Death Penalty
by Kathy and Clarence Pugh

The League of Women Voters of the United States supports the abolition of the death penalty.

This position statement on abolition of the death penalty was adopted by the 2006 National Convention. The decision was made in concurrence with a position adopted by the LWV of Illinois. Since that time, state Leagues have used the position to support initiatives to abolish the death penalty in their own states.

In brief, the League of Women Voters of Illinois supports abolition of the death penalty in Illinois because it does not function as an appropriate punishment for the following reasons:

- Inadequate legal representation is a better predictor of who is sentenced to death than the facts of the crime.
- The death penalty system is prone to error to an extent that is unacceptable.
- That innocent people are being killed is not only possible, but likely. The error rate and the fact that any number of the exonerated were saved by luck or at the last minute points to an unacceptable risk of killing innocent people.
- The death penalty cannot be adequately reformed. Legislation cannot correct flaws such as: eyewitness error, false testimony, police and prosecutorial misconduct, arbitrariness (factors such as geography, race, and class).
- The international community is moving toward abolition of the death penalty.
- The death penalty is costly and quite often does not deliver the promised “ultimate justice.” The death penalty is much more expensive than its closest alternative—life imprisonment with no chance of parole.

This month’s forum is an effort to confront the issues involving the death penalty in Washington State. While the death penalty itself is a complex issue, it became personal for us in 1994 when the 18 year-old daughter of close friends was murdered. Two young men, 16 and 18 years of age, picked a young couple at random (our friends’ daughter and her fiancé), to rob, murder, and leave without identification along a rural road in Oregon. The violation of your child by murder is almost unbearable, and yet our friends steadfastly worked with the prosecuting attorney to secure prison sentences rather than death sentences. These friends were not and are not active in opposition to the death penalty; they believe each family must make its own decision. However, they did not favor the death penalty because they believed their murdered daughter would not have wanted a person killed on her behalf.

These friends acted with the prosecution to sort out how best they could confront this horrible situation, and the prosecutors worked with them. There are, of course, other stories. Later, we met Aba Gayle, who tells the story of the 1980 murder of her daughter Catherine. The district attorney assured her that the execution of the man responsible for Catherine’s

Continued on page 28
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President’s Message</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calendar</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum Schedule</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Briefs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committees</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King County Connects</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updates from State and National LWV</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olympia and Our Washington</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National News</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voter Service</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership News</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Members</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Memoriam</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy Birthday!</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join the League</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Death Penalty</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit Meetings</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board and Committee Contacts</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Connecting with the Leadership

The more things change. . . . Well, you know the rest of the saying. One of our members was recently researching some information in old Voters, including the one for February 1986, 30 years ago. The headline for the cover article: “Is There a Gun in Your Future? A Public Meeting on the Issue of Gun Control as It Stands Today.”

At our Planning Forum last month, one of the main topics of interest, yet again, was gun safety and gun violence. The issue is again at the forefront of public debate, as the United States seems to be in the midst of an epidemic of gun-related violence, from mass shootings to suicide, and an upsurge in gun ownership. Since President Obama is now taking up the issue seriously, and more people are talking about it—for both good and ill—just maybe we’ll inch forward toward some more reasonable laws to keep guns out of the hands of those who shouldn’t have them. And it’s time to insist on safety features to make a gun less likely to be used by someone not authorized to have it.

My personal—and pie-in-the-sky—opinion is that the Second Amendment is outdated and should be repealed, and it bothers me when the President, and others, say they believe in it. If you read Ro McCreary’s excellent article in last month’s Voter, quoting an MIT history professor, it’s clear that the Founding Fathers equated gun ownership with a militia that could be called up to defend the new country, since the United States at the time had no standing army. I believe that the current misrepresentation, that anyone can have and carry a gun anywhere, possibly to defend herself against a tyrannical US government, should be corrected at every opportunity.

That’s my soapbox speech for the month.

There were other similarities in the 1986 Voter to what we’re still doing today. The League endorsed school levies in Seattle, Mercer Island, and Shoreline. This year, we didn’t take a stand on levies outside Seattle, but as you know, we did endorse the two Seattle levies. We say that the State needs to step up to its “paramount responsibility” to fully fund education. The school operations levy on this ballot will fund over 25 percent of school operations, including teachers, textbooks, special education services, building security, and more. Interestingly, before 1986, the Legislature had put a lid on levies, requiring that districts begin to reduce their levies to the point where they could be no greater than 10% of the amount provided by the state.

What happened? In 1985, the Legislature, “to avoid the educational damage that would result if levies continued to fall without increased state support,” allowed districts to remain at the current levy capacity through 1988, with the assumption that levies would get smaller as state support grew. There are of course other aspects to the high rate of some levies—some districts want to tax themselves to provide additional school services, regardless of state support. But the more things change. . . .

What else remains the same? Fundraising, as always, was a concern. But today, there is a big difference in how and where we raise money:

In 1986, about one-third of the income was from dues, one-third from donations from members and the public, and one-third from the big fundraiser, the Political Party. Today, about one-fourth of our income is from dues, about one-half from donations, and one-fourth from fundraisers. We need and greatly appreciate all donations, but we obviously have to increase what we make from fundraising events.

Planning for our upcoming April 9 event—Fish, Fruit, Floods, and Fire: The Price of Carbon Pollution—is proceeding nicely, and we expect a good turnout. It will be an informative and entertaining event. Our speaker, Rod Brown, is

Continued on page 6
# Calendar

## February

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**Units meet during shaded period**

### FEBRUARY
- International Relations Committee
  - Monday, February 1
  - 12:45 p.m.
  - League Office
- Forum: Death Penalty
  - Thursday, February 4
  - 7:00 p.m.
  - Seattle First Baptist Church
- Board Meeting
  - Saturday, February 6
- **The Voter Deadline**
  - Monday, February 8
- Transportation Committee
  - Tuesday, February 16
  - 10:00 a.m.
  - League Office
- LWVVWA CER Committee
  - Thursday, February 18
  - 10:00 a.m.
  - League Office
- Education Committee
  - Thursday, February 25
  - 10:00 a.m.
  - League Office

### MARCH
- Forum: Gender Pay Gap
  - Thursday, March 3
  - 7:00 p.m.
  - Seattle First Baptist Church
- Board Meeting
  - Saturday, March 5
  - 9:00 a.m.
  - League Office
- International Relations Committee
  - Monday, March 7
  - 12:45 p.m.
  - League Office
- **The Voter Deadline**
  - Monday, March 7
The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC) presents a public forum most months between September and May, generally on the first Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. Most forums are held at the Seattle First Baptist Church, but occasionally they are scheduled at other locations and times. The tentative schedule of forums for 2015-6 appears at left; check The Voter each month or the LWVS-KC website, seattlelwv.org, for up-to-date information. Past forums are frequently televised and can be accessed from the resources page of the website.

### Board Briefs

The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County and Education Fund Boards met on Saturday, January 9, 2016. This is a summary of their work. This month’s briefs were written by Katie Dudley.

Compiling the TRY for 2016 has been nearing its end, and should be ready to distribute by late January – Allison has been working very hard on it. It is available now online, and will soon be available in print.

Cindy Piennett, C4 treasurer, outlined the League’s finances and emphasized that we all need to think creatively about ways that we can raise funds for the League. Fundraising ought to be a successful endeavor, and all ideas are welcome. The success of the spring event on April 9, 2016, is crucial, and we need our members to make it a success by volunteering as table captains, by getting your friends, family, and neighbors to attend, and by donating to the league.

Pat Griffith and Amanda Clark introduced Peter Mayer who spoke in favor of the two school levies on the ballot in February – Operations Levy Proposition 1, and Capital Levy (BTA IV) Proposition 2. Student enrollment in Seattle is increasing, unlike other large cities, where enrollment is in decline. As a result, old schools are being retrofitted and remodeled so that they can be re-opened to make room for all the students. The speaker invited to voice opposition to the school levies did not come to the meeting to speak, so Pat explained the opposition to the levies. The Board ultimately decided to endorse both levies, emphasizing the hope that this is the last time that we must endorse an operations levy.

Since the League takes a bit of a break during the holidays, our committee chairs had less to report on than usual. Janet Winans, Action Chair, spoke about the May 5th forum, which is about cleaning up the Duwamish River, and about holding that forum at the Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center. The board was enthusiastic about this idea and discussed how to make this easy for League members who regularly attend the forums on Capitol Hill.

Continued on next page
The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County (LWVS-KC), 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-KC recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making. LWVS-KC 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-KC affirms its commitment to reflecting the diversity of Americans in its membership, board, staff and programs.
Committees

**LWVWA Carbon Emissions Reduction Committee**
DATE: Thursday, February 18
TIME: 10:00 a.m.
PLACE: League Office

**Economics and Taxation Committee**
DATE:
TIME:
PLACE: 909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

No Regular Meeting this Month

**Education Committee**
DATE: Thursday, February 25
TIME: 11:00 a.m.
PLACE: League Office

**International Relations Committee**
DATE: Monday, February 1
TIME: 12:45 – 2:45 p.m.
PLACE: League Office

**Transportation Committee**
DATE: Tuesday, February 16
TIME: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
PLACE: League Office

We encourage participation in our committees by all interested members. It’s a great opportunity to meet and talk to community leaders, stakeholder organizations, and experts where you can have direct input on local issues that affect you.

Don’t see a committee that covers your issue? Call the office and let us know. Sometimes people are working more informally without regularly scheduled meetings. If so, we may be able to help connect you with them or help you start your own.

**Mission Statement**
The League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County, 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.
King County Connects — Announcements

THANK YOU AND GOOD-BYE!

The Seattle League and the CIS desk recently lost a pillar of the organization when Betty Sullivan and her husband, Jay, moved to Cincinnati to be closer to their daughter and family. Betty served as co-president of the League with Annette Holcomb from 2001-2003 and on the CIS desk as chair and volunteer for over ten years following. She received the Carrie Chapman Catt Award in 2009. Coming to the League from the Elections Department, Betty knew everything there was to know about voting procedures and elections. She updated the TRY every year, and was the knowledgeable voice on the phone at the desk. Always unassuming and humble, Betty was a steadfast and loyal League member whose work benefitted us all. Thank you, Betty. You will be sorely missed!

CIS Volunteers Wanted!

Do you want to be part of the action in the League? Want to know first-hand what is going on and get acquainted with the people who are involved? If you are a new or current member who wants to give a little time on a regular basis, join the CIS (Citizen Information Service).

We provide information over the phone to members and the community while serving a three-hour shift once a week. It's fun and educational, and we train you. If you can't commit to a regular shift, we welcome substitutes who are called as needed.

If you are interested, please call or email Cynthia Howe at: 206-236-0593; howe.john@comcast.net

GREAT DECISIONS STARTS FEBRUARY 9TH!

The time is 6:00 p.m., and meetings are every other week until May 17th. 
*FYI: The time of the meeting has been changed due to library hours. It will be 6 p.m. to 7:45 p.m.*


Order your Great Decisions briefing book from the Foreign Policy Association website: fpa.org

Questions? Call Ro McCreary at 206-687-7415. Topics this year include:

- Middle East
- The Rise of Isis
- The Future of Kurdistan
- Migration
- The Koreas
- The United Nations
- Climate Change
- Cuba and the US
Save the Date for our Spring Event!

Fish, Fruit, Fires, and Floods: The Price of Carbon Pollution

What is being done to curb carbon emissions in Washington? And what is not being done? What should we do?

Speaker: Rod Brown, Co-Chair, Washington Carbon Emissions Reduction Taskforce
Convened by Governor Inslee to evaluate approaches to carbon pricing.

Saturday, April 9, 2016, 11:30-2:00, at Town Hall Seattle


You can reserve online at seattlelwv.org/4F or send a check to the office.

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Want to bring more to League? Board members Wanted!

- Do you ever wonder how decisions about local League issues are made or how League works?
- Do you want to be more involved with local League decisions/issues?
- Do you have some free time to devote to increasing voter participation in our elective process?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions, please contact me to find out about serving on the Seattle-King County League of Women Voters Board of Directors for the 2016-18 cycle!

Ellen Barton, Nominating Committee Chair
Call (206) 321-7362 or email eeb0825@yahoo.com
Updates from our State and National Leagues

All members of the LWV of Seattle-King County are also automatically members of the LWV of Washington and the LWV of the United States, whose work focuses on issues of state and national concern, respectively. Be sure to sign up for weekly email newsletters and/or visit their websites: www.lwvwa.org and www.lwv.org for the latest information.

Olympia and Our Washington

The 2016 Legislative session is underway and our lobby team is hard at work. You should be receiving the weekly Legislative Newsletter every Sunday in your email. If you are not, it probably means we don’t have your current email address. Please update us, or if you don’t do email but would like to keep informed, let us know and we’ll see what we can do. Your participation by responding to the action alerts is incredibly powerful in helping League achieve its (our) goals for legislative priorities.

LWVWA is also celebrating the recent ruling in the case against Initiative 1366 (requiring the legislature to propose an amendment to the constitution or face an automatic reduction in the sales tax). We won both arguments that were made to the court and look forward to the legislature taking a hard look at raising revenue and developing a more equitable tax system this session. You can read more about the case and the decision on the state website.

Co-founder of the South Seattle Emerald and League member Marcus Green gave a powerful speech in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day last month. We think it is worth listening to this month in honor of Black History Month. You can link to it here: http://kuow.org/post/i-hear-racism-dead-even-my-own-black-brothers.

“As racism was once housed prominently in the hearts of unrepentant bigots, it stubbornly finds shelter in the institutions of our society and that society’s systems. The gears of these systems continue to be greased with black bodies and function regardless of the good intentions of the men and women pulling the lever.”

National News

The League has announced its Priority Federal Issues for 2016. These include:

- Restoring the Voting Rights Act and calls on the Obama administration to comply with the National Voter Registration Act requirements for voter registration when enrolling in health care under the ACA.
- Combatting Money in Politics by pushing for passage of the DISCLOSE Act and lobbying the Federal Elections Commission to address and better define disclosure and independent expenditures.
- Addressing Climate Change by building support for good implementation and compliance with the newly finalized Clean Power Plan.
- Tackling Redistricting via an amicus brief in a pending U.S. Supreme Court case which could radically upset the way districts are drawn and the kind of representation our communities receive.

National is also working to provide excellent voter education materials for the presidential election process, including primaries and caucuses.

This is a national convention year - this June in D.C. the delegates will determine League focus and priorities for the coming year, as well as get training for a variety of League activities and advocacy. If you think you might be interested in being a delegate, please contact the office at 206-329-4848 or info@seattlelwv.org.
Seattle School Levy Election – February 9, 2016
By Pat Griffith

The Seattle School levies for Operations and Building/Technology/Athletics/Academics (BTA IV) are on the ballot for the February 9th election. Unlike many urban school systems nationwide, Seattle enrollment has increased significantly since the last Operations levy three years ago and the last major construction levy six years ago. Now at 52,000 students, enrollment is projected to grow by 4,000 by 2020.

The Operations levy accounts for approximately 25% of the budget and of basic education expenditures and includes costs of teachers, textbooks, bilingual and special education, security, transportation, and student activities – costs that are not fully funded by the state. The levy rate is $2.39 per $1000 of assessed value. This levy replaces the expiring levy voted on in 2013. Seattle has the lowest levy rate in King County due to our healthy and growing tax base.

Though our state LWV positions do not support special levies for basic education, the League does support local levies as a stopgap measure until the state pays for basic education, as it ought to per the McCleary decision. We sincerely and strongly hope this is the last Operations levy for basic education and that the legislature resolves the funding issue quickly. Until then, we need special levies to serve our students’ needs.

The BTA IV levy is meant to fund buildings, major maintenance, seismic upgrades, capital financing for the Stanford Center, technology in the classroom, information and data security, increased lab space in middle and high schools, and improved lighting and turf for sports fields. Levy projects, outlined in detail, will add space for 2,000 students; 3,000 students are currently housed in portable classrooms. Sixty percent of Seattle school buildings are fifty years old or more.

Cost of the six-year levy is $475 million, with a home with an assessed value of $450,000.00 paying $11 a month in property taxes. Again, this replaces an expiring levy.

The state legislature has appropriated $14 million in Distressed Grant money for renovation of EC Hughes and Magnolia Elementary Schools due to large enrollment increases. However, the state match for construction projects is quite small. The McCleary court decision states that facilities for basic education should be funded by the state.

The board of LWVS-KC at its January 9 meeting endorsed both levies.

There are also levies on the ballot in the Auburn, Federal Way, Fife, Mercer Island, Renton, Tukwila and Vashon Island School Districts.

If there is an issue in your community that you think could benefit from League action, please contact President Amanda Clark or Action Chair Pat Griffith, in advance, so we can research and discuss the issue!
Voter Services

Our 2016 TRY (They Represent You: Directory of Elected Officials) is ready! League members and donors to the Education Fund will automatically receive a copy. If you would like additional copies just email us at info@seattlelwv.org or call 206-329-4848. We will mail one or two copies free of charge; we request postage reimbursement for larger quantities. You can also pick them up at the office.

Special thanks to volunteers Beatrice Crane, Cynthia Howe, Julie Anne Kempf, Candis Litsey, Michelle Lucien-Erickson, Diane Ramsey and Betty Sullivan for their hard work updating this year’s edition. We also wish to thank all our donors who support this and the many other voter service activities of League.

There is an electronic version of TRY on our website: www.seattlelwv.org.

Have you returned your completed ballot yet? Remember, the signed envelope must either be postmarked by February 9 or put in an official ballot drop box/van by 8 p.m. that same day. If you’ve misplaced your ballot or need to find a drop-off location, call 206-296-8683.

Caucuses for Republican Presidential Candidates!

Precinct Caucuses for the Republican Party are on Saturday, February 20. Contact the King County Republicans at 425-990-0404 or info@kcgop.org for details.
Getting Connected Membership News

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS
Cathy O’Shea

After attending the Action Workshop in the fall of 2015, Cathy O’Shea was inspired to join the League of Women Voters of Seattle King County. With her children launching their careers Cathy feels she now has the opportunity to engage in interests she had put on the back burner, one being civic affairs. She is looking forward to learning more about various issues and is particularly interested in issues such as transportation and taxation - things that impact social justice and equality in our country.

Cathy grew up in Seattle and earned her BS in Business and Accounting at University of Washington, and an MBA at Seattle University. She is a Senior Product Manager working on the launch of smart phones at AT&T Mobility. She and her husband live in Bellevue and enjoy biking, kayaking and planning their next trip, whether overseas or a quick weekend getaway.

Summer Stinson

Summer Stinson is a native Oregonian, educated entirely by the Oregon public school system. She graduated from Oregon State University with a BS in Liberal Studies (Women Studies/Ethnic Studies). She received her JD and graduated Order of the Coif from the University of Oregon School of Law. After graduation from law school, she clerked for the Honorable Johnnie B. Rawlinson, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Summer is a full-time lawyer; she practices employment, labor, and disability law. She is currently the Policy Director for the 36th District Democrats. She has served in leadership roles in many organizations, including at Oregon State University, New York Cares, San Francisco Street Project, and the PTA. However, her most treasured accomplishment is being a mom to a third grader, who attends Seattle Public Schools.

IN MEMORIAM
Janet Mitchell Lynch
April 7, 1928 – December 3, 2015

Janet Lynch, a long-time League member, passed away on December 3, 2015, at the age of 87. Janet was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1928, the daughter of a lawyer and nurse. Always a scholar with an inquisitive mind, Janet attended Smith College and Chatham College for Women, graduating with a master’s degree in chemistry. After marrying Levin Lynch and moving to Seattle in 1955 where she raised two children, Janet returned to college and earned a second master’s degree in public administration from the University of Washington.

Janet worked for the U.S. Census Bureau, the Wilderness Society, and as a Guardian ad Litem, advocating for the needs of children in custody battles. She served on the Mercer Island Park Board in 1983.

Janet joined the League of Women Voters in 1961 and was an active member of the Mercer Island unit, often serving as discussion leader. She served on study committees and volunteered on the CIS desk in the League office from 2006-2009.

Janet was a birder, a singer, a genealogist, and voracious reader. She was also an expert sailor, who sailed around Vancouver Island with her husband more than once. She was earnest and always quick to laugh, often at herself. Janet was full of life and had a very adventurous, generous spirit. She will be sorely missed at the League.

Janet is survived by her husband of 60 years, Levin. She is also survived by her daughter Jennie Nelson and Jennie's husband, Webb, and her son Jim Lynch, an author, and his wife Denise, as well as three grandchildren and three great grandchildren.
Happy Birthday to League!

This month we celebrate our 96th birthday and thought we’d share these song lyrics written by lifetime League member Olive Spannaus who celebrated her 100th birthday last month.

**THIS LEAGUE IS YOUR LEAGUE**

1. This League is your League,
   This League is my League,
   From brand new voter to seasoned citizen,
   From under-active to over-committed,
   This League belongs to you and me.

2. Since 1920 this League’s been growing
   Those lively issues to full-blown studies,
   Reaping consensus, producing action,
   Grass-roots-y as a League can be.

3. With Voter Service League wheels keep turning,
   Providing info to J. Q. Public
   Recruiting voters the B.J.Klump way
   For civic responsibility.

4. If Carrie Chapman Catt and all her cohorts
   Could view the fruits of their grand endeavors,
   They’d point with pride and explode with pleasure:
   "Whooppe -- still making history!!"

1. This League is your League,
   This League is my League,
   From brand new voter to seasoned citizen,
   From under-active to over-committed,
   This League was meant for you and me...
   This League depends on you and me...
   We know the best is yet to be!

League members Bertena Hendrie, Roberta Martin, Nancy Eitreim, Boots Winterstein (Olive’s daughter) and Eleanor Laxdall serenading Olive Spannaus (seated) at her birthday party on January 23.
Join the League!

Take part in informed discussions of the issues facing our communities. Members automatically receive the VOTER, either in print or electronically, for the latest updates on current studies and action, monthly forums, committee activities, voter registration, and other volunteer opportunities. In addition, members receive action alerts about legislation in Olympia and Washington, D.C., as well as publications from the state League.

League membership is open to women and men.

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: _____________________________________________________________________________

City/State/Zip: _______________________________________________________________________

Phone: ______________________ Email: _______________________________________

Dues and contributions:
□ $75 one year individual membership
□ $115 one year household membership
□ $40 low income
□ $35 student
□ Enclosed is a contribution of $ __________

Please make your check payable to LWVS-KC and return with this form or go online to www.seattlelwv.org/membership.

Membership dues and contributions are not tax deductible; however, eligible tax deductible contributions may be made to the LWVS-KC Education Fund.

□ This is a gift membership from: ________________________________

Thank you for supporting the work of the LWV!

Please return this form to:
League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County
1620 18th Avenue, Suite 101
Seattle, WA  98122-7007

Celebrating 96 years of educating voters, improving elections, and making democracy work!
A descendent of slaves, Bryan Stevenson grew up poor, but attended college and later graduated from Harvard Law School. There, he took “an unusual one-month intensive course on race and poverty litigation.” He flew to Atlanta, Georgia, where he spent “a few weeks working with the Southern Prisoners Defense Committee (SPDC).”

One of Stevenson’s first tasks was “to go to death row to meet with a condemned man whom no one else had time to visit.” The prisoner “had been on the row for over two years” but SPDC “didn’t yet have a lawyer to take his case.” Stevenson’s job was to convey “one simple message: You will not be killed in the next year.”

He met “Henry” and passed on the message. The experience helped Stevenson understand he did have something to offer, if only his willingness to try to help. With that in mind, he committed himself to helping death row inmates.

Much of the book focuses on Water McMillian who was wrongfully accused of murder and would shortly have been executed if not for the work done by Stevenson and others. McMillian had been miles away at a barbecue, surrounded by scores of people at the time of the murder. However, everyone at the barbecue was black, and that mattered. The author points out that many judges in the South are elected, making them politicians asking voters for their help. In the South no one is likely to be elected to any office if he can’t find a murderer of a white woman.

I found it impossible not to be emotionally drawn in by stories of individual inmates. Marsha Colbey delivered a stillborn son and “desperately tried to revive the infant, but he never took a breath.” A nosy neighbor noticed Marsha was no longer pregnant yet saw no baby, so called the police. Marsha reacted badly to the officer’s personal questions and insinuations. Within a few weeks of the stillbirth “she was arrested and charged with capital murder.”

Having told us Marsha’s story, the author then introduces us to the wider picture. We learn that “most women on death row are awaiting execution for a family crime involving an allegation of child abuse or domestic violence involving a male partner.” We also learn that America has “always struggled against high rates of infant mortality.” In addition, “Communities [at that time] were on the lookout for bad moms who should be put in prison.”

Simply keeping Marsha safe in prison was difficult. Talk of sexual violence in women’s prisons frequently came up during visits with Marsha and other women. Male guards raped many of them, frequently when they were in the showers. It took a long time to deal with these problems, but eventually Marsha was freed “after ten years of wrongful imprisonment.”

The author pulls us in, tells emotionally powerful stories and teaches us a great deal about the very slowly improving justice system throughout the country, though his main focus is on the South. His interest is not on his own very considerable work, but rather on the injustice in the justice system itself, especially as it affects the poor and vulnerable. He shows us that evil can be checked if not absolutely stopped.
Program

The Death Penalty

The execution chamber at the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla. AP Photo/Ted S. Warren

This month’s materials and forum were prepared by League members Sherry Kew, Kathy and Clarence Pugh, and Marlis Worthington.
1. Why do people support the death penalty?

2. Why do people oppose the death penalty?

3. What do you think are the most important issues if we keep or abolish the death penalty? Should morality and cost be issues?

4. What did you know about the death penalty before reading the Voter? How can we educate others on the death penalty?

5. What do you think the LWV should do concerning the death penalty?
In spite of historic public support for the death penalty, Americans have always been uncomfortable with it. The hundreds of crimes that once carried the death penalty have been winnowed down over the years to a relative few.

Of the world’s 196 countries, the United States is among only about 67 that impose the death penalty, sharing that distinction with other like-minded nations such as China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Cuba (Cuba’s last execution was in 2003). The death penalty has been completely abolished in all European countries except for Belarus. In Russia, the death penalty is under moratorium, therefore, the country is abolitionist in practice. In 2014, executions were recorded in 22 countries. This is a significant decrease from 20 years ago, when there were executions in 42 countries.

In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court invalidated the death penalty laws in all states, saying that their imposition was so “arbitrary and capricious,” and that it was given for so many crimes and so unevenly, that it amounted to “cruel and unusual punishment” and could not be considered constitutional. They left the door open, however, for states to re-introduce new laws, with imposition of the death penalty limited to those who have committed murder in the course of carrying out other crimes, or murder of persons in protected categories.

In 1976, the U.S. Supreme Court began approving new state death penalty laws, with the first from the state of Georgia. New procedures approved by the U.S. Supreme Court, however, have not assured an evenly applied system from state to state and locality to locality. Pushback by politicians and the public has eroded the system mandated by the Supreme Court. In 1993, Congress passed, and President Bill Clinton signed, the “Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEDPA)” that in part:

- Placed stringent limits on the length of time appeals at any step could take;
- Limited the length of briefs filed in the case;
- Required “deference” that succeeding courts had to give to previous courts and the jury in the decisions that had been made.

The shortening of the process risks killing innocent people. The AEDPA effectively cut off defendants’ ability to prove their innocence if the issues were not raised in their original trial or at earlier appeal. In 2006, in an Oregon case, the U.S. Supreme Court determined a capital defendant did not have the right to introduce new evidence of his or her innocence during the sentencing proceedings because the evidence had not been introduced at trial. Justice Antonin Scalia said in his opinion on the Troy Davis case, “This court has never held that the Constitution forbids the execution of a convicted defendant who has had a full and fair trial but is later able to convince a habeas court that he is ‘actually’ innocent.”

In Washington state, the death penalty was abolished in 1914 and reinstated in 1919. The statute remained unchanged until 1975, when it was again abolished. A measure in 1978 reinstated it for a second time as the mandatory penalty for aggravated murder in the first degree. U.S. Supreme Court rulings in 1976 and 1977 meant that the 1975 law was unconstitutional and so the statute was modified to give detailed procedures for imposing the death penalty. This new law was also found unconstitutional by the Washington Supreme Court, because as it was written, a person who had pled not guilty could be sentenced to death after conviction, while someone who pled guilty would receive a maximum sentence of life imprisonment without possibility of parole. The current law was
passed in 1981 to correct these constitutional defects and inconsistencies.

**Current Law for Capital Punishment (Sentence of Death) in Washington State – Aggravated First Degree Murder Chapter 10.95 RCW**

A person is guilty of aggravated first-degree murder, a Class A felony, if he or she commits first degree murder and one or more of the aggravating circumstances exist. The following is a summary of the twelve aggravating circumstances that various groups have successfully lobbied to have included in the law:

- Murder of an on-duty law enforcement officer, corrections officer, or firefighter
- Murder by a prisoner
- Contract killing
- Murder to obtain or maintain membership or to advance position in the hierarchy of an organization, association, gang, or identifiable group
- Murder resulting from the discharge of a firearm from or near a motor vehicle
- Murder of judge, juror, witness, prosecuting or defense attorney, member of the indeterminate sentence review board; or probation or parole officer
- Murder to conceal the commission of a crime
- Murder of more than one person
- Murder while committing robbery, rape, burglary, kidnapping, arson
- Murder of a news reporter to obstruct or hinder
- Murder of a person who held a restraining order against the assailant
- Murder of a person with whom the murderer was a “family or household member”

As in any other state, a person who is under 18 at the time of commission of the capital crime (*Roper v. Simmons*, 2004) or a person who is mentally retarded (*Atkins v. Virginia*, 2002) is constitutionally precluded from being executed.

**Chronological Summary of a Capital Case in Washington State**

The term “Capital Case” is used when the prosecuting attorney decides to ask the jury for a death sentence. Because death is irreversible, litigation is complex for the attorneys and the court with constitutional law and procedures not involved in other cases. The prosecution must make every effort to ensure that a person actually guilty of the crime is convicted fairly, and the defendant’s attorneys must make the same effort to see the defendant receives a fair and complete defense including mitigating circumstances. Capital cases require the attorneys and the court to inquire extensively into jurors’ opinions about the death penalty. In the *New Yorker* (Sept. 14, 2015), Judy Clarke, a well-known death penalty lawyer, says one legal adage is “the first step in losing a death penalty case is picking a jury.”

A sample King County jury questionnaire includes many questions asking for the prospective juror’s job title and duties, current relationship status, and also the spouse/partner’s occupation, place of employment and highest level of education. Each prospective juror’s opinion on the death penalty is scrutinized in writing and through individual *voir dire* (questioning of prospective jurors by a judge and attorneys in court). The prospective juror must indicate how strongly opposed or in favor she is of the death penalty and whether mercy should play a role in her decision between the death penalty and life in prison without release. Questions include what one's political persuasion is, and what cable news is watched.

If a juror is categorically opposed to the death penalty, or believes that the death penalty must be imposed in all instances of aggravated murder, or would not be able to follow the law, that potential juror is excused. The process continues until enough jurors can be impaneled for a jury. This process may take a month. Once chosen, the juror may not discuss or research anything to do with the case outside what is heard.
in court under penalty of contempt of court.

The capital trial has two phases: merit (guilt or innocence) and penalty. The merit phase is a traditional trial where a jury is asked whether the prosecuting agency has proven every element of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt.

In capital cases, if a jury finds the defendant guilty of aggravated murder, then a special sentencing proceeding (the “penalty phase”) is conducted before the same jury to determine the punishment. A penalty phase has all the aspects of the merit phase. The penalty trial often runs days or weeks, dictated by the amount of evidence, witnesses and arguments each side presents.

Upon the conclusion of the evidence and argument at the special sentencing proceeding, the jury is directed to deliberate on the following statutorily mandated question: “Having in mind the crime of which the defendant has been found guilty, are you convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that there are not sufficient mitigating circumstances to merit leniency?”

If the jury unanimously answers the question in the affirmative, the sentence is death. If, however, the jury in a Washington state court does not unanimously answer the question in the affirmative, then the sentence must be life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Appellate Level
The lengthy appeals process has evolved over many years. Washington’s statute provides for automatic review and appeal to the Washington Supreme Court of all death penalty sentences. If the court determines the defendant is competent and the waiver is knowing, intelligent and voluntary, the defendant may waive direct appeal; however, the Court must still conduct the mandatory review.

If the Washington Supreme Court affirms the capital conviction and sentence on direct appeal, the defendant may file a Personal Restraint Petition in the Supreme Court to raise issues not considered in the trial or on direct appeal such as claims of ineffective assistance of counsel, prosecutorial misconduct or newly discovered evidence.

If appeals fail at the state level, a capital defendant may file petitions in the United States District Court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and the U.S. Supreme Court. Counsel for the defense is paid at public expense borne by the federal government. The Washington Attorney General represents the state.

If those appeals fail, an execution date is set for 30 days after the date of denial.

Under Washington law, a defendant may petition the state Clemency and Pardons Board for review. The Board must hold a public hearing. The Board reviews petitions for commutation of sentences and pardoning offenders in extraordinary cases and makes recommendations to the governor.

Methods of Execution
Methods of execution have changed, usually because the ones being used offended the sensibilities of the public and the authorities. “Better” ways were developed, often using more modern technology. In the United States, hanging was supplanted by the use of lethal gas, then electrocution, which was succeeded by lethal injection. Each of these in turn was thought to be more respectful of life – even as the life was taken away. In the first part of the twentieth century, the state ruled that the general public is barred from witnessing executions.

Washington’s capital punishment law requires that capital punishment imposed by the state's courts be carried out at the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla. Procedures for conducting executions are supervised by the Penitentiary Superintendent.
According to the Revised Code of Washington, executions in Washington “…shall be inflicted by intravenous injection of a substance or substances in a lethal quantity sufficient to cause death and until the defendant is dead, or, at the election of the defendant, by hanging by the neck until the defendant is dead.” (1996) Although Delaware and New Hampshire allow execution by hanging, Washington is the only state with an active gallows.

On September 10, 2010, Washington became the second state, after Ohio, to use a single dose injection of Sodium Thiopental as opposed to the typical three drug protocol used in most other jurisdictions. The single-drug protocol was used during the execution of Cal Brown.

Executions in Washington State

Since 1904, 78 persons have been executed in Washington, none of whom were women. Of those executed 66 were Caucasian, 7 Black, 2 Asian, 2 Hispanic and 1 Eskimo.

The majority of Washington's death penalty sentences are overturned and those convicted of capital offenses are rarely executed, indicating questionable sentencing in many cases. Since 1981, 33 defendants have been sentenced to die. One man, Benjamin Harris, was released from prison after 13 years on death row and is considered to be an individual wrongfully convicted and sentenced to death. Of the 24 who completed the appeals process, 18 had their sentences converted to life in prison.

During the same period, there were 298 non-death penalty cases for aggravated first-degree murder. Of 201 appeals filed, only 15 were reversed. Thus, since 1981, 75 percent (that is, 18 of 24) of the death penalty cases that completed review resulted in reversal compared to the 7.5% reversal rate of the non-death penalty appeals.

Five individuals have been executed by the state of Washington since the death penalty statute was reformed following the 1976 Supreme Court decisions. Two individuals exhausted their appeals before the sentence was imposed and three waived their non-statutorily mandated review. Two were killed by hanging, and three by lethal injection.

The nine current death row prisoners are all men. As of 2014, Washington state's population was just 4 percent black and 81 percent white. Yet four of the men on death row are black; five are white. All nine of these cases are pending appeals in either state or federal court.

Overall, the Trend in the U.S. is Downward

From 1998 to 2014, U.S. death sentences have declined by 75 percent. From 1999 to 2014, U.S. executions have declined by 64 percent. Since 2007, seven states have abolished their death penalties by vote of the legislature or have had their death penalty invalidated by their supreme courts. The Governors of four states, including Washington, have declared execution moratoriums during their terms in office. Nineteen states and Washington D.C. now do not have the death penalty.

During 2015, there were 28 executions, the lowest number since 1991. Just six states put inmates to death. Texas executed 12 people; Missouri executed 6; Georgia 5; Florida 2; and Virginia and Oklahoma each 1. While there are nearly 3,000 state and federal prisoners on death rows, new death sentences went down in 2015 to just 49, the lowest number since 1973.

Why Are Opinions on the Death Penalty Changing?

Lack of deterrence

The South has accounted for over 80% of executions since 1976. Yet the 2014 FBI Uniform Crime Report showed that the South had the highest murder rate and that states with the death penalty generally do not have lower murder rates. The Northeast is lowest, with the West
and the Midwest in between. The only state in the Northeast region with the death penalty is New Hampshire; one person is on death row there.

**Innocence**

Since 1976, more than 150 people who had been sentenced to death have been exonerated and set free. Nationwide data shows that it can take 20-30 years to develop the evidence that shows that a person sentenced to death is actually innocent. For every 9 people executed, one person has been found to be innocent. Although 334 people have been exonerated of various crimes by DNA evidence across the country (The Innocence Project, November 2015) DNA evidence is not found in most death penalty cases so it is not available to prove innocence.

**Problems with executions**

The execution procedure is not foolproof. On September 15, 2015, in the latest botched execution around the country, the state of Ohio failed in its attempt to execute death row prisoner Romell Broom. Guards spent two hours unsuccessfully trying to find suitable veins for the lethal injection, even with Broom’s assistance while he was strapped down on the death table. Some of the IV injection personnel walked out saying they couldn’t take it anymore.

Drugs used in the three-drug cocktail used to kill condemned people have been produced in the European Union. The E.U. has forbidden those drugs to be used for lethal executions. Therefore, some states are experimenting with other formulas, often purchasing drugs from compounding pharmacies that are not regulated by the United States. The names of the providers of these lethal drugs are, interestingly, not disclosed. This practice has resulted in failure during executions.

**Forensic evidence**

Some types of forensic evidence that have been commonly used and were once considered state-of-the-art are now disavowed by the FBI and other agencies because they have been found to be without scientific validity. Among these are:

- Eye Witness Testimony has not been disavowed in its entirety, but studies show that it is unreliable and has resulted in numerous incorrect convictions and death sentences. A first-person account of the unreliability of eyewitness testimony is Picking Cotton, 2009, by Jennifer Thompson-Cannino, Ronald Cotton, and Erin Torneo. See also Make Believe Memories, by Elizabeth Loftis, University of California Irvine, in American Psychologist, 2003.
- Lie Detector evidence is no longer allowed at trial, although it can be used as an investigative tool.
- Microscopic Hair Analysis is not allowed at trial. DNA evidence from hair is allowed.
- Modern studies in Fire Science have invalidated older methods of interpreting suspected arson investigation practices. Cameron Willingham was convicted and executed in a Texas case in which the arson evidence has been thoroughly refuted and Willingham shown to have been innocent.
- Bullet Lead Analysis was a standard forensic tool used by law enforcement agencies from the FBI to the local levels. The FBI has now recognized that it is not possible to match one bullet to another by batch.

Most cases have no medical forensic evidence. Experts estimate that only 5 to 10 percent of criminal cases in the U.S. involve biological evidence, and there is consensus that proving innocence on appeal without the scientific proof of DNA results can be an uphill battle.

**Effects on Citizens and Public Employees**

The judges and the citizens who are called to jury service must make terrible decisions regarding life or death. They are all caught up in a process that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Many jury members have report-
ed lingering doubts and guilt over the decisions they had made.

The family members of the victims and of the executed persons suffer, too. They grieve and they feel helpless to be able to affect the proceedings.

State and federal employees serve on the execution “teams” and report severe reactions to their experiences. Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, guilt, remorse, and conflicted feelings are common results.

Dr. Marc Stern, the former assistant secretary of healthcare for the Washington Department of Corrections, commented on physician participation in executions in the wake of the botched lethal injections in Oklahoma and Arizona. Dr. Stern resigned rather than cooperate with his state’s execution plan. He explained his views, “Although its foundation is in medical science, lethal injection is not a medical procedure: it has no therapeutic value, and it is not taught in medical school. A ‘successful’ lethal injection would require the training and expertise of a medical professional. Finding and accessing a vein – especially in someone who is older, obese or has abused drugs – can be challenging. Choosing a proper medication dose for a patient, monitoring medication administration and its effects, and making necessary course corrections need the expertise of a professional. But legitimate medical procedures are subject to scientific study, open discussion among peers, training, supervisory oversight and improvements in technique. Lethal injection will never benefit from these safeguards for one critically important reason: it violates medical ethics.” He acknowledged that some medical professionals are willing to anonymously participate in the process. “However,” Stern wrote, “we will continue to risk botched executions because they are conducted in a scientific vacuum.”

(Marc Stern, “I was told to approve a lethal injection, but it violates my basic medical ethics,” The Guardian, August 6, 2014)

Frank Thompson, former superintendent of the Oregon State Penitentiary and warden of prisons for the Arkansas Department of Corrections, has supervised two executions with his teams of corrections officers. He is “aware of the immeasurable burden that this process places on correctional officers” and that “awful, lifelong repercussions that can occur as a result in carrying out executions.” He believes that established protocols, not the death penalty, are most effective in keeping prisons safe for corrections staff and inmates. Violence is most often because of either human error or negligence or insufficient funding for programs to treat inmates with alcohol and drug dependency or mental illnesses, appropriate inmate-to-staff ratios for the proper supervision of prisoners, adequate activities and work programs, and effective classification systems that provide guidance on how to properly house and program inmates. (Frank Thompson, “Ex-warden: Death penalty doesn’t make guards safer,” The News Journal, April 1, 2015)

Chiefs of Police across the nation also say that having the death penalty is the least effective tool in lowering violent crime. (“Smart on Crime: Reconsidering the Death Penalty in a Time of Economic Crisis,” Richard Dieter, Death Penalty Information Center Report, 2009)

Voices from Washington State

**Governor Jay Inslee announces capital punishment moratorium**

On February 11, 2014, Governor Jay Inslee announced a capital punishment moratorium. Inslee’s decision came after months of review of the status of capital punishment in Washington state.

Inslee said it is clear to him that use of capital punishment is inconsistent and unequal, and it’s time to have a conversation about ensuring equal justice under the law.

“Equal justice under the law is the state’s primary responsibility. And in death penalty cases, I’m not convinced equal justice is being served,” Inslee said. “The use of the death penalty in this
state is unequally applied, sometimes dependent on the budget of the county where the crime occurred.”

The moratorium means that if a death penalty case comes to the governor's desk for action, he will issue a reprieve. This action does not commute the sentences of those on death row or issue any pardons. A new governor would choose whether or not to maintain Governor Inslee's order and issue reprieves in new cases.

Seattle City Leaders
Seattle's Mayor Ed Murray, all 9 members of the Seattle City Council, and City Attorney Pete Holmes signed a letter in support of a bi-partisan bill to abolish the death penalty in Washington. Tim Burgess, then President of the City Council, is a former police officer and detective. The joint letter said: “There is no credible evidence showing that the death penalty deters homicide or makes our communities safer. Instead, pursuing capital punishment diverts precious resources from critical public safety programs, delays final resolution for victims’ families and has serious implications for racial and social equity.” Among the reasons given for abolition were the high cost of death penalty trials and the lengthy appeals required in death penalty cases. The nine inmates on Washington's death row have spent an average of 17 years awaiting execution. (Steve Miletich, “Seattle city leaders urge state legislators to abolish death penalty,” The Seattle Times, January 26, 2015)

King County Decision Not to Seek Death Penalty
King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg is not seeking the death penalty against Michele Anderson after a jury returned a life sentence for her co-defendant, Joseph McEnroe. McEnroe and Anderson were charged with killing six members of Anderson's family in 2007 in what Satterberg called “one of the worse crimes we've ever had in King County.” Satterberg explained his decision in a news conference on July 29, 2015, saying, “To proceed with the death penalty against defendant Anderson, in light of the sentence imposed [on] defendant McEnroe, would not be in the interest of justice.” Pam Mantle, the mother of one of the victims, said she was relieved by the decision. "It's been devastating for all of our friends and family,” said Mantle. "We're all just worn out from the whole thing. It's almost eight years.”

Michelle Anderson has spent time in a state mental institution during her pretrial incarceration, portending extensive mental health evidence if the death penalty was pursued in her case. After a highly publicized six-month trial, a King County jury sentenced the mentally ill defendant, Christopher Monfort, to a life sentence in the killing of a Seattle police officer. Seeking the death penalty against Anderson, McEnroe, and Monfort cost King County taxpayers more than $15 million in defense costs alone. (Joseph O’Sullivan, “Prosecutors won't seek death penalty for Michele Anderson,” The Seattle Times, July 29, 2015; Steve Lerner, “Is Washington moving away from the death penalty?” KIRO Radio, July 30, 2015)

The Seattle Times Editorial Board
On November 17, 2015 the Board published the following editorial:

The Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys has the right idea to push for direction on the death penalty. The final decision should rest with Olympia lawmakers, who need to exhibit moral leadership, take a vote and say no to capital punishment.

Washington's death penalty is an albatross - a massively expensive punishment, applied unevenly, that needs to be abolished.

Sensing a shift in public opinion, the group, whose membership is split, sent a letter to the Legislature asking that a referendum on the death penalty be sent to voters in 2016.

A better idea is for lawmakers to take up this issue, explore the waste of public resources and inequity in its application, and pass a law repealing the death penalty. Gov. Jay Inslee,
who announced a moratorium on executions during his tenure, has said that he would sign it.

Forty years ago, Washingtonians voted for Initiative 316 to support capital punishment. As the prosecutors note in their statement, most residents today didn't participate in that election. This is a tough issue for public servants who've seen the worst of the worst and work to comfort the families of murder victims. The prosecutors are not taking a formal position, pro or con. Instead, as they write, we “want to know that when we embark on the long and difficult process of capital punishment for the worst crimes inflicted upon our community that we are doing so with the support and approval of the people we represent.”

Seattle University Study on Costs of the Death Penalty in Washington

A Seattle University study examining the costs of the death penalty in Washington found that each death penalty case cost an average of $1 million more than a similar case where the death penalty was not sought ($3.07 million, versus $2.01 million). Defense costs were about three times as high in death penalty cases and prosecution costs were as much as four times higher than for non-death penalty cases.

Although Washington's death penalty was reinstated in 1981, the study examined cases from 1997 onwards. Using only cases in the study, the gross bill to taxpayers for the death penalty will be about $120 million. Washington has carried out five executions since reinstatement, implying a cost of $24 million per execution. In three of those five cases, the inmate waived parts of his appeals, thus reducing costs.


League of Women Voters in Washington is one of the 35 endorsers of the campaign of Safe and Just Alternatives.

Safe and Just Alternatives supports legislation to repeal the death penalty in Washington. SJA is a diverse group that includes law enforcement and corrections officials, murder victims’ family members, and faith and community leaders from across the state.

Other endorsers include ACLU of Washington, American Friends Service Committee Northwest, Amnesty International USA, Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of King County, Black Pastor Association, Catholic Mobilizing Network, King County Bar Association, Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation, NAACP of Seattle/King County, Seattle Human Rights Commission, Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, and Washington Community Action Network.

Summary of the Facts from Safe and Just Alternatives

- The death penalty costs taxpayers millions of dollars each year — far more than life in prison.
- The death penalty does not deter crime.
- The death penalty does not provide swift and certain justice. Murder victims’ families and the public need justice to be swift and sure. Capital cases take far longer than cases where the death penalty is not sought. As a result, victim family members must endure an average of about 20 years of trials, appeals and retrials. Death penalties are often overturned.
- The death penalty is applied unequally. A man who murdered one woman was put to death, while another man who was convicted of murdering 49 women—and confessed to killing many more—received a life sentence.

Many Washington counties cannot afford to
seek the death penalty, so the rate at which counties seek the death penalty varies widely. Among counties with five or more aggravated murder cases since 1981, the death penalty was sought at a rate ranging from a high of 67% in Thurston County to a low of 0% in Okanogan and Yakima Counties. Whether or not someone receives a death sentence often depends on their income level and race. (Katherine Beckett, Report, 2014, “The Role of Race in Washington State Capital Sentencing, 1981-2012”)

LWV Support of Legislation to Abolish the Death Penalty in Washington

The 2015-16 Companion Bills to abolish the death penalty in the Washington Legislature are HB 1739 and SB 5639: Reducing criminal justice expenses by eliminating the death penalty in favor of life incarceration.

HB 1739 is sponsored by 17 Democratic and Republican Representatives including from King County: Reuven Carlyle, Chad Magendanz, Joe Fitzgibbon, Mia Gregerson, Roger Goodman, Gerry Pollet, Jessyn Farrell, Zack Hudgins, and Eileen Cody.

In Senate SB 5639 is sponsored by 9 Senators including from King County: Mark Miloscia, Jeanne Kohl-Welles, Jamie Pedersen, Maralyn Chase, Bob Hasegawa, and Karen Keiser.

The LWVWA supports HB 1739 and SB 5639. Susan Eidenschink from the LWVWA Lobby Team wrote that the legislation “accomplishes the goal of the League of Women Voters to abolish the death penalty. This legislation would replace the death penalty in Washington State with a sentence of life without parole. This is a safe and just alternative that will reduce the expenses associated with a capital case. This alternative also eliminates the risk of executing an innocent person and adds more fairness to the sentencing process.”

Why Is It So Difficult to Abolish the Death Penalty?

Six in ten Americans still support use of the death penalty although support drops below 50 percent when the punishment is life in prison with no chance of parole. Five common reasons are given for support of the death penalty:

- A murderer deserves to die.
- I don’t want my money spent giving a murderer a cozy life in prison.
- It is what I would want if s/he killed my family member or friend.
- Shouldn’t the worst criminals like a mass murderer be killed?
- We need to be tough on crime.

The death penalty is an established part of American life, and most people do not spend time thinking or learning more about it. They leave the handling of crime to police and prosecutors, some of whom claim the death penalty is necessary to help them negotiate guilty pleas in many murder cases.

Knowledgeable League members are needed to help abolish of the death penalty. Talk with friends and family about the issue. Contact state legislators by mail or in person. Let legislators and other officials who do support abolition know that you back their position. Ask federal, state and local candidates what their position is.
death would make everything all right and she would heal. For eight years, she lived with hate even as she was studying great spiritual leaders who show us how to live in harmony. Aba Gayle decided to write the man on death row to tell him she forgave him, and from that action she felt healed. She continues to write to the prisoner and to speak out against the death penalty through her own website as well as speaking for organizations such Murder Victims Families for Reconciliation (MVFR) and Journey of Hope.

Forgiveness is personal. MVFR, in which Aba Gayle participates, neither promotes nor discourage forgiveness. Instead, MVFR members individually oppose the death penalty for a variety of reasons. For some, it violates ethical, moral, and/or religious beliefs. MVFR recognizes the risk of executing an innocent person “in our names” while failing as a deterrent to violence. Members see that the death penalty is applied disproportionately to people who are poor, have severe mental illness, and are people of color. For many, the death penalty complicates grieving and interferes with healing.

The death penalty is questioned from many directions. Former wardens from Georgia and Oklahoma found that most of the victims’ families do not experience the relief they expected with the execution. Among the materials in this Voter is the testimony of another friend of ours, Frank Thompson, former Superintendent of the Oregon State Penitentiary, expressing his thoughts as one who carried out the mandate of death.

Since we became concerned about this issue, we have attended death penalty trials and retrials and have seen first-hand the horror they bring into the lives of the victims’ and the defendants’ families. At one trial, we came to know the father of the defendant, the only person there in support of his son. At the second of three retrials of an Oregon mass murderer, we spent time with a young woman whose mother was murdered by the defendant in 1987 when she was a child. She felt uncomfortable sitting anywhere in the courtroom. She did not want to sit on the murderer’s side nor did she want to sit with the other victims’ families because, unlike her, they all supported the death penalty. Following another trial, after the sentencing of a defendant to death, three young people who sat on the jury making that difficult decision were outside the courthouse crying.

Please read the laws, history and opinions within this Voter and consider actively supporting the League’s position for abolition of the death penalty in Washington and the United States.
# Unit Meetings

(Unit times and locations subject to change; please verify with unit leader.)

Meetings are open to all.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Leader email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, February 8</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRST HILL</strong> – Adele Reynolds</td>
<td>206-621-4867</td>
<td>10:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Horizon House, Forum &amp; Social Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:adelereynolds@netscape.net">adelereynolds@netscape.net</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>900 University St., Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPITOL HILL/MONTLAKE</strong> –</td>
<td>206-329-4848</td>
<td>7:15 p.m.</td>
<td>Hostess: Linnea Hirst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1602 E McGraw St., Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>206-322-3076</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH SEATTLE</strong> - Marian Wolfe and Vivian Montoya</td>
<td>206-763-9430</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:hedgwolfe@aol.com">hedgwolfe@aol.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Address: 5511 52nd Ave S, Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:montoyaviv@gmail.com">montoyaviv@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>206-695-2620</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, February 9</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BELLEVUE/KIRKLAND/REDMOND</strong> –</td>
<td>425-820-7127</td>
<td>12:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Bellevue Library, Room 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonnie Rimawi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1111 110th Ave NE, Bellevue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:bonnierim@aol.com">bonnierim@aol.com</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wednesday, February 10</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORTHEAST SEATTLE</strong> (formerly View Ridge) – Kay Beck</td>
<td>206-523-3127</td>
<td>12:45 p.m.</td>
<td>Brig Bldg. (6344) in Magnuson Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:kbeck25@comcast.net">kbeck25@comcast.net</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Directions:</em> Go into the Park through North entrance at 74th and drive EAST toward water. At the STOP sign, turn LEFT to park in front of the Brig, or RIGHT, for more parking. There will be a speaker.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA/BALLARD EVENING</strong> - Kathy Pugh and Marlis Worthington</td>
<td>503-580-1240</td>
<td>7:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Magnolia Church of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:ckp1966@comcast.net">ckp1966@comcast.net</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3555 W McGraw St, Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:marliswrt@hotmail.com">marliswrt@hotmail.com</a></td>
<td>206-283-7147</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday, February 11</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MERCER ISLAND</strong> – Cynthia Howe</td>
<td>206-236-0593</td>
<td>9:30 a.m.</td>
<td>Emmanuel Episcopal Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:howe.john@comcast.net">howe.john@comcast.net</a></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4400 86th Ave SE, Mercer Island</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(Unit times and locations subject to change; please verify with unit leader.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Leader email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Margaret Austin</td>
<td>425-392-5760</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Echo Room, Issaquah City Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>130 East Sunset Way, Issaquah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University House/</td>
<td>206-329-4848</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>University House, Auditorium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallingford</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4400 Stone Way N, Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cathy Dormaier</td>
<td>360-802-6799</td>
<td>11:30 a.m.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Orlando</td>
<td>206-524-0936</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6536 31st Ave NE, Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethel Williams/Pat Lane</td>
<td>206-932-7887</td>
<td>1:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Daystar Retirement Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>206-932-1578</td>
<td></td>
<td>2615 SW Barton, Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni Potter</td>
<td>206-365-8949</td>
<td>9:15 a.m.</td>
<td>Third Place Commons Mtg Room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>17171 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Pk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy Jorgensen</td>
<td>253-859-8349</td>
<td>7:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Foundation House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32290 1st Ave S, Federal Way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alice Peterson</td>
<td>206-524-5530</td>
<td>10:00 a.m.</td>
<td>Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3837 25th Ave W, Seattle</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Board & Committee Contacts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Executive Committee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>President</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amanda Clark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td><strong>1st VP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ginna Owens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>2nd VP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Janet Winans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>Secretary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dora Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-16</td>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cindy Piennett</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-16</td>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paneen Davidson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>Voter Editor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Katie Dudley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-16</td>
<td><strong>Action</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pat Griffith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-16</td>
<td><strong>Director</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Julie Anne Kempf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>Outreach</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zara Kublin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-16</td>
<td><strong>Voter Services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amelia Woolley</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Directors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-16</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Zara Kublin</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>Voter Services</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amelia Woolley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: All board members listed above are also members of the Education Fund Board.*

#### Education Fund Officers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>President</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amanda Clark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td><strong>1st VP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ginna Owens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>2nd VP</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Janet Winans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-17</td>
<td><strong>Secretary</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dora Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td><strong>Treasurer</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Candis Litsey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Nominating Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td><strong>Chair</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ellen Barton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Carol Goldenberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16</td>
<td><strong>Membership</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Susan Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Paneen Davidson and Ginna Owens have been appointed to serve on the nominating committee.*

#### Off Board Positions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Finance</td>
<td>Jean Carlson</td>
<td>206-774-6649</td>
<td><a href="mailto:carlson.jean@gmail.com">carlson.jean@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS Coordinator</td>
<td>Cynthia Howe</td>
<td>206-236-0593</td>
<td><a href="mailto:howe.john@comcast.net">howe.john@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Finance</td>
<td>Jean Carlson</td>
<td>206-774-6649</td>
<td><a href="mailto:carlson.jean@gmail.com">carlson.jean@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS Coordinator</td>
<td>Cynthia Howe</td>
<td>206-236-0593</td>
<td><a href="mailto:howe.john@comcast.net">howe.john@comcast.net</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Committees

- **LWVWA Carbon Emissions Red.** Judy Bevington, gbeving@eskimo.com
- **LWVWA Carbon Emissions Red.** Raelene Gold, raelene@seanet.com
- **Economics & Taxation** Nora Leech, nleech2002@yahoo.com
- **Economics & Taxation** Laura Weese, laura899@earthlink.net
- **Education** Joanna Cullen, 206-329-8514, jfoxcullen@gmail.com
- **International Relations** Carol Goldenberg, carolsamgo1@gmail.com
- **Transportation** Janet Winans, 206-550-6483, janetwinans@earthlink.net
- **Waterfront** Nancy & Charles Bagley, 206-282-1578, candnbagley@comcast.net
LWV SEATTLE-KING COUNTY:

Death Knell Rings for Death Penalty?

Thursday, February 4

6:30 p.m. - Doors open
7:00 p.m. - Forum begins

Seattle First Baptist Church
1111 Harvard Ave (at Seneca)
Seattle, WA
Accessible entrance on Harvard

This forum is free and open to the public.

Speakers:
• Dan Satterberg, King County Prosecuting Attorney
• Mark Larranaga, Defense Attorney
• Danielle Fulfs from the Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

We will discuss their experiences with use of the death penalty and possibilities for legislation to change the law in Washington State.