENDAR**

Monday, December 7, 4:30 PM **Leadership** **Team** **Meeting.** Via Zoom.

*NOTE:* *League* *Conversations* *suspended* *until* *January.* *Any* *suggestions* *for* *topics* *and/or* *speakers* *can* *be* *forwarded* *to* *Quinn* *Dalan* *at* *quinndalan@gmail.com.*

**VALUE** **STATEMENT**

The League believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

LWVYC President’s Column…

**Officers** *President:* Criss Bardill *Secretary:* Karen Pilon *Treasurer:* Janis Luvaas

**Leadership Team** Quinn Dalan Rhona Hauff

(*also* *Membership*) Kitty Jubran

Susan Kaphammer Cheri Kilty

Kathy Lambert Anita Monoian Lee Murdock

*Voter* *Editor:* Susan Kaphammer 949-0127; susanlkap@gmail.com

The Board currently meets at 4:30 PM the 1st Monday of each month via Zoom. **All** **members** **are** **welcome.**

Contact Criss Bardill at 509-965-2351 or at cbardill@gmail.com to “attend”

**NOTES** **FROM** **CRISS**

As I write this, the outcome of the Presidential Election is settled and we are looking forward to our continued work. These are difficult times for the USA, and we face many, many challenges. I respect and support the League of Women Voters in our efforts to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy. We are an important voice for the civic health of our nation.

Our Get Out The Vote and voter education efforts led to some impressive outreach. The County Commissioner Zoom Forum was live-streamed by YPAC and on our Facebook page. YPAC rebroadcasted the event several times and the video on our Facebook page has had 650 views and over 60 comments. So it clearly was a worthwhile effort in voter education and engagement.

We placed GOTV calls to about 500 new voters who had registered since November 2019. Thank you League members Kitty Jubran, Elaine Smith, Karri Livingston, Trixanna Koch, Deborah Servertson-Coffin, Becky Scholl, and Jackie Hertel, and to League friends Donna Lund, Anne Harrison, and Isabel Garcia, for stepping up to make about 50 calls each.

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October League Conversation Recap. . .

**CRISIS** **RESPONDERS** **PARTNER** **WITH** **POLICE**

On October 27, about 8 members and friends gathered on Zoom to learn about the Designated Crisis Responder (DCR) partnership with local law enforcement, including the Yakima Police Department, the Union Gap Police Department, and the Yakima County Sheriff’s office.

Comprehensive Healthcare staff Courtney Hesla (Vice President), Samantha Noble (Director of Acute Care Operations), and Julianna Estall (Designated Crisis Responder with Law Enforcement), spoke to us about the 24 hour/day behavioral health crisis response which pairs DCRs with law enforcement officers responding to mental health and/or drug addiction crisis calls.

The primary purpose of the program is to divert people in crisis to avoid jail and to intervene with appropriate crisis treatment. Crises can include the threat of suicide, psychosis, and homelessness. DCRs have the authority to order a 72-hour involuntary treatment commitment. Case management is provided based on services needed. Case managers from Comprehensive also provide follow-up services based on police reports when there was no DCR on the scene.

Funding for the program is provided by the Trueblood funds that resulted from a case (Trueblood vs DSHS) in Washington State challenging unconstitutional delays in competency evaluation and restoration services. As a result of this case, the state has been required to provide court-ordered competency evaluations within 14 days and competency restoration services within seven days. Trueblood funds help individuals who are detained in city and county jails awaiting a competency evaluation or restoration services, and individuals who have previously received competency evaluation and restoration services who are released and at-risk for re-arrest or re-institutionalization. The current funding lapses in June 2021, and there will be efforts to continue the program through other funding sources.

Our speakers shared that the partnership with the DCRs has been well received by the police and sheriff’s departments and considered an asset in responding to calls involving people in crisis.

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LWV of WA TRAINING. . .

**SPEAK** **UP** **SCHOOLS** **FACILITATE** **INPUT** **FOR** **REDISTRICTING** *(See* *also* *the* *following* *article.)*

With the goal of having over 2000 people statewide testify to the Washington State Redistricting Commission, Speak Up Schools offers training. Three two-hour sessions will be online between December 8 and 17, with each session offered at 6 to 8 PM on two different days to accommodate busy schedules.

The Speak Up Schools Project begins with these December Train the Trainer workshops to familiarize volunteers with information about redistricting and strategies for effective testifying. The workshops will provide the how-to for participants to, in turn, facilitate local support and practice sessions. The LWVWA statewide Speak Up School team is ready to assist local efforts.

Speak Up Schools implement in Washington the national League call: “… *state* *and* *local* *Leagues* *will* *engage* *residents* *in* *creating* *awareness* *about* *redistricting,* *its* *importance,* *and* *the* *impact* *redistricting* *has* *on* *how* *their* *vote* *is* *counted.* *Leagues* *will* *do* *this* *in* *their* *immediate* *and* *adjacent* *communities* *and* *in* *coalition* *with* *community* *partners.”*

Involvement with Speak Up Schools offers a powerful way to act on our League mission of “Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.” We would be working to ensure effective input to Redistricting Commissioners, to encourage diverse voices, and to make maps more representative of diversity. For more information, including schedule and registration instructions, see the LWVWA webpage for Speak Up Schools: [https://www.lwvwa.org/speakup.](https://www.lwvwa.org/speakup)

Making Democracy Work. . .

**REDISTRICTING** **EXPLAINED**

Redistricting is the process of maintaining or re-drawing boundary lines for legislative districts. Washington State currently selects representatives from 10 districts for our 10 United States representatives and 49 smaller districts, each of which elects one senator and two representatives for our state government. 2020 Census data will be used to craft districts in compliance with the US Supreme Court ruling in *Reynolds* *v.* *Sims*, in which the court ruled that "the Equal Protection Clause [of

the United States Constitution] demands no less than substantially equal state legislative representation for all citizens, of all places as well as of all races."

For the majority of the country, state legislatures are primarily responsible for redistricting. This arrangement opens the opportunity for gerrymandering, which refers to the practice of establishing electoral districts lines to advantage one political party or favor one social, racial or ethnic constituency over another.

Washington is one of seven states using independent commissions to draw congressional district lines. This is consistent with LWVUS policy: “We believe responsibility for fair redistricting should be vested in an independent special commission…” With a non-voting chair, the four-person commission has been evenly split with two Republican and two Democratic lawmakers. The Commission is appointed by January 15th with a November 15th deadline for new district lines. While avoiding

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**REDISTRICTING** **EXPLAINED** *Continued* *from* *Page* *3*

extreme gerrymandering, the process has to date created many non-competitive districts, seems to favor incumbents and has resulted in close majority control.

Washington falls short in the second portion of the national League policy statement: “…with membership [of the Redistricting Commission] that reflects the diversity of the unit of government.” To this end, the LWVWA advocates for:

1. Appointment of women and people of color, LGBTQ people, and representation from regions outside of Puget Sound to the Washington State Redistricting Commission.

2. Legislation requiring that the Washington State Redistricting Commission be appointed sooner, and requiring more public access and increasing transparency.

3. Moving to a true citizens’ redistricting commission by proposing a commission with additional members that are not affiliated with the major political parties.

For now, LWVWA urges League members to prepare to provide input to the Redistricting Commission, which will be holding statewide public meetings in June, 2021. Speak Up Schools offers training and support for this input. (See previous article.) Speaking up for fair redistricting is a meaningful way to further our mission: Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

*NOTE:* *Content* *for* *the* *articles* *on* *Speak* *Up* *Schools* *and* *Redistricting* *was* *drawn* *from* *several* *sources* *that* *provide* *further* *information:* LWVWA webpage for Speak Up Schools [https://www.lwvwa.org/](https://www.lwvwa.org/%20speakup) [speakup;](https://www.lwvwa.org/%20speakup) LWVWA 2020 Issue Paper: Redistricting [https://www.lwvwa.org/resources/Documents/](https://www.lwvwa.org/resources/Documents/%202020%20Issue%20Papers/2020%20REDISTRICTING%20IP.pdf) [2020%20Issue%20Papers/2020%20REDISTRICTING%20IP.pdf;](https://www.lwvwa.org/resources/Documents/%202020%20Issue%20Papers/2020%20REDISTRICTING%20IP.pdf) LWVUS webpage on Redistricting: [https://www.lwv.org/voting-rights/redistricting;](https://www.lwv.org/voting-rights/redistricting) and Ballotpedia – non-profit organization providing neutral, accurate, and verifiable digital encyclopedia of American politics and elections – webpages on Redistricting <https://ballotpedia.org/Redistricting>and Redistricting in Washington After the 2020 Census: [https://ballotpedia.org/Redistricting\_in\_Washington\_after\_the\_2020\_census.](https://ballotpedia.org/Redistricting_in_Washington_after_the_2020_census)

***LEAGUE*** ***OF*** ***WOMEN*** ***VOTERS*** ***OF*** ***YAKIMA*** ***COUNTY*** **Cordially** **invites** **you** **to:** **JOIN** **US!**

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Phone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Membership:** \_\_\_\_\_\_$60 Basic\_\_\_\_\_\_$40 Each additional family member at same residence Sustaining Gift: $60 \_\_\_\_\_ $40 \_\_\_\_\_ $25\_\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Your Sustaining gift will help support our local activities. LWVYC **\*Please** **Note** **Annual** **Dues** **Distribution:** PO Box 723

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