



# Seattle Voter

APRIL 2011

VOL. 52, No.9

## REVENUE SHORTFALLS AND LOCAL IMPACTS

By Nora Leech, chair, Economics and Taxation Committee

“A in’t got no money honey.”

It has been a difficult four years since the 2007 depression/recession hit our region. Four years of job losses and increasing need. Four years of lost revenue. Four years of budget cuts to our most treasured programs that make our communities great.

of life — be it helping the vulnerable, saving the environment, providing transportation or conserving natural resources. To vote wisely and to form an effective strategy for citizen input, we need to understand the big picture.

**Join us for this important forum on our economic future.**

### What does the future hold?

Unemployment remains high, as does the demand for services for those who lost their jobs. There are some bright lights, such as the recently announced Boeing contracts, but the general recovery is very slow. Pressure is high on governments to cut costs, shed workers, dismantle unions and still provide services.

### Tell it like it is.

We’ve lined up government experts Beth Goldberg, director of the city of Seattle’s Budget Office, Tom Goodwin, chief economist with King County’s office of Economic and Financial Analysis, and Marc Baldwin with Washington State’s Office of Financial Management. They will shed light on the revenue projections in the near future and budget challenges facing our elected officials. What are the options?

Understanding revenue forecasts will help League members to effectively give input regarding the programs that we feel are essential for quality

**\*\* SAVE THE DATE \*\***

The League of Women Voters of Seattle

### ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP

Will take place on  
**THURSDAY, MAY 12**  
at 5:00 p.m. at the Seattle First Baptist Church  
(one week earlier than previously scheduled)

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Postal Regulations  
The *Seattle Voter* is published monthly  
except June and August.

Published periodicals postage paid at  
Seattle, WA.

Postmaster:  
Send address changes to *Seattle Voter*.  
1620 18th Ave, Suite 101  
Seattle, WA 98122  
Seattle Voter (USPS 052210)

## President's Message

April traditionally brings us showers and while we'll probably see more than a few of those this year it's also bringing us drought — at least in terms of revenue. The picture in Olympia looks grim and is only getting grimmer. Unfortunately League lobby day was cancelled due to snow but don't let that stop you from contacting your legislators and putting your two cents in! (Ooh, bad pun — sorry). In addition, several other groups and coalitions will be holding lobby days in the early part of April. You might think about rounding up a few fellow members or friends to go down and join in. Our hardworking legislators need to see and hear from you to know that you are following what is happening and moreover, to know that you care.

April is a busy time here at the League office too. We're getting ready for two great forums as well as our annual meeting. Our nominating committee has been doing a great job recruiting new board members and I'm trying to get a hundred little things done so I can have a smooth hand-off to my successor. We're also putting our own budget together and prepping for state convention in May.

Believe it or not - we've also got to start our prep for election season! Potential initiatives and referenda for the August primary ballot are appearing and we'd love to have your help following and researching these so we can get the jump on publishing those ballot issue summaries that so many people rely on to understand the issues.

Another active group right now is our stalwart EdFund board who are planning a wonderful fundraising luncheon for this June. We're looking for help with decorating, registration and other activities to ensure a successful event. We also really hope you'll spread the word and invite friends and neighbors. A chance to visit the Chinese garden



should appeal to many — I know I'm looking forward to it!

I'm glad the days are getting longer, I know I have more energy when it's lighter and brighter. I hope that's true for you too and that you'll be sure to come out for the forum and ask critical questions about the budget process. We need to grapple with these tough issues so we can develop solutions that serve all members of our communities, not just those who are best able to defend their turf.

Thanks for all you do to support the League and our mission to foster an informed and active citizenry!

Sincerely,

*Allison*

***Let us recycle your empty ink cartridges!***

***Do you have used ink or toner cartridges lying around? Bring them into the office!***

***We will recycle them for you, and the organization will make a little cash too.***

***Every bit helps!***

***Any inkjet cartridge that fits in the palm of your hand is eligible, and many other ink/toner cartridges too. Contact Lindsay (lindsay@seattlelwv.org/(206) 329-4848) to see if your brand/model qualifies. Thanks for helping the Earth and the League at the same time!***

***Happy Earth Day - April 22nd***

# April/May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					April 1	2 Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.
3	4 Voter Deadline/ International Relations Comm. 12:45 p.m.	5	6	7 Forum: Budget/ Taxation 7:30 p.m.	8	9
10	11 Teacher Study Committee 3:30 p.m.	12	13 Civics Education Committee 4:30 p.m.	14 Social Justice Committee 7:00 p.m.	15	16
17	18	19 Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.	20	21	22	23
24	25 Teacher Study Committee 3:30 p.m.	26	27	28	29	30 Economics and Taxation Comm. 9:00 a.m.
May 1	2	3	4	5 Forum: Smart Transportation Choices and How to Fund Them 7:30 p.m.	6	7 Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.

## APRIL

Board Meeting  
Saturday, April 2  
9:00 a.m.  
League Office

Voter Deadline  
Monday, April 4

International Relations  
Committee  
Monday, April 4  
12:45-2:45 p.m.  
League Office

Forum: Budget/Taxation  
Thursday, April 7  
7:30 p.m.  
Seattle First Baptist Church

Teacher Study Committee  
Monday, April 11  
3:30 p.m.  
League Office

Civics Education  
Committee  
Wednesday, April 13  
4:30 p.m.  
Vios Cafe, Upstairs at Third Place  
Books, Ravenna

Social Justice Committee  
Thursday, April 14  
7:00-8:30 p.m.  
League Office

Transportation Committee  
Tuesday, April 19  
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
League Office

Teacher Study Committee  
Monday, April 25  
3:30 p.m.  
League Office

Economics & Taxation  
Committee  
Saturday, April 30  
9:00 a.m.  
909 E. Newton St., D-9

## MAY

Forum: Smart Transportation  
Choices and How to Fund  
Them  
Thursday, May 5  
7:30 p.m.  
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting  
Saturday, May 7  
9:00 a.m.  
League Office

Annual Meeting  
Thursday, May 12  
5:00 p.m.  
Seattle First Baptist Church

## Forum Schedule

**April 7** - Budget/taxation

**May 5** - Smart Transportation Choices and  
How to Fund Them

**August 4** - Primary election issues/  
candidates (tentative)

**September 1** - Teacher study (tentative)

**October 6** - General election ballot issues

**November 3** - To be determined

**December 1** - To be determined

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) presents a public forum each month between August and May, generally on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. Most forums are held at the Seattle First Baptist Church, but occasionally they are scheduled in other locations, including at least one on the eastside. The tentative schedule of upcoming forums for 2010-2011 appears to the left; check your *Voter* or the LWVS website, [seattlelwv.org](http://seattlelwv.org), each month for up-to-date information.

## Board Briefs By Joanna Cullen, Secretary

*The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) Board met on Saturday morning, March 5, 2011.*

### Spring Event and Fundraising

The Board approved a motion that the League of Women Voters of Seattle Education Fund (Ed Fund) purchase a brick in the name of LWVS as a donation to the Seattle Chinese Garden, in appreciation of the docents to be provided for the garden tour portion of its Spring Fling. We encourage all members to attend this fun event, planned for June 11, 2011.

LWVS is also in the process of recruiting a leader for a fall fundraiser.

### Forum updates

Nora Leech briefed the Board on the upcoming Economics and Taxation forum in April. Speakers knowledgeable on the current state of affairs in this area from the City of Seattle, King County and Washington State will address the relationship between revenues, general funds and a civil society. The Board will pursue ideas for additional outreach for this forum and requested that Nora and the Economics and

Taxation Committee also forward contact ideas to us. The Board thanked Nora for the work of the committee in ensuring that the forum will address very timely and important topics. All were invited to join this committee. It is especially fun for those interested in economics.

Currently an initiative and referendum are circulating for signatures on the issue of the deep bore tunnel. One or both are likely to make it to the ballot. The Transportation Committee will be invited to comment on the steps necessary to study these issues.

### Outreach

Outreach activities to the eastside included delivering TRYs to Medina City Hall, local churches and high schools, along with speaking to career councilors and government teachers about the League and the TRYs. Contact information for the LWVS was provided, as was information about community service opportunities for students and other ways that the League can help inform and get citizens involved.

### Technology Committee

The Technology Committee continues its work with Outreach, Public Relations and Membership on effective uses of electronic communications and social networking. Updates to the LWVS website should be ready soon.

The technology committee will also be working through Tech Soup to procure updated software necessary to ensure that the LWVS office will be able operate efficiently and open documents that they receive.

### Annual Meeting

A change of date for our Annual Meeting was necessary to avoid possible conflicts with the State Convention. If the First Baptist Church is available on Thursday May 12, that is the preferred date.

### Office

The board continued to discuss a process for restructuring the board and office work to reduce the demands on Board members, especially the President, and improve office efficiency.

### Endorsement Process

The Board approved recommendations for the process and procedures for taking positions during elections. It voted a thank you to the committee members, especially to those who spent much time editing to ensure that the policy respected the workload of Board members.

## **HELP WANTED!**

### **CIS DESK**

The Citizen Information Service (CIS) is the personal “face” of the League of Women Voters of Seattle. Volunteers in the League office provide information over the phone to members and the community on any number of subjects ranging from election information to bill progress in the legislature to directions to League forums.

If you are a new member and want to learn what the League is all about, or a past member who just wants to give a little time, volunteering at the CIS desk is a great way to get involved—and we need you!

Currently, there are two three-hour shift openings on Fridays — 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. If you are interested, please call or email CIS Coordinator Cynthia Howe at (206) 236-0593 or [howe.john@comcast.net](mailto:howe.john@comcast.net). She will be delighted to train you. Come on—it’s fun!

## Committees

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: MONDAY, APRIL 4

TIME: 12:45 – 2:45 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

We will continue to discuss American foreign policy, with an emphasis on competing views of how the country *should* project itself in the world. Readings are available from Ellen Berg at [ellenzberg@msn.com](mailto:ellenzberg@msn.com).

### TEACHER STUDY COMMITTEE

DATES: MONDAY, APRIL 11

MONDAY, APRIL 25

TIME: 3:30 – 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

For more information, contact Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis at [terrylucy2u@comcast.net](mailto:terrylucy2u@comcast.net).

### CIVICS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13

TIME: 4:30 – 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: VIOS CAFÉ, UPSTAIRS AT THIRD PLACE BOOKS, RAVENNA (NE 65TH AND 20TH AVE NE IN SEATTLE)

Two agenda items are to whether to reprise Civics Trivia this spring and whether to apply for a Civic Education grant from the State League to fund a project.

Please email Dana Twight at [dctwight@mac.com](mailto:dctwight@mac.com) or call (206) 329-4848 for other information or with questions.

### SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

DATE: THURSDAY, APRIL 14

TIME: 7:00 – 8:30 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

### TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: TUESDAY, APRIL 19

TIME: 10:00 A.M. – 12:00 NOON

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

SPEAKER: TO BE ANNOUNCED

Remember: The transportation committee will present the May Forum, Thursday, May 5, 7:30 p.m. at the Seattle First Baptist Church. Our subject will be SMART TRANSPORTATION CHOICES AND HOW TO FUND THEM. Speakers will be Peter Hahn, Executive Director of Seattle Department of Transportation; Erica Barnett, transportation reporter for *Publicola*; Fred Jarrett, Deputy King County Executive; and Celia Kupersmith, Sound Transit Deputy CEO.

### ECONOMICS AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

DATE: SATURDAY, APRIL 30

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: 909 E. NEWTON ST., D-9

For more information, call Nora Leech at (206) 329-4848.

### PHOTOJOURNALIST MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE TALK

At the League of Women Voters of Seattle's March forum, retired University of Washington professor Lynne Iglitzin presented an abbreviated version of her talk on photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White. For those who missed this informative talk, as well as those who would like to hear more, there will be two opportunities to hear the full presentation in April. You can attend at these locations:

**Tuesday, April 5, 7:00 p.m., Bellevue Library, 1110 110th Avenue W, Bellevue**

**Thursday, April 21, 7:00 p.m., Mount Baker Community Club, 2811 Mt. Rainier Avenue S**

## Announcements



**Chongqing Spring Fling**

Who: The League of Women Voters of Seattle  
Education Fund

What: Tour the newly-opened Seattle Chinese Garden, enjoy a delicious  
lunch and hear from guest speaker, Connie So

Where: Brockey Center at South Seattle Community College

When: **Saturday, June 11**  
Tour begins at 10:30 a.m.  
Lunch served at noon

Why: Support the League's  
Voter Education programs!

### **CONNIE SO, GUEST SPEAKER FOR OUR SPRING LUNCHEON AT SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

BY LAURA WEESE, CO-PRESIDENT,  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SEATTLE  
EDUCATION FUND

Connie So, who will be our guest speaker on June 11, is a senior lecturer in American Ethnic Studies at the University of Washington (UW). Her topic will be "Asian Americans in Politics." Connie immigrated to Seattle from Hong Kong in 1969 at the age of four, along with her parents and five siblings. She remembers meeting her maternal great-grandparents, who were then living in one of the old residential hotels in the International District. Her great-grandfather had been a cannery recruiter and helped form the Woo

Family Association. Her great-great grandfather was one of the first Chinese Americans hired as a translator at Angel Island Immigration Center, a detention center for Asian immigrants.

Connie attended public schools in Seattle (she was a classmate of my daughter at Mercer Junior High on Beacon Hill) and the University of Washington. She went to Princeton on a fellowship and earned a Master's degree in public policy. Connie's PhD is from University of California/Berkeley's Ethnic Studies graduate program. Her dissertation, "Wing Luke and the Rise of Asian Americans in Politics," was based on extensive research into the history of Seattle's Asian American community. The University of Washington hired Connie as a lecturer in the 1990s. In 1997, students demonstrated at the UW

Administration Building following the announcement that Connie's contract would not be renewed. The students won their case when, within a year, UW President Richard McCormick rehired Connie. Connie currently maintains a heavy teaching load and supervises an internship program. During Winter Quarter this year she taught two courses: "Chinese American History and Culture" and "Contemporary Problems of Asian Americans." During Spring Quarter she will be teaching "Asian American Identity" and "History of Racial and Ethnic Minorities in the United States."

We are fortunate to have such a lively and well-informed speaker!

## **THE SEATTLE CHINESE GARDEN**

BY RUTH SCHROEDER, DIRECTOR,  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SEATTLE  
EDUCATION FUND

Our locale for the Education Fund's June 11 luncheon will be South Seattle Community College, which is adjacent to the Seattle Chinese Garden, a fairly recent and developing highlight of our diverse community. The garden is a collaboration of Seattle's cultural, educational, and business interests. Seattle's sister city in China is Chongqing Municipality in Szechuan Province, the site of many spectacular public gardens. The idea of a garden sponsored by both cities sparked and grew as a way to strengthen the relationship between the two cities. Brainstorming and years of planning commenced; political leaders of both cities were enlisted, business interests and cultural groups were recruited, and fundraising was initiated. A delegation of garden experts from China came to Seattle to finalize the decision on the location. The perfect spot was declared to be next to the Arboretum at South Seattle Community College. The past ten years

have seen intensive work developing a master plan, preliminary grading of the entire site, and beginning the building of the structures to be incorporated in the garden. Workmen from China have completed the Entry Courtyard and Ceremonial Gateway, constructing the buildings in the old, authentic ways.

The construction of the garden is just in the beginning phase. For now, we can see the graceful Song Mei Pavilion and Entranceway, plantings and a pond. Still to come are more traditional structures and water features. The garden will provide a vision of Old China here in Seattle for us to enjoy.

As part of the June event, luncheon guests are invited to tour the garden. Docents will lead small groups on the tour, providing entertainment and education. The tour will start at 10:30 a.m. and last about an hour, ending just in time for participants to take a short stroll to the Brockey Center for lunch and the program.

## League News

### TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE REPORT: TRANSPORTATION CHOICES COALITION

BY JANET WINANS, CHAIR, TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Our February speakers were Andrew Austin, Field Director, and Viet Shelton, Campaign Director for Transportation Choices Coalition.

The Transportation Choices Coalition is a nonprofit, 501(c) (3) corporation that is “working to bring...more and better transportation choices – real opportunities to take a bus, catch a train, ride a bike or walk.” They have a philosophical agenda. Their principles are:

- First, repair and maintain current transportation assets.
- Demand that investments in new infrastructure improve safety and health, create jobs, reduce oil dependence, ensure rural safety, improve air quality, eliminate toxic runoff into the state’s waters, and ensure social equity.
- Provide more transit and build healthy and sustainable communities.

Their sponsors and members include many of the state’s large corporations and important local businesses, local governments and agencies from across the state, other nonprofit organizations, transit agencies, foundations, major donors and individuals. Our two speakers asked that the League consider joining them as well. In 2009 they received \$500,000 from these various sources and spent more than 2/3 of their revenue in education and policy outreach. Another 7% was spent in lobbying the state legislature, and others, to bring change in the state’s priorities for transportation. Their annual report states, “for every \$1.50 our members invest we provide \$25,000 in transit, bicycle and pedestrian investments.”

As you look at their mission statement above, consider your own opportunities to walk, bike, and use alternatives to your car. It is well worth asking, “Just how does it happen that I have access to this?”

The Transportation Choices Coalition emerged in 1993, inserting itself into the conversation about the way things were/are with respect to how transportation resources were/are allocated:

- 52% of climate change emissions in Washington come from transportation.
- 1 in 3 Washingtonians do not get enough physical activity.
- The cost of being stuck in traffic is measured in billions of dollars.

Viet Shelton is actively lobbying in the current legislative session and intends to “drop” a bill that will create new, local, voter-approved options for transit investment. Currently about 76% of transit funding comes from the legislatively enabled and locally assessed 0.9% sale tax. Only about 2% comes from state sources. As we are learning during this time of serious economic challenge, sales tax revenue is very volatile. It has declined seriously just as we need more public transit resources. The bill that Transportation Choices hopes to pass asks the state legislature to allow local governments to use options that are not currently tapped. They include a progressive motor vehicle excise tax based on vehicle value, a vehicle license fee based on annual mileage, a fuel efficiency-based tax that rewards clean and efficient vehicles and a local sales tax on gasoline. These options would be presented to local voters for approval. Transportation Choices believes that these are “revenue mechanisms that are

robust enough to weather economic fluctuations and diverse enough to meet the different needs of communities across the state.” The major difficulty that such an idea faces, apparently, is that, even though the state receives no funding from these sources, state legislators might, at some time in the future, want to use them and they will have already been allocated to other taxing bodies.

## Voter Service

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### THE FAMILIES AND EDUCATION LEVY

BY LUCY GASKILL-GADDIS, CHAIR, EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The City of Seattle Families and Education Levy (FEL) has provided city funds for programs and services to students of the Seattle School District for over 20 years. The first seven year levy was voted on in 1991 under Mayor Norm Rice. Since then, Seattle voters have approved two more levies, in 1998 and 2004. The levy is up for renewal again this fall. This levy is very unique in that the funds come from the Seattle city government, and it is not a school district levy.

The FEL is overseen by the Seattle City Office of Education in the Department of Neighborhoods. The Office of Education controls the funds and contracts with both the school district and community organizations to provide services to the students. For early learning, the levy funds training for preschool teachers in conjunction with Child Care Resources; the operation of a preschool for children that come from families whose incomes are slightly higher than the maximum level required for the State Early Care and Assistance Program for 4-5 year olds; and an early learning cooperative with other preschool providers on issues around early learning.

In the elementary schools, the levy funds Family Support Workers who work with minority and immigrant students and their families. The Family Support Workers are part of a team at the school

working with students who have the greatest needs, both academically and economically. The levy also supports after school programs operated at the schools through the YMCA or other local organizations. For high school, a major portion of funds goes to provide health clinics at middle and high schools. The city contracts with health providers such as Group Health, Neighborhood Health Clinics, and others to run the clinics, which may include school nurses. The levy also provides funds for academic support programs for high school students, particularly 9th graders, as that is the most critical time to keep students on track for graduation.

The Office of Education establishes targets and goals for each program and reports on the progress of the programs in a mid-year and annual report. Based on the outcomes of the programs, the city might defund or alter programs that are not meeting their targets. The Levy Oversight Committee is responsible for overseeing the levy and approving changes and adjustments to the levy. The committee is composed of elected officials from both the city and the School District, along with 6 citizen members.

I have a long history with this levy, as I represented the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) on the 2004 citizens' advisory committee that recommended the current levy, which expires in

August 2012. I have been a member of the Levy Oversight Committee since September 2009. From June 2010 through December, I participated on the Levy Planning Committee that put together the proposed 2011 levy. Mayor McGinn and Seattle City Councilmember Tim Burgess jointly presented the recommendations to the full city council for their review and approval. The council will vote on the levy in late March or early April.

The proposed levy would provide over \$230 million dollars over a seven year period beginning in September 2012. This is a significant increase over the current \$116 million total. The Levy Planning Committee unanimously voted for the highest option presented to them. The committee took into account the significant reduction in state funding to the schools over the last years and into the future. While the proposed amount is a big jump from the current levy, the needs of the students are severe and widespread, especially in the early learning and elementary levels. The levy doubles the funding for these two areas to close to \$115 million. Most of the Level 1 schools (the lowest level based on school report cards) are elementary schools. There is now a large body of research showing that the achievement gap is really a preparation gap, and more effort needs to be directed to students from pre-K to third grade. The proposed levy would provide funds to all 23 Title I schools, which are the schools with the highest level of needs. The remaining funds go to middle schools (\$44 million); high schools (\$20.7 million); health services (\$44 million); and administration and research (\$10.7 million). The cost of the levy to the typical homeowner is \$124 a year.

More information can be found at the Office of Education website: [www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/education](http://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/education) . This site includes the annual reports, the full recommendation of the Levy Planning Committee and other data on the levy. If you would like more information, please feel free to contact me. The LWVS Board of Directors will consider its official position on the levy later in the year.

### Diversity Policy

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS), in both its values and practices, affirms its beliefs and commitment to diversity and pluralism, which means there shall be no barriers to participation in any activity of the League on the basis of gender, race, creed, age, sexual orientation, national origin or disability.

LWVS recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVS subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that this inclusiveness enhances the organization's ability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWVS affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, staff and programs.

**BOOK REVIEW** by Vicky Downs  
*The Big Short* by Michael Lewis

I listened to the unabridged audio version of this book about the recent financial crisis: it is a thriller! Lewis focuses on “[a] small number of people...[who] made a straight forward bet against the entire multi-trillion-dollar subprime mortgage market and, by extension, the global financial system.”

I’d never heard of any of these people, but I came to especially enjoy reading about Charlie, Jamie and Ben, who called themselves “the garage band hedge fund.” They were young men from Berkeley, California looking for “a long shot.” They quickly decided to search for whatever Wall Street thought was the *least likely* thing to happen, so that they could then bet that that very thing would happen.

They set their laser-like focus on Wall Streets’ mortgage bond market and especially the subprime market, which makes loans to people with little if any credit worthiness and usually no documentation. These young men thought there was no chance poor and often illiterate people could make their payments, especially once their rates went up.

However, when attending the annual subprime conference they couldn’t believe that all attendees seemed to be true believers. Surrounded by hundreds of people, they found that everyone they talked to was loudly enthusiastic about the subprime market and was confident it would go on making money for a long time. Charlie said, “We [were] kind of obsessed with this trade... [and] we exhausted our network of people to talk to about it... We kept trying to find people who could explain why [our positions] were wrong.” When no one could do so, he said, “We just kept wondering if we were crazy.”

Lewis introduces us to big name firms, which used the subprime mortgages to bring vast incomes to the firms and their executives. Basically they

repackaged multiple subprime mortgages into toxic financial products, which the credit agencies claimed were very valuable. The quality of the loans was dubious at best, but the very agencies that were supposed to police them found it worthwhile to enable them instead.

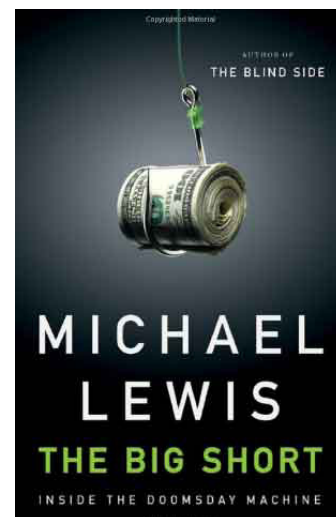
The more opaque the packaging, the easier it was to sell the products. We learn that the rating agencies rated these paper packages as if they were truly diversified with perhaps 80% or more good stuff, though they were often close to worthless.

Through the eyes of the men from Berkeley and about eight others who are like them, we see how easy it was for Wall Street executives and salesmen to allow themselves to believe that the easy, short-term profits were morally justifiable. Even the government watchdogs didn’t make a sound.

When the collapse finally occurred, those few who had bet against the market made huge profits. I was fascinated to discover that one of these was a doctor with Asperger’s Syndrome. I realized that this difficult affliction had made it possible for the doctor to focus on the mind-numbing numbers which proved beyond doubt that Wall Street was wrong.

This is a lively though not exactly an uplifting story. We read about bankers, mortgage providers and others who essentially allowed the bubble to exist and inevitably burst. I enjoyed reading about the characters and the high-pressure culture behind this crisis, and am profoundly grateful to live far away from Wall Street!

*The opinions in this review are personal and do not represent those of the LWV.*



## MYTH: IMMIGRANTS ARE NOT INTEGRATING INTO AMERICAN SOCIETY AS QUICKLY AS THEY DID IN THE PAST

BY BEATRICE CRANE, IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE

*This article continues our series by members of the Immigration Committee on common myths and misperceptions about immigration.*

Since 1990, the foreign-born population of the United States has doubled, reaching 12.5% of the total population in 2008. The last time period that experienced a comparable wave of immigration was the early part of the twentieth century. A pervasive myth is that immigrants are not integrating into American society as quickly as they did during previous times of high immigration. What is responsible for this perception, and does it contain any truth?

Any comparison made by the casual observer is likely to be subjective and unfair, since such an observer will be comparing isolated individuals at different points in the assimilation process, and will not have access to all the relevant data. Because of the current boom in immigration, coupled with the fact that many immigrants are settling in places which had not previously had high immigrant populations, people are likely to encounter more recently-arrived immigrants than they might have twenty or thirty years ago. They may hear unfamiliar languages, observe different styles of dress or encounter foreign customs. But newly-arrived immigrants are by definition not integrated into American society, because integration is a process that takes place over time. Moreover, the most readily-observed aspect of integration—language acquisition—is the one which tends to take the longest for adult immigrants.

There are studies which use census data to analyze assimilation rates of immigrants over time.<sup>1,2</sup> They identify various components of assimilation: cultural adaptations such as language acquisition, economic factors such as employment and home ownership, and civic aspects such as citizenship. These studies reveal various unsurprising trends: that the longer immigrants are in this country, the more they integrate, regardless of their country of origin; that economic measures of integration, particularly homeownership, increase more rapidly than cultural aspects such as language acquisition; that younger immigrants achieve English proficiency more quickly than do adults.

One such study compares the current wave of immigration with that of a century ago.<sup>3</sup> It defines an index of assimilation, made up of economic, cultural and civic components. The study concludes that, upon arrival, today's immigrants are indeed less assimilated than those of the early 1900s, when many more immigrants came from countries in Western and Northern Europe, which have languages and cultures similar to those of the United States, but that their rate of assimilation is actually higher.

However, these studies do not tell the whole story. They focus on assimilation — the process of becoming similar to native-born members of society. But integration is more complex than that; it implies adaptations on both sides as society absorbs its newcomers. The traditional concept of the “melting pot” is somewhat flawed, in that it suggests the distinctive characteristics of each new group will eventually disappear. Actually, every new group adds recognizable elements to American culture. But however one characterizes the process, immigrants are adapting to an evolving norm.

According to the Migration Policy Institute, “integration is a two-way process in which both the newcomers and the host societies are changed.”<sup>4</sup> At a time of high immigration, both the immigrants

and the residents are just beginning that process; as the newcomers find their place in American society and interact increasingly with others, Americans move from suspicion and fear to acceptance.

A recent event in Seattle marked and symbolically negated the expulsion of its Chinese immigrants in 1886. After experiencing years of discrimination, the Chinese were forced to leave Seattle in a time of economic downturn because of perceived competition for jobs. On Saturday, February 12, a group including many Chinese Americans marched from the docks up through the “welcome gate” into the International District, reversing the path of the expulsion. According to a *Seattle Times* article, the remembrance organizers “hope the events of the past will never be repeated with a new generation of immigrants.”<sup>5</sup>

The journey from rejection to acceptance is not always so clear. But what is clear is that integration is not a one-way street. When we question whether immigrants are integrating into American society, we must also examine to what extent society is supporting and adapting to its new members.

<sup>1</sup>Dowell Myers and John Pitkin, “Assimilation Today,” Center for American Progress, September 2010.

<sup>2</sup>Jacob L. Vigdor, “Measuring Immigration Assimilation in the United States,” Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, Civic Report No. 53, May 2008.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Migration Policy Institute, “Immigration Settlement and Integration.”; [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/)

<sup>5</sup>Nancy Bartley, “Shameful Moment in Seattle History,” *Seattle Times*, 13 Feb 2011, B1.



### Mission Statement

The League of Women Voters of Seattle, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

The League of Women Voters of Seattle serves the greater Seattle area, including the cities of north King County as well as east King County from Bothell to Bellevue.

# April Program: Revenue Shortfalls and Local Impacts

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Name one or two issues that concern you regarding revenue shortfalls at the city, county or state level.
2. What did you learn about the budget process from the April forum and the Voter that might be useful for to you as an individual or as a lobbyist with the League?
3. Why are we experiencing revenue shortfalls?
4. What should the League do in response to the current fiscal crisis?

**Other background materials about this topic will be available at the forum on April 7.**

## Understanding the King County Budget

The annual budget is the single most important document through which the Council sets policy for King County and oversees the delivery of services you need and expect. This “big picture” look will help you understand how the King County budget works.

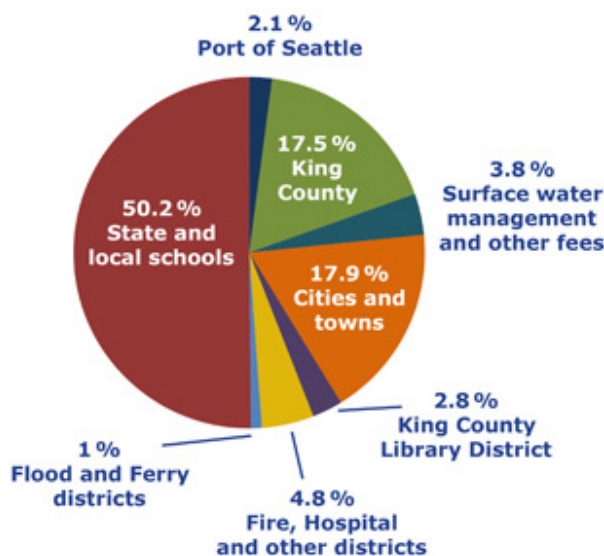
The County Executive submits his proposed budget in late September. The County Council then holds a series of public hearings and panel meetings to scrutinize the proposal and develop its own. The Council traditionally adopts the final county budget the Monday before Thanksgiving.

### County revenues

King County has only two principal tax revenue sources to fund the many services it provides to residents: property tax and sales tax.

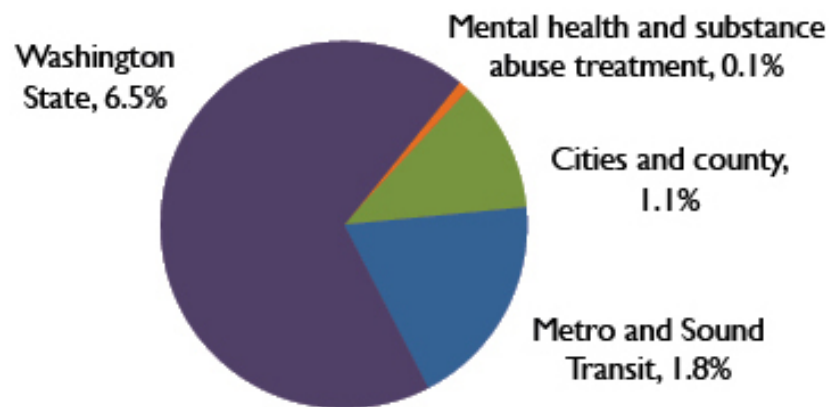
King County is the tax collector for all taxing districts within the county. Although the property tax check you write is payable to King County, the County receives only 17 cents of every dollar. The rest goes to other agencies, including 50 cents to schools, 18 cents to cities and towns, and 13 cents to other districts (see pie chart below).

Where your property tax dollar goes:



King County residents currently pay a 9.5 percent sales tax. The state keeps 6.5 percent, 1.8 percent goes to Metro Transit and Sound Transit, 0.1 percent is set aside for mental health services and substance abuse treatment, and the remaining 1.1 percent is split between cities and the County. (See pie chart next page)

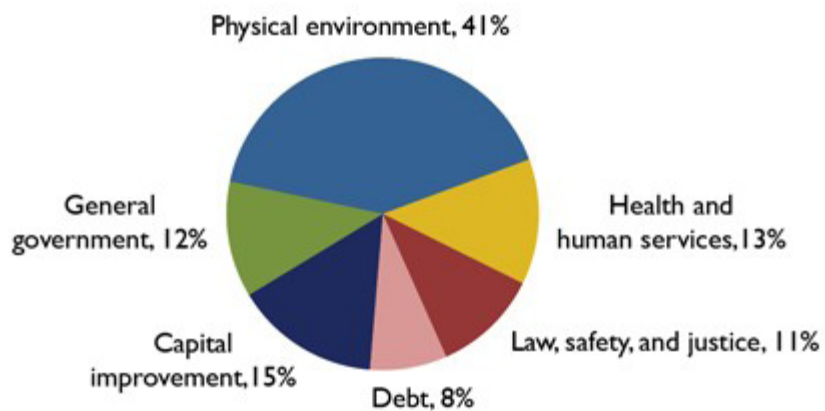
Where your sales tax dollar goes



### Restricted and unrestricted funds

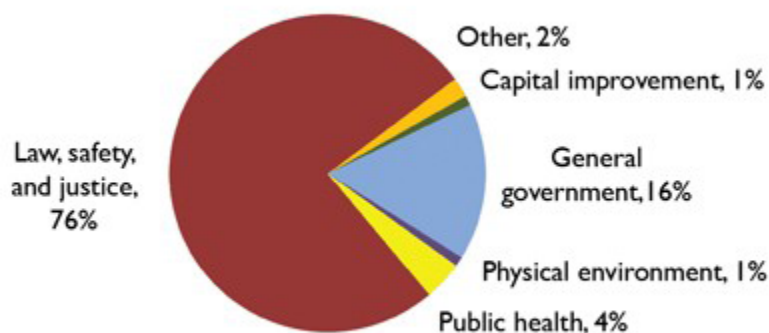
The county budget is composed of two types of funds: dedicated funds and the general fund. By law, dedicated funds can be utilized only for specific purposes, such as transit, sewage treatment, and voter-approved programs. Dedicated funds are the largest portion of the county budget, at 87% or more than four fifths of the total budget.

King County dedicated funds:



At 13%, the general fund is the smaller share of the county budget. This discretionary fund pays for critical day-to-day services that are not supported by dedicated revenues. Three quarters of the general fund (76%) goes to support state-mandated criminal justice and public safety services, with the remainder paying for other programs, such as parks and health and human services (see pie chart below).

King County general fund:



### Structural gap, or why is there a budget shortfall?

King County is now the 14th most populous county in the nation, with nearly 1.9 million residents, and county government is the second largest provider of public services in Washington State.

In addition to the services the county usually provides to residents, counties have had to fill the gap as federal and state governments have made significant reductions to their support of vital human services and have left other critical needs unfunded. These service responsibilities have come without additional funding from the state or other sources to meet the expenses they incur.

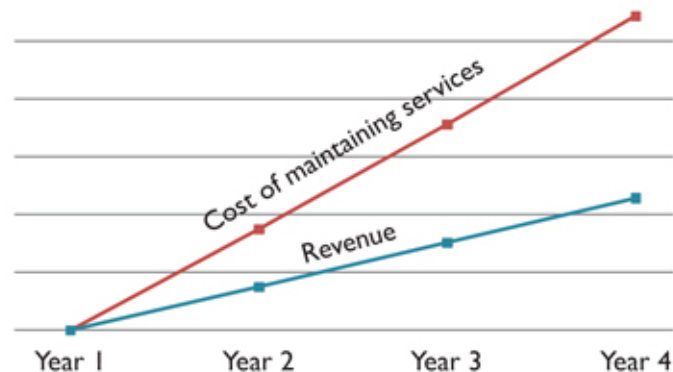
Annexations and incorporations have also reduced King County's tax base, as previously unincorporated areas now send their tax revenues to cities.

Counties have only two principal sources of tax revenue to support public services—property tax and sales tax—a structure that dates back to the farm-based economy of the 1850s. In contrast, the State of Washington receives revenue from 36 separate taxing sources, and cities like Seattle have 6 separate taxing sources.

By voter initiative subsequently passed into law by the Washington State Legislature, the amount of property taxes levied by counties can increase by only 1 percent per year, plus revenue from new construction. As a result, revenues counties receive grow at a much lower rate than the cost of maintaining services to residents. This gap is called the "structural gap."

The chart below illustrates how this structural gap creates an ever widening deficit between the cost of maintaining the same level of services and the lowered revenue the county receives. In years with a recession, this gap widens further, as revenues remain flat or decrease. The insidious result of the structural gap is that King County becomes unable to provide the same level of services as in the previous year, requiring continuous cuts to essential services to residents.

King County is not alone in this situation. Counties across the Washington State face this structural gap.



With the cap on property taxes, King County revenues grew by 2-3 percent a year till 2009, buoyed by the region's construction boom. However, the rising cost of providing the same level of public services went up by 4 to 6 percent a year. In the past few years, the structural gap has been worsened by the global recession. Property tax revenues are depressed by the severe slowdown in new construction, and sales tax revenues have declined dramatically as consumers have cut back on spending. In 2010, for example, county revenues dropped by \$30 million compared to the previous year. The projected deficit, or difference between revenues and costs, for King County is \$60 million for 2011. Previous deficits were \$56 million in 2010, and \$93 million in 2009. How can the budget gap be fixed?

In the short term, the County has to make difficult decisions to balance its budget, as counties are required by law to adopt a balanced budget. In the long term, this structural gap between revenues and costs of county services can be resolved only through the collaboration of the State Legislature, the County, cities, and voters.

*This material is from the King County website and can be found at the following link:  
[http://kingcounty.gov/council/budget/budget\\_basics.aspx](http://kingcounty.gov/council/budget/budget_basics.aspx)*

*Additional resource materials for understanding the state, county and city budgets can be found in the November 2009 and December 2008 editions of the Seattle Voter, both of which are on our website.*

# Unit Meetings

## APRIL UNIT INFORMATION

Email	Phone	Time	Location
<b>Monday, April 11</b>			
<b>CAPITOL HILL/MONTLAKE – Jan O'Connor/Zita Cook</b>			
oconnor.js@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	7:15 p.m.	Linnea Hirst, 1602 E. McGraw
zzitamcook@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848		
<b>FIRST HILL — Jeannette Kahlenberg</b>			
kahlenb@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Horizon House, 900 University St., Sky Lounge, Mary Margaret Pruitt, hostess
<b>SOUTHEND — Marian Wolfe/Susan Jones</b>			
hedgwolfe@aol.com	((206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Lila Bulen, 3716 Cascadia Ave. S.
susan@monckjones.com	(206) 329-4848		(206) 329-4848
<b>Tuesday, April 12</b>			
<b>BELLEVUE – Bonnie Rimawi</b>			
bonnierim@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Bellevue Public Library, Rm. 6
<b>NORTH END AFTERNOON – Helen St. John</b>			
hbstjohn@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	12:30 p.m.	Anne Conkle, 12526 39th Ave. NE (206) 329-4848
<b>WEST SEATTLE – Ethel Williams/Hazel Schiffer</b>			
etheljw1@q.com	(206) 329-4848	12:30 p.m.	The Kenney
hazelms@drizzle.com	(206) 329-4848		7125 Fauntleroy Way SW
<b>Wednesday, April 13</b>			
<b>VIEW RIDGE – Gail Winberg</b>			
winbergeng@q.com	(206) 329-4848	12:45 p.m.	Gail Winberg, 6004 NE 60th St.
<b>QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA/BALLARD EVE. – Karen Adair</b>			
adairk@seanet.com	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Eileen Bleeker, 7317 Mary Ave NW (206) 329-4848
<b>Thursday, April 14</b>			
<b>ISSAQUAH DAY — Connie Reed/Dorris Martin</b>			
reedhtop@earthlink.net	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Issaquah City Hall & Police
dorrismrtn@aol.com	((206) 329-4848		580 E. Sunset Way, Coho Room (upstairs)
<b>KIRKLAND/REDMOND — Sheila Hoff</b>			
	(206) 329-4848	7:00 p.m.	Liv Grohn, 338 10th Ave., Kirkland

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Email	Phone	Time	Location
<b>MERCER ISLAND — Lucy Copass/Cynthia Howe</b>			
lucyco@speakeasy.org	(206) 329-4848	9:15 a.m.	Mercer Island Presbyterian Church
howe.john@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848		3605 84th Ave. SE, Mercer Island
<b>NORTH CENTRAL – Jan Orlando</b>			
orlanre@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Gail Shurgot, 6536 31st Ave. NE
<b>SHORELINE — Juliet Beard</b>			
juliet@windermere.com	(206) 329-4848	4:30 p.m.	Richmond Beach Congregational Church, NW 195th St & 15th Ave NW
<b>UNIVERSITY HOUSE/WALLINGFORD — Charles and Nancy Perkins</b>			
perkwz@msn.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	University House 4400 Stone Way N

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#### Friday, April 15

##### **BAYVIEW – Peg Williams**

pwilliams@brc-res.com	(206) 329-4848	1:30 p.m.	Bayview Retirement Community 4th Floor Solarium
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#### Saturday, April 16

##### **BALLARD/MAGNOLIA/QUEEN ANNE DAY – Kerry Peterson**

(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Joan Peterson 6537 Dibble Ave. NW
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#### Wednesday, April 20

##### **N. KING COUNTY - Marjorie Hawkes/Raelene Gold**

mshawkesis@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	9:30 a.m.	Third Place Commons
raelene@seanet.com	(206) 329-4848		Meeting Room

# Board & Committee Contacts

Term	Executive Committee			
2009–2011	<i>President</i>	Allison Feher	(206) 329-4848	president@seattlelwv.org
2010–2012	<i>1st V.P. Action</i>	Nan Moore	(206) 329-4848	nanaction@comcast.net
2009–2011	<i>2nd V.P. Membership</i>	Kelly Powers	(206) 329-4848	membership.seattlelwv@gmail.com
2009–2011	<i>3rd V.P. Public Relations</i>	Jean Carlson	(206) 329-4848	jean.carlson@att.net
2009–2011	<i>4th V.P. Voter Editor</i>	Beatrice Crane	(206) 329-4848	votereditor@seattlelwv.org
2009–2011	<i>Treasurer</i>	Judy Bevington	(206) 329-4848	treasurer@seattlelwv.org
2010–2012	<i>Secretary</i>	Joanna Cullen	(206) 329-4848	jfoxcullen@gmail.com

Term	Directors			
2010–2012	<i>Outreach</i>	Brigitte Ashley	(206) 329-4848	brigitteashley@hotmail.com
2010–2012	<i>Unit Coordinator</i>	Diana Henderson	(206) 329-4848	whender912@aol.com
2010–2012	<i>Voter Service</i>	Julie Anne Kempf	(206) 329-4848	julie@kempf.com
2010–2012	<i>Communications</i>	Kathy Sakahara	(206) 329-4848	kathysakahara@gmail.com
2010–2012	<i>Voter Service</i>	Cyndi Woods	(206) 329-4848	cyndiwoods@comcast.net

Term	Education Fund Board			
2009–2011	<i>Co-President/Treasurer</i>	Denise Smith	(206) 329-4848	issaquahsmith@msn.com
2009–2011	<i>Co-President</i>	Laura Weese	(206) 329-4848	laura899@earthlink.net
2009–2011	<i>Secretary</i>	Kris Bushley	(206) 329-4848	abushley@earthlink.net
2010–2012	<i>Director</i>	Ruth Schroeder	(206) 329-4848	schrdrcrl@comcast.net

## Off-Board Positions

<i>CIS Coordinator</i>	Cynthia Howe	(206) 329-4848	howe.john@comcast.net
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## Committees

<i>Civics Education</i>	Dana Twight	(206) 329-4848	dctwight@mac.com
<i>Economics &amp; Taxation</i>	Nora Leech	(206) 329-4848	nleech2002@yahoo.com
<i>Education</i>	Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis	(206) 329-4848	terrylucy2u@comcast.net
<i>Social Justice Committee</i>	Kathleen Randall	(206) 329-4848	kathleenr8@gmail.com
<i>Immigration</i>	Barbara Reid	(206) 329-4848	barbereid@yahoo.com
	Barbara Yasui	(206) 329-4848	daruma52@msn.com
<i>International Relations</i>	Ellen Berg	(206) 329-4848	ellenzberg@msn.com
<i>Land Use</i>	Karen Kane	(206) 329-4848	kanek@iopener.net
<i>Reclaimed Water Study Committee</i>	Denise Smith	(206) 329-4848	issaquahsmith@msn.com
<i>Transportation</i>	Janet Winans	(206) 323-4825	janetwinans@earthlink.net

## Nominating Committee

<i>Chair</i>	Nancy Eitreim	(206) 329-4848	nancye@speakeasy.net
	Vicky Downs	(206) 329-4848	downsvdowns@aol.com
	Peggy Saari	(206) 329-4848	peggyasaari@comcast.net
	Liv Grohn Goodman	(206) 329-4848	livgrohn@verizon.net

The League of Women Voters of Seattle  
1620 18th Ave, Suite 101  
Seattle WA 98122

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Call the League office at (206) 329-4848 or  
email [info@seattlelwv.org](mailto:info@seattlelwv.org)

## **LWV SEATTLE: APRIL FORUM**

# Revenue Shortfalls and Local Impacts

### **Seattle First Baptist Church**

1111 Harvard Ave.  
(the corner of Harvard and Seneca)  
Seattle, WA

**Thursday, April 7**

6:30 p.m. - Discussion Leader Briefing

**7:30 p.m. - Forum**

All forums are open to the public.

### *Speakers include:*

- **Beth Goldberg**, director, City of Seattle Budget Office
- **Tom Goodwin**, chief economist, King County Office of Economic and Financial Analysis
- **Marc Baldwin**, Washington State Office of Financial Management