



Seattle Voter

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Voting Rights: Are We There Yet?

By Pat Cleary

Our organization originated in the suffrage movement. Our founding mothers made difficult choices around women’s suffrage, equal rights for women and the abolition of slavery. The decisions were political, as they continue to be on such issues as District of Columbia voting rights and voter identification. We work to support full voting participation for all citizens and fair elections processes.

This month we go back to our roots and take a fresh look at suffrage, and specifically where we are, as a people, in providing a level playing field for all Americans to vote.

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) is cosponsoring its May forum with Seattle Works, an organization that works to foster a lifetime commitment to community involvement in young adults through innovative volunteer activities and educational opportunities. We are grateful for the excellent work of Laura Gee, Maria Brusher and April Kauffman to make this cosponsorship happen.

Our kick-off speaker will be King County Executive Ron Sims, who will give us a look at election administration in King County. Then members of LWVS and Seattle Works will conduct a workshop forum in which participants will be able to interact with experts and ask questions about what is happening locally with voting rights and election administration. Invited guests from King County Elections, the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Federation of the Blind and other community-based organizations will lead table discussions, visiting each table in turn. Topics to be discussed will include the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), voting turnout among women, election

administration, restoration of voting rights for people with prior felony convictions, Latino and immigrant voting, how people who are homeless can vote, the Voting Rights Act, and regional voting centers.

For our unit discussions, we have selected an excellent report from the Brennan Center for Justice, “An Agenda for Election Reform.” Once again, Vicky Downs provides a related book review, this one on *Conned*, a book that explores the impacts of disenfranchisement on communities. Also included in this *Voter* are two articles, one on the 40% democracy and the other on the *Washington Council of Churches v. Reed* case, on the issue of data base consolidation.

League of Women Voters of the United States Education Fund, actress **Virginia Madsen** and **Allergan, Inc.** will host a Get Out The Vote event at Experience Music Project (EMP) May 19, 2008 featuring LWVUS President Mary Wilson. See page 8

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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.

President's Message

In the Seattle League, spring cleaning means tying up loose ends, reviewing the year's program and accomplishments and preparing the next fiscal year budget. This week we are preparing for the Annual Meeting by wrapping up our 2007-2008 program and assembling the program for next year. The recommendations from the program planning forum have been compiled and the board has prepared a tentative program.



Denise D. Smith

The finance committee and board are fine-tuning the 2008-2009 budget by reviewing our expenses from last year, setting our goals for next year and mixing a measure of pessimistic logic with a measure of optimistic hope to predict our income for next year. This is always a time of mixed feelings. Reviewing the budget, I am in awe of both the generosity of our supporters and the breadth of work carried out by our League volunteers. Thank you.

We have been very fortunate this year to have had good organizational and technical support from our office specialists. Rose Marcotte was with us through the end of November; Monya Noelke joined us January 31st. They were and are indispensable in helping our League run smoothly and meet deadlines, and enabling those of us who volunteer to maximize our time. We could not accomplish all we do without their talent and dedication.

However, the Seattle League is and has always been a volunteer organization. With a committed corps of strong, impassioned and tireless women and a few men we have spoken out on issues from voting rights and child care to open spaces. We have reminded our elected officials of the core principles of our government and the rights of its residents.

We have worked to protect the health of our communities and the environment and we have done this within the context of our government process.

At the same time that our action volunteers have been advocating, our voter service volunteers have registered hundreds of new voters and educated students and others about the process of voting and the issues they are voting on. Nancy Eitrem, Victoria Bennett and the Civics Education Committee have helped compile the civics education content of the Newspapers in Education project with the *Seattle Times*, and have organized an event to help fund that exciting program, our upcoming Spring Fling.

Along the way we have networked, made life-long friends and learned about our community. I was reminded of this most important aspect of our organization both at my unit meeting and at a League mailing party this week. Tuesday morning a few longtime members volunteered at the office to fold invitations and stuff envelopes and talk. I was fortunate to be able to join in and learn a little history of the Seattle League, some good information on how the *Voter* can be viewed for the visually impaired and how a large unit incorporates new members. We have a great organization with a proud history and ample opportunity for everyone to find something that gives them personal satisfaction. Take another look at all we do. I am sure we have some little thing for you.

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, May 22, 2008

\$10 Dinner & registration fee

5:00 P.M.	Registration begins
5:30 P.M.	Call to order
9:00 P.M.	Adjournment

Watch the mail for your
Annual Meeting
Workbook

May

Forum:Voting Rights
 Thursday, May 1
 7:30 p.m.
 Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting
 Saturday, May 3
 9:00 a.m.
 League office

Spring Fling
 Sunday, May 4
 2:00-4:00 p.m.

International Relations Committee
 Monday, May 5
 12:45 – 2:45 p.m.
 League Office

Voter Registration Training
 Monday, May 12
 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, May 15
 1:30 p.m.

Tuesday, May 20
 10:00 a.m.

Wednesday, May 21
 6:00 p.m.
 League Office

Civics Education Committee
 Tuesday, May 13
 4:00-6:00 p.m.
 League Office

Auction Planning Meeting
 Tuesday, May 13
 5:30 p.m.
 League Office

Social Justice Committee
 Tuesday, May 13
 6:00 p.m.
 League Office

Candidate Forum Q&As
 Monday, May 19
 1:30 p.m.
 6:00 p.m.
 (Call to confirm time & date)

Membership Strategic Planning Committee
 Tuesday, May 20
 5:30 p.m.
 League Office

Transportation Committee
 Tuesday, May 20
 10:00-12:30 p.m.
 League Office

May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Forum:Voting Rights 7:30 p.m.	2	3 Board meeting 9:00 a.m.
4 Spring Fling 2:00-4:00 p.m.	5 IR Committee 12:45 p.m.	6	7	8	9	10
11	12 Voter Reg Trng 6:00 p.m.	13 Auction Planning 5:30 p.m. Social Justice 6:00 p.m. Civics Education 4:00 p.m.	14	15 Voter Reg Trng 1:30 p.m.	16	17
18	19 Candidate Forum Q&A 1:30 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. LWVUS Event 6:00 p.m.	20 Voter Reg Trng 10:00 a.m. Mbrshp Strategic Plng 5:30 p.m. Transportation Comm 10:00 a.m.	21 Voter Reg Trng 6:00 p.m.	22 Land Use Committee 12:30 p.m. Annual Meeting 5:00 p.m.	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Economics & Taxation Comm 9:00 a.m.

May continued

Land Use Committee
 Thursday, May 22
 12:30-2:30 p.m.
 Park Shore Building
 1630 43rd Ave East

Annual Meeting
 Thursday, May 22
 5:00 p.m.
 Seattle First Baptist Church

Economics and Taxation Committee
 Saturday, May 31
 9:00 a.m.
 909 E Newton #D9

June

Old Board/New Board Meeting
 Saturday, June 7
 9:00 a.m.
 League office

National Convention
 June 13-17
 Portland, Oregon

NO Voter in June

July

Summer Voter Deadline
 Monday, July 14

Ballot Issues Meetings
 Tuesday, July 15
 1:30 p.m.
 6:00 p.m.
 League Office

Training for Forum Moderators
 Thursday, July 17
 6:00 p.m.
 League Office

Board Meeting/Retreat
 Saturday, July 19

April Board Briefs

By Karen Adair, Secretary

MEMBERSHIP: There are 796 members in good standing. Because of the increase in LWVUS dues, the LWVS Board approved recommending a raise of dues to \$60 per person, \$30 for students or second-in-the-family members.

BUDGET: The Board approved the adoption of the 2009 Budget for presentation at the annual meeting.

VOTER REGISTRATION: LWVS registrars worked at the C-Span Campaign Fest and other events.

ACTION: President Smith sent letters to the King County Council about mental health funding and testified in support of voter-owned elections. She will testify about the King County Charter before the Charter Commission.

OBSERVER CORPS: The Observer Corps is slowly increasing in numbers; members are regularly attending meetings.

FUNDRAISING: The fundraising committee has been attending various training sessions. They plan to have a second fundraising event for next year, possibly featuring a major speaker.

SPECIAL PROJECT: Shoshana Billik presented a proposal for six Russian citizens to visit Seattle and the LWVS as part of the Open World Hosting Program. The Board recommended that she recruit a committee of League members to help her complete the plans and to insure full League participation at every step, including acting as home hosts. The Board suggested that the committee plan the visit for the fall of 2009.

EDUCATION FUND: There will be two “mini” Spring Flings on Sunday May 4, one on the east side and one on the west.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE: The nominating committee has a slate of six excellent candidates for the Board and Executive Committee. They need three more candidates for the Nominating Committee.

JULY RETREAT: The Board’s summer retreat will be July 19.

NATIONAL CONVENTION: The Board approved the following list of delegates to attend the LWVUS Convention in Portland in June: Denise Smith, Jackie Wall, Karen Adair, Nan Moore, Pat Cleary, Victoria Bennett, Beatrice Crane, Kitty Mahon, and Ellen Berg.

Spring Fling Returns!

It's time for *Spring Fling!* On **Sunday, May 4**, two member households – one in Bellevue, the other in Seattle – will open their homes for a League of Women Voters of Seattle Education Fund (LWVS Ed Fund) fundraiser. This year, contributions will support civics education in the classroom, a wonderful collaboration of the LWVS Ed Fund with the League of Women Voters of Washington Ed Fund and *The Seattle Times* to teach youngsters about their role in the democratic process. The LWVS Civics Education Committee is reaching out to schools in the LWVS area with a brochure on League resources for teachers.

On the Eastside, Fred Butler of Sound Transit will speak about the latest developments in Sound Transit's transportation planning.

On the Westside the event will focus on drug policy, featuring both a speaker from the King County Bar Association's Drug Project and the ACLU's film, “Marijuana: It's Time For a Conversation.”

Each event will be held from 2 to 4 pm. The suggested contribution per person is \$30, though other contributions – including those for \$88 in honor of the League's birthday year – will be accepted with pleasure. Everyone is welcome!

Put the *FUN* into fundraising. Support a GREAT cause, mingle with friends and jump into the forefront of two important issues facing our community. Call 206-329-4848 for further details.

Annual Meeting

Thursday, May 22, 2008

While much of the daily work of the League of Women Voters of Seattle is performed by members of committees or the Board or by a small cadre of other volunteers, every member has a responsibility—every year—to shape the future of League. We are a grassroots organization; members decide what issues we will focus on and what actions we take. Your attendance at the annual meeting is vital to the health of our organization. Please attend. Five percent of the membership is the required quorum but attendance at the highest level possible helps to forge a League that speaks for all of us.

On the Agenda

5:00 P.M. Registration begins
 5:30 P.M. Call to order
 Guest speaker
 Year in Review
 Adoption of new studies and positions
 Election of new officers and directors
 Budget approval
 Carrie Chapman Catt Award
 Education Fund Annual Meeting
 Buffet dinner

Location Seattle First Baptist Church
 1111 Harvard Avenue
 Seattle, WA 98122
 (Harvard and Seneca on First Hill)

Cost \$10 at the door covers the cost of registration and buffet dinner

RSVP Respond to the League office by Tuesday, May 20.
 Call (206) 329-4848 or email monya@seattlelwv.org.

Committee Meetings

International Relations Committee

Date: Monday, May 5
Time: 12:45 – 2:45 p.m.
Place: League Office

We will be working on the Resolution on Nuclear Arms Control we will be taking to the National Convention. All are welcome! Email Ellen Berg (ellenzberg@msn.com) to find out more.

Civics Education Committee

Date: Tuesday, May 13
Time: 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Place: League Office

Social Justice Committee

Date: Tuesday, May 13
Time: 6:00 – 7:30 p.m.
Place: League Office

During April the committee continued work on the May unit materials and forum on voting rights. Also, committee members worked on a draft letter for the League to send to King County Council on the oversight plan for the Mental Illness and Drug Dependency Action Plan.

At the May meeting, members will report on local social justice issues, including an update on the Real Change Organizing Project and the City of Seattle's recently revised protocols for sweeps of homeless encampments.

All are welcome to attend and join in our efforts. If you have questions, please call Pat Cleary at (206) 329-4848.

Transportation Committee

Date: Tuesday, May 20
Time: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Place: League Office

Karen Wolf of King County Executive Sims' office will be coming to speak to the Transportation Committee about the carbon-modeling project she is involved in. While this is a King County project, people throughout the nation are watching that project and looking forward to using its results to help in the battle against climate change. Because transportation is one of the serious producers of carbon, this project is of great interest to us. All are welcome to come hear Ms. Wolf and her staff. For further information, please contact Linnea Hirst, lwvquilter@comcast.net, (206) 329-4848.

Membership Strategic Planning Committee

Date: Tuesday, May 20
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Place: League Office

Land Use Committee

Date: Thursday, May 22
Time: 12:30–2:30 p.m.
Place: Park Shore Building
1630 43rd Ave. East

Extremely limited, free parking is available on site and along adjacent streets, plus the #11 bus provides service to Madison Park. Bus stops to enter and depart the neighborhood are located within one block of Park Shore.

The Land Use Committee is tentatively scheduled to have a guest speaker(s) from Seattle

Parks and Recreation to provide an overview of various Park Department projects/issues the Land Use Committee and Seattle League have followed and/or been involved with over the years. Because plans weren't finalized by the *Voter's* press deadline, please contact Karen Kane at (206) 329-4848 for further information. Everyone is welcome!

Economics and Taxation Committee

Date: Saturday, May 31
Time: 9:00 a.m.
Place: 909 E. Newton #D9

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

Auction planning Meeting

Date: Tuesday, May 13
Time: 5:30 p.m.
Place: League office

It may seem a long way away, but our biggest fundraiser of the year – the October 26 political party and auction – is only a few months away. There are many jobs, small and large, that will enhance your skills. Come find out what special role you can play to ensure a sound financial footing for the League. We have fun!

Announcements

Seattle League Hosts Caucus at National Convention

This year's League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) Convention in Portland will feature a caucus hosted by the **League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS)**! It will be presented by MomsRising Executive Director, Kristin-Rowe Finkbeiner and MomsRising Campaign Director (and former LWVS Board member) Katie Bethell. The subject will be the need for good family-leave policies in the U.S., an issue of primary importance to MomsRising, which produced the book and film documentary *The Motherhood Manifesto*. The film was viewed by a large group of Leaguers and their guests in December 2006 and it was a big hit. We hope the presentation will be just as big a hit with League attendees from all around the country at this year's convention, and that it will influence policy agenda at the national level.

Special thanks goes out to Teddy Geokezas, who took the helm at organizing the event with MomsRising and LWVUS. Her hard work and dedication are so appreciated!

[WWW.GOODSEARCH.COM](http://www.goodsearch.com)

By Nancy Eitrim

Earn money to support the LWVEF every time you search the web! Just log onto www.goodsearch.com, designate the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) as your charity of choice, and start using GoodSearch as your primary search engine.

Each time you search, a donation will automatically go to the LWVEF. Each retailer announces the percentage of the order designated for the charity.

Among the companies that return a percentage of the online sale to charity are my personal favorites: Lands End, Amazon, Target, Gap, and many more. Actually, the search function gives the shopper many possible retailers to choose from for a variety of products.

GoodSearch is a search engine that donates 50% of its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to designated charities. A penny per search will only add up to a significant amount if all League members and friends use GoodSearch with LWVEF as their designated charity.

The more people who use the site, the more money we'll earn. Please visit www.goodsearch.com today, designate the League of Women Voters Education Fund and start searching the Web!

Behind the Scenes at the Pike Place Market

Friday, June 6

The North Central Unit invites you to a tour of the Pike Place Market followed by lunch at SAM Sculpture Garden. Our guide will be an entertaining and knowledgeable member of the Pike Place Market Foundation. Find out little known facts about the history and learn about future plans for the market. A box lunch at the SAM Sculpture Garden will follow the tour. Your donation to the Unit Fundraiser will support the Seattle LWV.

Contact unit leaders for questions/reservations: Jan Orlando orlanre@aol.com (206) 329-4848 or Gail Shurgot gailshurgot@earthlink.net (206) 329-4848.

LWVUS Education Fund Cosponsoring Event with Allergan Inc.

The LWVUS Education Fund recently entered into a relationship with Allergan (a leading maker of eye care and skin care products including Botox) on their "Freedom of Expression through Film" campaign. This campaign was launched in New York City on April 10, 2008. The Seattle event, to which members received invitations in gold envelopes, will be the second local event.

This is primarily a Get Out The Vote (GOTV) campaign with multiple components: from sponsorship of the League's VOTE411.org website, to creation and distribution of a League Public Service Announcement, to sponsorship of 10 local events.

The target audience for this GOTV campaign is women and men in the beauty service industry, including salon workers and department store cosmetic employees. Representatives from the Seattle League will be present at the EMP event to register voters. League members are also invited to attend but may pass on their invitation or send it to the League office. Reservations are required.

You can learn more at: www.lwv.org (search for Allergan). We have heard from several Seattle members and will be happy to speak with you and hear your comments. We will discuss the issue further in the next *Voter*.

Use Your Willpower! Everyone Can Leave a Legacy!

By Nancy Eitreim

Naming a charity in your will is one of the best ways to express your values - to assure that the work you believe in will continue. Donors don't have to be wealthy to include a charity in their will. Some bequests are very small or a small percentage of an estate.

As an organization with nearly 90 years of history, the League of Women Voters values and needs all contributions of time and money to support the important work of the organization. Many of our members volunteer many hours of service and may not have resources to donate during their lifetime. They believe in the principles and mission, support the work of the League and want to include the League in their will.

Again this year, we remember Virginia Richmond and Sally Morgan, whose generosity in their bequests to the LWV of Seattle continued to support the mission and the work of the League long after they were received.

Join them. Remember the League when you write your will. Your commitment to the League and belief in the mission deserve support.

Use your "willpower" to make a positive impact on the future.

The IRS identification number for the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS), a 501(c)(4) organization, is #91-0653656.

The number for the League of Women Voters Seattle Education Fund, a 501(c)(3) tax-deductible nonprofit organization, is #91-1224769.

Things you can do to leave a legacy

1. Prepare a will. Take care of your family and your community
2. Leave a gift in your will for the nonprofit organizations that make a difference in your life.
3. Leave a specific dollar amount or a percentage of the assets in your will to one or more nonprofits.
4. Name the LWVS Education Fund as a beneficiary of your IRA, pension plan, retirement plan. This may help save income taxes.
5. Name your favorite nonprofit as the owner/beneficiary of a new or existing life insurance policy.
6. Support the 'Bridge-to-the-Future' fund of LWVS. The Fund supports operations by transferring 10% or \$10,000, whichever is greater, to the general fund each year; it also supports special projects.
7. Remember your loved ones or League friends with memorial gifts.

Always check with a professional to maximize accuracy and tax benefits.

(adapted from Leave a Legacy of Western Washington materials)

Leave a Legacy of Western Washington is endorsed by a coalition of more than 500 non-profit organizations and initially funded by area businesses, and foundations. They have joined together to promote the concept of leaving a gift to charities in one's will. The League of Women Voters of Seattle Board endorsed the program more than 7 years ago. Materials, speakers, and information are available through this organization and its partners and supporters.

Dependent Care and Child Care

Reminder: The League reimburses members for dependent care and child care. We want everybody who is the primary giver for their loved ones to be able to join us.

Voter Service

By Victoria Bennett, Voter Service Chair

Folklife beckons

“Tra la, it's May!” The Northwest Folklife Festival is just around the corner. This has been an effective venue for voter registration. Festival attendees appreciate the League's presence, updating their voter registrations or registering to vote for the first time. It's heartening to watch 18-year olds persuade their cohorts that voting is important. Music brings a smile to the sulkiest curmudgeon's face, and the colorful attire of various performing groups and sidewalk performers lightens hearts. Be a part of this delightful Northwestern tradition. Sign up for a shift or two at the festival by calling (206) 329-4848 or emailing monya@seattlelwv.org.

Voter service opportunities

Voter registration training sessions – pick one!

Monday, May 12 at 6:00 pm

Thursday, May 15 at 1:30 pm

Tuesday, May 20 at 10:00 am

Wednesday, May 21 at 6:00 pm

Place: League office

Do you know how to change a registered voter's name on the election list? What do you do if someone tells you she is in an address confidentiality program and that she wants to register to vote? What is a special ballot? Whether you're a new or seasoned voter registrar, training will hone your knowledge. Anyone who has not been to a voter registration training session in the past two years is encouraged to come in for a tune-up session. Sign up for one of the sessions by emailing monya@seattlelwv.org or calling (206) 329-4848.

Ballot issues meeting – pick one!

Tuesday, July 15 at 1:30 pm

Tuesday, July 15 at 6:00 pm

Become our League expert on a ballot issue. Use your research skills to uncover the background, impact, pros and cons of a measure that will appear on the ballot. This is a short-term project that requires dedication and follow-through. With thousands upon thousands of hits to our Web site, you are guaranteed to have an influence in the general election. Sign up by emailing monya@seattlelwv.org or calling (206) 329-4848.

Candidate Forum Q&A – pick one!

Monday, May 19 at 1:30 pm

Monday, May 19 at 6:00 pm

Curious about putting on a candidate forum? We cosponsor a lot of forums and offer a few on our own. Come ask your questions. You can be on the cutting edge of introducing candidates to the voting public. Sign up by calling (206) 329-4848 or emailing monya@seattlelwv.org.

(Note: This program may be postponed due to visit from LWVUS president. Please call office to confirm.)

Training for moderators

Thursday, July 17 at 6:00 p.m.

Place: League office

As the election season moves into full gear, the League will be called upon to moderate candidate forums. Learn the ins and outs of being a good moderator. You'll be instrumental in giving candidates a fair shake. Sign up by emailing monya@seattlelwv.org or calling (206) 329-4848.

Civics Education in the Classroom

Tackling the legislature's unfunded mandate to require civics education in the schools, our Education Fund has partnered with the LWVWA Education Fund and *The Seattle Times* Newspapers in Education program to bring civics lessons to the schools. With middle school and high school students starting their voting careers in six years or less, the League is stepping up to show these future voters how to participate in the democratic process.

For our debut, we will offer sixteen weekly lessons, focused on electing the President, to teachers across the state. 102 school districts will receive notification of the curriculum. Teachers can sign up for the program at no cost to the schools. Newspapers will be delivered to their classrooms on the days the lessons run. The lessons will appear in different sections of the paper, helping students to navigate their way through the news. Subscribers and casual coffee sippers also may benefit from the lessons. This is an exciting way to teach students and the general public how government works!

LWVUS Immigration Position: The Culmination of Our Grassroots Work

By Patti Catalano

The Seattle Times published a series of articles this month regarding the deportation of “illegal” or unauthorized immigrants and what faces these immigrants when they are returned to their home countries. *The Seattle Times* reporter followed a deportee’s life in Mexico, the country from which she had fled 18 years ago. Interestingly enough, the LWVUS had just released its Immigration Position four days before the first article was published. Regarding deportation, the League “does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.”

This past November, our units worked diligently to reach a consensus on the various questions presented by LWVUS regarding immigration, with extra support and clarification provided by our immigration study committee. What was the result of our work? From our input as well as that provided by Leagues throughout the country, LWVUS developed its position. Read on to see if this position reflects what your unit came up with when working on consensus.

In crafting the position, the League focused on both the humanitarian and economic aspects of immigration. The League supports family reunification of the immediate families of authorized immigrants or citizens, legal admission of persons who face persecution or humanitarian crises in their home countries, and due process for all persons. The League looks at the economic and employment needs of the US as well as education and training needs of the US and supports legal admission for immigrants to fill those needs; it supports policy that would bar admission to anyone with a history of serious criminal activity.

The League would like to see programs that allow foreign workers to come into the US for seasonal or sporadic labor needs and then return to their home countries. At the same time, the League would have our government enact policies that would assist the countries with large emigrating populations to improve their own economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions. According to *The Seattle Times*, the Mexican economy, for instance, receives \$24 billion dollars from Mexicans living abroad each year. When a deportee is sent home, the home country loses that money and also has more competition for the already too few jobs.

In its Immigration Position, the League has taken a strong stand on employers who hire unauthorized workers, calling for significant fines and penalties for those employers. The League would like to see improved technology to help employers verify employee status as well as verification documents

with secure identifiers. The League supports an increase in personnel at borders, more effective tracking of individuals entering the US, and improved technology to assist federal agencies in sharing information.

For those unauthorized immigrants already here, the League supports provisions for them to earn legal status while our immigration system is reformed. *The Seattle Times* reports that there are an estimated 3 million American children who have at least one parent living illegally in the US. Underage children with no legal relatives to live with in the

United States may be sent home with a deported parent to a life vastly different from those in the US. Seattle immigration attorney Steve Miller is quoted in *The Seattle Times*, saying “We are better people than that to hold the sins of the parents against these kids.” The League’s focus on reunification and provisions for legalizing unauthorized immigrants would address the needs of these American children.

In April we had an opportunity to look at our international relations and review the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. As we consider immigration policy, we should remember that nothing we do is done in a vacuum. What the US does regarding immigration will be watched by our global compatriots. Work done on the Millennium Development Goals will in turn affect our immigration and perhaps reduce the need for people to emigrate. The timing of the League’s Position on Immigration is important in working towards a stable world with humanitarian ideals and economic opportunities for all.

References:

LEAGUE OPPOSES DEPORTATIONS, SUPPORTS EARNED CITIZENSHIP FOR UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS, Press Release, April 2, 2008, www.lwv.org

Turnbull, Lornet, “Deported to Mexico – What happens after an illegal immigrant is sent home” and “An American teen in a foreign land”, *The Seattle Times*, April 6, 2008

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*League Opposes
Deportations,
Supports Earned
Citizenship For
Unauthorized
Immigrants*

Immigration Study Committee Reaction to National Immigration Position

By Annette Holcomb

On April 2, 2008, the League of Women Voters of the US (LWVUS) announced its position on immigration, based on the feedback from local leagues throughout the country. The Seattle LWV immigration study committee is pleased that we now have an official policy and that the position addresses several points that we feel are very important. In November 2007, our local units studied and discussed the issues outlined in the LWVUS immigration reports. Our units did not reach consensus on all questions that were posed in the national study, mainly due to the length of the questionnaire and the limited time of our discussions. However, there are no points in the new national position that contradict the recommendations gathered from the Seattle LWV members. Thus the committee feels that this position reflects the opinions of our local league and we are gratified that LWVUS is now empowered to advocate for comprehensive immigration reform.

Our local immigration study group is busy writing its report on some key issues that confront immigrants in our area. Committee members are energized from their interviews with the agencies and organizations working with immigrants as well as with immigrants themselves in our area, and they look forward to sharing what they have learned in the local immigration program scheduled for September 2008.

LWVUS Announces its Official Position on Immigration

LWVUS Immigration Position

The League of Women Voters believes that immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises. Provision should also be made for qualified persons to enter the U.S. on student visas. All persons should receive fair treatment under the law.

The League supports federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry of immigrants into the U.S.

To complement these goals the League supports federal policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities, and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations.

In transition to a reformed system, the League supports provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status. The League supports federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

Criteria for Legal Admission to the U.S.

The League supports the following criteria for legal admission of persons into the United States:

- Family reunification of spouses or minor children with authorized immigrants or citizens;
- Flight from persecution or response to humanitarian crises in home countries;
- Economic, business and employment needs in the U.S.;
- Education and training needs of the U.S.;
- Educational program opportunities; and
- Lack of a history of serious criminal activity.

Administration and Enforcement

The League supports due process for all persons, including the right to a fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal and right to humane treatment.

The League supports:

- Improved technology to facilitate employer verification of employee status;
- Verification documents, such as status cards and work permits, with secure identifiers;
- Significant fines and penalties for employers who hire unauthorized workers;
- Improved technology for sharing information among federal agencies;
- More effective tracking of individuals who enter the United States; and
- Increased personnel at borders.

The League also supports programs allowing foreign workers to enter and leave the U.S. to meet seasonal or sporadic labor needs.

Unauthorized Immigrants Already in the U.S.

In achieving overall policy goals, the League supports a system for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status, including citizenship, by paying taxes, learning English, studying civics and meeting other relevant criteria. While policy reforms, including a path to legal status, remain unachieved, the League does not support deporting unauthorized immigrants who have no history of criminal activity.

The King County Bar Association Drug Policy Project

By Jan O'Connor

The War on Drugs is the popular name given to a legislative campaign undertaken by the U.S. government to control the production, distribution, and consumption of targeted substances. Although the U.S. has enacted drug legislation since the early 1900's, the legislative package called the War on Drugs was proposed in 1969 by the Nixon administration, and consequently the U.S. Congress passed the Controlled Substances Act of 1970. The Federal Law is the overriding authority in drug control issues. This fact has made local innovation very difficult.

In 2000, King County Bar Association (KCBA) president Fred Noland wrote an editorial in which he decried the impact of the war on drugs. To put it simply, the arrest and incarceration of small-time users and sellers of drugs was clogging the justice system and rehabilitating no one. This article led to an outpouring of interest among lawyers, judges, public officials, and concerned citizens in examining and reforming current drug policy.

The War on Drugs was criticized:

- for its failure to reduce drug use
- for the increase in crime related to illegal drug use
- for the increase in public costs
- for the erosion of public health
- for the abridgement of civil rights
- for the disproportionate effects of drug law enforcement on the poor and people of color
- for the clogging of the courts and compromises in the administration of justice.

The widespread response to Noland's comments led to the establishment of the KCBADrug Policy Project. Several policy task forces were set up and in 2001, they published a major report, *Is It Time to End the War on Drugs?* This report was summarized for League use as a study topic and the following positions were adopted by LWVS in 2004.

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

A. Expansion and funding for school programs to

prevent drug abuse and establishment of programs to reach school drop-outs.

B. Public education in family management, parenting, job skills, and evaluation of commercial media which enhance drug use.

C. Provide integrated services as appropriate, including long-term treatment, counseling and mental health services, to all drug abusers and to meet the needs of individuals with co-occurring disorders.

D. Support community involvement to provide alternative behavior opportunities for potential drug abusers. Provide citizen block watch assistance for neighborhood police in crime prevention.

E. Strictly enforce penalties for drug traffickers.

F. Periodically evaluate drug programs and inter-agency coordination and cooperation.

In 2005, the League of Women Voters of Washington concurred with these positions at the state convention, and the League is now a member of the Washington State Coalition for Drug Study.

The KCBA Drug Policy Project, under the leadership of Roger Goodman and with the support of the Bar Association, and many medical associations and community groups, has been widely recognized for its many accomplishments. Its efforts led to a new drug sentencing system which reduces incarceration and focuses much more on treatment. It has worked to preserve insurance for drug treatment and lobbied to secure more funds at the state level for treatment. Efforts are now underway for a new look at the Federal laws which constrain the actions which can be taken by the states.

The KCBA Drug Project has also organized major public information events and published subsequent specialized reports.

Drug addiction is an international problem and the illegal use of drugs leads to many health issues, local property crimes, and a vast international network of illegal activity whose enormous profits have a devastating effect on local economies. Addiction is a complex issue. The issues of incarceration, treatment, prevention, and the legal framework which controls the use of drugs are very complex and heavily debated.

The KCBA Drug Project has gained international recognition for its efforts, but as concerned citizens throughout the world try to wrestle with the problem, it's apparent that there are no simple answers.

The League has been represented on the KCBA Drug Project since its inception.

SEATTLE BUILDS A BUDGET

By Jan O'Connor

The process of developing the Seattle City Budget for 2009-2010 is underway.

The City Neighborhood Council, under the leadership of Chris Leman, sponsored a Citizens' Budget Conference on February 10. This conference included a presentation by Dwight Dively, Director of Seattle's Department of Finance (DOF); panels representing the major city departments; and a panel of Seattle City Council members headed by Finance Committee chair, Jean Godden.

Dwight Dively, DOF, presented an overview of the budget and its development.

The Seattle City budget is a modified biennial budget which is organized according to funds. The general fund receives the most tax revenues and pays most of the cost of basic services such as police and fire protection, libraries and parks. The general fund also provides partial support for departments which have funds of their own, such as Human Services, Transportation, and the Seattle Center. The utilities have separate funds which cannot be used to subsidize other programs.

At this time of year, the mayor and council develop priorities. The departments will submit Budget Issue papers to the DOF. These are reviewed with the mayor and feedback given to the departments. The City will also hold community outreach meetings to gather input on the budget and budget priorities from citizens.

Departments submit formal budget proposals in early July. These are reviewed by the DOF, evaluated in terms of revenue estimates, and then reviewed by the mayor, who builds the budget. Under state law, the mayor must present a proposed budget to the city council by October 1. The council reviews the proposed budget and takes public testimony, makes appropriate changes, adopts a budget for the first year of the biennium and endorses a budget for the second year which may be adjusted as needed. The council must adopt its version of the budget by December 1. Jean Godden is now chair of the

council's budget committee (consisting of all nine council members), which reviews the budget before the whole council votes on it.

The Puget Sound area experienced a recession in 2001 - 2004 and tax revenues fell. The local economy rebounded in 2005 - 2007, tax receipts rose, and funds were restored to previously cut programs. Planning for the 2009 - 2010 budget assumes slower economic growth, especially in some areas. General fund monies basically come from the property tax, the sales tax, the Real Estate excise tax, and the B&O tax. Revenues from the Real Estate Excise tax (REET) are generally used to fund capital projects and are expected to decline.

The council is considering changes including a plan to add 85 additional police officers to the force before 2012. Meeting those costs may put additional pressure on other priorities important to the League. The Seattle City Council budget website (www.seattle.gov/council/committees/budget_comm.htm) explains the process further. The Seattle Channel, channel 21, follows council meetings. Stay informed. Consider attending one of the following Community meetings. Don't miss this opportunity to make your voice heard!

Seattle City Council Community Budget Meetings:

Thursday, May 8, 2008

5:30 -7:30 PM

Miller Park Community Center

330 19th Ave. E, 98112

Tuesday, May 20, 2008

5:30 -7:30 PM

Ballard Northwest Senior Activity Center

5429 -32nd Ave NW,

98107

Thursday, May 22, 2008

5:30 -7:30 PM

High Point Community Center

6920 34th Ave. SW,

98126

Thursday, May 29, 2008

5:30 -7:30 PM

Rainier Valley Cultural Center

3515 S Alaska St, 98118

Fundraising Report

By Denise Smith and Victoria Bennett

Fundraising and Auction

Fundraising is the most underrated volunteer opportunity we have in the Seattle League. It is an essential activity if we are to continue our work educating voters, speaking out on issues of importance and *doing the hands on work of democracy*.

The fundraising committee members have taken their charge of finding the financial resources to support the work of the league very seriously. They have taken classes, met with fundraising advisors, and read articles on how to fund non-profits. They have debated and strategized and now need your help. The committee has chosen a multi-tiered approach to fundraising this coming year. In the fall, we will host our annual Political Party and Auction. We will add a League Birthday Celebration event in February. However, we cannot be successful with either event without your help.

Our Political Party and Auction has been our signature event for 32 years. Last October the Seattle League received three or four invitations to other fundraising events each week. Many of those events occurring just before the election are modeled on our long-standing event. We have been very fortunate to have had dedicated auction committees and successful events in the past. YOU can be part of our future! Bring your vision to the mix of ideas and add your energy to one of a variety of roles, sized to fit your schedule. Come test the waters on Tuesday, May 13 at 5:30 pm. Together, we can create a fabulous event!

Hats Off!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Paula Polet, Sandy Barney and Annette Holcomb for their past service to the auction. Over the course of several years, each took on major responsibilities and put in dedicated time to ensure that the auction ran smoothly and brought in significant funds. Because of their efforts, our League has remained in strong financial shape. Thank you Paula, Sandy and Annette for giving us an irreplaceable gift: a solid foundation from which to launch our programs.

The Future of the Seattle School District

By Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis, Education Committee

Seattle School Superintendent Maria Goodloe-Johnson has spent her first year at the Seattle School District listening and learning about all aspects of the district. She met with staff and stakeholders and conducted audits on the Accelerated Academic Program (APP), communications, curriculum, special education, and bilingual program. In the fall, Superintendent Goodloe-Johnson laid out a process for the development of a strategic plan based on what she has learned. She hired McKinsey and Company to assist in the strategic planning process. They delivered their report in March, 2008.

The Superintendent will announce her strategic plan in May. The focus of the strategic plan is on five areas:

- **Support high quality teaching and learning**
- **Attract and support district talent**
- **Drive efficiency and effectiveness of the Central Office operations**
- **Introduce effective performance management**
- **Strengthen stakeholder engagement**

The plan will lay out key initiatives to address the needs in each of these five areas. Some will be accomplished in the next fifteen months; others may be done within the next five years. Built into the plan will be an annual review process. Most of the information on the planning process, including the audit reports, can be found in the district's web site: www.seattleschools.org/area/strategicplan.

The Superintendent and the Seattle School Board will use the strategic plan to guide their decisions over the next five years. The public will have an opportunity in April and May to provide comments on the plan. Stay tuned!

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Kitty Mahon, Membership Chair

Get To Know League Dinner

We had a pretty full house at the March 6 "Get to Know League" dinner at St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Bellevue, with 68 in attendance!! Among those present, 22 were new, relatively new or prospective members!! As is typical at League gatherings of this nature, there was lots of lively conversation, plenty of good food and many opportunities to share stories about League experiences in the past and the potential for experiences to come.

I want to thank all those who attended and contributed to this rousing crowd. It really was fun to see so many faces at the dinner prior to the forum on Women and Economics. Following introductory remarks by League President Denise Smith, Victoria Bennett and Harriett Morton described their respective roles as Voter Service and Action Chairs, filling the membership in on the details of each of the critical positions. Next, in their capacities as League members and committee volunteers, Vicky Downs and Unit Coordinator Mickey Horwitz talked about their perspectives on the League.

In addition, a big thank you to the many hands who made such light work of putting on a successful gathering by making contributions to the meal, setting up, and serving as table captains or as speakers.

Table captains: Karen Adair, Patti Catalano, Pat Cleary, Nancy Eitreim, Martha Jordan, Lois Laughlin, Charlene McKenzie, Harriett Morton, Bonnie Rimawi, Denise Smith, Anita Warmflash and JoAnne Way.

Set up, organization, greeters and clean up: Nan Moore, Joanne Way, Bonnie Rimawi, Margaret Austin, Dorothy Cyra,



Kitty Mahon

Michael Mahon, Ron Moore and Betsy Greene.

Food (fabulous food): Karen Adair, Martha Jordan, Jan O'Connor, Betsy Greene, Lee Carpenter, Lael Braymer, Nancy Eitreim, Jocelyn Marchisio, Pat Cleary, Jackie Wall, Charlene McKenzie, Bonnie Rimawi, JoAnne Way, Nan Moore, Mickey Horwitz,

Myra Lupton, Naila Harper, Estelle Wertheimer, Harriett Morton, Patti Catalano and Dorothy Cyra.

The next dinner for new members will be held on October 2, so save the date and start inviting your friends and colleagues to join the League. Let's see if we can pack the house next time.

\$2.50 Club

Almost two years after the adoption of the \$2.50 increase in national fees to underwrite the cost of the immigration study, we still have many members who add this amount (and more) to their dues in support of the League. Thank you to our most recent donors: Dorota Rahn, Ann Widditsch, Catherine Moody, Irene Wall, Hazel Schiffer, Wendy Morgan, Nancy Ellingham, Christine Palmer, Rebecca Deardorff, Mary Anne Schmitt, Mary Lou Block, Edith Younge, Carolyn Lewis, Eleanor Fordyce, Mary Pneuman, Joy Carpine, Elizabeth Terrey, Barbara Kaiser, May Pendergrass, Gisela Baxter, Richard Spady and Kay Shoudy.

Donors

Continuing in the vein of generosity are donors who renew at higher levels.

- Sustaining level: Shirley Bridge
- Supporting level: Gail Katz
- Contributing level: Ruth Kagi, Alexander West and Sally Prior.

Additional members who have renewed their memberships with added amounts above the base level are Olive Spannaus, Dana Twight, Mary Wolch, Teddy Geokezas, Barbara Young, Nancy Smith and Steven Gilbert.

Thank you, one and all!

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS THROUGH THE DECADES!

These two final installments complete the series of articles from the *The League of Women Voters Through the Decades*, written by Kay J. Maxwell, former President of the LWVUS.

We have offered this series to enable members (old and new) and interested readers to learn about the roots of the League and its mission. You may find the previous installments in back issues of the *Seattle Voter*, beginning in October 2007. The complete series is also available under the New Members section of the LWVUS website (lwvus.org).

The League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) and the Overseas Education Fund (OEF)

In the late 1940s and 1950s, the League established two 501(c)(3) educational organizations that, like the LWVUS, are nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations, but, unlike the LWVUS, also can accept contributions that are deductible for income tax purposes. In 1957, the LWVUS Board established the **League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF)**. The LWVEF undertakes a broad array of citizen education and research efforts, which complement the membership and political action activities of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Although a separate legal entity, the LWVEF is closely related to the LWVUS; in fact, the LWVUS Board members also constitute the LWVEF Board of Trustees. While the LWVEF provides citizen education information to a larger-than-League community, the LWVUS benefits from its research, and the budgets of each organization reflect this relationship. Thus, (1) the LWVEF conducts and funds research on national issues and undertakes educational projects in cooperation with state and local Leagues aimed at providing information and educational services to the public; (2) the LWVUS conducts and funds all action, membership and organization-related activities; and (3) administrative services used by both organizations are shared.

The unique network of local and state Leagues has a multiplier effect in bringing the Education Fund's services to the wider public. Through workshops, conferences and the distribution of publications, Leagues disseminate LWVEF's materials. The

LWVEF also sponsored the 1976, 1980 and 1984 Presidential Debates and the 1988 and 1992 Presidential Primary Debates.

Many local and state Leagues and Inter-League Organizations (ILOs) use the services of the LWVEF to finance state and local educational projects by raising tax-deductible money. In addition, many state and some local Leagues have established their own education funds, which can accept tax-deductible contributions.

The **Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund (CCCMF)** was set up in 1947 as a vehicle to expand the League's work and to service requests from women in former totalitarian countries for guidance on the role of citizens under a democratic system of government and for help with civic action programs. In 1961, its name was changed to the **Overseas Education Fund (OEF)** and in 1986, it became OEF International.

Although established by the LWVUS, the CCCMF and its successor organizations were always independent, setting their own policies, raising their own funds and carrying out their own programs. The board, too, was always separate from the LWVUS Board, although in the early years many of the CCCMF (and later OEF) board members also served on the LWVUS Board. Until the late 1970s all LWVUS Board members were among the 40 OEF trustees that elected the OEF Board.

In its early years, the Carrie Chapman Catt Memorial Fund provided citizen education publications for use both in the United States and abroad. Of particular significance to the League was the Fund's work with the LWVUS in developing a series of pamphlets and discussion guides for the Freedom Agenda project. These became the resource materials for League members and community groups on the League's study of the relationship of national security to individual liberty, adopted by the 1954 convention. In the 1950s, OEF began to work with women in Latin America and later in Asia. In the 1980s, OEF International worked primarily in Asia, Africa and Latin America, although its Women, Law and Development program was global.

OEF's efforts enabled women in more than 20 countries to work together to manage profitable enterprises, increase local food production, overcome legal inequities and organize for community development. Among development agencies OEF was a pioneer in promoting participatory organizational skills, part of its rich inheritance from the League of Women Voters. The OEF ceased operations in 1991 after spinning off several independent organizations to promote various aspects of its mission around the world.

Conclusion

While the League's programs, priorities and procedures have changed over the years to meet changing times, a League pamphlet written in 1919 describes with remarkable accuracy its basic aims today: The organization has three purposes to foster education in citizenship, to promote forums and public discussion of civic reforms and to support needed legislation. Over the years, the League has also been a training ground for women who want to serve in public office. In fact, the League's ability to prepare women for public life may be its finest legacy to the nation. (Nancy Neuman, President, LWVUS, 1986-90).

There is probably no other national volunteer organization in America that inspires such a great degree of commitment from its members. As a direct result of that commitment, the League of Women Voters has evolved from what it was in 1920, a might political experiment designed to help 20 million enfranchised women carry out their new responsibilities, to what it is today: a unique, nonpartisan organization that is a recognized force in molding political leaders, shaping public policy and promoting informed citizen participation at all levels of government.

League History Reference Materials:

1. "Twenty-Five Years of a Great Idea", LWVUS, 1950.
2. "Forty Years of a Great Idea", LWVUS.
3. "For the Public Record, A Documentary History of the League of Women Voters", Barbara Stuhler, 2003.
4. "In the Public Interest: The League of Women Voters 1920-1970", Louise M. Young, 1989.
5. "Papers of the League of Women Voters, 1918-1974", Library of Congress Research Collections in Women's Studies.
6. "Impact on Issues: 2004-06: A Guide to Public Policy Positions", LWVUS, 2005.
7. "Recollections", Percy Maxim Lee, 1984.

New Member Profiles

By Kitty Mahon, Membership Chair

An avid reader and writer, **Carrie B. Sachse** heard about the League through the internet. She recently completed her associate's degree at Seattle Central Community College and is planning a transfer to Western Washington University in the fall of 2008. Carrie is currently pursuing volunteer opportunities with NARAL Pro-Choice America and the National Organization of Women. Through her involvement with the League of Women Voters, she anticipates becoming a more informed voter and also becoming acquainted with many wonderful politically-active people.

Chris Swenson wants to volunteer and support the League's political positions, especially in the area of election reform. Chris, a retired psychologist, has 35 years of experience in schools and hospitals. Special skills include dispute resolution, crisis intervention, emotional support and psychological assessment. Chris was a member of the League of Women Voters in California in the 1960's; other affiliations have included time as a worker bee and occasional board member primarily for conservation organizations.

Orna Locker was inspired to join the League of Women Voters by her friend, LWVS Board member Jackie Wall. She is a graduate student at Antioch University in Seattle. She is looking to the League of Women Voters for information on local and national political issues and opportunities to become involved in issues of interest to her. These include: election reform, international relations, national issues and natural resources.

The topics of city government, King County parks and open space and the port are of interest to **Dorothy Guth**. Dorothy is a retired editor who also has writing experience. She heard about the League through a friend and has not been a member before. She is looking forward to learning more about political issues.

Currently a Public Relations Specialist with Seattle Public Utilities, **Laura Gee** learned about the League both from her boyfriend and from LWVS member Maria Brusher. Laura has a B.A. in English and a B.S. in environmental studies from the University of Utah, as well as a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Washington. She is currently a volunteer with Seattle Works, a non-profit organization which engages people in their 20's and 30's in service and civic participation. She has experience in writing, editing, community outreach and evaluation. Her hobbies include cooking, knitting and reading. Laura is looking forward to being involved with issues important to the city or state and to learning more about various issues, legislation and elections. She has already joined our Membership Strategic Planning Committee.

BOOK REVIEW by League Member Vicky Downs

Conned: How Millions Went to Prison, Lost the Vote, and Helped Send George W. Bush to the White House

By Sasha Abramsky

Two Leaguers strongly recommended this book by Sasha Abramsky, who writes for the *New York Times* among other well regarded periodicals and also published a book on prisons in 2002. In spite of the unfortunate subtitle, this is not a book that bashes Bush or the GOP: it is about disenfranchisement in the US. When he began researching this book, Abramsky expected to find limits to voting in the South, but was amazed that it frequently occurred in the North as well. I was shocked to find that Washington State was among the worst at reinstating the voting rights of former felons, and Seattle is described as "the epicenter of...mass disenfranchisement"!

The book points out that the constitutions of many of the former Confederate States specifically bar felons from ever voting again. Abramsky suggests that this might have been intended as a way to help limit the impact of the African American vote.

In contrast, Washington technically allows former felons to re-register, but the laws are so cumbersome, in practice "huge numbers of felons never vote again." For example, if a clerk just can't find someone's papers, then the person will not be able to register. The law allows the judge who adjudicated a case to reinstate a former felon, but what happens if the judge has died? or retired? According to Abramsky, the problem in this state is that the "crazy quilt" of laws together with an uncaring bureaucracy make the situation like a "*Catch-22* [or] Kafka novel."

All this is of more than passing interest because the numbers of disenfranchised are vast. We are talking about millions of US citizens, and the proportion of African Americans is high. "Nearly one in four black men living in Washington [State] ... were legally disenfranchised by 2004."

How did this happen? In 1972 the "War on Drugs" swept up thousands of people either for possessing drugs or for crimes that are related. Importantly, police tend to pick up the small fry rather than those

farther up the food chain who have more money and power. Those at the top have information they can exchange for lighter sentences, those at the bottom don't. In Washington State that results in one in every fifty African Americans (including men, women and children) living behind bars.

Abramsky points out that the voices of huge subgroups of people are not heard. "We are becoming a country that boasts of its universal suffrage, yet disenfranchises millions."

Conned includes information about several other states, each with a unique take on the issue of disenfranchisement. I was especially touched to read about Casey Rudd in Montana. She is a former felon who eventually overcame her addiction and became an advocate for others who had never been told that once out of prison they could register again to vote. She has traveled all over her state helping former felons to do what it takes to register, and she has been effective.

We have no one in Washington who is doing likewise. As one ACLU lawyer says, "The process for canceling the voting rights is very prompt and very automatic in contrast with how difficult it is to restore [them]." This book has important information for all Leaguers, but for members of the Seattle LWV, this information is vital!

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

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.

Voting Rights: Are we there yet?**Material selected by:**

Pat Cleary, chair Social Justice Committee
 Nancy Eitrem
 Jayne Freitag-Koontz
 April Kauffman
 Kathleen Randall

Reading Committee:

Anita Warmflash
 Kitty Mahon
 Laraine Volkman

40 Percent Democracy

Elections are the backbone of democracy. But many people don't exercise their right to vote—meaning that those who do vote make the decisions for everyone else.

The long-term trend shows that 55 percent to 60 percent of eligible voters cast their ballots in a presidential election, while about 40 percent of eligible voters vote in mid-term elections, when many governors and other state officers, as well as the U.S. House and one-third of the U.S. Senate are elected.

These figures—relatively unchanged during the past two decades—are far below that of other Western nations, many of which boast voter turnout rates in excess of 80 percent.

Participation data reveal clear patterns about who is most likely to vote and who isn't. If you are old, white, educated and strongly rooted in your community, you are more likely to vote. If you are young, non-white, less educated and move frequently, you are less likely to vote.

While these patterns generally hold true across states, there is great variation in voter turnout among the 50 states. For example, in the 2006 mid-term election, 55 percent of eligible Minnesotans went to the polls, while only 29 percent of North Carolinians voted.

Some of this variation can be explained by who lives in a state and who is ruled eligible under state law. For example, nationwide, around 10 percent of the voting age population is ineligible to vote. But, in California, 20 percent are ineligible; and, in Montana, one percent is ineligible. Most of this variation can be attributed to the size of a state's immigrant and prison populations.

Variation in voter turnout across states is also impacted by the voter registration rates. Self-reported registration rates vary dramatically, from a high of 89 percent in North Dakota, to a low of 53 percent in Hawaii. Some states offer registration up to and on Election Day, and these states tend to have higher overall registration rates.

Research shows that competitive elections increase voter turnout, but the amount of money required to run for office can deter or doom candidates who would otherwise engender broad public support. For example, in 2004, the average candidate needed around \$110,000 to run for a seat in the upper chamber of a state legislature, and the average candidate needed more than \$300,000 in California, Illinois and Texas.

As states increasingly take the lead on policy reform with respect to climate change, immigration and other issues, who votes and who doesn't—and why—matters more and more.

Who is making decisions for your state?

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Washington Association of Churches v. Reed Court Cases

The Brennan Center for Justice, New York
University School of Law www.brennancenter.org

– 03/16/07

The Brennan Center has resolved the first lawsuit in the country concerning a new procedure to “match” voter information from one source to another. After winning a preliminary injunction on August 1, 2006, on behalf of a coalition of citizens and groups concerned about voting rights in Washington State, the Brennan Center consented to an order entered by a Seattle federal court on March 16, 2007. This order blocks enforcement of a law (RCW 29A.08.107) in a way that would bar citizens from voting unless the Secretary of State first succeeds in matching their names, drivers license or Social Security numbers, and birth dates from their voter registration forms with records kept in other government databases.

Before the lawsuit was brought, some voters had already been blocked from registering by typos or other minor problems like these. For example, Marina Petrienko (who submitted a statement to the court, reproduced below) is a newly eligible U.S. citizen who tried to register to vote for the first time last winter. But a county official mis-typed the year of her birth, putting “1976” into the database, instead of the year on her form: “1975.” There is no question that Ms. Petrienko was eligible to vote, and there is no question that she provided accurate information. But nobody caught the fatal typo, and on May 2, 2006, Ms. Petrienko’s attempt to register was rejected. Lisa Oldham (whose statement is also reproduced below) is another eligible citizen whose unmatched registration was rejected. Ms. Oldham registered to vote in February 2006. Her married name is “Graham” and her driver’s license is in the name “Graham,” but her Social Security card is in her maiden name, “Oldham” – the name she used to register. She was not successfully matched. On May 2, 2006, Ms. Oldham’s registration was rejected, and she was rendered unable to vote. Ms. Petrienko and Ms. Oldham are merely examples. Many other eligible citizens were blocked from registering by the

“no match, no vote” rule, and without intervention, there would have been many more following that.

Federal law requires each state to create a statewide database of registered voters, but nothing in this law requires that they adopt no match, no vote rules like the one that had been adopted in Washington. The absence of a match between data on a registration form and data held in a government computer occurs for many reasons having nothing to do with voter eligibility, including human error by government election workers, computer glitches, misspelling of names, and transposing digits in a Social Security or drivers license number. Asian Americans, American Indians, and Alaska Natives with names that are especially prone to multiple English spellings, or flipping of first and last names; married women who have taken hyphenated names or their husbands names but have not yet seen those changes recognized throughout the bureaucracy; and people with names containing apostrophes or hyphens were especially likely to be harmed by this law. Now, under the court’s order, even if the state is not able to find a successful “match” for those voters’ information, a voter will have ample opportunity to resolve the matching error or show some form of alternative identification in order to cast a valid ballot.

Plaintiffs joining the complaint filed include: the Washington Association of Churches; the Washington Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN); the Service Employees International Union, Local 775 (SEIU); Washington Citizen Action; the Organization of Chinese Americans (Greater Seattle Chapter); the Chinese Information and Service Center; the Korean American Voters Alliance; and the Filipino American Political Action Group of Washington.

AN AGENDA FOR ELECTION REFORM

Wendy R. Weiser and Jonah Goldman

Brennan Center for Justice *at New York University School of Law*
and the
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law

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AN AGENDA FOR ELECTION REFORM

by

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and

Jonah Goldman

LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS UNDER LAW

Our Constitution promises every eligible American a full and equal opportunity to participate in the political process. Unfortunately, defects in election administration and procedures undermine that promise by disenfranchising countless eligible Americans every election cycle. These defects can be remedied, and the promise of democracy restored, by implementing real reforms to ensure that all eligible Americans have a fair and equal opportunity to vote and to have their votes counted. This memorandum sets out a comprehensive reform agenda for the 110th Congress to achieve that goal and explains the reasons for each policy reform.

This memorandum provides elaboration, support and background for “An Agenda for America’s Voters,” a comprehensive proposal to Congress on how best to use its Constitutional authority to regulate federal elections, endorsed by dozens of organizations. This agenda is the product of years of research and experience by a variety of organizations and institutes focused on civil rights, voting rights, and civic participation. Over the past few years, these organizations have created an extensive record of the problems voters face as they attempt to register, vote, and have their votes counted. The following recommendations are designed to address those problems, to promote the integrity of elections, and to ensure that our electoral process serves all American citizens. The recommendations are organized into the following five subsections: (i) measures to improve the voter registration process, (ii) measures to improve electronic voting systems, (iii) measures to prevent disenfranchisement on or near Election Day, (iv) measures to improve the administration of elections, and (v) measures to expand the franchise.

I. IMPROVE VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

Voter registration problems typically are the largest cause of unwarranted voter disenfranchisement in the United States. Year after year, a substantial number of Americans show up at their polling places only to find that their names are not on the voter rolls, either because of a problem in the registration process or because their names have been incorrectly removed from the rolls. Others are unable to register to vote in advance of Election Day because of restrictive voter registration requirements. Although the new statewide voter registration databases mandated by HAVA have the potential to mitigate these problems, that potential has not been reached, and few states have adopted policies and practices to use their databases to help voters. The causes of voter registration problems are multiple, and they have been fleshed out through extensive study and advocacy experience.

Any reform agenda should address the myriad barriers to voter registration that currently plague our electoral system. Since new barriers frequently arise, a reform agenda should also include protections to ensure that additional barriers do not disenfranchise voters. And since existing voter registration systems themselves are often a significant barrier to voting for many citizens, even when they function properly, a reform agenda should seek to expand the ways in which citizens can become registered to vote. Overall, the goals of federal reform of the voter registration process are: (a) to expand the avenues for voter registration; (b) to remove technical and other barriers to voter registration; (c) to improve practices for purging the voter rolls of ineligible voters by increasing public transparency and reducing the likelihood that eligible voters will be disenfranchised; and (d) to make it easier for citizens to determine their voter registration status.

A. Expand Avenues for Voter Registration

1. SAME DAY REGISTRATION

Election 2004 saw an encouraging trend in voter turnout nationwide—about a 5% increase from four years earlier. While voter turnout was up across the country, four of the top five states with the highest percentage of eligible voters who cast ballots had one thing in common: they allowed citizens to register and vote at the polls on Election Day. In the six states that had “same day registration” in 2004, eligible voter turnout was 13.6% higher than in those states that did not.¹

In addition to increasing turnout, same day registration helps overcome a number of problems in state registration systems. Americans often complain that voter registration deadlines prevent them from participating in elections because they frequently become engaged in elections and political discussions after the registration deadline has passed. Moreover, one of the most frequent causes of disenfranchisement on Election Day, even for those who have submitted timely voter registration applications, is the registration process. Year after year, thousands upon thousands of voters show up at the polling place only to find that a technical or administrative error prevented

them from showing up on the rolls. Election officials often cannot meet the last minute demand for voter registration before the deadline, causing backlogs of voter registration cards that do not get processed in time for Election Day. These problems will not disenfranchise voters if states provide for same day registration. We therefore propose the following federal reform:

- **Same Day Registration.** Congress should pass legislation that allows every eligible Americans to register and vote the same day for all federal elections. Any such legislation must provide adequate resources to state and local election administrators to implement an effective same day registration system. It should also ensure that only eligible voters can take advantage of the same day registration system.

2. REGISTRATION WHEN CITIZENS BECOME ELIGIBLE TO VOTE

New citizens, young people who reach voting age, and Americans who reenter civic life after incarceration should be encouraged to participate fully in our democracy. Studies show that when voters cast a ballot the first time they are eligible to vote, they are far more likely to become life-long voters. To do so, they must first become registered to vote. According to the Census Bureau, more than 25% of voting-age Americans, and more than 50% of those aged 18-24, are not registered. We therefore propose the following federal reforms:

- **Voter registration for newly eligible citizens.** Congress should require that voter registration be made available at high school graduations, college freshmen orientations, naturalization ceremonies and, where applicable, when Americans become eligible to vote after they have lost their eligibility for a period of time. Currently, the NVRA requires all state departments of motor vehicles and state social service agencies to provide opportunities for their clients to register. This model should be expanded to encourage newly eligible voters to register by making registration available at naturalization ceremonies, at high schools and colleges, and at the appropriate departments of correction, probation or parole.
- **Mailing to newly eligible citizens.** Congress should require states to mail voter registration application cards to citizens on their eighteenth birthdays and to other newly eligible citizens.
- **Improve civic education.** Congress should also encourage, possibly through pilot programs, creative civic education in high schools to teach young people the importance of democratic participation as well as how to be effective voters. Such programs should include classroom voter registration and education on how to be a poll worker.

3. REGISTRATION WHEN ELIGIBLE CITIZENS MOVE

One of the problems most frequently reported to the voter protection hotlines on Election Day is that eligible registered voters do not know that they must re-register when they move, even if they move just a few houses away.² The NVRA already contains only limited protections for voters who change their address within a precinct, municipality, or county. Simple outreach to moving citizens can help

ensure that all valid registrations are properly updated, and that all eligible citizens are thereby able to cast a valid vote. We therefore propose the following federal reform:

- **Voter registration materials in postal moving materials.** Congress should require that the United States Postal Service offer voter registration forms among the other materials they make available to Americans who change their mailing address. Currently, the NVRA provides for the use of postal change-of-address information to remove voters from jurisdictions where they are no longer eligible, but it does not provide a straightforward corresponding process for adding voters in their new jurisdictions.

4. ENSURE PROPER NVRA IMPLEMENTATION

The National Voter Registration Act (NVRA) provides for voter registration at motor vehicle and public assistance offices, at state disability agencies, and via the mail. Congress designated public assistance offices as voter registration sites so that low-income citizens would have equal access to registration at public agencies. These Americans are less likely to own automobiles, frequent departments of motor vehicles, and register at DMV agencies. While the NVRA requires that public assistance agencies offer voter registration to applicants and clients, research suggests that many states are ignoring this federal requirement. Voter registration applications from public assistance offices dropped by almost 60 percent from 1995 to 2004, while applications from all other sources increased by 22 percent. To ensure that registration opportunities are enjoyed by all Americans, regardless of income levels, Congress should ensure that the NVRA's provisions are implemented and enforced:

- **Congressional oversight of NVRA Implementation.** Congress should increase its oversight over state implementation of the NVRA's public assistance provisions and the Department of Justice's enforcement of the federal law.

5. ENCOURAGE INNOVATIONS IN VOTER REGISTRATION PROCESS

New technologies and ideas have the potential to improve the accuracy, accessibility, and effectiveness of our voter registration systems. Congress should promote innovations in the voter registration process to ensure that it better serves voters, including the following:

- **Public access portals to voter registration lists.** To enable citizens to verify and update their voter registration status and information, Congress should encourage states to make available secure and accessible public access portals through which individual voters or their agents can verify, correct, or update the information in their voter registration records. These portals should be accessible to individuals with disabilities and language minority voters.
- **Study on-line voter registration.** Congress should provide funding for research on whether and how the Internet can be useful in the voter registration process, including research on how to overcome security and privacy concerns. Although there are serious concerns about the security and reliability

of using the Internet in connection with elections, if those concerns can be addressed, the Internet may provide a convenient way to enable eligible citizens to register and vote.

B. Remove Technical and Other Barriers to Voter Registration

1. FAIR PROCESSING OF VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

Voter registration forms are often rejected for technical reasons that have nothing to do with a voter's eligibility.³ For example, as they implemented their new statewide voter registration databases, a number of states refused to add registrants to the voter rolls unless their voter registration information "matched" data in other government databases. Unfortunately, given the inconsistent quality of existing government databases and the poor technology used for "matching," up to 20%—and in some cases, 30%—of registrants who should have "matched" did not because of typos, maiden names, and other immaterial differences in records.⁴ These policies resulted in the disenfranchisement of eligible voters through no fault of their own. Other common examples of this phenomenon are discussed in part 2, below. To guard against unwarranted disenfranchisement as a result of incorrect processing of voter registration forms, the following additional protections are needed:

- **Construction of voter registration forms.** States should be prohibited from refusing to process voter registration forms that contain all the information necessary to determine voter eligibility, even if the forms are not completed entirely in the prescribed manner, such as if there are minor errors or omissions that are not determinative of eligibility. Ambiguous responses on a voter registration form should be construed in favor of the registrant. For example, states should be prohibited from summarily rejecting voter registration applications where applicants are unable to recall their driver's license or non-driver's ID numbers or make mistakes in transcribing those numbers.
- **Notice and opportunity to correct.** States should provide registrants timely notice and opportunities to correct errors on or information missing from their voter registration forms. Forms submitted before the voter registration deadline should be deemed timely submitted even if the correction is made or the missing information is provided after the voter registration deadline but before the election.
- **Matching as a tool, not a barrier.** Congress should make it clear that, under HAVA, states may not reject voter registration applications based solely on the fact that the information in the application does not match the information in existing government databases.⁵
- **Uniform and transparent rules for processing forms.** States should be required to promulgate uniform and transparent rules for determining voter eligibility and for determining when a voter registration form may be rejected.
- **Coordination with social service agency databases.** States should be required to coordinate their statewide voter registration databases with the databases of social service agencies to ensure timely

processing of voter registration forms submitted through social service agencies and to provide another tool for verifying and correcting information in voter registration records.

2. CLARIFY VOTER REGISTRATION FORMS

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) mandated several changes to state and federal voter registration forms that have caused confusion among many voters and, in a number of states, has led to the rejection of many voter registration forms submitted by eligible applicants.

The first set of requirements that have caused problems are HAVA's citizenship and age check box requirements. The new language HAVA requires on all voter registration forms is confusing to many voters and leads many reasonably to understand that they need not check any boxes in order to become registered.⁶ Unfortunately, some states have penalized voters for failing to understand this language and have refused to register eligible voters who fail to check the "yes" boxes on their voter registration forms, even though the forms contain no instructions to suggest that any adverse consequences would follow from failing to check those boxes, and even though the forms otherwise include sufficient information to determine the applicants' eligibility.⁷

HAVA's identifying number provisions have caused similar problems.⁸ Although there is nothing inherently disenfranchising about those provisions, a number states have implemented them in a way that incorrectly blocks eligible voters from participating in the process. For example, several states have refused to register voters without driver's license or Social Security numbers if those voters did not write "none" in lieu of providing the numbers, even though nothing on the form instructs applicants to do so. In addition, few state forms specifically indicate that a state-issued non-driver's ID number is acceptable as a "driver's license number."

To address these and similar problems, federal law should ensure that voter registration forms are easy for citizens to understand and use and should ensure that states do not refuse to register eligible voters because of technical errors or omissions. To address the problems arising from the forms themselves, Congress should require:

- **Clarification of check box language.** The HAVA language for the citizen and age check boxes should be revised to eliminate any ambiguity on the voter registration form.
- **Clarification of identifying number language.** The HAVA language for identifying numbers should be clarified to specify that the space for a "driver's license number" includes non-driver's ID numbers, and to provide a clearly-marked space on the voter registration form for applicants who do not have the requested numbers to so indicate.
- **Usability testing.** State and federal voter registration forms should be tested for usability, to ensure that all eligible citizens can understand and properly complete them.

3. NO NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION

In a recent trend that is causing great concern, several states are seeking to impose new and onerous requirements for voter registration. The most burdensome such policy currently in effect is Arizona's demand that citizens provide documentary proof of citizenship with their voter registration applications. Arizona's new requirement, which is currently the subject of federal litigation, has led to the disenfranchisement of many citizens, including more than 22,000 people whose applications were rejected in 2006 for lack of proof of citizenship.

Proof-of-citizenship requirements invariably put burdens – including financial burdens – on citizens themselves. While it would be ideal if all U.S. citizens had documents such as a passport, a birth certificate, or naturalization papers readily available, the truth is that many do not.⁹ A birth certificate usually costs \$10 to \$15. According to the Bureau of Consular Affairs, only 25-27% of eligible Americans have passports, which now cost \$97. Naturalization papers, if they are lost or damaged, cost \$210. A proof of citizenship requirement would result in making the exercise of the right to vote unaffordable for many citizens. For some citizens, proof of citizenship may even be impossible to obtain. In certain parts of the country, for example, many African Americans and Native Americans were born at home, under the care of midwives, and were never issued birth certificates.

Congress should enact further protections to guard against these new barriers to voter registration:

- **No new requirements for voter registration.** States should not be allowed to require voters to meet additional requirements beyond those already required by the NVRA in order to be registered to vote for federal elections.¹⁰ In particular, states should not be allowed to require identity documentation or proof of citizenship as a condition of voter registration.

4. PROTECT VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVES

Nonprofit voter registration drives are playing an increasingly important role in expanding voter registration and participation in the United States, especially among those citizens who have traditionally faced the greatest barriers to the franchise. In 2004, several large nonprofits alone registered 10 million voters, more than one fifth of the total that year; in some jurisdictions, private voter registration drives accounted for as much as 40% of the total registrations. For certain groups of citizens, such as many people of color, people in low-income communities, and younger and elderly citizens, these drives provide the most convenient and accessible means of registering to vote.

Unfortunately, instead of praising voter registration groups for their contribution to democracy and civic participation, a number of states responded by passing laws restricting voter registration drives, making it difficult—and in some cases, impossible—for them to operate. These new restrictions, which vary from state to state, include short deadlines for submitting voter registration forms,

backed by criminal penalties or heavy civil fines; rules limiting the number and types of forms available to organized voter registration drives; onerous pre-registration and training requirements; and rules specifying the manner in which voter registration drives are to be operated, among other things. As a result of these new laws and regulations, voter registration drives were seriously hampered in a number of states in 2006, including Florida, Ohio, New Mexico, Colorado, and Georgia, among others.¹¹

To protect this important avenue of voter registration as well as the civic engagement essential to a vibrant democracy, Congress should:

- **Prohibit undue burdens on voter registration drives.** States should be prohibited from imposing undue burdens on the ability of private groups and individuals, as well as governmental entities, to conduct voter registration drives.
- **Additional protections for voter registration drives.** More specific protections may also be warranted. For example, states should be expressly prohibited from limiting the number of voter registration forms available to organized voter registration programs or from preventing those programs from using the federal voter registration form. In addition, states should not be allowed to impose financial or criminal penalties on individuals or groups for conduct in voter registration drives that is not willful, fraudulent, or likely to injure voters.

C. Fair List Maintenance

1. FAIR STANDARDS FOR PURGING INELIGIBLE VOTERS FROM VOTER ROLLS

Although purges of the voter registration rolls are an important component of list maintenance, poorly conducted purges can disenfranchise thousands of eligible citizens. New statewide voter registration databases make it easier for states to purge voters from the rolls by pushing a button. Most states are now able to develop lists of voters to be purged from the rolls by electronically “matching” names on voter rolls against government databases of persons ineligible to vote. Unfortunately, the “matching” processes used are inaccurate and may result in many eligible voters being purged from the voter rolls. Since states rarely provide effective notice of a purge, voters whose names have been removed from the rolls usually do not learn of the problem until they show up at the polls on Election Day and are denied a regular ballot. The secrecy of the process makes it easier for election officials to manipulate purges to target certain groups of citizens.

The most notorious examples of flawed purges occurred in Florida in 2000 and 2004. In 2000, thousands of legal voters were purged from Florida’s voter rolls simply because their names shared 80% of the characters of the names on a list of people with felony convictions. In 2004, the state developed a purge list of 47,000 “suspected felons;” despite Florida’s sizable Hispanic population, the list contained only 61 Hispanic surnames, over-represented African Americans, and also mistakenly included thousands who had had their voting rights restored. Although these errors were widely publicized, similar errors across the country escape public scrutiny.

To protect eligible citizens from inaccurate or unfair purges, Congress should enact the following protections:

- **Transparency of purge procedures.** States should be required to develop and publish uniform, non-discriminatory, and transparent standards for determining when, why, how, and by whom a voter registration record can be purged from the list of eligible voters.
- **Public notice of purges.** States should be required to provide effective public notice of an impending purge at least 30 days in advance of the purge. The NVRA already provides that no organized purge should take place within the 90 days preceding any federal election.
- **Notice to voter and opportunity to contest purge.** No state should be permitted to remove an individual's registration record from the list of eligible voters without giving the affected person sufficient notice and an opportunity to contest the purge or correct any errors. Notice should be provided at least 30 days in advance of a prospective purge by sending to the last known address of the affected person a certified, forwardable letter, accompanied by a postage pre-paid response card.
- **Maintain purge history to facilitate reinstatement.** States should be required to retain registration records that have been purged from the list of eligible voters, preferably in their computerized databases, and to develop procedures for reinstating records that have been incorrectly purged. States should also be required to transmit data regarding individuals who have completed incarceration or sentences from their departments of corrections or other relevant agencies to their chief election officials to facilitate reinstatement.
- **Acceptable basis for purge.** No state should be permitted to refuse to register a voter or to premise a purge based solely on one undeliverable mailing. Despite the serious potential for inaccuracy, postcards sent to voters and returned as undeliverable are often used as the basis for a purge or a bar to initial registration. The NVRA already provides some protection against using unreliable postcard mailings to obstruct registration, but several states ignore this provision in practice, and a Michigan federal district court has interpreted the language to be meaningless for new registrants.

2. PRIVACY AND SECURITY OF PERSONAL INFORMATION ON VOTER REGISTRATION LISTS

As a result of HAVA, each state is required to have a statewide voter registration database that is coordinated with other state databases and that contains personal information about each registered voter, such as her driver's license number or her Social Security number. This new development creates a substantial risk that confidential information about voters may be accessed by unauthorized individuals and used for improper purposes. This could leave many voters susceptible to identity theft and other injuries. Although federal law already requires states to ensure the privacy and security of personal information in voter registration lists, few states have implemented serious security measures. Indeed, over the past two years, there have been several well-publicized security

breaches involving voter registration lists. We therefore recommend that Congress take further steps to ensure the security and privacy of voter registration information:

- **Voter registration list privacy and security.** Congress should take additional steps to ensure the security and privacy of electronic voter registration lists, including by promoting research on best practices and by requiring the Election Assistance Commission or the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop privacy and security standards.

II. IMPROVE VOTING SYSTEMS

Research shows that all of the most commonly purchased electronic voting systems have significant security and reliability vulnerabilities. For example, radio frequency wireless components in voting machines pose an especially large security risk, as does the failure of states to audit voter-verified paper records. Unless adequate protections are put in place, there is a risk that these voting systems could be tampered with so as to change the outcomes of elections. This risk further undermines Americans' confidence in our electoral system.

In addition to security and reliability problems, some voting systems have significant usability and accessibility problems that lead to the loss of votes. It is essential that, in making any reforms, Congress preserve the gains that HAVA made in ensuring that all voters, including voters with disabilities and language minority voters, have an opportunity to cast an independent and secret ballot. Those protections need not be compromised to ensure that new voting systems are secure and reliable.

Congress should pass comprehensive legislation mandating necessary security protections for all voting systems. Congress should also take additional steps to ensure that voting systems are usable and accessible. The most important such protections include:¹²

- **Voter verified audit records.** Congress should mandate voter verified audit records for all electronic voting systems. The voter verified audit records must be independent of the software used in the voting systems, such as paper records.¹³ They must also be accessible to people with disabilities and language minority voters.
- **Mandatory audits.** Congress should require an audit of the voter verified audit records after every federal election. It should also ensure that the auditing procedures are transparent and effective.
- **Ban wireless components.** Congress should ban radio frequency wireless components in all voting systems. The use of all other wireless components should be severely curtailed, if not eliminated.
- **Ballot chain of custody practices.** Congress should require states to implement good practices concerning ballot chain of custody.

- **Access to firmware and software.** Many states have had difficulty gaining access to the firmware and software on their own machines. Congress should address this problem and end the exclusive private control that many vendors have over the code on voting machines owned by local jurisdictions.
- **Usability and accessibility testing.** Congress should mandate usability and accessibility testing for all new voting systems and ballot designs.
- **Emergency ballots.** Congress should require all states to make available emergency ballots in all polling places using electronic voting systems.
- **Different Election Methods.** Congress should promote voting systems that are ready to implement effectively any election method currently used in elections in the United States, including cumulative voting and ranked choice systems.

III. PREVENT DISENFRANCHISEMENT ON OR NEAR ELECTION DAY

A. Prohibit Deceptive Practices and Voter Intimidation

Every election cycle, voters are inundated with a flurry of information aimed at educating them about issues, candidates, and the electoral process. Unfortunately, not all of this information is designed to help voters make informed political choices; instead, in nearly every election cycle many voters, disproportionately those in minority communities, are confronted with deceptive information designed to prevent them from casting a meaningful ballot. In 2004, for example, fliers in African American neighborhoods of Milwaukee, Wisconsin falsely warned voters that if they had not paid their parking tickets, if they had ever been convicted of a felony or if they had ever voted in an election that year that they would be punished for going to the polls. In 2006, fliers distributed to voters with Latino surnames in Orange County, California incorrectly intimated that it is illegal for naturalized citizens to vote. In Virginia, Colorado and New Mexico, voters received automated calls communicating incorrect information about where and when to vote and the requirements for voting.¹⁴

- **Prohibit voter intimidation and deceptive practices.** Congress should pass legislation that prohibits and provides voters with adequate recourse for conduct aimed at preventing them from voting through intimidating or deceptive practices. This legislation should preserve the fundamental First Amendment freedom of speech, particularly in the political arena. In addition, the legislation should include a remedial structure that provides members of affected communities with immediate, correct information from a reliable and trusted source.

B. Prevent Disenfranchisement as a Result of Documentation Requirements

A wave of restrictive voter ID and proof of citizenship laws and proposed laws across the country seek to condition the right to vote on presentation of a strictly limited set of documents. Tens of millions of eligible citizens do not have the documents required under those proposals, especially people of color, low-income citizens, the elderly, and students. A recent study by the Brennan Center, for example, shows that more than half of all voting-eligible women do not have proof of citizenship with their current names on it. A 2005 Wisconsin study showed that 78% of African-American men between the ages of 18 and 24 do not have driver's licenses.

In 2006, new voter ID requirements caused enormous problems and disenfranchised many across the country, even where restrictive laws were not in effect. Most notoriously, South Carolina Governor Mark Sanford and Ohio Representative Steven Chabot were turned away from the polls for lack of proper ID, and Missouri's chief election official, Robin Carnahan, was improperly asked to show photo ID despite the fact that the state's supreme court had struck down Missouri's photo ID law. Equally problematic, calls to voter protection hotlines revealed that many voters were turned away across the country even though they showed military IDs or because their addresses on their photo IDs were not current.

In some jurisdictions, restrictive ID laws may have helped determine the outcome of the elections. In Franklin County, Ohio, for example, many voters were turned away or forced to cast provisional ballots because of new ID requirements which were improperly administered. Overall, 20,000 provisional ballots were cast in the county (5,000 more than in 2004). In the race in Ohio's 15th Congressional district, Rep. Deborah Pryce beat challenger Mary Jo Kilroy by only 1,062 votes. In Arizona, at least 22,000 voters were denied registration because of the state's new proof of citizenship requirement, and 1,300 voters in one county alone were forced to cast provisional ballots because of the state's new polling place ID requirements. Several local races were decided by a smaller margin.

- [Resist restrictive ID and proof of citizenship requirements.](#) First and foremost, Congress should resist any attempt to make proof of citizenship or photo ID a pre-condition of voting. Congress should similarly resist efforts to require voters to present a durable voter registration card, since a substantial number of Americans in states that currently produce such cards do not receive their cards in the mail or lose them before the election.
- [Repeal onerous provision of REAL ID Act.](#) The REAL ID Act of 2005, which is scheduled to go into effect in 2008, imposes a series of burdensome federal requirements on state photo ID cards, including driver's licenses. Among those is a requirement that each citizen show documentary proof of citizenship and that the state verify that documentation with the Department of Homeland Security before the individual is issued a driver's license or other photo ID. The National Governors

Association, the National Council of State Legislatures, and the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators have estimated that it will cost states at least \$11 billion to implement the REAL ID Act over the first 5 years.¹⁵ Because states cannot and will not comply with its mandates, and because individuals will be injured, Congress should repeal the onerous requirements of the REAL ID Act.

- **Resources for voter education on ID.** Congress should provide resources for state and local election officials to educate their voters and poll workers about what identification is necessary in order to vote as well as what identification is not required. Congress should amend Section 302 of HAVA to require that states post at every polling place, information about voter identification including what identification is required to receive a ballot.
- **Prohibit onerous state documentation requirements.** Congress should also enact protections to guard against voter disenfranchisement as a result of restrictive state-imposed voter ID or proof of citizenship requirements and the improper implementation of any such requirements.

C. Ensure Fair and Effective Provisional Balloting

Provisional balloting was one of the centerpieces of HAVA, intended to provide a fail-safe mechanism to ensure that eligible voters will not be disenfranchised as a result of administrative errors. Although provisional ballots have saved many votes that otherwise would have been lost, their promise has been severely hampered by the failure of states to adopt procedures to ensure that provisional ballots are a true fail-safe for eligible voters. Worse yet, a number of states have adopted provisional balloting procedures under which voters are provided ballots that will not be counted under any circumstances. These “placebo ballots” not only fail to provide a fail-safe for eligible voters, but they also mislead voters into believing that they have cast meaningful ballots when they have not. The problems are compounded by the fact that many states do not have uniform rules for counting provisional ballots, which means that one county might count certain provisional ballots that neighboring counties will reject.

We therefore recommend the following proposals to restore the promise of provisional ballots:

- **Require provisional ballot forms to be used as voter registration forms.** All states should be required to add eligible voters who voted by provisional ballot to their voter registration lists. The provisional ballot envelope typically includes all information required on a voter registration form. This has been implemented successfully in a number of states.
- **Uniform and transparent counting standards.** All states should be required to publish uniform and transparent standards for determining when a provisional ballot will count, well in advance of an election.

- **Provisional ballots cast by voters sent to the wrong precinct or polling place.** States should not refuse to count a provisional ballot cast by an eligible voter in the wrong precinct or polling place for all the races for which that voter was eligible to vote. This would not prevent states from maintaining a precinct-based voting system or from penalizing voters or others for deliberately undermining that system without good cause.

IV. IMPROVE ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

A. Prevent Conflicts of Interest

Over the past few election cycles, Americans have become frustrated with election officials who seem more interested in partisan electoral successes than in ensuring that voters in their jurisdictions have the ability to cast meaningful ballots. In 2000 and 2004, the national spotlight shone on chief election officials in several states because of the conflicts of interest between their roles in running elections and their official positions in partisan political campaigns. Controversies arose over last minute election administration decisions in those states because those decisions appeared to benefit the candidates for whom those officials were working. Regardless of whether state election officials who hold positions in partisan political campaigns actually base their election administration decisions on illegitimate partisan considerations, conflicts of interest create incentives for wrongdoing and cause voters to doubt the impartiality of those running their elections, undermining the integrity of the process. Voters should be confident that those who are selected to run their elections have the interest of democracy, and not the interest of partisanship, as their primary concern. To increase confidence in the fairness of elections, we recommend the following reforms:

- **Prevent conflicts of interest.** Congress should adopt legislation that prevents conflicts of interest by amending Title III of the Federal Election Campaign Act to prohibit chief state election officials from actively campaigning for a candidate for political office or serving as an official on a candidate's campaign.
- **Prohibit last-minute changes in election rules.** Congress should prohibit last minute changes in the rules that govern elections. Instead, states should be required to publicly post election laws and regulations 90 days before an election and should be prevented from changing the rules after that date, except in response to court rulings or an unforeseen emergency.

B. Ensure Adequate and Equitable Allocation of Election Resources

In the past two federal election cycles, voters across the country were disenfranchised by long lines at the polling place. In 2004, for example, some voters in urban districts in Columbus, Ohio waited to vote in the pouring rain for over 5 hours while other voters in suburban precincts in the same

county quickly cast ballots at their polling places. In 2006, voters in St. Louis reported similar delays at the polling place to the Election Protection hotline. It is a constant struggle for state and local election officials across the country to ensure adequate and equitable allocation of election resources, including voting machines and poll workers. These problems disproportionately affect voters who have work, family or other considerations that prevent them from spending hours at the polling place on Election Day.

- **EAC study and guidance.** Congress should require the Election Assistance Commission to study the issue of election resource allocation and develop recommendations on the most effective formula for states and local election officials to follow in making election resource allocation decisions. It should provide adequate resources for this task.
- **State plans.** Congress should require each state to submit a written plan about how it intends to adequately ensure, to the extent possible, equitable wait times for all polling places within each jurisdiction and that no voter has to wait more than one hour.

C. Improve Poll Worker Recruitment and Training

According to the Election Assistance Commission, two million poll workers are needed to run an effective federal election. Those Americans who devote their time to serve as poll workers should be praised for their commitment to our nation's democratic principles. Unfortunately, each election many polling places have too few poll workers to administer orderly and well-run elections. Equally problematic, the poll workers who do commit their time are frequently unfamiliar with essential rules and procedures.

In 2006, poll workers in precincts across the country showed up on Election Day to find unfamiliar voting machines and registration procedures, causing polling places to open late. In other precincts unfamiliarity with the proper procedures for overcoming election machine problems forced voting to slow to a trickle and, in some cases, led to lost votes. Voters from coast to coast were asked for identification in violation of state election laws.¹⁶ Some poll workers discriminated against certain voters, including voters with limited English-speaking skills. In 2004, there were widespread reports about poll worker confusion with provisional balloting that caused many voters to leave the polls without taking advantage of this safeguard. Clearly, poll workers need to be better trained. As federal, state and local election laws and rules are in a constant state of flux, poll workers should be trained before every election cycle.

Congress should do all it can to address the problems that voters face due to a lack of poll workers or because poll workers are under-trained and under-prepared.

- **Funding and incentives to states.** Congress should provide funding incentives to state and local jurisdictions to provide poll workers with the resources they need to do their job effectively.

Congress should also provide incentives for states to develop adequate training protocols as well as incentives for states to make training more frequent, more comprehensive and better tailored to the experience and inexperience of those citizens who serve as poll workers.

- **Pilot programs on poll worker training and recruitment.** Congress should promote pilot programs to encourage public employees to serve as poll workers. These programs should develop a detailed training curriculum for workers who elect to participate and who can dedicate more time than most poll workers to preparing for Election Day service. Because of their superior training, employees who take advantage of the pilot program should lead operations at the polling place. They should be rewarded, not penalized, for their participation in the program. Similarly, Congress should promote pilot programs to encourage high school and college students to serve as poll workers. This will serve the dual interests of bolstering the poll worker ranks and instilling civic responsibility and familiarity with our nation's democratic process in young citizens.
- **Uniform training manuals.** Congress should amend Title III of HAVA to require states to develop uniform statewide training manuals that cover those parts of the election process that can be standardized statewide.
- **Improve civic education.** As discussed in section I.A.2 above, Congress should promote civic education in high schools to improve democratic participation. Such programs should include education on how to be a poll worker.

D. Enhance Information Collection and Reporting

Although state election officials have access to useful information about voters, elections, and the electoral process, too little of that information is compiled and disseminated to the public. Better data about each election could provide a much better understanding of what works and does not work in election administration, which practices should serve as models for other jurisdictions, where problems occur, and the needs of voters in different communities, among other things. This data should be compiled on a regular basis because both the American public and state elections systems continue to change.

- **Information collection and reporting.** Congress should amend Title III of HAVA to expand the information states must provide in a timely and comprehensive reports about their elections. These reports should include: registration statistics, including demographic breakdowns and information about voters who have moved; detailed statistics about voter turnout; information about absentee balloting including the number of absentee ballots requested, processed, and rejected; details about provisional balloting including the number of provisional ballots cast, the number counted, and the number of provisional ballots rejected and the specific reasons those ballots were rejected; information about how voters with disabilities and language minority voters were afforded access

to the ballots, as required by federal law; information about the number and location of voting sites, including how many voting sites were moved since the last election and why those sites were moved; information on voting machines including the number of machines available in each jurisdiction, where and how many of those machines were placed at each location; and detailed information on the costs and funding of elections.

E. Improve Voter Education

One of the most frequent causes of voter disenfranchisement is a lack of information. As our election system continues to change, voters often show up at the polling place to find new and confusing procedures and equipment. The drafters of HAVA were correct in emphasizing the responsibility of election officials to educate their constituents on how to cast a meaningful ballot. Voters need clear information about how the registration process works and what the qualifications to vote are. They should also know what to expect when they show up at the polling place. Rules about what voters cannot do, or what constitutes election fraud and intimidation, should also be clear and the penalties communicated to deter those who would like to unfairly manipulate the system. In addition, voter education programs are far less effective if they are not conveyed in a way that is accessible to the audience. Different communities respond to different messages and methods. Significant resources and attention are thus needed to improve voter education.

- **HAVA funding.** Congress should fully fund HAVA to ensure that states have the resources to conduct effective voter outreach and education. Congress should also expand the mandate for voter education to require jurisdictions to provide voters with more information.
- **Sample ballots.** Congress should encourage states to ensure that each jurisdiction sends each registered voter a sample ballot configured for the upcoming election, along with voting instructions, within a reasonable period of time before an election.

F. Encourage Electoral Innovation

Many citizens have work, family, or other obligations that make it difficult for them to participate in elections. Innovative new voting procedures could make it easier for those citizens to participate and increase voter turnout. Many states have been experimenting with new ways to vote in an attempt to increase access to the franchise. These new methods include expanded opportunities for absentee voting; opportunities for voters to vote early and in person; opportunities for voters to vote by mail; and vote centers or mega-polling places that seek to address problems created by precinct distinctions and poll worker shortages.

Other innovations being considered at the federal level include moving Election Day to the weekend or making Election Day a holiday. While additional research is needed to determine the effect of the former proposal, the latter proposal is not helpful. Making Election Day a federal holiday will not help many eligible voters, especially those in lower-income communities. A large number of Americans who work in the service and retail industries will be unable to take advantage of an Election Day holiday because federal holidays are typically among the busiest shopping days of the year. In addition, additional research is needed to determine whether the Internet can be safely used for voting. So far, the limited experiences we have had with Internet voting have been met with criticism, and across Europe, where there have been more widespread experiments, the results with Internet voting have been inconsistent.

- [Study new ways to vote](#). Congress should encourage innovation in the electoral process by amending Title II of HAVA and providing the resources and direction for the EAC to study new methods of voting, including vote by mail, universal absentee voting, permanent absentee voting, early voting, vote centers, and Internet voting. The research should explore whether and how these methods can be used to increase the turnout of eligible voters; how they affect voters from different demographic and geographic communities; whether and how they can be misused or create the potential for misconduct and how such problems can be solved; and what it would cost for states to implement new programs.

V. EXPAND THE FRANCHISE

A. Restore Voting Rights to People with Past Felony Convictions

Voting is both a fundamental right and a civic duty. Yet, alone among modern democracies, the United States permits laws that lock people out of the voting booth for life once they have been convicted of crimes. These laws are often a remnant of Jim Crow. Restoring the right to vote strengthens democracy by increasing voter participation. Political participation also helps people reintegrate into the community after serving time in prison. And re-enfranchisement means that the home communities of those convicted regain their political voice and the ability to elect representatives.

An estimated 5.3 million Americans are barred from voting because of a felony conviction. Approximately 4 millions of the disenfranchised are living in our communities, working, paying taxes, and raising families; 2 million are people who have completed their sentences but remain relegated to permanent second-class citizenship. About 1.4 million African-American men are barred from voting under these laws. Their 13% disenfranchisement rate is seven times the national average. In six states, more than one in four African-American men are permanently disenfranchised.

There is a growing movement in the states—including Rhode Island, Iowa, Florida, Connecticut, Nebraska, and Alabama—to reform restrictive felony disenfranchisement laws. Congress should join this movement to halt this continuing injustice.

- **Restoration of Voting Rights.** To address this ongoing injustice, Congress should pass legislation that would restore the right to vote in federal elections to people as soon as they are released from prison and are living, working, and raising families in our communities.
- **No Conditioning Right to Vote on Ability to Pay.** No state should be permitted to condition the franchise on the payment of any legal financial obligations, including fees, fines, costs, or restitution. Currently, many states condition the restoration of the right to vote on payment of such financial obligations imposed as part of a criminal sentence, creating an economic or wealth barrier to the franchise.
- **Preventing Vote Dilution Due to Incarceration.** Congress should require the Census Bureau to initiate a research and testing program, including as part of the 2010 census, to evaluate the feasibility and cost of assigning incarcerated and institutionalized individuals with a legitimate preferred or permanent address to that address rather than to the address of the locations where they are in person, as recommended by the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences. The Census Bureau should also be required to provide tract- or block-level counts of prison populations along with the population data provided to the states for apportionment and districting purposes. This would address the problem of undercounting in the communities to which prisoners belong and over-counting in communities where prisons are located.

B. Ensure Voting Rights for Residents of the District of Columbia

More than half a million Americans living in the District of Columbia currently have no right to vote in any congressional elections. As a result, those Americans have no representation in either the U.S. Senate or the House of Representatives, and they have no say over a range of matters that affect their lives, from taxes, to military service, to health care, to education, to voting rights. Congress should address this injustice and eliminate second-class citizenship for DC residents.

- Congress should pass legislation to ensure that American citizens living in the District of Columbia have voting representation in Congress.

ENDNOTES

¹ For more information on the impact of Same Day Registration, see “About Election Day Registration” available at <http://www.demos.org/page52.cfm>.

² A preliminary analysis of the problems voters faced in the 2006 election is available in “Election Protection 2006: Report on the Legal Program to Board of Directors and Trustees, Staff and Pro Bono Partners” available at http://www.lawyerscommittee.org/2005website/home/images/features/FINAL_EP%20Board%20Report.pdf.

³ Although such a result most likely violates a provision of the Voting Rights Act that prohibits states from rejecting voter registration forms because of immaterial errors or omissions, 42 U.S.C. § 1971(b), that provision has not been enforced to its full extent.

⁴ A detailed report on these policies, and a comprehensive catalog of state matching and identifying number procedures is available at http://www.brennancenter.org/dynamic/subpages/download_file_35559.pdf.

⁵ A federal court in Washington State has held that HAVA and the Voting Rights Act already prohibit states from imposing a “no match, no vote” requirement, *Washington Ass’n of Churches v. Reed*, No. 06-0726 RSM (W.D. Wash. Aug. 1, 2006) (order), and several other states have revised their policies in response to that ruling. This reform would extend that result to the rest of the country.

⁶ Specifically, HAVA requires each voter registration form to include the questions, “Are you a citizen of the United States of America?” and “Will you be 18 years of age on or before election day?” along with ‘yes’ and ‘no’ boxes for the applicant to check in response to those questions. The form must state, “If you checked ‘no’ in response to either of these questions, do not complete this form.” 42 U.S.C. § 15483(b)(4)(A). Many voter registration applicants are confused by this language and do not understand it to mean that they must check the “yes” boxes in order to be registered; instead, they understand it to mean only that they should not fill out the rest of the form if the answer to either question is “no.”

⁷ Florida’s refusal to register applicants who did not check “yes” boxes was the subject of a legal challenge in *Diaz v. Cobb*, No. 04-22572 (S.D. Fla. Filed 2004).

⁸ Under those provisions, states are required to ask each new applicant for her driver’s license number if she has one, and if not, for the last four digits of her Social Security number. If she has neither number, the state is required to assign her a unique identifying number. 42 U.S.C. § 15483(b)(5).

⁹ Recent studies on Americans without proof of citizenship are available at http://www.brennancenter.org/stack_detail.asp?key=97&subkey=39242&init_key=9153 and <http://www.cbpp.org/9-22-06id.pdf>.

¹⁰ This rule is most likely already required by the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (“NVRA”); it is consistent with the longstanding interpretation of the NVRA by the DOJ, the FEC, and the EAC. Nevertheless, additional legal protection is warranted because courts have not uniformly interpreted the NVRA in this way.

¹¹ Federal courts blocked enforcement of the Florida, Ohio, and Georgia laws after the 2006 primary elections. The Florida case is currently on appeal.

¹² Additional recommendations are available at http://www.brennancenter.org/stack_detail.asp?key=97&subkey=36343.

¹³ Currently, the only records that are truly software independent are paper records. New technology in the future may produce independent audit records that are not paper-based.

¹⁴ For documentation of such incidents, see www.stopdeceptivepractices.org.

¹⁵ See http://www.ncsl.org/print/statedfed/Real_ID_Impact_Report_FINAL_Sept19.pdf.

¹⁶ For an egregious example, see *Voters First: An Examination of the 2006 Midterm Election in Missouri, Report from the Office of the Secretary of State to the People of Missouri*, at 15-17, available at <http://www.sos.mo.gov/elections/VotersFirst/>.

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MAY UNIT AGENDA

Discussion Questions**Voting Rights: Are we there yet?**

1. What are the strategies to register more eligible voters?

2. What technical barriers are impediments to voting?

3. What is fair list maintenance? How has it affected recent elections?

4. Is there a way to restore the integrity of voting systems?

5. What are the election day problems with restrictive identification?

6. Why is there resistance to expanding the franchise for people who have been previously convicted of felonies and the citizens of the District of Columbia?

7. Has King County solved most of the key election administration issues?

8. Do you have suggestions for local action?

Unit Meetings

Unit leader	email	Phone	Time	Host	Host Phone
Monday, May 5, 2008					
Southend					
Sam Scharff	webcats@speakeasy.net		7:30 p.m.	Lila Bulen 3716 Cascade Ave S	
Issaquah Evening					
Ann Thornton	alpheaan@aol.com		6:30 p.m.	Starbuck's at Meadow Center 1460 Gilman Blvd #K	
Thursday, May 8, 2008					
Mercer Island					
Martha Jordan	marty4lww@yahoo.com		9:15 a.m.	Janet Lynch 8420 Benotho	
Issaquah					
Margaret Austin Connie Reed	Margaret.Austin@comcast.net reedhtop@earthlink.net		10:00 a.m.	Issaquah City Hall & Police 130 E. Sunset Way Coho Room (upstairs)	
Shoreline					
Juliet Beard	juliet@windermere.com		4:30 p.m.	Richmond Beach Congregational Church NW 195th St and 15th Ave NW	
North Central					
Jan Orlando Gail Shurgot	orlanre@aol.com gailshurgot@earthlink.net		7:30 p.m.	Ginny Barker 6509 46th Ave NE	
Monday, May 12, 2008					
First Hill					
Janet Perry	jhperry@foxinternet.com		10:00 a.m.	Mary Margaret Pruitt Horizon House, 900 University	
Kirkland/Redmond					
Patti Catalano Gerry Williams	pattimusic@comcast.net gerrywilliams@comcast.net		7:00 p.m.	Kirkland Fire Station #26 9930 124th Ave NE	
Capitol Hill/Montlake					
Jan O'Connor Vicky Downs	oconnor.js@gmail.com DownsVdowns@aol.com		7:15 p.m.	Ellyn Swanson 3416 - Houseboat Portabe Bay Pl.E	
Tuesday, May 13, 2008					
Bellevue					
Bonnie Rimawi JoAnne Way	BNRimawi@aol.com waytandj@comcast.net		10:00 a.m.	Bellevue Library Room 6	
North End Aft.					
CoraLea Doty	clnjdoty@earthlink.net		12:30 p.m.	Trudy Brown 12115 12th NW	
West Seattle Day					
Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis	terrylucy2u@comcast.net		12:30 p.m.	Anne Bowden The Kenney 7125 Fauntleroy SW	
West Seattle Eve					
JoAnne McGaw	N/A		7:00 p.m.	Barbara O'Steen 4364 SW Cloverdale St.	
Wednesday, May 14, 2008					
View Ridge					
Marcia Brown Elaine Birn	marciajobebrown@hotmail.com mbirn@verizon.net		12:45 p.m.	Gail Winberg 6004 NE 60th	
Magnolia/Queen Anne/Ballard Eve					
Elsie Simon	elsiesimon@comcast.net		7:30 p.m.	Mary Burki 8706 40th Ave SW (West Seattle)	
Saturday, May 17, 2008					
Ballard/Queen Anne/Magnolia Day					
Judy Ostrow Alice Peterson	2jostrow@comcast.net peterson-alice-jack@msn.com		1:00 p.m.	Janet Anderson 4560 W. Cramer (call for directions)	
Tuesday, May 20, 2008					
Pioneer Square					
Pat Cleary	patiquah@msn.com		5:30 p.m.	Zeitgeist Coffee 174 So. Jackson St	

Board & Committee Contacts

Term	Executive Committee		
2007–2009	* President	Denise D. Smith	president@seattlelwv.org
2007–2009	*1st V.P.... Program Chair	Nan Moore	nannm@comcast.net
2007–2009	2nd V.P.... Program	Harriett Morton	action@seattlelwv.org
2007–2009	4th V.P.... Membership	Kitty Mahon	membership@seattlelwv.org
2007–2009	Secretary	Karen Adair	adairk@seanet.com
2007–2008	Treasurer	Laraine Volkman	treasurer@seattlelwv.org

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2007–2008	*Voter Service	Victoria Bennett	voterservice@seattlelwv.org
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2007–2009	Seattle Liaison	Anita Warmflash	ansky2@comcast.net

Term	Education Fund Board		
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2007–2008	Vice President	Myra Lupton	mlupton@mailstation.com
2007–2009	Treasurer	Lisa Peterson	
2007–2008	Secretary	Boots Winterstein	paulandbootswinterstein@juno.com
2007–2008	Board member	Dorothy Y. Sale	saledy@comcast.net

Voter Service

CIS Coordinator	Cynthia Howe	howe.john@comcast.net
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Immigration Study Co-chair	Barbara Reid	barbereid@yahoo.com
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* Indicates LWVS Board Representative on the Education Fund Board

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May Forum

Voting Rights: Are We There Yet?

Thursday, May 1

7:30 p.m. Briefing for discussion leaders at 6:30 p.m.

Program

An **interactive workshop** presented by the **League of Women Voters of Seattle** and **Seattle Works**, with kick-off speaker King County Executive **Ron Sims** and experts on voting issues from throughout the community.

Seattle Works www.seattleworks.org Works to foster a lifetime commitment to community involvement in young adults through innovative volunteer activities and educational opportunities.

Location:

Seattle First Baptist Church
1111 Harvard Avenue (Harvard & Seneca)
Seattle, WA 98122

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