

The Voter

A Publication of the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County

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Voting: Best Practices and Barriers

by Barbra Chevalier and Bridget Kruszka, Voter Services Co-Chairs

The Seattle-King County League's tagline is "doing hands-on work to safeguard democracy." This article explores some of the keys to unlocking the promise of representative government, and it also discusses the most significant current threats to democracy.

The Good

Ranked Choice Voting/Instant Runoff Voting

"There is no perfect system; however, everything is better than plurality."—Dan Rayfield, Oregon State Representative during a Portland LWV forum

In a winner-take-all, or plurality system, with which most of us are familiar, the candidate with the most votes wins, regardless of their total vote share. All voters choose a single candidate for each position. As widespread as this method is, it is fundamentally flawed. By constituents voting for only one candidate, votes can be split between the candidates whom most voters prefer. This can leave other, less popular, candidates with more total votes but less overall support. This is essentially what we saw in the Republican presidential primaries in 2016 and in the 2000 presidential race. This means that someone can be elected to office with less than a majority in support of their leadership, and it means that many votes are "wasted" on candidates who don't have

a chance of winning, effectively silencing thousands of voters.

In races that have at least three candidates, ranked choice or instant runoff voting addresses these issues. In a ranked choice election, all voters choose multiple candidates in order of preference. For example, consider an election between Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse, and Donald Duck. If Minnie is your first choice, but Mickey would be preferable to Donald, then you would mark your ballot 1) Minnie, 2) Mickey, 3) Donald. If, in the first round of tallying, Mickey and Donald end up with the most votes, then Minnie's voters' second choices are tallied and redistributed. This system is called instant runoff voting because each round of tallying is effectively another election.

In practical terms, this means a few things: people could vote for a third-party candidate without "throwing their vote

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Special Location!
for the monthly forum

Thursday, October 5

ATLAS Workbase (near Seattle Center)
Seattle Mayoral and Council Candidates
See back cover for details

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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.

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Connecting with the Leadership

Long before October arrives, my stepson is already thinking about Halloween and scary things that go bump in the night. While he's busy drawing his costume designs and plotting his trick-or-treat route, October brings me candidate forums and ballot measures. And it gets me thinking about scary things, too—but the things that scare me have nothing to do with werewolves and witches.

What scares me is the state of our democratic institutions. Increasing voter disengagement and apathy. Hyperbolic civil discourse, hyper-partisanship, and oversimplified media coverage. The decline of civics education in our schools. I could go on, but the list makes me shudder.

Recently the League applied for a grant from the Greater Sum Foundation, an organization that provides financial and professional support to nonprofit organizations that are doing innovative work to build communities, foster education, protect the environment, and promote healthy living. When asked to describe the problem that our organization is addressing, we responded with the following:

With 1.28 million registered voters, King County, Washington is the largest jurisdiction in the United States to conduct all of its elections exclusively by mail. High among the rationale for migrating to an all-mail electoral system in 2009 was a more informed electorate and higher voter turnout. The idea was that by having more time to ruminate on their ballot at home, voters would thoughtfully research candidates and ballot measures before carefully making their selections.

While King County's elections system is a success by many measures, it has done

little to stimulate voter engagement. Since 2009, voter turnout across all elections has averaged 40 percent, while many primary and special elections have attracted less than 25 percent of the vote. King County's most recent primary took place in August, with only 34 percent – a one-third minority—of voters deciding such important matters as which mayoral candidates would advance to the general election or whether to increase the countywide sales tax to fund arts education programming.

This is scary stuff. It's a hard pill to swallow that King County's statistics follow a national trend of voter disengagement. We have a lot of work to do to connect our residents with their government, to engage our electorate and remind them that voting matters.

Thankfully, there's no reason to hide under the covers just yet. After outlining the scope of the problem, our grant proposal went on to describe the League's capacity to address it. Seeing the work of the League detailed and itemized in a grant proposal was incredibly heartening—it's easy to forget how much we accomplish with such scarce resources.

Here are just some of activities we listed in the grant proposal that we are currently undertaking to combat voter apathy:

- Voter registration drives, especially in high schools or non-English speaking communities where people may be less engaged;
- Free monthly public forums where people can learn about complex ballot measures or other important issues like intersectionality and racism, the environment, or housing;
- Ballots & Baristas, a series of community

Continued on page 5

October

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4 Forum: Seattle School Board Races 7:00 p.m.	5 Forum: Seattle Mayor & Council Races 7:00 p.m.	6	7 Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.
8	9 Voter Deadline	10 Transportation Comm. 10:00 a.m. Internat'l Rela- tions 7:00 p.m.	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22 Social Justice Comm. 3:00 p.m.	23	24	25	26 Education Comm. 11:00 a.m.	27	28 Econ. & Tax. Comm. 9:30 a.m.
29	30	31	1	2	3	4 Board Meeting 10:00 a.m.
5	6	7	8	9	10	11

Units meet during shaded period. See pages 21-22 for detailed unit meeting listings.

OCTOBER

Forum: Seattle School Board
Wednesday, October 4
7:00 p.m.
Centilia Cultural Center, Seattle

Forum: Seattle Mayor & Council
Thursday, October 5
7:30 p.m.
ATLAS Workbase, Seattle

Board Meeting
Saturday, October 7
10:00 a.m.
League Office

The Voter Deadline

Monday, October 9

Transportation Committee
Tuesday, October 10
10:00 a.m.
League Office

Internat'l Relations Committee
Tuesday, October 10
7:00 p.m.
909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

Social Justice Committee
Sunday, October 22
3:00 p.m.
League Office

Education Committee
Thursday, October 26
11:00 a.m.
League Office

Econ. & Tax. Committee
Saturday, October 28
9:30 a.m.
909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

NOVEMBER

Forum: Internet Privacy
Thursday, November 2
7:00 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
Saturday, November 4
10:00 a.m.
League Office

The Voter Deadline
Monday, November 6

Forum Schedule

Sept 6 — Port and Sheriff Races

Sept 18 — 45th and 48th LD Senate Races

Oct 4 — Seattle School Board Races

Oct 5 — Seattle City Mayor & Council Races

Nov 2 — Internet Privacy

Dec 7 — No forum. There will be a special event in December.

Jan 4 — Program Planning

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. Because of the current election season, there will be more forums than usual in September and October, focusing on ballot issues and candidate forums. The schedule through January is listed here. 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.

For the January Planning Forum, the Program Chairs are looking for League members who are passionate about an issue and would like to give a “Pecha Kucha” Style Presentation to inspire content for the year’s upcoming program. Pecha Kucha 20x20 is a simple presentation format where you show 20 images, each for 20 seconds. The images advance automatically and you talk along to the images. Contact the Program Chairs at abigail.doerr@gmail.com or afweed1@gmail.com if you are interested in presenting!

Leadership, continued from page 3:

conversations in partnership with Starbucks to get people talking about ballot measures;

- A “Civil Discourse” project that will bring together people from diverse backgrounds and different political stripes to discuss a complicated topic;
- Our publications, such as *The Voter* and *TRY (They Represent You)*, and Vote411.org, an online resource for candidate information.

And this is just the tip of the candy corn. While the grant focused on our voter services work, we do much more in the

name of advocacy and action: For example, the endorsement of ballot measures, advocating for legislation locally and in Olympia, or partnering with other organizations to take grassroots action.

So maybe the state of our democracy is not so scary after all. Certainly not with organizations like the League of Women Voters to embolden and empower us. Bring on November.

Stephanie Cirkovich
President

Committees

Economics and Taxation Committee

DATE: Saturday, October 28

TIME: 9:30 a.m.

PLACE: 909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

Education Committee

DATE: Thursday, October 26

TIME: 11:00 a.m.

PLACE: League Office

International Relations Committee

DATE: Tuesday, October 10

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: 909 E. Newton #D-9, Seattle

Social Justice Committee

DATE: Sunday, October 22

TIME: 3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

PLACE: League Office

Transportation Committee

DATE: Tuesday, October 10

TIME: 10:00 a.m.

PLACE: League Office

Read more about what's happening at the committee meetings on pages 12-15.

Have a question? The contact information for the committee chairs is listed on the inside back cover.

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.

Diversity Policy

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, gender identity and/or gender expression, 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.

King County Connects — Announcements

EASTSIDE HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

All Eastside LWV members (and guests interested in the League) are asked to save the date for a holiday luncheon sponsored by the Issaquah unit.

Date: Tuesday, December 12, 2017

Time: 11:30 AM

Location: St. Michael and All Angels Episcopal Church (large room in the basement), 325 SE Darst Street, Issaquah. Darst Street is near Issaquah High School and off of 2nd Avenue.

More details and how you can help will be in next month's edition.

New member orientation

Have questions about how League operates? What is a unit? What does it mean to be nonpartisan? Can I support candidates? What do committees do?

If you want answers to these questions, and more, please come to the fall new member orientation. You'll be able to meet our president, Stephanie Cirkovich, and other board members. Refreshments will be served.

October 14, 2017

10:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Kenmore Library

6531 NE 181st Street

Kenmore, WA 98028

RSVP to membership@seattlelwg.org. Space is limited.

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 Vote411.org team has (almost) completed their work getting quality information about the candidates and issues uploaded for all of Washington - over 4,000 races. Be sure to check what the candidates you will be voting for had to say. Thank you to these amazing volunteers.

Next up, getting ready for January! LWVWA will be organizing three action workshops:

- November 18, 2017, in Olympia, hosted by the Thurston and Mason County Leagues
- December 2, 2017, in Tacoma, hosted by the Tacoma-Pierce County League
- January 6, 2018, in Seattle, hosted by Seattle-King County League

All workshops will run from 9:30 AM to 3 PM with opportunities to hear from legislators and Lobby Team members. Specific locations and registration information will be posted soon.

In addition, the Lobby Team is recruiting for people to work on Issue Teams before and during the legislative session. Please take a look at the state website to see who the Issue Chairs are and let them know if you can help out. Welcome to LWVS-KC member Martin Gibbins who is joining the team to focus on water issues.

Finally, the LWVWA Redistricting Committee has completed their report. You can find it on the website under the publications tab. Now we need to organize a local effort to share it with the community. Please contact the LWVS-KC office if you are interested in working on this timely issue.

National News

LWVUS is one of the primary organizers of National Voter Registration Day. This year over 350 Leagues were among 3,000 partner organizations registering voters on Sept. 26. Locally we had over 20 volunteers in five locations around King County. It was a great day for voter outreach and education. Thank you to all who participated.

On the advocacy front, national continues the fight against the Pence-Kobach election commission. There are a number of tools to help you make your voice heard on the forum.lwv.org website.

In addition, League has been busy filing *amicus* briefs in a couple of key cases:

1) The historic partisan gerrymandering case, *Gill v. Whitford*, which will be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court on October 3rd. The brief agrees that partisan gerrymandering violates the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution and points out that traditional redistricting principles – such as compactness, contiguity, and respect for political subdivisions – have no constitutional foundation. Deferring to such traditional principles would put the focus on form over substance and thus would allow intentional and extreme political gerrymanders as long as the map's appearance seemed “normal”.

2) The case of *Juliana et al v. United States* where 21 young people have filed a landmark constitutional climate change lawsuit against the federal government, via the Eugene, Oregon-based organization, Our Children's Trust.

Action

I-940 Signature Gathering Progress and Upcoming Training

By Heather Kelly

The De-Escalate Washington (I-940) Campaign to put this initiative on the ballot is now well underway, with over 85,000 signatures gathered. This is almost a quarter of its overall goal of 300,000 signatures! The League has committed to gathering 15,000 signatures towards that goal. With only eight weeks left until the Thanksgiving deadline, we are asking all League members to join our effort in circulating petitions.

To that end, the LWVWA De-Escalate Team worked hard in September to get out the word about I-940 to League members across the state! Eleven out of 16 Seattle-King County units hosted a Team member at their unit meetings. Each unit took petitions to circulate locally, which means we've moved into the second phase of our support efforts—educating the public.

To aid in this effort, we have added a page on the LWVWA website where you can review the main talking points, learn about the lives lost to police violence, and discover new ways to contribute to the Campaign. Please see the next TWIL for the link (also given at the end of this article).

The De-Escalate Campaign has requested that League members **send in half-completed petitions** if you are not actively gathering signatures. This helps ensure the Campaign is getting a steady influx of signatures, which aids them in budgeting and planning. You can always get a new

blank petition to circulate. Please remember to **write "LWV"** in the gray box where you provide your contact information so the Campaign can identify and track our contributions.

For those of you circulating petitions, we want to hear from you! What questions are you getting from the public about the initiative? What is your most successful "opener" as you invite people to sign? Have you had any positive experiences you'd like to share? Please contact Heather or Nikki (see below) with your stories from the field.

Are you interested in gathering signatures, but unsure how to go about it? The De-Escalate Team will host a training on Monday, October 9, from 6:30 to 7:30 PM at the Phinney Neighborhood Center, room 5. We will discuss how to approach potential supporters for signatures, best locations for gathering signatures, and what to bring with you. Please mark your calendars.

If you missed your unit meeting or simply want to learn more about I-940, please reach out to Heather Kelly (hejokelly@gmail.com, 415-516-1201) or Nikki Hurley (nhurley1009@gmail.com, 410-300-6195). Check out our webpage at: http://participate.lwv.org/c/9163/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=10386

Voter Service

2017 General Election Important Dates

Saturday, October 7

- Last day to mail voter registration/update forms

Monday, October 9

- Last day to register to vote/update registration online

Wednesday, October 18

- Ballots mailed

Monday, October 30

- Last day for in-person registration (new to Washington only)

Tuesday, November 7

- **General Election** — ballots must be *postmarked* or placed in an elections drop box on or before this date

2017 General Election Ballot Measures

Statewide

- 3 Advisory tax measures (a few of these are referred from the legislature every year)

King County

- Prop 1 — Levy Lid Lift for Veterans, Seniors and Vulnerable Populations

Burien

- the initiative re: sanctuary city status will **not** be on the ballot per court order

In addition, the Federal Way School District has a measure on the general election ballot as do three of the fire districts and three of the special purpose districts.

Information about candidates and issues on the ballot is now available on the League's Vote411.org website.



Seattle School Board Candidates Forum

Wednesday, October 4

7:00 p.m.

Centilia Cultural Center at El Centro de la Raza
2524 16th Ave S, Seattle WA 98144

One block from the Beacon Hill light rail station.

Seattle Mayor & Council Candidates

Thursday, October 5

7:30 p.m.

ATLAS Workbase
500 Mercer St, Seattle WA 98109

Near Seattle Center

Getting Connected Membership News

By Cathy O'Shea, Membership Chair

"Democracy works when people claim it."
—Bill Moyers

And this is our month to claim it! Ballots will be mailed on October 17, and many people will vote early. Use this time as an opportunity to talk with friends and family about the issues on the ballot. Sometimes discussion leads to developing an opinion and sometimes it just helps to increase our understanding of how our government works. Unit and committee meetings are a great way to learn more about our county government and history as we draw on our varied experiences.

Schedules get tight at this time of year, so make a point of putting meetings and to-dos on your calendar so you don't schedule other activities at the same time. More and more we are having conference calls instead of face-to-face meetings so that we can connect on projects with less effort.

The Voter Services Committee has done amazing work putting on candidate forums. They are working with Starbucks on having **Ballots and Baristas** events and can use your help to hold discussions and invite people to attend.

I said in last month's article that I was developing a survey on interests, and I am still working on that. Stay tuned!

The **New Member Orientation** is on Saturday, October 14, at the Kenmore Library. 10:30 to 12:30. Refreshments will be served! If you are new to the League and couldn't attend the well-received orientation in the spring, please put this on your calendar. We'll talk about the League and ways to become involved.

You can always reach me at membership@seattlelwv.org. I look forward to hearing from you!

IN MEMORIAM - BARBARA SARASON

A lifetime member, Barbara and her husband Irwin moved to Seattle in 1956. Three years later she joined the Seattle League and from 1973-75 she was president, a period when League was working on campaign finance, transportation, school funding, and the status of women. Sound familiar?

She later joined the Psychology Department of the University of Washington as a Research Professor. She was the author of many articles and books. Her Abnormal Psychology textbook, written with Irwin, went through eleven editions and has been widely used throughout the world. Barbara's major research interests were in interpersonal relationships and the social support they provide for people. Her Social Support Questionnaire has been employed in thousands of research studies worldwide and has been translated into many languages. ... Barbara retired in 2000, although she continued her writing and research. She influenced the development of many graduate and undergraduate students who valued greatly what she contributed to their lives.

Barbara had many interests. Her League of Women Voters presidency illustrates her involvement in public affairs. She enjoyed reading, music, and art. She was a wonderful cook (she created a cookbook of her recipes for her children.) Barbara valued opportunities for travel, especially living in England for a year and in the Netherlands for 18 months. She and Irwin gave lecture series in Japan and many lectures in Australia and throughout Europe. Barbara had a great interest in architecture and especially enjoyed visiting churches and cathedrals throughout Europe.

A memorial in the future is being planned.

Excerpted in part from the Seattle Times obituary published Sept. 24, 2017

Features

International Relations Committee

By Carol Goldenberg

The International Relations Committee will meet on October 10 and continue the lively discussion of US foreign policy. At the last meeting, after a quick review of LWVUS positions on international issues, committee members reported on articles from the September/October issue of *Foreign Affairs* magazine, titled "Trump and the Allies: The View from Abroad." The October meeting will focus on "Where Do We Go from Here? Rebooting American Foreign Policy" by Richard Haas in the July/August issue of *Foreign Affairs*. Haas is President of the Council on Foreign Relations and the author of *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order*.

Please join us at 7:00 PM at the home of Vicky Downs, 909 E. Newton St., #D-9, Seattle. If you would like a copy of the article that we will discuss, call Carol Goldenberg at 206-527-8589. New members are welcome to bring their own ideas and articles to share.

Great Decisions 2018

The International Relations Committee will again sponsor a Great Decisions discussion group in 2018. Meetings will begin in February and will occur every other Tuesday for eight meetings. More information about time and place and Foreign Policy Association briefing books will be available in January.

The following topics will be discussed:

- The Waning of Pax Americana?
- Russia's Foreign Policy
- China and America: The New Geopolitical Equation
- Media and Foreign Policy
- Turkey: A Partner in Crisis
- U.S. Global Engagement and the Military
- South Africa's Fragile Democracy
- Global Health: Progress and Challenges

For more information, call Rosalie McCreary, (206) 687-7415.

Seattle Central Waterfront Report: Fundraising and a Zombie is Back

By Nancy & Charles Bagley

Thanks to the successful emergence of Bertha, the giant drill, the waterfront tunnel for State Highway 99 will be completed and then the Alaskan Way Viaduct will come down. In 2012 demolition was projected to occur in mid-2016. Now it is projected for late 2019. The tunnel should be open to traffic in mid-2020. There has been no progress in settling the \$240 million tunnel cost overrun claims, which, however, involve the State, not Seattle.

All EIS requirements for the Waterfront

Promenade, street-side amenities like plantings and bike lanes, Aquarium expansion on land, and the Overlook Walk connecting Pike Place Market to the new Aquarium building and to the Promenade have been approved. The issue is how to pay for them. (The street construction costs are paid by the State.) At the meeting of the City Council Committee on the Waterfront on September 7, long-researched funding plans were discussed and approved, and sent to the full Council for approval as Resolution 31768.

The major funding source will be a new Local Improvement District (LID) that will encompass most of downtown. It is hoped that this will yield \$200 million for the above projects. The City has a consultant's report (benefits analysis) that LID property tax increases may yield as much as \$400 million. But to be finalized, the LID plan must be approved by 60% of the property value owners. There will be opportunities for public and affected property owners to comment. The City hopes the LID will be approved and ready by mid-2019. This LID would be the largest in Seattle history. The other funding source is philanthropy. The Friends of the Waterfront, the nonprofit partner of the City's waterfront program, will seek to raise \$100 million. The Friends are asked to release a pledge schedule and also to have raised the first \$25 million by early 2019.

Resolution 31768 also approves an operating agreement with the Friends to staff and pay "Park Ambassadors" on the waterfront to aid persons and monitor maintenance. Friends will also manage permitting and scheduling of most waterfront events, and manage concessionaires. (Actual park maintenance will be done by regular Parks Department staff.) And Friends will also raise \$1 million annually (in addition to the \$100 million pledge) to pay for these functions.

Full operation of all Seattle Waterfront improvements is expected in 2023.

Major construction work on Phase 1 of the Seawall Project is now complete. The pedestrian walk is open from Yesler to the Aquarium. Costs have been about 20% higher than projected. Phase 2, from Virginia Street north to Broad, has not been funded.

The Aquarium plans an expansion to house a beautiful Tropical Waters exhibit. The expansion will be built on land across from its Pier 60 (north) area, on space partially covered now by the existing Alaskan Way, which will be moved. The Seattle Aquarium Society (SEAS) will raise \$65 million to fund the expansion. In case of delay in the above waterfront funding plans, the Aquarium expansion can still be built, and attachments to the Overlook Walk can be made later.

Voter readers will remember the League's fight against the plan of the owners of Pier 57, the Griffiths, to expand their pier northward into the water space of Waterfront Park, which is between Pier 57, site of the Wheel, and the Aquarium. We objected. In January 2014 the plan was cancelled. However, in 2013 the Griffiths also had proposed building a gondola line up Union Street from Waterfront Park to the Convention Center! Estimated cost—\$20 million! Few took this proposal seriously, and it faded from the media by 2015. We covered it in the May 2014 *Voter*. But, zombies can rise again! We are told that the Griffiths are now considering a permit application for the gondola. More to follow?

The LWVS-KC Waterfront Committee continues to monitor the Central Waterfront Improvements Program. We welcome new members who are interested and willing to help. Please contact us at candnbagley@comcast.net.

Transportation Committee Gets Going Again

By Dianne Ramsey

On September 12, the Transportation Committee had its first meeting of the year after a much needed vacation from all things transportation related. We met throughout 2015 with a focus on learning as much as we could about the nine-year, \$930 million dollar Move Seattle Levy proposal that appeared on the November 2015 ballot. During 2016 our attention turned to trying to digest the details of the 25-year, \$53.8 billion dollar Sound Transit 3 ballot measure scheduled for the November 2016 election. The marathon of discussions and presentations about these two pieces of transportation legislation was ably shepherded through the committee by Janet Winans.

Now that both SDOT and Sound Transit agency expansion projects have been funded and will be moving forward, we've decided that instead of future Transportation Committee meetings being used to address the myriad of specific projects coming online, we're encouraging individual League members to pay attention to those projects of personal interest or impact to them. One such project is the closing of the Metro Downtown Transit Tunnel. Beginning in September 2018, Metro buses will phased out of the tunnel and rerouted. Once fully closed, sometime in 2019, surface streets are expected to become more congested and may impact your local auto trips and bus schedules and routes. For more information about the Move Seattle Levy and Sound Transit 3 projects, visit their websites. Additional project details and information can be found at their respective oversight committee websites, i.e., the Levy Oversight Committee and the ST3 Citizen Oversight Panel.

The purpose of this meeting was to determine how best to use League resources to get our elected officials to make changes

to a policy or process that will produce a positive, tangible result for a transportation issue we find problematic or needs to be addressed. To that end, we decided to take two approaches:

First, we'd like to have quarterly transportation meetings with League members from adjacent counties to discuss Sound Transit and other transportation agency impacts and issues we may have in common.

Second, we discussed inviting representatives from local transit agencies and other members of the transit community, to attend a forum styled event for feedback on how the agencies are doing at meeting their transportation goals. These events would be followed by reaching out to the Units for their input and feedback on which Policy Position items should be a priority on our "To Do List."

Using the LWVS-KC Full Public Policy Positions (as revised and adopted 5/18/2017) for guidance, our objective will be to identify one or more transportation related issues for action, and if completed will produce a tangible transportation benefit. It's amazing that transportation positions from 2004 are still applicable—and unfulfilled—today. These are just three of the positions the committee is focusing on.

Transportation and Growth Management

- Support the concentration of population growth by coordinating growth management plans in order to support a mass transit system and to reduce sprawl.
- Support a diverse, seamless, balanced transportation system that includes such features as regional and commuter rail; passenger-only and auto ferries; maximum

development of high-occupancy vehicle lanes; express, local and feeder buses; transportation for special-needs; promotion of bicycle use; and adequate, safe pedestrian access to all transit and community services.

- Support growth management/ transportation planning and funding that includes cooperation and coordination among transportation systems to implement effective regional multi-modal transportation choices.

References

Move Seattle Levy <https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/levytomovesseattle.htm>

Move Seattle Levy Oversight Committee https://www.seattle.gov/transportation/ltms_oversight.htm

Sound Transit 3 http://soundtransit3.org/ST3_Citizen_Oversight_Panel

<https://www.soundtransit.org/About-Sound-Transit/Accountability/Citizen-Oversight-Panel-COP>

Civil Discourse in Action: A Dialogue on Health Care Reform

By Mary Coltrane

The Civil Discourse Working Group has been meeting since last winter to put together a community event that will engage constituents of the 8th Congressional District in a bipartisan civil discussion. This project grew out of the 2016 presidential election, when it seemed the American electorate was more divided than at any time since the 1960s Viet Nam era. Discourse on social media, on TV and radio news shows, at public meetings, at rallies and campaign events was often divisive and not fact-based. People on both sides appeared to be “talking past one another.” This continues. What happened to honest public discourse?

The Civil Discourse Working Group is reinventing a model for engaging community members, even though they significantly disagree. We selected a topic that affects everyone and one where there are diverse views: health care reform. We’ve invited federally elected officials to participate, because leadership matters. This is a pilot project; we hope to show how civil discourse among people with diverse views adds value to public discussions.

Our plan focuses on outreach to ensure a diverse participant pool, including ethnic diversity, a range of ages and incomes,

balanced gender representation, and—critically—diverse political opinions. This means we will be reaching out to left-leaning and right-leaning constituents of the 8th District, all within these parameters of demographic diversity. KNKX FM-88.5 is our partner in this effort, and will help with outreach and other components of the project.

We will ask participants to come together to discuss this important topic in a civil way. How will that happen?

- Background information and ground rules are critical to a good discussion. We are working with subject matter experts to develop a short primer on health care reform to send to participants, along with ground rules that will create and reinforce a productive mind-set for this effort. And we will have placards on hand at the meeting that distill critical information about current health care issues.
- Skilled facilitators and note-takers will manage small group discussions, and move them forward in a constructive way. We have several skilled facilitators in our group, but welcome a few more. Note takers will also be needed.
- Small groups will report out, so everyone

in attendance can know what others had to say.

The Civil Discourse Working Group believes that the current times call for measures beyond the ordinary, and that this citizen participation model provides a way to do this. We think that the participants will benefit from engaging in a civil democratic process. But what about the rest of the community? How will we make sure the benefit is maximized?

- We believe leadership makes a difference. We've met with staff from Congressman Reichert's office, and have scheduled a meeting with staff from Senator Murray's and Senator Cantwell's offices. We are hopeful that our elected officials will recognize the value of citizen input arising from informed discussion that reaches across political differences to hear—if not agree on—other points of view. If this isn't possible, we'll proceed with an "empty chair" event, and let our elected leaders

know what we learned.

- TVW has indicated an interest in televising this event. In addition, we'll maximize social media to assure as many people as possible have a chance to see how this works, including a live stream on Facebook. We will work with other media to cover the event.
- We will close the loop. This means writing up our notes from the event, and making them available to participants, our elected representatives and the media. We will maximize social media for this.

Putting all the pieces of this plan together has been challenging and interesting. We aren't done. For example, the date depends on how our elected representatives choose to be involved. We are committed, however, to keep on and see how this works out. I'll keep you posted.

Let me know if you would like to help: Mary Coltrane, coltran_e@icloud.com, (206) 365-5974.

Voting, continued from cover:

away," and any candidate who wins will have at least lukewarm support from a majority of the electorate. Less definite advantages of this system are that candidates have incentives to appeal to people across a political spectrum, which may soften political polarization, and the number of elections that need to be held would decrease since most primaries and general elections could be folded into a single election.

Ranked choice or instant runoff voting is the single best way to reform executive races, such as for president or governor, in which there can only be one winner. It is also applicable in races for governing

bodies, but those can be reformed by the next key to good government—proportional representation.

Proportional Representation

The basic principles underlying proportional representation (PR) elections are that all voters deserve representation and that all political groups deserve to be represented in our legislatures in proportion to their strength in the electorate. In other words, everyone should have the right to fair representation. Conservatives in cities and progressives in rural areas both deserve to have their voices heard. These systems are most relevant when electing bodies, such as city councils, school boards, and legislatures.

To achieve fair representation, all PR systems have certain basic characteristics. First, they all use multi-member districts. Instead of electing one person in each district, several people are elected. These multi-member districts may be relatively small, with only three or four members, or they may be larger, with ten or more members.

The key difference between these districts and the districts we currently have in Washington to elect our state representatives is that ideal PR districts have multiple open seats, whereas we have multiple single-post seats. One of the most impactful reforms that Washington could undertake would be to transition to truly multi-member districts. The Sightline Institute has drawn up sample maps that show what legislative districts might look like under such an arrangement in Washington.

The second characteristic of all PR systems is that they divide up the seats in these multi-member districts according to the proportion of votes received by the various parties or groups running candidates. Thus, if the candidates of a party win 40% of the vote in a 10 member district, they receive four of the ten seats. If another party wins 20% of the vote, they get two seats, and so on. Specifics vary between systems in the way that seats are proportionally awarded and candidates chosen.

In practice, this means that if Seattle was a single district with 10 seats, Republican, Libertarian, and Green party candidates might actually have a chance at being elected, thereby more accurately reflecting the diversity of opinion found within Seattle. It is likely that third parties would spring up and be competitive at the local and state levels. Jurisdictions that have transitioned to multi-member districts have also seen increases in minority representation and

female leadership.

Automatic Voter Registration

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) is a system in which people are automatically registered to vote. AVR is similar to other “opt out” programs, such as states automatically enrolling drivers in organ donation programs without any extra work on the part of the drivers. Like the organ donation programs, people would be able to opt out of automatic registration if they chose to do so. The programs currently in operation around the country generated marked increases in voter participation after AVR was introduced.

The primary barrier to AVR implementation in Washington is that driver’s licenses, unlike in many other states, are not proof of citizenship. However, this will be changing as the federally mandated enhanced driver’s licenses are rolled out over the next few years. Citizens could also be registered when they interact with the government in other contexts. People could be enrolled when they register for any governmental benefits, such as food stamps. Newly sworn-in citizens could also be automatically enrolled.

The Bad

Gerrymandering

Gerrymandering has received a fair amount of attention in the past two years as courts grapple with the problem of unfairly drawn Congressional districts in Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The League of Women Voters has been heavily involved in some of these cases. Courts thus far have generally sided with plaintiffs, eroding the argument that districts can legally be drawn in such a way as to give one party more seats than it would otherwise win.

There are three primary ways to solve or alleviate the problem of gerrymandering. One is to circumvent the issue entirely by moving to an electoral system based on proportional representation, as discussed above. The second, though it has been used with mixed results, is to hand the job of redistricting to an independent, largely apolitical commission. The third is to use computer algorithms designed to handle drawing district lines and remove humans from the situation.

Restrictive Voting Laws

Starting after the 2010 midterms, state lawmakers in 31 states have introduced hundreds of new laws to restrict voting. The laws range from cuts to early voting to burdensome changes in voter registration to strict voter identification requirements.

In 2004, there were no states with strict voter ID laws. Two states enacted voter ID laws in 2008, and by 2012, that number had increased to four. In 2016, a total of eight states had strict voter ID laws, which disproportionately affect people of color and low economic means.

In 2013, the Supreme Court gutted Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. Under Section 5, states and localities with a history of racial discrimination in voting had to seek federal approval from either the Department of Justice or a federal court before implementing any changes to their voting laws and procedures. Of the 15 states previously covered by Section 5, nine have new restrictions in place that cannot be challenged under the Voting Rights Act. Some of those new laws had been blocked previously by a federal court.

Despite the changes in voter laws, which were promoted as a defense against fraud, voter fraud has remained negligible. Instead, these changes have effectively disenfranchised thousands of American

citizens.

Washington, meanwhile, is among the 45 states that have passed bills to enhance voting access. In King County, a Social Security number and a signature are sufficient to verify your identity, making it a quite generous identification requirement. Furthermore, although Washington does not have same-day registration, voters can register until 11 days before ballots are mailed out. And all of our voting takes place via mail, which, though it has problems of its own, eliminates many of the barriers to voting that people face in other parts of the country.

It bears repeating that even with all this supposed leniency, Washington's levels of voter fraud are similar to what they are elsewhere around the country—negligible.

Purging Voter Rolls

In 2002, in response to the electoral fiascos of 2000, Congress passed a bipartisan measure called the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to reform many facets of the voting process. HAVA's goals included the replacement of voting machines, reforms to voter registration, improved access to voting for the disabled, and more extensive poll worker training. It also established minimum standards for states to follow in key electoral areas, such as maintaining accurate and current voter registration databases.

A lack of clear and uniform standards for list maintenance, however, has resulted in inconsistencies between states and poorly developed "voter purge" programs. These programs have often led to the mass disenfranchisement of eligible voters and frequently disproportionately impact minority populations.

In Washington, voters can be placed on "inactive" status if a good address cannot be

located for them or if the county auditor is informed of a relocation across county lines or out of the state by an agency responsible for voter registration. Cancellations of voter registrations require documentation in the form of death certificates, affidavits, court orders, or justice department documents. The Secretary of State does not engage in wholesale voter purges.

And the Ugly

Cyberattacks

Last year, 21 states saw intrusions on their computer systems leading up to Election Day 2016. Voter information was stolen and voter rolls altered, although no vote counts appear to have been disturbed. The fallout from these irregularities meant confusion, long lines at the polls, and disorder as poll workers had to shift to paper voter rolls. Experts theorize that the ultimate goal of these attacks was to sow doubt about the outcome of this election and to undermine public trust in American elections in general. If successful, this mission would be disastrous for American democracy.

In mid-September 2017, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer said, “The consensus of the 17 U.S. intelligence agencies was that Russia, a foreign adversary, interfered in our elections. Make no mistake: their success in 2016 will encourage them to try again.”

A bipartisan effort is currently making its way through the Senate that would provide grants to the states to fund cyberdefense for voting systems, post-election audit systems, and paper trail technology.

A 2012 study conducted by Verified Voting, an organization dedicated to “safeguarding elections in the digital age,” Common Cause, and the Rutgers School of Law noted that Washington state could improve the security

of its elections by conducting regular post-election audits and using secure means to obtain and count ballots from uniformed and overseas citizens. Overall, the state received a score of “generally good,” with its paper ballots and solid practices around ballot counting and reconciliation.

While Washington ranks as one of the best states in the nation on many voting parameters, there is still work to be done to expand access to the ballot. As ever, the League will be there actively pursuing the promise of government of, by, and for all of the American people.

If you are interested in learning more about anything covered in this article, the sites referenced below are exceptional resources. While there is a wealth of information available online, the Voter Services Committee is also happy to delve deeper with you or answer any questions you may have on these topics. You can contact us at voterservice@seattlelwv.org, or by phone. Call Barbra at (425) 445-2281 or Bridget at (716) 783-2407.

References

Many thanks to these organizations for their tireless research, diligent advocacy, and generosity in publishing their work online for the benefit of the public.

Brennan Center for Justice
(brennancenter.org)

Sightline Institute (sightline.org)

Fair Vote (fairvote.org)

Project Vote (projectvote.org)

Verified Voting (verifiedvoting.org)

Common Cause (commoncause.org)

BOOK REVIEW by Vicky Downs

A Fine Mess: A Global Quest for a Simpler, Fairer, and More Efficient Tax System

By T.R. Reid

Our federal tax system is “a fine mess,” but in straightforward and friendly prose, Reid describes our absurdly complex system and several ways to make it simpler, fairer and more effective.

The main problem is that our tax code has become jam-packed with loopholes. “Each year, hundreds of contributors, each with his own pet cause, manage to persuade Congress to insert a particular loophole or exclusion into the Internal Revenue Code.” Mostly it’s the wealthy who can lobby Congress, so it’s no surprise the changes tend to benefit the already well-to-do.

What kind of tax code would be better? The formula for good taxation is a “four-letter word: ‘BBLR,’” standing for “broad base, low rates.” The idea is that “the total amount of income, or sales or property that can be taxed—is kept as large as possible; then the tax rate . . . can be kept very low.” Reid says, “Virtually all economists and tax experts agree that this is the best way to run a tax regime.”

I was surprised to learn that one popular loophole, the mortgage interest deduction, would no longer exist in a BBLR code. However, Canada and many other countries don’t have a mortgage deduction, yet that seems to have no impact on home ownership.

In the US that one deduction reduces tax revenue by about \$100 billion each year. The tax code therefore has to find that much money somewhere else.

Meanwhile, Reid shows us how the mortgage tax deduction helps a couple earning \$200,000 but only modestly helps a couple earning \$20,000 and helps a couple earning \$10,000 not at all! In effect, this is a tax cut that helps those who are already well off.

He also shows us how the current code has a high (35 percent) corporate tax, which virtually

chases both US businesses and jobs offshore to countries with lower rates. He states, “The US corporate income tax is not working,” and therefore suggests Congress lower the rate. If we had a BBLR tax code, we could almost certainly lower the rate of corporate tax without a loss of revenue.

Reid shows us how other countries have taxed their citizens, and what works well and what doesn’t. Regarding a flat tax, he writes, “In practice, you can’t find a single tax rate that is high enough to raise the revenues you need but low enough for average working people to afford.”

One tax that does work is the Value Added Tax, “a levy that is applied to virtually every business transaction but [is easy] to track and hard for taxpayers to duck.” This requires a tax at every stage of production: such as growing wheat, grinding seed into flour, making bread, packaging and selling to the public. When a customer pays the sales tax, it is smaller than the consumer tax paid today. This tax is much admired by economists, who report that the VAT “would increase the fairness and efficiency of our system and reduce its mind-boggling complexity.”

Shockingly, Reid suggests we copy other countries where tax preparation takes only minutes. In those countries, the revenue authorities send you a short note telling you what you owe. If it seems reasonable, you merely pay the amount owed. If not, you discuss the issue with the authorities. My family did this in Japan and found it worked well.

When should we make these changes? Reid points out that every 32 years the US completely changes its tax system. The last time we did so was in 1986. It is time to do so again, and this book tells us it is best to start from scratch.

Now is the time.

Unit Meetings

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

Unit Leader email	Phone	Time	Location
Monday, October 9			
SOUTH SEATTLE - Marian Wolfe and Vivian Montoya			
hedgwolfe@aol.com	206-763-9430	5:30 p.m.	Third Place Books - downstairs
montoyaviv@gmail.com	206-695-2620		5041 Wilson Ave. S, Seattle

Tuesday, October 10			
SOUTHWEST KING COUNTY – Mary Ehlers/Cindy Piennett			
maryehlers@comcast.net	253-941-1930	2:00 p.m.	Contact unit leader for details
cindypiennett@gmail.com	253-777-9864		

Wednesday, October 11			
NORTHEAST SEATTLE (formerly View Ridge) – Gail Winberg			
winbergeng@Q.com	206-524-7801	12:45 p.m.	Brig Bldg. (6344) in Magnuson Park 7400 Sand Point Way NE, Seattle

Directions: 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.

QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA/BALLARD EVENING - Kathy Pugh and Marlis Worthington			
ckp1966@comcast.net	503-580-1240	7:30 p.m.	Magnolia Church of Christ
marliswrt@hotmail.com	206-283-7147		3555 W McGraw St, Seattle

Thursday, October 12			
MERCER ISLAND – Paneen Davidson			
paneenie@gmail.com	206-466-2023	9:30 a.m.	Emmanuel Episcopal Church 4400 86th Ave SE, Mercer Island
ISSAQUAH – Margaret Austin			
margaret.austin@comcast.net	425-392-5760	10:00 a.m.	Echo Room, Issaquah City Hall 130 East Sunset Way, Issaquah

SOUTHEAST KING COUNTY/ENUMCLAW - Cathy Dormaier			
clcathy@foxinternet.com	360-802-6799	11:45 a.m.	Location: contact unit leader

NORTH CENTRAL SEATTLE – Jan Orlando			
orlanre@aol.com	206-524-0936	1:00 p.m.	Hostess: contact unit leader

Continued on next page

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

Unit Leader email	Phone	Time	Location
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Monday, October 16

FIRST HILL – Adele Reynolds

adelereynolds@netscape.net	206-621-4867	10:30 a.m.	Horizon House, Forum & Social Room 900 University St., Seattle
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NORTH KING COUNTY – Judy Deiro/Thessalonika “T” Benny

judy.deiro@gmail.com	425-774-1492	7:00 p.m.	Third Place Commons, Stadler Mtg Room
thessalonika.benny@gmail.com	206-353-7070		17171 Bothell Way NE, Lake Forest Pk.

CAPITOL HILL/MONTLAKE –

	206-329-4848	7:15 p.m.	Hostess: Linnea Hirst 1602 E McGraw St., Seattle 206-322-3076
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Tuesday, October 17

BELLEVUE/KIRKLAND/REDMOND – Cathy O’Shea

cathy_oshea@yahoo.com	425-753-4182	12:00 p.m.	Bellevue Library, Room 6 1111 110th Ave NE, Bellevue
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WEST SEATTLE – Ethel Williams/Pat Lane

etheljw@comcast.net	206-932-7887	1:00 p.m.	Daystar Retirement Village
pgblain11@gmail.com	206-932-1578		2615 SW Barton, Seattle

Thursday, October 19

UNIVERSITY HOUSE/WALLINGFORD – Janet Kime

kraftyjane@comcast.net	206-588-0988	10:30 a.m.	University House, Auditorium 4400 Stone Way N, Seattle
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DOWNTOWN/PIONEER SQUARE – Carla Chavez

carla.chavez@icloud.com	972-757-4963	5:30 p.m.	Cherry Street Public House 210 Occidental Ave S, Seattle
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Saturday, October 21

BALLARD/MAGNOLIA/QUEEN ANNE DAY – Janet Anderson

janetranderson@msn.com	206-285-2460	10:00 a.m.	Hostess: Wendie Berge 3100 W Commodore Way, Unit 206 206-283-1190
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Secure entry. You will need hostess name and phone #.

Board & Committee Contacts

Term	Executive Committee			
2017-19	<i>President</i>	Stephanie Cirkovich	206-329-4848	president@seattlelwv.org
2016-18	<i>1st VP - Action</i>	Pat Griffith	206-285-2452	pgseattle@q.com
2017-19	<i>2nd VP - Program</i>	Abigail Doerr	206-329-4848	abigail.doerr@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Secretary</i>	Katie Dudley	206-329-4848	kate.c.dudley@gmail.com
2016-18	<i>Treasurer</i>	Linda Snider	206-329-4848	treasurer@seattlelwv.org
Directors				
2017-19	<i>Technology</i>	Liz Bander	206-478-7335	lizhill@outlook.com
2017-19	<i>Development</i>	Carla Chavez	206-329-4848	carla.chavez.board@gmail.com
2017-18	<i>Voter Service</i>	Barbra Chevalier	425-445-2281	barbra.n.chevalier@gmail.com
2016-18	<i>Development</i>	Kiku Hayashi	206-329-4848	kikuhayashi1@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Committees</i>	Zara Kublin	206-276-2831	zkublin@hotmail.com
2017-19	<i>Voter Service</i>	Bridget Kruszka	716-783-2407	bkruszka3@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Membership</i>	Cathy O'Shea	425-753-4182	coshea120@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Action</i>	Anastasia Samuelson	206-329-4848	anastasia606@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Outreach & Events</i>	Melissa Taylor	206-329-4848	melissataylor.lwvskc@gmail.com
2017-19	<i>Program</i>	Alyssa Weed	206-329-4848	afweed1@gmail.com

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

Education Fund Officers - same as above except Treasurer

2017-19	<i>Treasurer</i>	Christy Wood	206-707-3845	eftreasurer@seattlelwv.org
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Nominating Committee

2017-18	<i>Chair</i>	Amanda Clark	206-236-0517	amandac5@comcast.net
2017-18		Amelia Woolley	206-329-4848	woolleyamelia@gmail.com
2017-18		Judy Love	206-329-4848	judysteveL@gmail.com

Off Board Positions

	<i>Voter Editor</i>	Amanda Clark	206-236-0517	votereditor@seattlelwv.org
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Committees

<i>Economics & Taxation</i>	Nora Leech		nleech2002@yahoo.com
<i>Education</i>	Joanna Cullen	206-329-8514	jfoxcullen@gmail.com
<i>International Relations</i>	Carol Goldenberg		carolsamgo1@gmail.com
<i>Transportation</i>	Abigail Doerr		abigail.doerr@gmail.com
<i>Social Justice</i>	Nikki Hurley		nhurley1009@gmail.com
<i>Social Justice</i>	Melissa Taylor		melissataylor.lwvskc@gmail.com
<i>Waterfront</i>	Nancy & Charles Bagley	206-282-1578	candnbagley@comcast.net

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LWV SEATTLE-KING COUNTY:

General Election Forums

*More forums are listed
on our website!
www.seattlelww.org*

Wednesday, Oct. 4

6:30 p.m. — Doors open
7:00 p.m. — Program begins

Centilia Cultural Center
2524 16th Ave S
Seattle, WA 98144

- Seattle School Board Candidates

Thursday, Oct. 5

7:00 p.m. — Doors open
7:30 p.m. — Program begins

ATLAS Workbase
500 Mercer St
Seattle, WA 98109

- Seattle Mayoral and City Council
Candidates