



Seattle Voter

JANUARY 2011

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PROGRAM PLANNING – A PLETHORA OF OPTIONS!

By Allison Feher, LWVS President

The January program planning forum and unit discussion has always been a challenging one to prepare for, but it is vital to what we are as an organization. What are the issues and topics we want to take on, what do we want to hear about and learn more about? We are a grassroots organization: our agenda for the year is set by you, the members, and the positions we take are arrived at through your consensus.

Since our mission is to inform and educate the voters, that leads to a pretty wide open field. Last year’s results reflected this, as at least two dozen different topics were mentioned and there was little consensus. When the topics were put up for a straw poll at annual meeting the top vote getters included: arms control, transportation, and taxes and budgets. We’ve covered or will be covering these three between now and June. Additional popular choices were: judicial selection/courts, homelessness, elections, civics education, health care – single payer and campaign finance reform. Sometimes there’s a call for more information in the responses to a study. This was the case after the budget

program we did a year ago and after the Port study. More recently, after the units met in November, hot topics mentioned again included homelessness, transportation (including public transit and light rail), campaign financing and regulation, civics education, and city and county budgets as well as education and the environment/pollution. Finally, at the board meeting and some informal discussions the topic of “net neutrality”—free and open access to the internet—has been coming up. Certainly something we’ve not studied before!

So think about what you would like to hear about, read or research and then let us know; even if you can’t make it to a unit meeting we welcome your input.

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President's Message

It's January, and the days, although still dark and short, are getting longer again. A new calendar, a new set of resolutions, and in some respects a clean slate. Not that our activities ever really stop; the business of the old year flows over and the day-to-day distractions continue. Still, we need to take time to plan for the future and that is what this month's program planning agenda is about. So how do we start that process?



to you? Does a position seem outdated, or deserving of a new look?

One of the benefits of our mission is that it gives us a pretty broad menu of topics to choose from, so make sure you select something that intrigues, informs and inspires you, because we want you coming back to dine with us every month!

Sincerely,

In the past we asked you to look at all the positions and then mark each one "retain, drop, or update." Given the number and length of the positions, that led to a pretty tedious unit meeting (one I was often tempted to skip!). On the other hand, just looking at a blank page that asks for suggestions for study topics is a bit like trying to order dinner from a restaurant that hasn't opened yet and doesn't have a menu, for a meal that you won't eat for 9 months to 2 and a half years!

Now, in a sense, we have to take up the role of the restaurant owner who is trying to decide what will make for a successful restaurant. Do we go for something popular like Italian or Thai, or hamburgers that it seems we can never have too many of, or do we try something completely different and unique here like Burmese or Tunisian or 101 ways to eat legumes?

One way to approach this is to look at current events for ideas and ask "do I really understand what's being argued or asked for here?" "Do I know enough about the history, the system or other factors to make a reasonable judgment or contribute to the discussion?" Another way is to go back to that set of positions. Have we ever studied or taken a position on an issue of interest



Mission Statement

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

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

January/February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						January 1
2	3 International Relations Committee 12:45 p.m.	4	5	6 Forum: Program Planning 7:30 p.m.	7	8 Board Meeting 9:00 a.m. Economics and Taxation Comm. 9:00 a.m.
9	10 Voter Deadline/ State Legislative Session Begins/ Reclaimed Water Comm. 2:00 p.m./ Teacher Study Comm. 3:30 p.m.	11	12	13 Social Justice Committee 7:00 p.m.	14	15
16	17	18 Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.	19	20	21	22
23	24 Teacher Study Committee 3:30 p.m.	25	26	27	28	29
30	31	February 1	2	3 Forum: Reclaimed Water 7:30 p.m.	4	5 Board Meeting

JANUARY

International Relations Committee
Monday, January 3
12:45-2:45 p.m.
League Office

Forum: Program Planning
Thursday, January 6
7:30 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
Saturday, January 8
9:00 a.m.
League Office

Economics and Taxation Committee
Saturday, January 8
9:00 a.m.
909 E. Newton St., D-9

Voter Deadline
Monday, January 10

Reclaimed Water Committee
Monday, January 10
2:00 p.m.
League Office

Teacher Study Committee
Monday, January 10
3:30-5:00 p.m.
League Office

Social Justice Committee
Thursday, January 13
7:00-8:30 p.m.
League Office

Transportation Committee
Tuesday, January 18
10:00 a.m.
League Office

FEBRUARY

Forum: Reclaimed Water
Thursday, February 3
7:30 p.m.
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
Saturday, February 5
9:00 a.m.
League Office

Voter Deadline
Monday, February 7

Special Election
Tuesday, February 8

Forum Schedule

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

December 9 - Nuclear Disarmament and the Future

January 6 - Program Planning

February 3 - Reclaimed Water

March 3 - Women and the Media

April 7 - Budget/taxation (tentative)

May 4 - Transportation (tentative)

.....

FOLLOW THE LEAGUE'S PROGRESS IN OLYMPIA
SUBSCRIBE TO THE LEGISLATIVE NEWSLETTER

During the legislative session you will receive information about League support or opposition to bills, pertinent committee hearings, status of bills and Action Alerts. If you are willing to receive the newsletter via email it's free! If you prefer to have it mailed to you there is a \$15 charge. Please specify which version you wish to receive - mail or email. \$15 Mail Free via Email

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

(Please print your email address clearly!!)

Make your check payable to and return to:

LWVWA, 4730 University Way NE, #720, Seattle, WA 98105

PH: 206-622-8961, outside toll area, 1-800-419-2596, email: lwwa@lwwa.org, www.lwwa.org

Board Briefs By Joanna Cullen, Secretary

The Board of the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) met on Saturday morning, December 4.

Membership

Efforts to strengthen and engage local units and recruit new members continue to be the central to the work of the committee. The number of \$100.00 Booster memberships has shown a significant increase during the two of months that it has been offered.

Units

In December, some local units plan social events in lieu of their monthly meetings and invite locally elected officials and others active in areas supported by the league. Board members are encouraged to look at the unit calendar and choose some of these events to attend.

Program

Unit engagement was a focus for the last program. Unit and member engagement will be important for the upcoming January forum on Program Planning. Action Chair Nan Moore's report on the results from the open-ended questions that were posed for the November forum on how the units can serve as action committees reflected the wonderful diversity of interest and expertise that exists in LWVS units. The forum itself was also very engaging and included a lively discussion on the tunnel that has been proposed to replace the Alaskan Way Viaduct. Members and units will again be asked to share their interests and knowledge in order to set successful programs for 2011. Committees will also be presenting information and inviting participation. Nan, Allison Feher and Joanna Cullen are on the subcommittee responsible for putting this forum together.

The Reclaimed Water Committee presentation will be ready for the February forum, and the Civics

Education Committee has planned a program on Women and the Media for March. April or May will be covered by the Transportation Committee. The Board and committee members are working together to focus the topic. The other forum for April or May, while not yet determined, will likely include some discussion regarding taxation and economics as related to social justice.

TRY

The 2011 *They Represent You* Release Party will be in early to mid February. Fundraising and end of year donations to support the printing and mailing continue to be pursued. Board members were reminded that donations to this are under the 501(c)(3) Education Fund and are tax deductible. Board members will be stepping up their efforts to obtain donations.

Voter Services

Activities have included further developing a list for voter registration opportunities and recruiting volunteers to staff the tables, and planning training for moderators and speakers.

Email Policies

The Board approved a motion directing President Allison Feher to send a letter to the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) requesting that LWVWA adopt the same policy for sharing member email information that LWVS uses.

Publicity and Public Relations and Outreach

Both the Publicity and Public Relations Committee and Outreach have been working with the Technology Subcommittee to refine and update the LWVS website and explore additional strategies for effective uses of electronic and social networking communications.

The current focus for Publicity and Public Relations is to broaden the list of individual and organizational contacts with whom we can work toward common interests and goals and to improve communications within the League itself.

Recent activities of the Outreach Committee have included engaging younger members through the University of Washington Alumni activities and other social mixers, along with exploring hot topics and local issues. Setting new goals for 2011 also tops their list of to-do items.

Other Activities

The ad hoc committee formed to streamline and more precisely define a ballot measures endorsement process has been meeting and plans to present a recommendation to the Board in January. Julie Ann Kempf, Dana Twight and Victoria Bennett are working on the League proposal to be a presenter at the Guiding Light Network's workshop on citizenship.

Treasurer Judy Bevington continues to work with the Equipment Committee and proposals for efficiencies will be ready soon. A nominating committee for the next Board is being formed.

Committees

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 3

TIME: 12:45 – 2:45 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

All are welcome to attend a special session of the committee, at which Vicky Downs will lead a discussion of a book about historical themes in American foreign relations. The book is *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How it Changed the World*, by Walter Russell Mead. Anyone wanting Vicky's synopsis of the book (whether you can attend or not) contact Ellen Berg: ellenberg@msn.com.

ECONOMICS AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

DATE: SATURDAY, JANUARY 8

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

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

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

CIVICS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE/TIME/PLACE: TBD

For more information, contact Dana Twight: dctwight@mac.com

RECLAIMED WATER COMMITTEE

DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 10

TIME: 2:00 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

SOCIAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

DATE: THURSDAY, JANUARY 13

TIME: 7:00 – 8:30 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

TEACHER STUDY COMMITTEE

DATES: MONDAY, JANUARY 10

MONDAY, JANUARY 24

TIME: 3:30 – 5:00 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

For more information, contact Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis at (206) 329-4848.

TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: TUESDAY, JANUARY 18

TIME: 10:00 A.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

SPEAKER: TO BE ANNOUNCED

Announcements

HELP WANTED

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

If you are a new member and want to learn what the League is all about, or a past member who just wants to give a little time, but not do the heavy lifting of a study, volunteering at the CIS desk is a great way to get involved—and we need you!

Currently , there are two three-hour shift openings on Fridays — 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. and 12:30 – 3:30 p.m. If you are interested, please call or email CIS Coordinator Cynthia Howe at (206) 329-4848 or howe.john@comcast.net. She will be delighted to train you. Come on—it’s fun!

GREAT DECISIONS 2011

It is time to sign up for a Great Decisions 2011 discussion group and order briefing books. Choose one of three groups sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Seattle.

A Mercer Island group will meet on Thursday afternoons beginning in February at the home of Susie Anschell, 3426 74th S.E. Call Susie at (206) 329-4848 if you wish to participate.

A Seattle group will meet on alternate Tuesday evenings beginning February 8 at the home of Vicky Downs, 909 East Newton. Call Carol Goldenberg at (206) 329-4848 if you wish to join this group.

An Issaquah group will meet on alternate Sunday evenings beginning in early February. Call Denise Smith at (206) 329-4848.

To order the \$20.00 2011 Great Decisions briefing book, call (800) 477-5836 or visit www.greatdecisions.org. The study guide is published by the New York based Foreign Policy Association, an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to public education regarding international issues. Written by independent experts, it contains in-depth articles providing maps, historical background, present and future policy options and an opportunity to take part in a national opinion poll on U.S. foreign policy.

2011 Topic Descriptions

REBUILDING HAITI – The January 2010 earthquake that devastated Haiti struck a country already suffering from widespread poverty and underdevelopment. Did this natural disaster inadvertently provide an opportunity for reassessment and planning a new Haiti? With presidential elections looming in early 2011, what can new leadership bring to restore the country?

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY – U.S. national security priorities were expanded after the attacks of September 11, 2001, to include waging war in Iraq and Afghanistan, tightening border security, pursuing cyberthreats, halting nuclear proliferation and attempting to snuff out homegrown terrorism. How has the U.S. national security agenda evolved since 9/11? In what ways will this agenda shape the American way of life in the future?

HORN OF AFRICA – Since the early 1990s, the U.S. has monitored the Horn of Africa due to security concerns. Internal instability, weak governments in some countries, regional rivalries and a lack of development have resulted in an environment conducive to terrorism. Can the U.S. protect its national interests while mitigating the dangerous conditions in the region?

RESPONDING TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS – As an immediate response to the financial crisis of 2007-08, governments around the world stepped in to bail out troubled private banks deemed “to big to fail”, underscoring the interdependence between private and public finances. With the recent eurozone crisis, what have we learned so far and is it possible to ensure that future crises will not occur?

GERMANY ASCENDANT – Germany has emerged from both the financial crisis and eurozone crisis as the dominant economic and political power in Europe, in particular setting the tone for dealings with Russia, Eastern Europe and Iran. How important is it for U.S. interests to enhance relations with Germany, and how should the U.S. react when U.S. and German interests fail to align?

SANCTIONS AND NONPROLIFERATION – Sanctions have been created to curb nations in violation of international law, especially agreements concerning nuclear nonproliferation. How successfully have sanctions been applied against past violators? Is there any chance sanctions can curtail North Korea and Iran from continuing to develop nuclear weapons?

THE CAUCASUS – The countries and regions of the Caucasus all have strong national identities but have long lived in the shadow of their larger neighbors: Russia, Iran and Turkey. How does this influence the Caucasus today? How do the region’s energy resources play into its relations with the outside world?

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE – International cooperation subjects political leaders to an ongoing test: balancing national needs with a commitment to building a durable international order. How has an increasingly interconnected and shrinking world affected the viability of existing agreements and institutions? What economic, political, social and security concerns are currently on the agendas of intergovernmental bodies, and what is the future U.S. role?

League News

TALENT SEARCH IS ON!

BY NANCY EITREIM, NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The New Year 2011 is here! The nominating committee is getting ready to roll. The search for officers and directors for the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) is beginning.

Each of you can contribute by scanning the roster of individuals in your unit or committee, and thinking about members who might be interested in the opportunities and responsibilities that come with board membership! All League boards are working boards but the returns are many. Former board members are elected and appointed officials and members of commissions. Former presidents are living breathing examples of the benefits of civic involvement.

Leading the League is an honor, a privilege and a responsibility. Since 1920, women and now men have used LWV membership and activities to gain leadership, organizational and political skills in Leagues throughout the country. League leaders can choose their paths after completing their service and transfer their successful experiences to other Leagues, nonprofits, businesses or government. Some eventually run for office and their League commitments highlight their resumes.

Leagues need leaders with a diversity of experiences. Not everyone has to be president. But everyone will choose an area of interest or an area to learn, and assume by membership on the board a leadership and organizing position.

This year, get busy and contribute your name or the names of others who may be interested in the Seattle League Board. Please add a brief introduction to let the nominating committee know about suggested board members. This information will be kept confidential, as are the committee deliberations.

The League needs you!

“League Basics”(http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=In_League) is a condensed overview of the League for all members.

The League of Women Voters is a volunteer organization that does a professional job. The League tackles important public issues and is a respected, trusted asset in cities and towns across the country. League leaders empower others to define and accomplish goals—for themselves, for the organization, for their communities and for the nation. Through these goals, the organization fulfills its mission and grows. Throughout its history, the League of Women Voters has been a dynamic, changing organization, adapting procedures to meet current and future needs. League leaders make their communities stronger, healthier, and more vibrant. This handbook and the additional information available on the League Web site (www.lwv.org) are essential tools to help League leaders be more effective and to help make the organization more effective.

Thank you for your assistance and commitment to LWVS.

Nominating Committee:

- Nancy Eitreim
- Vicki Downs
- Liv Grohn Goodman
- Peggy Saari
- Two appointed members from the current board

TRANSPORTATION REPORT: METRO TRANSIT

BY JANET WINANS, TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Our November speaker was Victor Obeso, Service Development Section Manager for Metro Transit.

The good news is that plans to increase routes for RAPID RIDE, the express-train like bus service between cities, still have adequate funding, as does the SR 520 Urban Partnership Agreement. However, Metro Transit still faces some very serious issues.

Our meeting took place just days after the Regional Transit Task Force released its KING COUNTY METRO TRANSIT CHALLENGE AND PRIORITIES document to the public. The Regional Task Force was formed in February, 2010, by the King County Council and Executive in order to develop a plan to confront the catastrophic fall in real and projected revenues that fund transit. The twenty-eight members were selected to represent the broad and sometimes conflicting diversity of interests and expertise in the county. Their goal was to devise a new plan to handle the questions about and demands for distributing the ever-shrinking transit resources that would not stir rivalries between the complex and very different areas of the county.

The task force began from a very different kind of policy guidance that was created in very different times. The Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) had projected, in their VISION 2040 and TRANSPORTATION 2040 plans, a forty-two percent increase in the county's population and a fifty-seven percent increase in jobs along with steadily increasing sales taxes and other revenue that would pay for each new stage of transit development. The former "Policy Guidance for Service Growth and Reduction" organized the county into three "subareas:" the West (the city of Seattle), the East (Bellevue and the East Side) and the South (the rest of the county). Their plan to distribute new transit resources was that twenty percent would go to the West, forty percent would go to the East and

forty percent would go to the South. Reductions would be sixty-two percent from the West, twenty-one percent from the South and seventeen percent from the East. The rationale for these distribution percentages was that Seattle already had the majority of transit services and that most of the sales taxes used to fund transit come from the South and East – e.g. Bellevue Square and South Center. And, of course, that actual reductions were unlikely.

Already, in 2008-2009, Metro had cut the capital program by more than \$65 million. Hiring was frozen and nineteen full-time and seven limited-term positions had been eliminated. Transit and paratransit fares had increased. For the 2010-2011 biennial budget, Metro's plan includes increasing fares, eliminating seventy staff positions, cutting bus service by seventy-five thousand hours, deferring bus service expansion, reducing operating reserves for four years, using fleet replacement reserves, and implementing schedule efficiencies estimated to save one hundred twenty-five thousand hours. Without further actions Metro will have to cut four hundred thousand hours of existing service by 2013, and another two hundred thousand hours by 2015.

Just consider, King County Metro Transit is the eighth largest transit provider in the United States. It has been ranked the best in the country. Now, when more people need bus service because their incomes are falling, most of the revenue the transit system depends upon comes from the sales taxes, yet the sales tax revenues are in decline because those same people cannot afford to buy as much. In February 2010, actual revenue had fallen from a projected \$525 million to less than \$400 million. The forecast for 2009-2015 projects a cumulative gap of \$1.176 billion.

The percentage allocations of the "Policy Guidance" led to serious arguments between Seattle and the rest of the county because Seattle is the starting

point and/or destination point for the vast majority of transit users, while it is still true that most of the sales tax producing businesses are in the suburbs. And, of course, while there are few riders from the areas of the county outside the suburban cities, most of those riders are completely dependent on transit services to meet their travel needs.

The task force met from March through October, 2010, and used a consensus-based decision making process, defining consensus as a situation in which “all members can support or live with the task force recommendations.” In essence, the task force created a system of “Key Transit System Design Factors” that will allow them to plan, prioritize, design, and distribute transit resources throughout the county in relation to available financing and demand for services. They defined seven such “factors:” 1.) Land Use, 2.) Social Equity and Environmental Justice, 3.) Financial Sustainability, 4.) Geographic Equity, 5.) Economic Development, 6.) Productivity and Efficiency and 7.) Environmental Sustainability.

The task force certainly did understand that the percentage reductions would hurt even those people from outside Seattle. They worked to find a way to include ideas of efficiency and equity into their plan. Instead of the formulaic sixty-two/twenty-one/seventeen allocation of cuts, the task force determined that “geographic value” means a multi-faceted approach that is perceived as “fair” by all users. Decisions must balance access with productivity. Investments in transit – and, unfortunately, reductions in service – should be appropriate to land use, employment and housing densities. There must be some relationship, but not an exact formula, between tax revenues created in sub areas and distribution of service. The goal must be to get the most workers to and from job centers while still providing service to people in areas where bus service is their only option for transportation.

That is the WHAT. The Regional Task Force agreed on seven recommendations to help cope with the HOW:

1. Create and adopt new performance measures; report at least annually on key system design factors and include comparisons with Metro’s peer transit agencies.
2. Control agency operating costs and create a sustainable cost structure including implementation of the 2009 performance audit.
3. Base the policy guidance for making service reduction and service growth decisions on the following priorities.
 - a. Emphasize productivity.
 - b. Ensure social equity.
 - c. Provide geographic value throughout the county.
4. Create clear and transparent guidelines to be used for making service allocation decisions, based upon recommended policy direction.
5. Use the following principles to provide direction for the development of service guidelines:
 - a. Transparency, clarity and measurability
 - b. Use of system design factors
 - c. Responsiveness to dynamic financial conditions
 - d. Integration with the regional transportation system
 - e. Development of performance thresholds as the basis for decision-making on network changes
6. Pursue state legislation to create additional revenue sources.
7. Update the mission statement and create a vision statement.

SEATTLE COMMUNITY ACCESS NETWORK

BY JEAN CARLSON, PUBLIC RELATIONS

SCAN TV, The Seattle Community Access Network, is listed in the League's 2010 TRY booklet as a private nonprofit organization operating TV studios and state-of-the-art production facilities on behalf of citizens residing in Seattle and King County. SCAN is broadcast on Comcast 77/ Broadstripe 23 and streamed live at www.scantv.org. It is funded largely by a surcharge paid by those providers to the city of Seattle to provide local programming.

League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) members and friends saw an example of SCAN's local programming in progress at the December 9 LWVS Forum. Ed Mays, who produces a show on SCAN called PirateTV, (airs Mondays at 8 PM and Wednesdays at noon) was seen filming at the back of the room. Mays volunteers his time and equipment to provide television coverage to a broader audience for organizations like ours.

Current city budget proposals have included eliminating most if not all city funding for public access television. At the same time, SCAN's Big Sister, Seattle Channel 21, has taken 5% cuts but also

has been shifted from covering Seattle City Council and Committee hearings, Parks Department Forums and the like to TV almost completely devoted to entertainment features. Streaming serious coverage on the internet is expected to fill the gap, a controversial assertion.

Ed Mays reports that on December 9 the SCAN Board of Directors was notified that SCAN has been chosen to be the transitional public access provider for January 1 – June 30, 2011. What exactly this means remains to be seen. The Board will be creating a new operational plan for the transition period but with diminished resources.

To stay informed on this subject, visit www.edmaysproductions.net and SCAN's website www.scantv.org for updates.

Diversity Policy

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

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

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

Voter Service

WHAT DID THE HEALTH CARE REFORM ACT ACTUALLY DO?

BY CYNTHIA STEWART, LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

On March 21, 2010, Congress completed its passage of major reform to the country's health care system, when the House voted for final approval of the legislation. The President signed the bill into law on March 23. The coverage of this legislation has been confusing, so the following summary is offered to clarify what the effects of this legislation are. This information is drawn from a variety of news sources and government reports.

General Effects

About 32.5 million people will gain health care coverage from this legislation. Of the newly covered people, about half (16 million) will be added to the Medicaid rolls. The remainder would be covered through subsidized private insurance for low income families. By 2014, all states will have insurance exchanges where individuals, families and small businesses can buy coverage. However, an estimated 23 million people are expected to remain uninsured as late as 2019. About one-third of the remaining uninsured would be illegal immigrants.

The cost of this increase in health care coverage is expected to be offset by cuts in Medicare spending, which start in the next few months, a tax on high-cost employer-sponsored health plans, which takes effect in 2018, and a tax on the investment income of the most affluent Americans. Although the increases will result in about a two percent growth in the share that health care costs contribute to the national economy (from 17.3% of the national economy in 2009 to 19.6% in 2019), the impact will also be to reduce the federal deficit by \$143 billion in the next 10 years as a result of cost-shifting and increased taxes.

There will also be a change in how tax deductions are allowed for health care costs. Currently,

deductions for unreimbursed health care costs are allowed when they exceed 7.5 percent of adjusted gross income. This deduction threshold will be increased to 10 percent in 2013 but the increase will be waived for individuals age 65 and older for tax years 2013 through 2016.

Most elements of the bill will be implemented between 2010 and 2014. Specific changes and when they will occur are described below. This is not an exhaustive list, because the bill is so complex. Therefore, references are available at the end of this document for more information.

Immediate Changes (2010)

- **Preventive health services.** All new health plans in either the group or individual markets must provide first dollar coverage for preventive services.
- **Coverage for those uninsured because of preexisting conditions.** Adults who have been denied coverage because of preexisting conditions will be able to sign on to a federally subsidized insurance program. Coverage in this stopgap insurance program isn't expected to be comprehensive and will expire once new insurance exchanges start operating in 2014.
- **Insurance companies cannot drop customers or raise rates prohibitively.** Insurance companies will not be allowed to drop people from coverage when they get sick, nor can they make health plans vastly more expensive for people with preexisting conditions. Lifetime limits on the amount of health care an insurer will cover will be eliminated, and use of annual limits will be restricted.
- **Insurance companies accountable for rates.** Creates a grant program to support states in requiring health insurance companies to submit

justification for unreasonable premium increases starting in plan year 2010. Insurance companies with excessive or unjustified premium increases between 2010 and 2014 could be prohibited from participating in the new Health Insurance Exchanges.

- **Coverage for children.** Companies won't be able to drop children under the age of 19 from coverage because of pre-existing conditions. Parents can also keep their children on a family plan till they turn 26 or get a job that offers them benefits.

- **Rebates for the Part D "donut hole."** An estimated 4 million Medicare beneficiaries who hit the so called "donut hole" in the program's drug plan (the gap in coverage which currently begins after \$2,700 is spent on drugs) will get a \$250 rebate in 2010. The cost of drugs in the coverage gap will then drop 50 percent in 2011, and the hole will be closed entirely by 2020.

- **Tax credits for small businesses.** For small businesses with fewer than 25 employees and average wages of less than \$50,000, the government will provide a tax credit of up to 35 percent of the cost of healthcare premiums. This will help these businesses provide coverage to their employees.

- **Reduced cost to cover early retirees.** A new temporary reinsurance program will be established to help offset the costs of expensive claims for employers and retirees for health benefits for retirees age 55 to 64.

- **Improves consumer assistance.** Provides aid to states to establish offices of health insurance consumer assistance in order to help individuals with the filing of complaints and appeals. Also requires the Secretary of HHS to establish an Internet website through which residents of any State may identify affordable health insurance coverage options in that State. Additionally, any new health plan in the group or individual markets must implement an effective internal and external

appeals process for coverage determinations and claims.

- **Reduces health care fraud.** Requires enhanced screening procedures for health care providers to eliminate fraud and waste in the health care system.

- **Improves public health prevention efforts.** Creates an interagency council to promote healthy policies at the federal level and establishes a prevention and public health investment fund to provide an expanded and sustained national investment in prevention and public health programs.

- **Strengthens the quality infrastructure.** Additional resources are provided to HHS to develop a national quality strategy and support quality measure development and endorsement for the Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP quality improvement programs. Also establishes a private, nonprofit institute to identify national priorities and provide for research to compare the effectiveness of health treatments and strategies. Further, establishes an independent National Commission to provide comprehensive, nonbiased information and recommendations to Congress and the Administration for aligning federal health care workforce resources with national needs.

- **Extends payment protections for rural providers.** Extends Medicare payment protections for small rural hospitals, including hospital outpatient services, lab services, and facilities that have a low volume of Medicare patients, but play an important role in their communities.

- **Medicaid flexibility for states.** A new option will take effect, allowing states to cover parents and childless adults up to 133 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) and receive current law Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP).

- **Nonprofit hospitals.** Establishes new requirements applicable to nonprofit hospitals

beginning in 2010, including periodic community needs assessments.

- **Expands adoption assistance and credit.** Increases the adoption tax credit and adoption assistance exclusion by \$1,000, makes the credit refundable, and extends the credit through 2011. The enhancements are effective for tax years beginning after December 31, 2009.

- **Support for investment in new therapies.** A two-year temporary tax credit for qualifying investments made in 2009 and 2010, subject to an overall cap of \$1 billion, will be available to encourage investments in new therapies to prevent, diagnose, and treat acute and chronic diseases.

- **Tax relief for health professionals with state loan repayment.** For amounts received by an individual in taxable years beginning after December 31, 2008, gross income payments made under any state loan repayment or loan forgiveness program will be excluded to provide for the increased availability of health care services in underserved or health professional shortage areas.

- **Tax benefits for tribal Indian health care.** Excludes from gross income the value of specified Indian tribal health benefits. The provision is effective for benefits and coverage provided after the date of enactment.

- **Strengthens the health care workforce.** Expands and improves low-interest student loan programs, scholarships, and loan repayments for health students and professionals to increase and enhance the capacity of the workforce to meet patients' health care needs.

- **Special Deduction for Blue Cross Blue Shield (BCBS).** Requires that nonprofit BCBS organizations have a medical loss ratio of 85 percent or higher in order to take advantage of the special tax benefits provided to them under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 833, including the deduction for 25 percent of claims

and expenses and the 100 percent deduction for unearned premium reserves.

- **Taxes.** Imposes a ten percent tax on amounts paid for indoor tanning services in lieu of the tax on cosmetic surgery. Indoor tanning services are services that use an electronic product with one or more ultraviolet lamps to induce skin tanning

Short-Term Changes (2011-2014)

- **Changes Medicare.** Medicare beneficiaries will get a free annual wellness visit, and the new health plans will be required to cover preventive services with little or no cost to patients. Medicare will also provide 10 percent bonus payments to primary care physicians and general surgeons. Establishes the Community Care Transitions Program to provide transition services to high-risk Medicare beneficiaries. Freezes 2011 Medicare Advantage payment benchmarks at 2010 levels to begin transition and continues to reduce Medicare Advantage benchmarks in subsequent years relative to current levels. Benchmarks will vary from 95% of Medicare spending in high-cost areas to 115% of Medicare spending in low-cost areas. Changes are phased-in over 3, 5 or 7 years, depending on the level of payment reductions.

- **Additional Medicaid savings.** A new Medicaid plan for the poor will allow states to provide more home- and community-based care for disabled people who would otherwise require institutional help. In 2013, Medicaid payment rates to primary care physicians for furnishing primary care services must be no less than 100% of Medicare payment rates in 2013 and 2014. Provides 100% federal funding for the incremental costs to States of meeting this requirement.

- **Limit on Flexible Spending Accounts.** Starting in 2013, flexible spending accounts used for health care costs would be subject to a \$2,500 limit, and over-the-counter drugs would no longer be reimbursed without a prescription. Currently, there is no legal limit, but most employers set a cap around \$4,000 or \$5,000.

- **Reduces cost of health care coverage.** Health insurers, including grandfathered plans, must annually report on the share of premium dollars spent on medical care as opposed to profits or administration and provide consumer rebates where less than 80 to 85 percent of dollars are used for benefits. In 2012, physician payment reforms, hospital value-based purchasing and hospital readmission tracking will be implemented. A new Center for Medicare & Medicaid Innovation will be established to test innovative payment and service delivery models to reduce health care costs and enhance the quality of care provided to individuals. Creates incentives for state Medicaid programs to cover evidence-based preventive services with no cost-sharing, and requires coverage of tobacco cessation services for pregnant women. In 2013, electronic exchange of health information to reduce paperwork and administrative burdens and costs will be mandated.
- **Strengthens coordination of care.** Establishes a national pilot program on payment bundling to encourage hospitals, doctors, and post-acute care providers to work together to achieve savings for Medicare through increased collaboration and improved coordination of patient care, to be implemented in 2013.
- **Strengthens community health centers and the primary care workforce.** Provides funds to build new and expand existing community health centers, and expands funding for scholarships and loan repayments for primary care practitioners working in underserved areas. Establishes a Graduate Medical Education policy allowing unused training slots to be redistributed for purposes of increasing primary care training at other sites.
- **Cafeteria Plan changes.** Creates a Simple Cafeteria Plan to provide a vehicle through which small businesses can provide tax-free benefits to their employees. This would ease the small employer's administrative burden of sponsoring a cafeteria plan. The provision also exempts employers who make contributions for employees under a simple cafeteria plan from nondiscrimination requirements applicable to highly compensated and key employees.
- **Expands primary care, nursing, and public health workforce.** Increases access to primary care by adjusting the Medicare Graduate Medical Education program. Primary care and nurse training programs are also expanded to increase the size of the primary care and nursing workforce. Ensures that public health challenges are adequately addressed.
- **Standardizes the Definition of Qualified Medical Expenses.** Conforms the definition of qualified medical expenses for HSAs, FSAs, and HRAs to the definition used for the itemized deduction. An exception to this rule is included so that amounts paid for over-the-counter medicine with a prescription still qualify as medical expenses.
- **Increased Tax for Withdrawals from Health Savings Accounts and Archer Medical Savings Account Funds for Non-Qualified Medical Expenses.** Increases the additional tax for HSA withdrawals prior to age 65 that are not used for qualified medical expenses from 10 to 20 percent. The additional tax for Archer MSA withdrawals not used for qualified medical expenses would increase from 15 to 20 percent.
- **Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Fee.** Imposes an annual, non-deductible fee on the pharmaceutical manufacturing industry allocated according to market share and not applying to companies with sales of branded pharmaceuticals of \$5 million or less.
- **Taxes.** In 2013, a 2.3 % excise tax on the sale of a medical device by a manufacturer or importer will be implemented, with exemptions for eye glasses, contact lenses, hearing aids, and any device of a type that is generally purchased by the public at retail for individual use.
- **Limits Executive Compensation.** Limits

the deductibility of executive compensation under Section 162(m) for insurance providers if at least 25 percent of the insurance provider's gross premium income from health business is derived from health insurance plans that meet the minimum creditable coverage requirements with respect to services performed after 2009.

Long-Term Changes (2014 onwards)

- **Requires insurance.** Beginning in 2014, all Americans would be expected to get insurance or face penalties. The fine depends on household income, but there's also an upper limit; a family would pay a maximum of \$2,085. Extremely low-income people will be exempt from the fines.

- **Eliminates Annual Limits.** Prohibits all employer plans and new plans in the individual market from imposing annual limits on the amount of coverage an individual may receive.

- **Ensures Coverage for Individuals Participating in Clinical Trials.** Prohibits new health plans from dropping coverage because an individual chooses to participate in a clinical trial and from denying coverage for routine care that they would otherwise provide just because an individual is enrolled in a clinical trial. Applies to all clinical trials that treat cancer or other life-threatening diseases.

- **Large employers must provide insurance.** Large employers are expected to provide coverage to workers or face fines. Businesses with 50 or more workers who do not provide coverage will be fined \$2,000 for each uninsured employee.

- **Medicaid expanded for low-income families.** Medicaid, the state-federal program for the poor and disabled, will be expanded sharply starting in 2014, when it will offer care to people with annual incomes less than 133 percent of the federal poverty level (\$29,326 for a family of four).

- **Tax credits for low-income families.** People with incomes up to 400 percent of the federal poverty level will receive tax credits on a sliding

scale for their health care premiums.

- **State health insurance exchanges.** State-based insurance marketplaces called exchanges are expected to go into effect in 2014. The exchanges will offer opportunities for people to pick and choose the plan that works best for them. Once the exchanges are up and running, insurers will be barred from rejecting applicants based on their health status. The new policies sold on the exchanges will be required to cover not just hospitalizations, doctor visits, and prescription medicines, but also maternity care and certain preventive exams. A choice of coverage through a multi-state plan, available from nationwide health plans under the supervision of the Office of Personnel Management, would also be available.

- **Excise tax on high cost employer-provided health plans.** In 2018, a tax is on the cost of coverage in excess of \$27,500 (family coverage) and \$10,200 (single coverage), increased to \$30,950 (family) and \$11,850 (single) for retirees and employees in high risk professions will be implemented. The dollar thresholds are indexed with inflation, and employers with higher costs on account of the age or gender demographics of their employees may value their coverage using the age and gender demographics of a national risk pool.

Other sources of information:

➤ <http://healthreform.kff.org/timeline.aspx>, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

➤ <http://docs.house.gov/energycommerce/TIMELINE.pdf>, Committees on Ways & Means, Energy & Commerce, and Education & Labor, 4/2/10

Action & Advocacy

THE 2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION AND THE LEAGUE

The Washington State legislature goes into session each year on the second Monday in January. In odd-numbered years, sessions last 105 days, to allow time to prepare a budget. So this year, the legislature will convene on Monday, January 10, and run through April 24.

The League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) has selected five legislative priorities for this year. They are:

- Strengthen Democracy
- Support Education, Early Learning, Families and Children
- Improve Access to Health Care
- Protect Natural Resources and Human Health
- Promote a Balanced Transportation System

LWVWA also belongs to coalitions of organizations with similar goals. At our Action Forum in November, we heard from Doug Howell of the Sierra Club about one of these, the Environmental Priorities Coalition, which has chosen clean energy, and specifically moving away from the use of coal in the TransAlta plant in Centralia, as a top priority for 2011. See page 20 for a complete list of the coalition's priorities.

LWVWA maintains a lobby team, which works closely with a professional lobbyist to follow the progress of bills through the legislature. In order to do this efficiently, each member of the team works only on bills in a single area — e.g. education, energy, health care. Lobby team members may testify at committee hearings or speak personally to legislators.

The LWVWA Lobby Day is scheduled for Friday, February 24 this year. On this day, interested League members gather in Olympia to hear speakers, talk about legislative issues and meet with legislators to discuss the League priorities. Mark your calendar!

LWVWA also enlists the support of individual members to move bills of interest through the legislature. To this end, it publishes a legislative newsletter every week during the legislative session. The newsletter includes reports by lobby team members on the progress of bills that the League supports; applicable League positions; recommended actions, such as requesting a legislator to vote a bill out of committee; and names of contacts. Members may receive the newsletter either by mail or by email; see coupon on page 5 to sign up.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES FOR 2011

The following legislative priorities have been selected by the Environmental Priorities Coalition for 2011:

Clean Energy for a Healthy Washington

We aim to protect families in Washington from the state's single largest source of dangerous air pollution, the TransAlta coal-fired power plant in Centralia. The legislative package will transition the dirty plant off coal in order to address Washington citizens' widespread concerns about the health impacts of coal, climate change, and air and water pollution caused by the TransAlta plant. The legislation will also seek funding to invest in the local community to provide new opportunities for workers affected by the transition away from coal for a more sustainable and reliable energy future.

Freshwater Pollution Control Act

Phosphorus from our industries, wastewater plants, septic systems, and even our lawns can cause algae blooms and impact water quality, fish habitat, and recreation in Washington's lakes and rivers. Controlling this discharge often takes millions of dollars in wastewater treatment upgrades at our industries and municipal wastewater plants. The Freshwater Pollution Control Act is a common sense and cost effective approach to reduce phosphorus in our waterways by restricting the sale of phosphorus lawn fertilizer in the State of Washington. Our lawns don't need the extra phosphorus and our lakes and rivers don't either.

The 2011 Clean Water Act/Working for Clean Water

Each year millions of gallons of petroleum pollute our lakes, rivers and marine waters through toxic oil runoff from our roads and cities, a serious threat to our health and environment. Working for Clean Water (the 2011 Clean Water Act) will fund job-creating projects all over the state, by building clean water infrastructure that will clean up our waterways. Now is the time for the oil companies, who profit from the pollution, to put Washington back to work and provide a cleaner environment that we'll be proud of for generations.

Budget Solutions for Our Environment

Our state needs a proactive approach that will improve our economy while maintaining environmental protections. A key element to the long-term economic health of our state is protecting our clean water, clean air and special places. By sustaining core environmental protections, continuing investments in parks and preservation, and requiring companies and others to pay their fair share for the services they receive, we can strike a balance that even in hard times will protect our public health, economic future, and quality of life in Washington.

For more information about these priorities, contact Elizabeth Davis, elizabethd@whidbey.com, or the visit the coalition's website, www.environmentalpriorities.org.

ACTION AND ADVOCACY: NOVEMBER UNIT DISCUSSIONS

BY NAN MOORE, ACTION CHAIR

The November Unit discussions were a departure for the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS): units were asked to think about how they might function as action committees. The Board posed seven open-ended questions, and the Action Chair gave a little guidance in the Voter. But there were no “experts” and no “wrong answers.” Many units reported lively discussions, some of which ranged beyond the questions posed to thoughts about how League works, used to work, or might work better. Folks reflected about how their unit is special and plotted what direction they’d like to see it take.

Some of the units found the number of discussion questions overwhelming and so—as we hoped—they focused on those areas of most interest to them. Kim Peterson worked out a process for the Ballard/Magnolia/Queen Anne unit involving sticky notes and one-minute speeches from members to help them narrow their focus to three key areas of interest. He’ll be glad to share his system with you if you’d like to use it for future meetings!

Some units reported that many of their members were already actively following their passions by participating in LWVS standing committees or other community organizations. They stressed the importance of unit meetings as an opportunity for reading and discussing studies and urged that LWVS should provide a regular diet of such materials for unit digestion. One unit leader told us, “I think studies are very important because they force us to take a new look at current issues and educate members. To say that we have positions on these issues without ever taking a new look leaves us uninformed and dead in the water.”

Those units who chose to select action topics had many strategies for following them. Several units identified guest speakers they wanted to invite—some even planned a nice potluck to go along

with the talk! Many identified local community organizations already dealing with that subject and planned to pursue relationships or some form of joint effort with those groups. Most units identified the city, county, school board, state agency or legislative body responsible for their issues and some identified various unit members who would follow the activities of the appropriate government body.

Units also discussed how they would stay informed about their issues. Most will consult standard news media, but some units also mentioned legislative newsletters, community publications and blogs, and newsletters of other organizations. Another strategy: use public access TV channels to watch public meetings, including school boards, city and county council meetings, and those of various committees. Some units noted that attending the meetings adds visibility for the individual and for the League.

In addition to inviting speakers to come to the unit, or following the activities of council committees, etc., some units discussed tours of public and social service facilities related to their areas of interest.

Many units mentioned encouraging their members to write letters to the editor or to a council member concerning an issue. Those letters would, of course, be letters from individuals and not identified as League letters. But some units also plan to draft letters about an issue and forward them to the League president for her to consider sending along to the appropriate government body.

And, finally, some members became interested enough in a particular topic to consider joining a standing committee.

At the end of this article you will find a list of action topics that various units chose. (In many cases units will focus on just one aspect of a

particular topic; the list does not include every detail.) Sometimes units chose topics that are also addressed by standing committees. Those committees will be good resources for the units. Not only can you turn to them for information, you may offer them your help—if you care to. As you'll see, some topics struck a chord with several units and in other cases only one unit plans to follow that topic. (If you notice that your unit's topic of interest is apparently shared by other units, feel free to call on the Action Chair to see who else might want to weigh in with you.) Most units chose to follow quite local issues, or rather, local aspects of wider issues. That is splendid; you are the resident experts. At least, if you aren't now, you soon will be!

<u>Action Topic</u>	<u># of Units</u>
Campaign Financing & Regulation	5
City & County Budgets/ setting priorities for social justice	3
Civics Education	3
Communications (loss of newspapers)	1
Criminal Justice	2
Education	4
Emergency Preparedness	1
Environment/Pollution (incl. TransAlta)	5
Homelessness/Affordable housing	6
Immigration	1
Initiative Process	1
Jobs	1
Land Use/Infrastructure	1
League patterns--effectiveness	3
Park funding, local or state	2
Port, esp. as relates to coal transport	1
Prescription Drug disposal	1
Redistricting	1
Taxation	1
Transparency	2

BOOK REVIEW by Vicky Downs *ABIGAIL ADAMS* by Woody Holton

In Holton's excellent biography, Abigail Adams becomes a three-dimensional woman whose letters occasionally seem to spring off the pages in flashes of light and of insight into her thinking. Because she and John were often apart, they wrote hundreds of letters to each other, and Holton provides the background to help us understand them.

After first meeting Abigail, John Adams wrote in his diary that he did not like her "wit". Apparently she had made it clear she found him vain and self-important, as did just about everyone who knew him. Later his word for her was "saucy," which Holton tells us described "the kind of spunk that a self-confident man like Adams could admire." In time, "while other people [called] John "haughty," "Abigail was increasingly willing to [refer to him as] 'saucy.'"

In the 18th century a married woman was treated like a child in that "marriage gave her husband total power over her..." All of a woman's property belonged to the husband from the moment she said, "I do." This seemed as wrong to Abigail as did the fact that women were seldom allowed an academic education. Even before marriage, she wrote John about her "abiding interest in the status of women." This was clearly a cause she worked for throughout her life. In time, John acknowledged her head for business, and accepted the idea that she would have her own "pocket money," to be used as she saw fit.

Abigail was often alone and in charge of raising and educating her children, the working of the farm, and managing the (mostly male) hired help. Because John frequently spent weeks and later months and even years away on business as a lawyer, or as a government official in the capital or abroad, Abigail learned how to be responsible for the family finances, and quickly grew good at it. Holton says that arguably she proved to be better at dealing with finances than was her husband. Though she herself could not legally sign documents, she turned to her Uncle Tufts, whom she trusted and admired, to be her trustee. She never did anything Tufts didn't himself approve of, but Holton makes clear that Abigail was the one who saw how she could turn a profit by making shrewd investments,

or by buying and occasionally selling property.

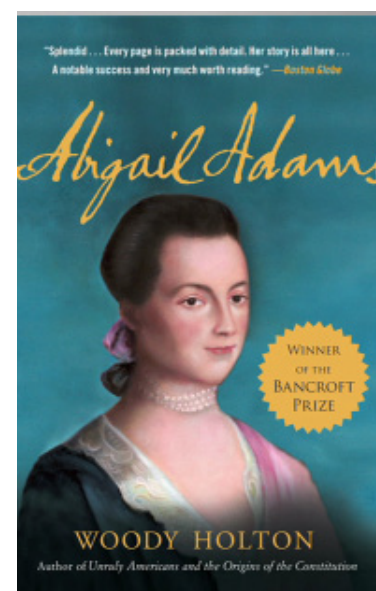
Because of her involvement in money matters, and in finding ways to get males to whom she was not related to work on the farm, her opinion on many issues was valued and she became someone others — mostly women but also some men — wanted to know.

She used what she considered to be her own money in ways that made sense to her. She had little interest in self-enhancement, but regularly provided sums to many of her poorer female relatives and on one occasion loaned a large amount to her eldest son, John Quincy Adams, when he was not yet earning enough to buy a house. Unlike most women of her era, she wrote a will. Legally all her property belonged to John, so there should have been nothing for her to leave. But write a will she did, knowing that John would follow her written requests. In the will she left her "own money" to female friends and relations, in proportion to their needs. She knew how difficult it was for any woman to have money for personal use.

In her care for the household economy and her determination to provide education and funds for women, Abigail Adams proved to be a reformer both within her home and outside.

I found this the most inspirational book I read in 2010, and find myself feeling grateful for the life of Abigail Adams and for Holton's superb biography of this remarkable woman.

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



MYTH: IMMIGRANTS DON'T PAY TAXES

BY BARBARA YASUI, IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE

Most people who believe that immigrants don't pay taxes probably have in mind a stereotyped "illegal alien" who snuck across the U.S. border from Mexico, hangs around outside Home Depot soliciting handyman jobs that are paid under the table and doesn't pay income taxes.

In fact, immigrants pay over \$133 billion in federal, state and local taxes every year¹. Immigrants, both documented and undocumented, who receive pay checks are subject to automatic payroll deductions just like other workers. The Social Security Administration estimates that 75% of undocumented immigrants pay payroll taxes² and contribute at least \$7 billion per year³ to federal programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

Immigration helps keep both Social Security and Medicare afloat. A 2007 study by the White House Council of Economic Advisors reported that immigrants and their families contribute an average of \$80,000 more over their lifetime than they use in benefits⁴. Their contributions help support the system and allow others to receive benefits that they themselves most likely will never receive.

At the state and local level, immigrants pay state income, sales, property, public utilities, gasoline and "sin" taxes. They also contribute to the local economy through their earnings. A 2002 study by the University of Illinois found that undocumented immigrants in the Chicago metro area spent almost \$3 billion of their earnings every year. These expenditures, in turn, generated an additional \$2.5 billion in spending, as the money originally spent by the undocumented immigrants rippled through the local economy⁵.

In 2007, Washington state immigrants contributed almost \$1.5 million in taxes to the state economy⁶. In fact, foreign born residents of Washington pay slightly more than their share of state taxes, paying more than 13% of the total taxes, while they represent only 12.5% of the population⁷.

Although low income households made up of foreign born residents pay less in total taxes than high income foreign born households, they pay a proportionally higher share of their income in taxes—about 14%⁸. In 2006, this amount was estimated to be \$50 million for households earning less than \$20,000⁹.

In other words, the myth that immigrants do not pay taxes is just that: a myth. In many cases, what immigrants pay in taxes is far greater than what they receive in services.

¹OneAmerica, Feb. 2010, "Immigrants & Immigration: Answering the Tough Questions." <http://www.weareoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/ToughQuestionsonImmigration-OneAmerica.pdf>

²ACLU, April 2008, "Immigration Myths & Facts". <http://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights/immigration-myths-and-facts>

³OneAmerica, op. cit.

⁴American Immigration Lawyers Assoc, Feb. 2009, “Myth: Immigrants Hurt the Economy Because They Don’t Pay Taxes.” <http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=27931>

⁵Center for Urban Economic Development, University of Illinois at Chicago, Feb. 2002, “Chicago’s “Undocumented Immigrants: An Analysis of Wages, Working Conditions, and Economic Contributions.” http://www.urbanecconomy.org/sites/default/files/undoc_wages_working_64.pdf

⁶OneAmerica, April 2009, “Building Washington’s Future: Immigrant Workers’ Contributions to Our State’s Economy.” http://www.weareoneamerica.org/sites/default/files/Immigrant_Contributions_to_Our_State_Economy.pdf

⁷Ibid

⁸Ibid

⁹Ibid

VOTER LEGIBILITY TIPS

Do you find the print in the *Voter* too small or difficult to read? With so much great stuff to cram in every month, it’s a constant struggle to make fonts large enough to see while retaining space for articles.

But there’s an easy solution! When you read the electronic PDF version of the *Voter*, available every month on our website (and via email), you can easily zoom in and out to adjust the size any way you wish - making small type much easier to see.

If you would like to join the monthly email *Voter* list – which also helps us conserve financial and ecological resources! – call the office at (206) 329-4848 or email lindsay@seattlelwv.org.

January Program: Program Planning

2011-2012 LOCAL AND STATE PROGRAM PLANNING

JANUARY 2011

Principles of the League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States. The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon the informed and active participation of its citizens and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibility, adequate financing and coordination among the different agencies and levels of government.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation, promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest, share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare, promote a sound economy and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems. The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solution to world problems and that the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.



League of Women Voters of Washington

December 8, 2010

WHAT IS YOUR PASSION? State Program Planning 2011-2012

Program Planning: the way the League chooses its issues. League members choose issues to place on our public policy agenda, and consider what role your local League will play in addressing those issues during the program planning process. You also decide which items to recommend to state or national convention as state (this year) and national (next year) study priorities. The process culminates when the program is adopted at the local annual meeting or at the biennial state or national convention. Our State Convention will be held May 20-22 in Richland, WA.

League Guidelines for Choosing a Study Item:

- Is there widespread member interest
- Is this a timely issue?
- Is government action the most effective way to address the problem?

It is important to be familiar with our current positions. You can find these on the LWVWA web site www.lwvwa.org or in *Program In Action 2009-2011*.

A good way to determine a state issue you want to suggest and would be willing to work on is to ask yourself **“What is My Passion?”** Below are some suggestions of state issues that League members are passionate about.

Land Use.

A review of the Growth Management Report of 2006 to potentially add any more recent legislation that affects the value of our report. This report, like other recent reports, is of great value as a resource for new elected officials and needs to be kept up to date. Possibly, the changes could be simply added as an inserted typed page with references to the appropriate section of the Report.

Study how to reduce recidivism of sexual offenders.

Perpetrators of sexual assaults very often reoffend. How can this cycle be stopped? What do theories about recidivism have to offer us? Today the only solutions seem to be incarceration or castration (physical or chemical). Are there other ways to address the problem of one of every three women being sexually assaulted in her life time? Are there any studies that would offer alternatives? Given that most of these sexual assaults are committed by a family member, friend or acquaintance would a conversation between victims and perpetrators lead to a solution? Is the present legislation adequate? Are perpetrators victims, too?

Carrying Capacity.

Study how the reduction of carrying capacity, specifically, the inverse relationship between human population and natural resources, may be lowering our quality of life. Are the demands of our large population reducing present quality of life or compromising the quality of life of those in the future?

LWVS POSITIONS 2010 - IN BRIEF

CITY GOVERNMENT

Citizen Participation

- Support measures to ensure communications between city officials, local governmental entities and the public so as to bring city government closer to the people and make it more responsive to their needs. 1963, 1972, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1994, 1995, 1999, 2003
- Support legislation that links the granting and continuation of corporate subsidies, tax preferences and incentives to specific criteria which ensure transparency and accountability. 2007

Vision of the City

- Support measures to achieve our vision of the most livable city through cooperation by city government with individuals, community organizations and business. 1974, 1976, 1983, 1984, 1990, 1994

Economic Development

- Support measures to achieve a healthy economy characterized by services that meet basic human needs. 1995
- Support measures to enhance the economy. 1995
- Support the use of public funds for economic development that benefits the public. 2006
- Support the evaluation of publicly-funded economic development activities to ensure that stated goals are achieved. 2006
- Support business regulation that is clear and consistent, and that protects public health, worker safety, and the environment. 2006
- Support legislation that links the granting and continuation of corporate subsidies, tax preferences, and incentives to specific criteria which ensures transparency and accountability. 2006

Neighborhoods

- Support communication and cooperation between the city, other local governmental entities and neighborhoods to plan for, create and maintain healthy neighborhoods. 1992, 1993, 1994, 2002, 2003
- Support a process that allows stakeholders to participate in the development and implementation of neighborhood plans. 2002

Planning and Zoning

- Support measures to achieve comprehensive, coordinated, long and short-range planning for the city with provision for periodic revisions. 1972, 1976, 1983, 1984, 1994, 2004
- Support zoning processes that allow flexibility and diversity in the neighborhoods and which provide for early neighborhood involvement in proposed development. 1965, 1966, 1973, 1977, 1990, 1992, 1994
- Support the interdisciplinary approach in comprehensive planning. 1969, 1972, 1974, 1984
- Support density that is well planned, respects neighborhoods, facilitates public transportation, is environmentally sensitive and complies with growth management open space goals. 1992, 1994

Publicly Owned Property

- Support legally required procedures for determining when and what kinds of property are considered surplus. LWV 2004

Public-Private Partnerships

- Support measures to ensure accountability and adequate citizen participation/oversight in public-private partnerships. Our vision recognizes that public-private partnerships may serve as a mechanism for the City to work in concert with the private sector to achieve public objectives if specific elements are present. 2002

Privatization

- The following core services, functions and assets critical to the well-being of the people, should remain with government and not be transferred to the private sector: Courts, police, public health, public schools, prisons, voter services, taxation, parks, lakes, water and mineral rights, beaches,

streams, and forests. 2010

- The stated criteria should be the basis for decisions regarding whether core government services, functions and assets not listed in the preceding section should be transferred to the private for-profit sector. 2010
- Public agencies are required to make a documented finding of adequate return on investment for the public for any government contribution of funds or assets to the private sector. Periodic performance audits should be required and made public regarding whether stated public benefits were met. 2010
- Government employees and elected officials after leaving government service should be prohibited for two years from working for any private company for which they had oversight responsibilities or authority over awarding contracts. 2010

Governmental Structures

- Support home rule for the city of Seattle. 1963, 1975, 1984
- The city should have control over those matters which are of strictly local concern.
- Support measures to increase accountability, responsiveness and efficiency of city government.
- Support the separation of powers and an adequate system of checks and balances among the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government (and these respective functions), with the responsibilities of each being clearly defined. 1963, 1969, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1990
- Support non-partisan municipal elections and the short ballot principle. 1963, 1969, 1973, 1975, 1996
- Support election criteria to foster fair and effective representation. 1996

Budget and Finance

- Support adequate financial resources for city government.
- Support criteria for use in prioritizing programs and projects. 1988
- Support measures and procedures to ensure that the city's budget and the budgets of other local governmental entities are prepared using sound financial management procedures and that citizens have ample opportunity to participate in the development and review of the proposed annual budget. 1983, 1988, 2003

Capital Improvement Projects

- Support specific methods for financing capital improvements. 1985, 1987
- Support measures to evaluate the development and implementation of capital improvement projects. 1985

Law Enforcement/Crime Prevention and Rehabilitation

- Support a well-trained and adequate police force, responsive to public needs. 1969, 1979, 2002
- Support police policies based on adequate planning, adequate staffing and adequate training, that protect the rights of free speech and assembly, while providing safety for all. 2002, 2008
- Support an emphasis in law enforcement on building trust in immigrant communities, to include the policy of asking about an individual's immigration status only if he/she has been charged with a felony or misdemeanor. 2008
- Support local governmental programs for crime prevention and rehabilitation. 1970, 1979, 1994

Trade

- Support the encouragement of more trade activity if this growth is well planned and sensitive to environmental concerns. (and to the needs of workers both in the U.S. and internationally.)1978, 1982
- Support an international trade policy, set primarily at the national level. The State and City should be involved in formulating this policy.

Municipal Court

- Support a municipal court system organized to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of our urban community. 1986

Ethics in Government

- Support ethics in government and measures to ensure that public officials and employees (and members of boards, commissions, and advisory committees) perform their responsibilities in the public interest in accordance with the highest ethical standards and measures to increase citizen confidence in government. 1994, 2003

Public Library

- Support a public library system that provides the public with fundamental library services and access to information technology. 1993

HUMAN RESOURCES/SOCIAL POLICY

Human Services

- Support measures to provide basic food, shelter and health care for those unable to provide for themselves and to provide training and opportunity for employment. 1982, 1984, 1990, 2004
- Support funding for community mental health services that addresses factors such as the number of individuals needing services, complexity of client needs, and local factors such as housing and labor markets that affect the cost of providing services. 2004
- Support removal of artificial barriers to advancement in employment. 1993
- Support the involvement of local government in sponsoring ESL classes for all immigrants. 2008
- Support measures to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, religion, age, gender, physical or mental disability, race, national origin, marital status or socio-economic status, and promote equal rights for all persons. 1994, 2000

Housing

- Support programs that promote individual choice of housing by enhancing the availability and affordability of alternatives throughout the city. 1992, 2000, 2004
- Support low-income housing programs which meet the needs of low-income persons, are well located with respect to schools, jobs, medical care, shopping and transportation, and contribute to the diversity of the neighborhood. 1978, 1982, 1994, 1995, 2000
- Support programs to aid homeless families and single adults and to prevent homelessness. 1995, 2004
- Support efforts to limit the damaging environmental and social effects of sprawl. 2000
- Support the efforts of government at all levels to increase the supply of affordable housing through a variety of programs. 2000
- Support policies which increase the density and the supply of affordable housing. 2000

Health and Safety

- Support provision of public health services to all residents without regard to their citizenship status. 2008
- Support measures to reduce the exposure of the population to toxics in the home such as: educating the public and public officials, informing the media, developing advocacy groups, improving building standards. 1990, 2001
- Support incentives to promote healthy homes. 1994, 2001
- Support research and education in the area of indoor toxics. 1994, 2001
- Support public health as a basic function of government that must receive adequate and sustained public funding. The activities that are critical in sustaining community health include: community-based preventive services; control of communicable diseases; emergency preparedness, and ensuring a safe and health environment. 2005

Human Rights

- Support a human rights agency as a necessary and useful local government function. 1966, 1969, 1976

Microlending

- Support the concept of microlending. 2000

Women

- Support local government policies that enable women to make economic and personal decisions for themselves and their families. 1981, 1993, 1994
- Support policies that promote gender equity in employment. 1993
- Support policies that promote awards of spousal maintenance. 1994
- Support a uniform system of legislation protecting a divorced spouse's rights to pension benefits obtained during a marriage. 1994
- Support policies that promote reproductive choice. 1994

Teens

- Support government funding of programs to ensure health, safety, education and welfare of teens. 1995
- Support prevention and intervention programs to overcome problems of violence, suicide, homelessness, and family dysfunction. 1995

Children

- Support measures to assure that children have adequate food, clothing, education, medical care and a safe home environment free from abuse and neglect. While primary responsibility rests with the family, the community must provide the support if the family does not. 1985, 2003
- Support programs that provide parenting education and assist parents in problem resolution which is important in fostering positive child development and preventing delinquency. 2003

Early Childhood Programs

- Support the use of public funds for programs that meet the cognitive, physical and social needs of children from birth through age eight; that encourage parent education and involvement; and that provide health and human services to these children and their families. 1990, 2006

Drug Abuse and the Community

- Support measures to expand and fund drug abuse prevention education and drug abuse treatment programs as a means to reduce the demand for drugs. 1992, 2004

Juvenile Justice

- Support measures to develop and provide family, child and youth development programs to prevent delinquency, crime, and/or recidivism. 2002.

Cultural Activities

- Support city involvement in cultural activities. 1989, 1994

Historic Preservation

- Support the following criteria to be applied in designating an historic landmark: historical, architectural, and aesthetic values. 1986
- Support historic preservation policies which decide each designation on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration other public priorities, particularly human needs. 1986
- Support sharing the costs and benefits of historic preservation by the public and private sector 1986
- Support a process for determining landmark designation that includes a broad-based commission, public hearings, and final approval by the City Council, with provisions for appeal. 1986

SCHOOLS

Schools (general)

- Support an educational system that will permit each child to acquire basic skills, to develop the ability to reason, to develop self-esteem and social skills and that will challenge all children to achieve their full potential. A variety of educational approaches should be provided to achieve these goals. 1974, 1987

Financing

- Support adequate long-range financing for our public schools. 1962, 1968, 1970

Policy-Making

- Support a curriculum which includes academics, the arts, physical education and work skills.
LWE 2004
- Support an elected school board whose primary role is making policy, and who has final decision-making powers. 1962, 1966, 1970, 1971, 1994, 1997

Governance

- Support measures that clearly delineate authority and responsibility at the school building level and a governance structure that involves the community. 1997

Educational Reform

- Support educational reforms that address individual student needs and measures that allow innovation and flexibility in education. 1997

Administration

- Support the delegation of administrative functions to an appointed superintendent responsible to the board. 1962, 1970, 1971, 1987
- Support the school board and administration using all effective means of communicating with the public.
- The board must actively seek the counsel of parents, teachers, students and other citizens throughout all phases of the policy-making process. 1962, 1971
- Support the school board and administration establishing and implementing procedures for participation of school building staffs in district decision making.
- School building staff should be involved in the district decision making processes which affect them and their work with students 1987.

Teacher Compensation

- Support teacher compensation systems that reflect geographic cost of living variables and special demographic factors, and that reward teacher growth and excellence. 1992

Citizen Participation in Budget Process

- Support citizen and school building staff involvement in the budget-making process for public schools. 1973, 1987

Children at Risk

- Support programs and staff to provide early identification of children at risk and appropriate counseling and/or referral. 1985

NATURAL RESOURCES

- Support measures which are precautionary in their approach to the use of processes and materials which may have unintended harmful effects. 2004

Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Greenbelts

- Support comprehensive planning, acquisitions, development, preservation and use of parks, open spaces, and green belts, both public and private, to provide a wide variety of facilities for all age groups. LWE 2004
- Support of the city's park and open space plan. MI 2004
- Support measures to achieve a well-maintained, adequately funded, diverse and safe system of parks, recreation and open space which is accessible to all, with emphasis on public service that is flexible and responsive to changing demographics and social needs. 1990.
- Support preservation, acquisition and enhancement of open spaces, selected ecosystems and environmentally sensitive areas, and promotion of environmental awareness and sense of stewardship in the public. 1990, 1991
- Support Seattle Center as a unique urban park with a wide variety of activities and open space made available to residents and to non-residents of the city. 1981, 1989

Energy

- Support the formulation of clearly-defined governmental policies on energy. 1975
- Support the adjustment of the economy to zero energy growth, and the establishment of a definite target date. 1975, 1982
- Support governmental controls to accomplish energy conservation. 1975, 1994
- Support research and development on a wide variety of new energy sources such as solar, solid waste, wind, geothermal, tides and nuclear fusion. 1975
- Deregulation of the electric industry should be approached cautiously because of its possible impact on the environment and various stakeholders. 1998

Solid Waste Management

- Support measures to achieve waste reduction and recycling of solid waste as a first priority with environmentally safe disposal of the remainder. 1985

Air Quality

- Support reducing the amount of carbon dioxide produced to achieve a sustainable system. Incorporate the best available science to achieve best practices which may include mitigation. 2005

Litter

- Support measures to control litter as an environmental and aesthetic problem. 2005
- Support the role of individuals, business, volunteer groups and government in controlling litter. 2005
- Support the efforts of all individuals/groups to change attitudes so a litter-free environment is valued. 2005

Drainage and Wastewater Management

- Support the development of governmental policies, legislation and processes for storm water management that protect and maintain habitats as part of a sustainable ecosystem. 2009
- Support emerging scientifically-based practices that encourage best management practices, low impact development and natural drainage systems. 2009

KING COUNTY

Governance

- Support a county-wide policy-making body with legal authority to establish policy for functions which require area-wide solutions. 1997, 2000
- Support a form of county government that is representative of the areas governed. 1997, 2000
- Support a form of county government that would have the power and resources to carry out its functions including adequate financial resources. 1997, 2000, 2005
- Support increased efficiency and cost-effectiveness. 2000
- Support coordination and cooperation among all local governments, including ports, schools and special districts. 1997, 2000
- Support establishment of long-range goals, plans to attain them, and a performance budget in an understandable form, including a long-range capital improvement program. 1997, 2000
- Support maintaining discretionary county services, especially in the areas of health and human services. 2005
- Support cost containment through:
 - efficient administration of county systems
 - consolidation of special services, where appropriate
 - coordination between the cities and the county, particularly in the area of criminal justice
 - preventive services, including alternatives to incarceration. 2005
- Support the use of tools that would promote the annexation of urban areas, e.g.: education, state mandates, and financial incentives. 2005

Ethics in Government

- Support ethics in government and measures to ensure that public officials and employees perform their responsibilities in the public interest in accordance with the highest ethical standards and measures to increase citizen confidence in government. 1994, 2000, 2003

Courts

- Support implementing a strong court administration responsible for unified customer service, efficient management systems and coordinated technology. 1999
- Support reducing jurisdictional overlap except to provide flexibility in dealing with case overloads. 1999
- Support changes to the judicial selection system that would ensure qualified judges, increase public awareness of judicial elections and provide the public the information needed to make informed decisions. 1999

Special Districts

- Support consolidation of like special districts and setting of minimum, enforceable, county-wide standards for special districts.

Farmland

- Support a flexible combination of governmental programs to prevent a nonreversible alteration to lands with prime or productive soils. The principal use of those lands should ultimately be food production. Governmental policies and programs including taxation and zoning should support King County agriculture (land and industry).

Solid Waste Management

- Support measures to achieve waste reduction and recycling of solid waste as a first priority with environmentally safe disposal of the remainder. 1985.
- Dependence on landfills for disposal of solid waste should be greatly reduced.

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. 2004
- 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. 2004
- Support growth management/transportation planning and funding that includes cooperation and coordination among transportation systems to implement effective regional multi-modal transportation choices. 2004
- Support the use of public transportation systems through incentives such as convenient, affordable, secure transit services and pricing disincentives such as user-based taxes. 2004
- Support incentives for additional employer auto-trip reduction programs. 2004
- Support adequate and secure park-and-ride lots, community transportation centers and transit-oriented development where appropriate. 2004
- Support an increase in the amount of state, regional and local transportation funds to implement the most appropriate high priority transportation improvements consistent with adopted growth management and transportation plans. 2004

REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY

- Support water conservation efforts by all users including education programs, voluntary and mandatory conservation requirements that take into account previous conservation efforts and alternative types of water reuse. 1996, 1999
- Support a regional approach to water resources, watersheds, basins, aquifers and to the accountability of any decision-making bodies to citizens. 1999
- Support a legal framework to create a regional water entity to manage regional water development. 1996

WASHINGTON STATE WATER RIGHTS AND GROUNDWATER PROTECTION

- Support the principle of maximum net benefits including human health and safety, riparian habitat, concurrency of supply with permitted demand, Indian treaty rights, protection of in-stream flow, and hydraulic continuity. 1996, 1999
- “Allocation of waters among potential uses and users shall be based on the securing of the maximum net benefits for the people of the state. Maximum net benefits shall constitute total benefits less cost including opportunities lost.” (Water Resources Act, 1971)
- Support federal and state standards and guidelines on a watershed basis. Other governments should meet or exceed federal and state regulations. County government should be the most restrictive. 1996
- All wells (Class A, B, and single family residential wells) should be measured and the data regarding water withdrawal, use and claims be reported to King County and the Department of Ecology.

PORT DISTRICTS

- Support public port districts as authorized by R.C.W. Title 53.04.01 (as of 1985) with emphasis on coordinated planning, public accountability, purposes of the port and environmental sensitivity. Puget Sound Leagues of Women Voters’ position adopted by LWV Seattle in 1982; amended in 1989.

2009-2011 STATE PROGRAM: POSITIONS IN BRIEF

– Government –

Education Action to support in principle the Basic Education Act (1977) and the Levy Lid Act. Action to obtain a balanced tax structure and to maintain uniform assessment practices to ensure equitable and sufficient financing. Action to support adequate and stable state funding of common schools in Washington including the costs of in-service training. Action to increase visibility, accessibility and accountability of the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education. Action to support closer links between schools and social services, so that every child is ready to learn. Action to support greater involvement of parents, an increased role in decision making for teachers, and more flexible state education requirements. Action to provide greater access to public higher education to all, at whatever point in life it can be beneficial. Action to expand the definition of Basic Education to include the birth to five years.

Port Districts Action to encourage cooperation among port districts, but with local options for voter control over major policy and expenditure decisions.

Representative Government Action to facilitate changes in the state constitution to achieve a representative and effective state legislature. Action to promote an informed electorate. Action to limit methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the election process. Action to support the initiative and referendum process, adopt improvements to the process and require additional information for voters. Action to protect the interests of all affected parties in considering the formation of new counties. Action to clarify in legislation the processes in county formation and to require that the entire county have the ability to vote on separation. Action to support election methods that promote "representative-ness," citizen participation and accountability and that produce proportional representation. Action to support a majority vote requirement if achieved through a mechanism such as Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). Action to support a primary that is "open" and encourages minor party participation if a primary continues to be used.

State Tax Policy Action to obtain a balanced tax structure that is fair, adequate, flexible and has a sound economic effect.

Washington State and Indian Treaty Rights Action to enhance salmon resources, establish a procedure for retrocession of jurisdiction to the tribes and support tribal land use planning of trust lands.

– Transportation –

Transportation The League supports a balanced state transportation policy that defines the role of the state and supports increases in funding to provide adequate revenue and flexibility for a multi-modal system of transportation.

– Natural Resources –

Energy Action to support an energy policy within Washington State. Action to educate the public on energy conservation. Action to establish incentives for efficient use of current energy sources and the greater use of alternative energy sources.

Global Climate Change See LWVUS Impact on Issues.

Resource Management Action to obtain coordinated planning and ensure environmental quality in the use of water, air and land resources. Action to insure that forest management is carried out in a manner that will sustain healthy forests, streams and habitats.

Waste Management Action for coordinated control and reduction of solid waste. Action to reduce the amount of hazardous waste generated in Washington and action to promote safe management of that waste which is produced, including toxics in the home.

– Social Policy –

Administration of Justice Action to ensure that our courts are fair, efficient, accessible and staffed with qualified personnel. Action to maintain a separate court system and facilities for youths that will balance the procedural rights of the adversary system with the protection of youth's basic rights. Action to realize equity in sentencing standards. Action to obtain alternatives to incarceration is of prime importance.

Children's Programs

Child Support and Custody: The League of Women Voters supports vigorous, efficient and innovative child support enforcement methods and broad education

regarding the responsibilities and consequences of parenthood. The best interest of the child should be the overriding consideration in determining custody, visitation and an appropriate level of child support. The physical and emotional security of the child should be paramount. Children are entitled to support adequate to meet basic needs commensurate with the parents' income, resources, and standard of living. Courts should have the discretion to order post secondary educational support in appropriate circumstances.

Children's Services: Action to support stable and adequate funding for children at risk, with priority given to prevention, early identification and intervention services, community based treatment programs, day treatment programs and residential care.

2009-2011 LWV/WA - Program in Action - page 5

Day Care for Children: Action to provide for the general welfare of children in day care centers. Action to ensure that the state enforce minimum standards that include provision for a safe, healthy, clean environment. Action to support sufficient staff with emphasis on competence and ability to provide a creative, challenging and caring environment.

Early Care and Education of Children: Action to support the quality of early care and education, birth – 5, to maximize the child's future development. Action to support parents so all children develop to their full potential. Action to support improvements to child care programs, quality child care programs for children birth to five, increased access to preschool programs, programs for special needs children, home visiting and encouraging public-private partnerships.

Economic Diversification Action to ensure a balanced state economy with a strong mixture of large and small businesses. Measures to contribute to long-range planning and cooperation between all levels of government with local initiatives wherever possible.

Gun Control Action to provide governmental regulation of ownership and possession of firearms, and measures to limit their accessibility.

Health Care Action to provide universal access to affordable health services for all residents of the state of Washington and to control total system expenditures with seamless coverage regardless of ones health status.

Human Resources Action to achieve equal rights for all. Action to achieve equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Action to obtain measures that provide basic human needs for those unable to provide for themselves. Action to ensure that there are emergency support services for those involved in physical and/or mental violence.

PROGRAM PLANNING AT THE UNIT MEETINGS

This year—as every year—League members have been following issues in the news (including our own *Voter*) and at League programs. We have heard eloquent and ardent forum speakers urging action of one kind or another. Unit members have forcefully discussed their ideas about what they would like to see League do in matters of greatest concern to them. But as we all know, any League action we take is based not on our good hearts but on our well-drafted positions.

Now is the time we examine our positions to see if they are adequate to the tasks we'd like to set ourselves. You will find Positions in Brief in this issue of the *Voter*. If you would like a copy of the full positions, please contact the office. Read them with a critical eye to see where League might need to take a new position or update a current one.

This year we will consider both our local positions and questions that the League of Women Voters of Washington has forwarded to us. You should allot about equal time to state and local positions. Note that your planning material includes two forms to submit, one for our local League and one for State.

At the unit discussion please consider the following questions in regard to local positions: Do we need to update a position extensively (this would require a study); do we need to revise a position slightly; or do we need to sunset a position because it is no longer relevant? Do we need a new study on a matter on which we currently do not have a position?

Unit responses at the local level will be tabulated and presented at the annual meeting in May; this is where adjusting or adopting positions takes place and where we may agree to undertake new studies.

UNIT INSTRUCTIONS FOR JANUARY PROGRAM PLANNING

1. Review the criteria for the selection of LOCAL study items:
 - a. The issue must fall within the principles of the LWV.
 - b. It must be one on which governmental action is needed.
 - c. It must be within the province of local government.
 - d. It must be one to which the League can make a significant contribution.
 - e. It must be timely.
 - f. Options must exist for citizen action.

2. Discuss possible new local studies
 - a. This is a consensus decision with agreement on major principles and the absence of major opposition. To the extent possible, be sure that suggested topics meet each of the six criteria listed above. If the topic does not meet the criteria for a study your unit may choose to suggest an update or an article in the Voter.
 - b. Prioritize your choices. Please indicate on the ballot the names and phone numbers of any unit members who wish to work on a specific new study or update.

3. Review existing local positions. Identify any positions that you feel should be updated.

4. Review existing state positions. Identify any positions that you feel should be updated.

5. List and rank statewide issues you wish to see addressed.

6. Review the criteria for the selection of STATE study items:
 - a. The issue must fall within the principles of the LWV.
 - b. It must be one on which governmental action is needed.
 - c. It must be within the province of state government.
 - d. It must be one to which the League can make a significant contribution.
 - e. It must be timely.
 - f. Options must exist for citizen action.

7. Discuss possible new state studies
 - a. This is a consensus decision with agreement on major principles and the absence of major opposition. To the extent possible, be sure that suggested topics meet each of the six criteria listed above.
 - b. Prioritize your choices.

**REPORTING FORM, 2011 LOCAL PROGRAM PLANNING
DISCUSSIONS**

Unit:

Number of Members in Unit:

Number of Members Present:

Suggestions for New Local Studies

Topic 1:

(describe scope and focus)

Number of members in favor:

Names of potential study members:

Topic 2:

(describe scope and focus)

Number of members in favor:

Names of potential study members:

Topic 3:

(describe scope and focus)

Number of members in favor:

Names of potential study members:

Positions to be Updated

Positions:

REPORTING FORM, 2011 STATE PROGRAM PLANNING DISCUSSIONS

Worksheet I: Review of Current LWVWA Positions

If you think a position needs to be revised, please explain:

Name of position:

Reason:

Worksheet II: Listing and Ranking of Issues for State Program 2011-2013

Please list in the table below the items you want to give attention to. Specify what role the issue should play, e.g. study, update. After discussion, rank the top three items in order of importance: give it a 1 if it's the most important and 3 if it's your third choice.

Name of Issue	Study	Update	Action	Citizen Education	Rank

If you propose concurrence please explain:

1. Issue
2. LWV Source of position
3. Contact information
4. Reason for us to consider concurrence

Suggested State Study

Title:

Scope:

Outlook for Work:

Unit Meetings

JANUARY UNIT INFORMATION

Email	Phone	Time	Location
Monday, January 10			
CAPITOL HILL/MONTLAKE – Jan O'Connor/Zita Cook			
oconnor.js@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	7:15 p.m.	Linnea Hirst, 1602 E. McGraw
	(206) 329-4848		(206) 329-4848
FIRST HILL — Jeannette Kahlenberg			
kahlenb@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Horizon House, 900 University St., Sky Lounge, Mary Margaret Pruitt, hostess
SOUTHEND — Marian Wolfe/Susan Jones			
hedgwolfe@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Lila Bulen, 3716 Cascadia Ave. S.
susan@monckjones.com	(206) 329-4848		(206) 329-4848
Tuesday, January 11			
BELLEVUE – Bonnie Rimawi			
bonnierim@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Bellevue Public Library, Rm. 4
WEST SEATTLE – Ethel Williams/Hazel Schiffer			
	(206) 329-4848	12:30 p.m.	The Kenney
Hazelms@drizzle.com	(206) 329-4848		7125 Fauntleroy Way SW
Wednesday, January 12			
NORTH END AFTERNOON – Helen St. John			
hbstjohn@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	12:30 p.m.	Cora Lea Doty 2133 N. 115th St. (206) 329-4848
VIEW RIDGE – Gail Winberg			
winbergeng@q.com	(206) 329-4848	12:45 p.m.	Lynn Ferguson, 6422 NE 60th St
QUEEN ANNE/MAGNOLIA/BALLARD EVE. – Karen Adair			
adairk@seanet.com	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Barbara Reid, 316 NE 54th St. (206) 329-4848
Thursday, January 13			
ISSAQUAH DAY — Connie Reed/Dorris Martin			
reedhtop@earthlink.net	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Issaquah City Hall & Police
dorrismrtn@aol.com	((206) 329-4848		580 E. Sunset Way, Coho Room (upstairs)
KIRKLAND/REDMOND — Sheila Hoff			
	(206) 329-4848	7:00 p.m.	Liv Grohn, 338 10th Ave., Kirkland (206) 329-4848

Email	Phone	Time	Location
Thursday, January 13			
MERCER ISLAND — Lucy Copass/Cynthia Howe			
lucyco@speakeasy.org	(206) 329-4848	9:15 a.m.	Mercer Island Presbyterian Church
howe.john@comcast.net	(206) 329-4848		3605 84th Ave. SE, Mercer Island
NORTH CENTRAL – Jan Orlando			
orlanre@aol.com	(206) 329-4848	7:30 p.m.	Alice Rasp, 4523 5th Ave. NE (206) 329-4848
SHORELINE — Juliet Beard			
juliet@windermere.com	(206) 329-4848	4:30 p.m.	Richmond Beach Congregational Church, NW 195th St & 15th Ave NW
UNIVERSITY HOUSE — Charles and Nancy Perkins			
perkwz@msn.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	University House, 4400 Stone Way North, Auditorium
Friday, January 14			
BAYVIEW – Peg Williams			
pwilliams@brc-res.com	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Bayview Retirement Community
Saturday, January 15			
BALLARD/MAGNOLIA/QUEEN ANNE DAY – Kerry Peterson			
	(206) 329-4848	10:00 a.m.	Janet Anderson, 4560 W. Cramer (206) 329-4848 Call for directions.
Wednesday, January 19			
N. KING COUNTY - Marjorie Hawkes/Raelene Gold			
mshawkesis@gmail.com	(206) 329-4848	9:30 a.m.	Lake Forest Park, Third Place Books
raelene@seanet.com	(206) 329-4848		17171 NE Bothell Way

Board & Committee Contacts

Term	Executive Committee			
2009–2011	<i>President</i>	Allison Feher	(206) 329-4848	president@seattlelwv.org
2010–2012	<i>1st V.P. Action</i>	Nan Moore	(206) 329-4848	nanaction@comcast.net
2009–2011	<i>2nd V.P. Membership</i>	Kelly Powers	(206) 329-4848	membership.seattlelwv@gmail.com
2009–2011	<i>3rd V.P. Public Relations</i>	Jean Carlson	(206) 329-4848	jean.carlson@att.net
2009–2011	<i>4th V.P. Voter Editor</i>	Beatrice Crane	(206) 329-4848	votereditor@seattlelwv.org
2009–2011	<i>Treasurer</i>	Judy Bevington	(206) 329-4848	gbeving@eskimo.com
2010–2012	<i>Secretary</i>	Joanna Cullen	(206) 329-4848	jfoxcullen@gmail.com
Term	Directors			
2010–2012	<i>Voter Service</i>	Sarah Luthens	(206) 329-4848	luthens.seattlelwv@gmail.com
2010–2012	<i>Outreach</i>	Brigitte Ashley	(206) 329-4848	brigitteashley@hotmail.com
2010–2012	<i>Unit Coordinator</i>	Diana Henderson	(206) 329-4848	whender912@aol.com
2010–2012	<i>Voter Service</i>	Julie Anne Kempf	(206) 329-4848	julie@kempf.com
2010–2012	<i>Communications</i>	Kathy Sakahara	(206) 329-4848	kathysakahara@gmail.com
2010–2012	<i>Voter Service</i>	Cyndi Woods	(206) 329-4848	cyndiwoods@comcast.net
Term	Education Fund Board			
2009–2011	<i>Co-President/Treasurer</i>	Denise Smith	(206) 329-4848	issaquahsmith@msn.com
2009–2011	<i>Co-President</i>	Laura Weese	(206) 329-4848	laura899@earthlink.net
2009–2011	<i>Secretary</i>	Kris Bushley	(206) 329-4848	abushley@earthlink.net
2010–2012	<i>Director</i>	Ruth Schroeder	(206) 329-4848	schrdrcl@comcast.net
Off-Board Positions				
	<i>CIS Coordinator</i>	Cynthia Howe	(206) 329-4848	howe.john@comcast.net
Committees				
	<i>Civics Education</i>	Dana Twight	(206) 329-4848	dctwight@mac.com
	<i>Economics & Taxation</i>	Nora Leech	(206) 329-4848	nleech2002@yahoo.com
	<i>Education</i>	Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis	(206) 329-4848	terrylucy2u@comcast.net
	<i>Social Justice Committee</i>	Kathleen Randall	(206) 329-4848	kathleenr8@gmail.com
	<i>Immigration</i>	Barbara Reid	(206) 329-4848	barbereid@yahoo.com
		Barbara Yasui	(206) 329-4848	daruma52@msn.com
	<i>International Relations</i>	Ellen Berg	(206) 329-4848	ellenzberg@msn.com
	<i>Land Use</i>	Karen Kane	(206) 329-4848	kanek@iopener.net
	<i>Reclaimed Water Study Committee</i>	Denise Smith	(206) 329-4848	issaquahsmith@msn.com
	<i>Transportation</i>	Janet Winans	(206) 329-4848	janetwinans@earthlink.net

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LWV SEATTLE: JANUARY FORUM

Program Planning

Seattle First Baptist Church

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

Thursday, January 6

6:30 p.m. - Discussion Leader Briefing

7:30 p.m. - Forum

**Come make your voice heard as
the League considers its plans and
priorities, for study and action, in
2011!**

Speakers include:

- **Tom Tierney, Seattle Housing
Authority**
- **Sarah Weinberg, Healthcare
Advocate**