

## **King County Charter Amendment No. 1**

On Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Board voted to endorse King County Charter Amendment No. 1, which would amend Charter Section 895 to “clarify that an inquest is required when an action, decision, or possible failure to offer appropriate care by a member of a law enforcement agency might have contributed to a person's death.” The amendment would also “require the county to assign an attorney to represent the decedent's family in the inquest proceeding.” The full text of the ordinance can be [found here](#).

The Board’s decision to endorse this ballot measure was based on the belief that the requirement of an inquest when a member of law enforcement is involved in someone’s death is necessary to a fair and accurate determination of the cause and circumstances of the individual’s death, which is supported by League public policy positions on governmental transparency and accountability and independent public review of law enforcement entities. For more information, please view the King County Police Accountability Town Hall [here](#) or email Action Co-Chairs Heather Kelly and Lauren Pixley at [action@seattlelwv.org](mailto:action@seattlelwv.org).

### **King County Charter Amendment No. 3**

#### *References to Citizens*

Shall the Preamble and Sections 260 and 800 of the King County charter be amended to replace the word “citizen” with “public,” “member of the public” or “resident,” as applicable?

LWVSKC Recommends: YES

This change reflects the League’s policies on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

In July 2020, the LWVSKC Board of Directors voted to appoint League member Kathy Sakahara to serve on a three-person committee responsible for drafting the voter pamphlet statement in support of this change. Kathy was joined by Charter Review Commissioner and Kirkland City Councilmember Toby Nixon and OneAmerica Executive Director Rich Stoltz. The language Kathy's committee drafted is below:

*We celebrate the diversity of King County and work to ensure all programs and services are welcoming and inclusive for all. The county serves everyone, including residents who do not have citizenship. Our county charter currently refers to people mostly as “public” or “residents”; in just a few places does it use “citizen” where it isn’t necessary to make that distinction. Every resident deserves the ability to be actively involved in helping shape the functioning of county practices and services. County employees do not inquire about citizenship status unless required by state or federal law. Our charter should not imply citizenship requirements where none exist. This amendment would selectively replace the word “citizen” with “resident” or “public” except in one place where it refers to qualifications to hold public office. The Office of the Ombuds (as the Office of Citizen Complaints is now known) is required by county code to accept complaints from any source. This amendment aligns the charter with this long-standing practice to ensure all residents can file complaints. It also aligns with the long-standing practice of not inquiring about citizenship of members of the Charter Review Commission. We urge you to vote Yes to approve this amendment.*

## King County Charter Amendment No. 4

On Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Board voted to endorse King County Charter Amendment No. 4, which would amend Charter Section 265 to give the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO) “the authority to subpoena witnesses, documents and other evidence relating to its investigations and reviews” and “administer oaths to the subpoenaed witnesses and would provide that any subpoenaed witnesses would have the right to be represented by an attorney.” The full text of the ordinance can be [found here](#).

The Board’s decision to endorse this ballot measure was based on League public policy positions on ethics in government, governmental transparency and accountability, and the need for independent public review of law enforcement entities. This measure makes an existing ordinance permanent by integrating it into the charter and helps to foster connection and trust with the community by removing barriers that currently hinder the ability of the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight to function as it was intended. Additionally — and most importantly — because we have been called upon to view every issue that we consider through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion, it stands to reason that the Board would endorse this ballot measure due to its potential to benefit Black, Indigenous, and People of Color — those who have historically been disproportionately harmed when policing goes wrong. For more information, please view the King County Police Accountability Town Hall [here](#) or email Action Co-Chairs Heather Kelly and Lauren Pixley at [action@seattlelwv.org](mailto:action@seattlelwv.org).

## **King County Charter Amendment No. 5**

### *Making the King County Sheriff an Appointed Position*

Shall the King County charter be amended to return the position of King County sheriff to an appointed position with a requirement for consideration of community stakeholder input during the selection process and to make the county executive responsible for bargaining working conditions with the department of public safety's represented employees?

LWVSKC Recommends: YES

On Saturday, September 12th, the LWVSKC Board of Directors voted unanimously in favor of endorsing King County Charter Amendment No. 5.

The vote in favor of endorsement maintains the League's previous stances on this issue and was reached after careful consideration of our existing public policy positions, in addition to conversations with Sheriff Johanknecht and King County Charter Review Commissioner Kinnon Williams. The endorsement committee consisted of Action Co-Chair and 2nd Vice President Heather Kelly, Action Co-Chair and Volunteer Coordinator Lauren Pixley, and Observer Corps member Mary Taylor.

The full endorsement recommendation, along with cited positions and historical background can be [found here](#).

## **King County Charter Amendment No. 6**

On Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Board voted to endorse King County Charter Amendment No. 6, which would amend Charter Section 350.20.40 to “provide that the county sheriff's duties be specified by ordinance, adopted by the county council” and would “return to the council the authority to combine the department of public safety with other county departments or offices and the authority to decrease the department's duties.” Additionally, “all bargaining responsibilities would be placed with the county executive,” who currently bargains on all matters except compensation and benefits. Amendment No. 6 would not allow the department of public safety to be abolished. The full text of the ordinance can be [found here](#).

The Board’s decision to endorse this ballot measure was based on League public policy positions on government transparency and accountability, public oversight of law enforcement entities, separation of powers, and checks and balances. This amendment would remove language currently in the Charter that explicitly forbids the County Council from decreasing the duties of the Department of Public Safety, which effectively prohibits the Council from even considering certain reforms, such as transitioning the responsibility to respond to mental health crises away from law enforcement and instead to trained mental health professionals. For more information, please view the King County Police Accountability Town Hall [here](#) or email Action Co-Chairs Heather Kelly and Lauren Pixley at [action@seattlelwv.org](mailto:action@seattlelwv.org).