



# Seattle Voter

OCTOBER 2009

VOL. 51, No.3

## Two Sides of the League in Action by Beatrice Crane, Voter Editor

Well before it was clear that Referendum 71 would appear on the Washington state ballot this November, the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA) declared its support for the measure. Referendum 71 affirms the domestic partnership law passed by the state legislature, which provides expanded rights and responsibilities to registered same-sex couples, as well as to opposite-sex couples in which one member is at least 62 years old. At the time of the LWVWA state convention in May, 2009, the bill had been signed by the governor, and opponents were trying to collect enough signatures to place the issue on the ballot as a referendum to the people. Delegates to the convention passed a resolution providing that if the referendum appeared on the ballot, LWVWA would encourage voters to approve the law.

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) actively endorses the state position.

However, at the annual LWVS Ballot Issues Forum, scheduled for October 1, you will not hear a word about the League's position on this issue or any other. Contradiction? Not exactly, it's simply an illustration of the two aspects of the League. When fulfilling its mission to educate voters, the League has a responsibility to be strictly nonpartisan, and to avoid even the appearance of bias. So for its forums, it invites speakers on both sides of the issues to present their views, with the same time allotted to each. Although participants are sometimes League members, they never speak as representatives of

the League. The League's ballot issues guide is also a nonpartisan effort, presenting both sides of each issue in depth.

But the League also has a political side. While it never endorses candidates for elective office, it does take positions on ballot issues, where such positions can be supported by its published principles. These principles are developed by the membership through study and small group discussions in which consensus on various questions is reached. The principle of nondiscrimination was cited in the state resolution supporting Referendum 71.

It is sometimes tricky maintaining the proper degree of separation between the two functions of the League. At the forums, only the educational aspect is visible. But this *Voter* represents both sides of LWVS. We encourage you as voters to attend the upcoming ballot issues forum, study the ballot issue analyses and make your own informed choices. And we urge you as League members to bear in mind the principles of the League and its endorsements as you make those choices.

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*“When fulfilling its mission to educate voters, the League has a responsibility to be strictly nonpartisan... But the League also has a political side...”*

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### GET TO KNOW LEAGUE DINNER

5:30 pm, October 1, 2009  
Seattle First  
Baptist Church - Before the  
Election Forum

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## President's Message

As I read the cover article, I am reminded of the frustration that some of our members have expressed that we spend a lot of time studying but that we don't seem to do much with our positions after we've studied and developed them. One of the passages I see in our office every day states that "informed and active citizens are the root of true democracy." While a lot of our efforts this summer and fall will continue to focus on informing ourselves and the community at large, we also need to take action. When we know from past experience and study that something is potentially harmful to our communities and have strong positions about issues, we need to speak out. Whether about issues on the national level such as health care, global warming or the patriot act, issues at the state level such as Referendum 71 and Initiative 1033 or local concerns about funding for basic human services, we need to stand up and be heard. Our voice is important in these public debates because of our reputation. We are known for thoughtful study; if we take a position, it comes from an in-depth understanding of the issues. So when we speak up, people listen and we can have a tremendous effect.

While as individual members you cannot speak officially for the League, I encourage you to share our stands on the issues with your friends, families and



Allison Feher

others. Your voices are also powerful as individuals when you write to your representatives. I know many of you have signed up to receive action alerts via email when there is a critical issue that needs our support; if you haven't, I hope you will consider doing so. Another way you can help the League take action is to participate on one of our standing committees. Their members follow current legislative agendas and let me and the Board know when there is an issue that needs our voice. If you have an interest that doesn't seem to be covered by one of our committees, give me a call. Maybe we can help you establish a new one!

In the coming weeks and months you will be also be asked to participate and engage with us and with other community organizations as part of the League of Women Voters of Washington's statewide civic engagement project, and also to take part in a project on the 2010 census, directed by the League of Women Voters of the United States. There are many ways we can be active as well as informed voters; I hope you can join us in some of these.

Sincerely,



### 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.

# October

## October

Get to Know League  
Dinner  
Thursday, October 1  
5:30 p.m.  
Seattle First Baptist Church

LWVS Forum: Ballot Issues  
Thursday, October 1  
7:30 p.m.  
Seattle First Baptist Church

Board Meeting  
Saturday, October 3  
League Office

November Voter Deadline  
Monday, October 5

International Relations  
Committee  
Monday, October 5  
12:45-2:45 p.m.  
League Office

Ballot Issues Presentation  
Monday, October 5  
7:30-9:00 p.m.  
Horizon House

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

Education Committee  
Thursday, October 15  
12:00 p.m.  
League Office

Civics Education  
Committee  
Thursday, October 15  
4:00-5:30 p.m.  
The Pub at Vios

Transportation  
Committee  
Tuesday, October 20  
10:00 a.m.  
League Office

LWVS Political Party and  
Auction  
Sunday, October 25  
4:30 p.m.  
Brockey Conference Center,  
South Seattle Community  
College

Immigration Committee  
Wednesday, October 28  
11:30 a.m.  
316 NE 54th St.

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 GTKL Dinner 5:30 p.m./ Forum: Ballot Issues 7:30 p.m.	2	3 Board Meeting 9:00 a.m.
4	5 November Voter deadline/ IR Comm./ Ballot Issues Presentation 7:30 p.m.	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 Social Justice Committee 6 p.m.	14	15 Education Committee 12:00 p.m./Civics Ed. Committee 4:00 p.m.	16	17
18	19	20 Transportation Committee 10:00 a.m.	21	22	23	24
25 LWVS Political Party 4:30 p.m.	26	27	28 Immigration Committee 11:30 a.m.	29	30	31 Economics and Taxation Com- mittee 9:00 a.m.

# November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3 Election Day	4	5	6	7 Board Meeting/ State Action Workshop, Eastern WA
8	9 December Voter Deadline	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 State Action Workshop, Western WA
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

## League Forums

October 1	Ballot Issues
November 5	State Budget
December 3	Action
January 7	Program Planning
February 4	TBA
March 4	Women's Issues
April 1	TBA
May 6	TBA

The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) presents a public forum each month between September and May, generally on the first Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. With the exception of the March forum, which takes place at St. Andrews Church in Bellevue, the forums are held at Seattle First Baptist Church. The tentative schedule of upcoming forums for 2009–2010 appears at left; check your *Voter* or the LWVS website, [seattlelwv.org](http://seattlelwv.org), each month for up-to-date information.

As part of LWVWA's Civic Engagement project, we have now selected the state budget as the topic for November's forum. Topics under consideration for the spring are a national project on the 2010 census, climate change, and the port study.

## July/August Board Briefs By Brita Butler-Wall, Secretary

*The Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) met briefly during their annual Retreat on Saturday morning, July 25, 2009. They met again on Saturday morning, August 22. This is a brief summary of their work.*

**Program:** Allison Feher appointed Brita Butler-Wall and Judy Bevington to compile unit responses to the privatization study questions. The Port Study is on hold. The Board discussed additional forum topics; send suggestions to Feher.

**Voter Service:** The Board gave organizer Sarah Luthens feedback on the League's Primary Forum held August 6. The League Forum on Ballot Issues will be held October 1 and may include one or more candidate races.

League volunteers are registering voters at Farmers' markets, Hempfest, and Bumbershoot. Several units have sponsored candidate forums. The Board allocated \$100 for the Alliance for Human Service Forum. Units are encouraged to set up carpooling to provide transportation to League events.

**Units:** Judy Bevington reported that the Seattle League now has 16 active units. Board members will be attending upcoming unit meetings and suggesting ways to strengthen local units.

**Membership:** LWVS currently has 804 members. The Get-to-Know-League dinner is scheduled for

5:30 PM on October 1, 2009. The Board agreed that each board member will nominate one civic-minded member of the community for a gift membership for one year.

**Action:** At the July meeting, the Board approved the Disposal Bag Ordinance following a presentation of both sides of the issue and discussion. At the August meeting, Feher reported that the Social Justice Committee has been very active in letter writing. The Board will take a position on the Housing Levy at our October 3 Board meeting. The Board decided to contribute \$100 toward the campaign to affirm the legislation on Referendum 71. The Seattle League is waiting for the state League position regarding Initiative 1033. The Seattle School District levies are scheduled for February 2010.

**Outreach:** Toni Potter has organized meetings with legislators regarding cap and trade. Jean Carlson is developing media lists and Public Service Announcements for radio stations. She and Maria Brusher recently attended KUOW's Fireside event.

**Fundraising:** The annual Political Party will be held Oct. 25 at South Seattle Community College. Featured speaker is the Honorable Sharon Tomiko Santos.

**Board work:** The Board is recruiting additional members; send names to Feher.

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# Committees

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## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

DATE: MONDAY, OCTOBER 5

TIME: 12:45–2:45 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

Anyone interested in participating is welcome – we will be brainstorming about our work for the upcoming year. Everyone is invited to bring one article on an I-R topic which has recently caught your attention. For more information email Ellen Berg or Peggy Saari: [ellenzberg@msn.com](mailto:ellenzberg@msn.com) or [peggyasaari@comcast.net](mailto:peggyasaari@comcast.net).

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## **EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

DATE: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

TIME: 12:00 P.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

The first Education meeting of the year will cover a variety of topics: the upcoming Seattle School District candidate forum, school levies in February, and a review of League education positions to see if we need to update any of them. If you are interested in early learning or K-12 education, please join us. For more information, contact Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis at (206) 329-4848 or [terrylucy2u@comcast.net](mailto:terrylucy2u@comcast.net).

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## **CIVICS EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

DATES: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15

TIME: 4:00-5:30 P.M.

PLACE: THE PUB AT VIOS, 6504 20TH NE

We will be meeting in the place where we held the first Civics Trivia contest last spring. Park at Third Place Books in

Ravenna and walk downstairs—the cider is delicious. Topics to discuss will include a possible partnership with the Seattle schools. All are welcome—follow the suggestion of Justice O'Connor in September and try visiting [www.ourcourts.org](http://www.ourcourts.org) to play civics video games.

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## **TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

DATE: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

TIME: 10:00 A.M.

PLACE: LEAGUE OFFICE

COMMITTEE CHAIR: JANET WINANS (206) 329-4848

Our committee has members from King, Kitsap and Pierce counties and welcomes anyone with interests in transportation in general or in the specific issues our speakers will be addressing. That makes us a kind of regional committee, with interest in and concerns about local, county, regional and state transportation and its impact.

David Hull, the Service Planning Supervisor for the Metro Transit Division, will speak at the October meeting on the subject of METRO's service commitments and its financial crisis.

On November 17, our speaker will discuss "Who pays for what?" in terms of the various kinds of funding available for the various kinds of projects.

The November *Voter* will include a report on the presentation at our September meeting by Dan Carlson, who is on the faculty of

the University of Washington Evans School of Public Affairs, giving our committee a broad overview of state and local transportation issues.

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## **IMMIGRATION COMMITTEE**

DATE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

TIME: 11:30 A.M.

PLACE: 316 NE 54TH ST.

The Immigration Study Committee will meet for a potluck lunch and meeting at the home of Barbara Reid. Meanwhile, we are midway through five sessions of public dialogue on Immigration and Race, Jobs, Schools, and Language Differences led by Barb Yasui, a facilitator of Everyday Democracy.

Please join us, new and old, old and young for our potluck lunch on October 28! For more information, call Barbara Reid, chair, at (206) 329-4848.

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## **ECONOMICS AND TAXATION COMMITTEE**

DATE: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31

TIME: 9:00 A.M.

PLACE: 909 E. NEWTON, #D9

New members are welcome, but please call Vicky Downs at (206) 329-4848 to let her know you will be coming.

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## Announcements/League News

### HELP WANTED

#### Request for CIS Volunteers

Have a little extra time and want to become involved with the League? Come join us on the Citizen Information Service (CIS) desk. If you like to talk on the phone and greet people who come into the office, we have just the right spot for you. We currently need someone who would be willing to commit three hours a week in the afternoon, preferably Thursday afternoon, to answer our phones for us. We will train! Call Cynthia Howe at (206) 329-4848 or email her at [howe.john@comcast.net](mailto:howe.john@comcast.net).

#### Calling All Eastsiders!

The Eastside Units have a reputation for providing a delicious salad lunch for those attending the League of Women Voters of Washington Action Workshop

for western Washington. This year we will be meeting on November 21 at St. Andrews Lutheran Church in Bellevue. PLEASE call Lee Carpenter, (206) 329-4848, and tell her you will bring a salad (at least 8 servings, please) to the workshop. Thank you! This is the major eastside fundraiser for the League, and we can all contribute to its success.

#### Help With the Get to Know League Dinner

We need people to help set up, provide a dish for, and clean up after the Get to Know League Dinner on October 1, before the Ballot Issues Forum. Also, we have extra invitations, so let us know if you would like us to mail one to a prospective member. Call the office at (206) 329-4848 to RSVP and to let us know if you can help out.

### League of Women Voters of Washington

#### ACTION WORKSHOP 2009

#### REGISTRATION

**Cost: \$25 per venue per person**  
Lunch Provided

Choose one or both venues:

- Benton/Franklin Counties, November 7, 2009  
 Bellevue, November 21, 2009

Name \_\_\_\_\_

—

Tel/email \_\_\_\_\_

—

VISA  M/C

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ exp.

date \_\_\_\_\_

Check enclosed

**Mail to: LWVWA, 4730 University Way N.E., Suite #720, Seattle, WA 98105**

## AREA ELECTION FORUMS

Listed below are some of the many election forums scheduled in various locations in King County in October. Some feature ballot issues; others focus on selected candidate races. The League of Women Voters of Seattle (LWVS) provides moderators for many of the forums.

### Ballot Issues Presentation

Date: Monday, October 5  
Time: 7:30 – 9:00 p.m.  
Place: Horizon House, Performance Hall, 900 University Street, Seattle  
Sponsors: the First Hill Unit of LWVS and the Horizon House Residents' Council.

### Bellevue City Council Candidate Forum

Date: Tuesday, October 6  
Time: 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.  
Place: Bellevue Hyatt Regency, 900 Bellevue Way NE, Bellevue

### Shoreline School Board Candidate Forum

Date: Wednesday, October 7  
Time: 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
Place: Shoreline Library, 175th & 5th NE, Shoreline  
Moderator: Jim DiPeso, LWVS

### Sammamish City Council Candidate Forum

Date: Wednesday, October 7  
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Place: Sammamish Hills Lutheran Church  
Moderator: Denise Smith, LWVS  
Sponsors: Sammamish Kiwanis Club, Sammamish Chamber of Commerce and Sammamish Rotary Club.

All eight candidates for Sammamish City Council have agreed to attend; they will answer some prepared questions as well as take questions from the audience. The event will be televised on the city's channel 21.

### Lake Forest Park City Council Candidate Forum

Date: Tuesday, Oct. 13  
Time: 7:00 p.m.  
Place: Third Place Books, 17171 Bothell Way NE  
Moderator: Denise Smith, LWVS  
Sponsor: Third Place Commons

### City of Seattle Candidates Debate

Date: Tuesday, October 13  
Time: 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Place: Lincoln High School, 4400 Interlake, Seattle  
Sponsors: the neighborhood councils of Wallingford, Fremont, Greenlake, Greenwood, Phinney Ridge and the University District.  
Candidates for: Mayor, City Council and City Attorney  
The debate will focus on neighborhood-centered issues. Neighborhood residents and the general public are invited.

### Mercer Island Candidate Forum

Date: Wednesday, Oct. 14  
Time: 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.  
Islander Middle School, 8225 SE 72nd, Mercer Island  
Sponsors: The League of Women Voters and The Mercer Island Reporter  
Candidates for:  
King County Executive, Mercer Island City Council, Mercer Island School Board

## NEWS BULLETIN:

Beginning September

28, King County

Elections will be

working out of a

temporary office at

9010 East Marginal

Way S in Tukwila. For

details, go to [www.kingcounty.gov/](http://www.kingcounty.gov/elections)

[elections](http://www.kingcounty.gov/elections)





## 33<sup>rd</sup> Political Party and Auction Sunday, October 25 2009

### **Silent Auctions, Dinner and Live Auction**

Silent Auction begins at 4:30 p.m.  
Complimentary champagne 4:30-5:00

Brockey Conference Center  
South Seattle Community College  
6000 16<sup>th</sup> Ave. SW

### 2009 Honorary Speaker: Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos

Elected in the 37th District in 1998, Sharon Tomiko has been a community activist for more than 30 years, working for civil rights, social and economic justice, community development and preservation, and quality public education. She serves as Majority Whip, and is a member of the Education, Finance, Rules, and Insurance, Financial Institutions and Consumer Protection committees. She is an active member of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), serving as co-chair of the Immigration Task Force and on the NCSL Executive Committee. She also serves as chair of the Washington state Financial Literacy Private Public Partnership (FLPPP). Her community involvement includes the Seattle University Leadership Council and the UW Business Economic Development Emeritus Board. A graduate of the Evergreen State College and Northeastern University, Sharon Tomiko has worked for local government, in the banking industry, and in nonprofit management. She and her husband, Bob, reside in the Rainier Beach area.



Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos

We're very lucky to have her as this year's Honorary Speaker!

Auctioneer: Graham Crow, Benefit Auction Associates

***Gold Sponsors:*** Harriett and John Morton, Joan Thomas

***Silver Sponsors:*** Herb Bridge, Michael and Lucy Copass,  
William J. Crittenden, Allison Feher, Judy Pigott,  
Denise and Bruce Smith, Betty and Jay Sullivan

## ASK AUCTION ANNIE!

Dear Auction Annie,  
I'm a new member of the League. I got an invitation to an auction. I don't really know anybody yet, so I feel a little uncomfortable about going. Would I be sitting with other people who are new?  
Newest Nancy

Dear Newest,  
This is a great opportunity for you to meet other League members and to find out more about the League. We have some very experienced table captains who keep a spot or two open at their tables in order to include new people. They'll introduce you to other people and answer questions you might have about the League. You'll also have fun bidding on items. Throw your hat into the ring – the auction is a blast!  
Auction Annie

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Dear Auction Annie,  
I see I can buy an auction ticket at the early bird rate. There's also a patron ticket on offer. I don't remember seeing that option before. What is it?  
Curious Charlene

Dear Curious,  
Some folks would like to give the League an extra boost, but they aren't able to be a sponsor. A patron ticket gives them a way to help the League without "breaking the bank." They also will get \$25 of scrip which they can apply to an auction purchase if they so choose. It's a great way to give a little more.  
Auction Annie

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Dear Auction Annie,  
I notice that sponsors are listed on the invitation. Is it too late to become a sponsor?  
Belated Belinda

Dear Belated,  
It's never too late to be a sponsor! If you want to pitch in now, we'll recognize you at the auction. If you'd prefer to stay out of the limelight, we'll honor your request. We appreciate any gift—large or small—that is made to the League. Our sponsors give us a special lift, however, as they make it possible to cover the expenses of the auction.

Auction Annie  
Dear Auction Annie,  
I'm confused about being a table captain. I'm willing to invite a lot of people, but I can't afford to pay for a table. What should I do?  
Timorous Tina

Dear Timorous,  
Invite as many people as you can! Table captains are NOT responsible for paying for a table of ten. They give invitations to friends, family and business contacts, encouraging all to attend. If you are a table captain and don't quite fill your table, we'll seat a politician and/or some other guests with you. "The more the merrier" applies here. We'd like to have 300 guests at the auction, so you can make an enormous difference by getting people to come. New attendees guarantee that more people learn about the League and support it.  
Auction Annie

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Dear Auction Annie,  
I can't buy a reservation, but I'd like to find a way to help the League. Is there something I can do?  
Helpful Hannah

Dear Helpful,  
You bet! We're always looking for people to help the day of the auction. We need people to sell raffle tickets, greet people, work at the registration desk, spot bidders and perform a variety of other tasks. We'd love your help! Give Lindsay a call at (206) 329-4848 or email [info@seattlelwg.org](mailto:info@seattlelwg.org) with your request to help. Double your fun by bringing a friend to volunteer with you!  
Auction Annie

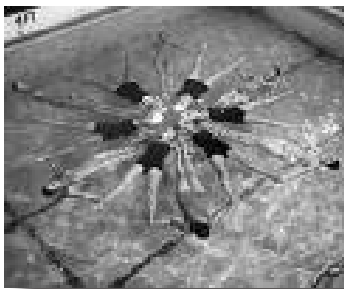
## Membership Report by Kelly Powers, Membership Chair

### WHAT KIND OF LEAGUER ARE YOU? HAS IT CHANGED DURING YOUR TIME AS A LEAGUER?

Marcia Merrins, who works on membership and volunteer issues at the national level, says there are many kinds of League members:

- those that want to “do something”
- those that want to “learn something”
- those that want to “be a part of something”
- those that are merely “curious.”

As we encounter people who might like to join the League or people who approach the League about volunteering, we can engage in conversations to learn more: Is this person happy to receive the *Voter* and look up the League endorsements online? Does the person want to be more involved, and if so, in what way? This can help us guide each potential member to a happy place within the League.



### WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE LEAGUE AT THIS TIME IN YOUR LIFE?

Being a member of the League means different things to us at different times in our lives. As long-time Leaguers can attest, the League can be a life-long friend throughout the different phases of life. For example, providing much needed lively discourse during the childrearing years, providing ways to build skills when it's time to spread wings, or a way to feel engaged and work with a group of people for the greater good after retirement or any other life change. It's useful to keep in mind that involvement ebbs and flows throughout membership. It can be helpful to share this concept with new members as they grow more comfortable with the League. It also gives us the opportunity to ask if members are ready to try something new!

Another way of looking at participation in the League comes from Alfred Adler, a 20th-century Austrian psychologist, who believed that each of us has a keen need to feel a sense of significance and belonging. The League can be an ideal group for people to positively fulfill that need. In a way, we are helping people

figure out how to do this within the League and in the greater community.

It's not too late to invite a new, prospective or returning member to the Get to Know League Dinner on October 1. Guests will have the opportunity to learn about the League from participating members, as well as to attend the Ballot Issues forum which will follow the dinner.

### THANKS FOR HELP WITH MEMBERSHIP....

Thank you to Kitty Mahon for stepping in to send out renewals at the end of August, the biggest month for renewal notices.

Thanks to Lindsay for preparing the Get to Know League Dinner invitations and answering a zillion questions.

Thanks to Victoria Bennett for providing gentle oversight of the ins and outs of the database.

Thanks to Candis Litsey for entering membership information in the national database during her Citizens Information Service (CIS) Desk shift. It really helps keep the data input to a manageable level.

Thanks to CIS Desk volunteers for preparing materials we need for renewals, such as return envelopes and membership brochures. Also thanks for making calls to get out the crowd for the Primary Forum, which was a new event for the League. It worked!

### NEW MEMBERS

*A very warm welcome to these new and returning members of the League of Women Voters of Seattle.*

#### Barbara Dietrich

Barbara earned her Bachelor of Music in composition. She teaches piano and plays piano every week at a hospital. She helps maintain three acres of her woodlands, garden, and home in Kenmore. She is a first time Leaguer at age 81. She likes to keep up with the issues.

**Sally Hood**

Sally earned a Masters degree in Education, which she put to good use when her family moved to Hawaii. She saw the need for a quality day care for working parents and so she started a school. When she returned to the mainland, she worked in law firms. Sally is returning to the Seattle League after recently retiring as a legal assistant. She lives on Capitol Hill. Sally is our newest CIS Desk volunteer, answering the phones and fielding questions about upcoming elections and League events. Thank you, Sally!

**Ginna Owens**

Ginna comes to us from Champaign, Illinois, where she was very involved in the League from 1958–1966. She worked on international affairs, poverty, health issues and selection of judges. She wrote PR for the Illinois State League. She has 45 years experience in non-profit development. She helped organizations develop boards and implement strategic goals. She lives downtown and volunteers at the Pike Place Senior Center and Food Bank, helping the homeless and low-income seniors. She looks forward to discussing and influencing public policy.

**Paul Wlaschin**

Paul earned a BA in History and was a US Navy pilot for 5 years. In civilian life, he was in construction and real estate development for 22 years. He is interested in research, computers, reading and writing essays, prose and poetry. He is a student of physics and spirituality. He lives in downtown Seattle and is interested in League training on registering voters.

**Christine Yount**

Christine earned a BA in Linguistics, Speech and Hearing and has been a software tester. She is also a member of the Washington Women's Political Caucus. She joined the League for thorough information and means of taking action on issues. She currently resides in the University District.

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## National

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### **INDIANA LWV VICTORIOUS IN COURT** by *Beatrice Crane, Voter Editor*

The Leagues of Women Voters of Indiana and of Indianapolis recently won a victory in the battle to overturn the 2005 Indiana voter ID law, which requires voters to present a state or federal ID at the polls. Opponents of the law fear that it will effectively disenfranchise many poor, elderly and minority voters. On September 17, the Indiana Court of Appeals declared that the law violates the equal protection guarantee of the state constitution, since it does not apply equally to all voters; absentee voters are exempt from the ID requirement, as are residents of nursing homes which serve as polling places.

The law was upheld in the U.S. Supreme Court in April, 2008. Subsequently, the Indiana and Indianapolis Leagues challenged the law in the state court. It is likely that the case will go on to the Indiana Supreme Court.

The League of Women Voters of Seattle congratulates the Indiana and Indianapolis Leagues on their work to protect voting rights.

BOOK REVIEW by Vicky Downs

## *The Nine: Inside The Secret World Of The Supreme Court*

By Jeffrey Toobin

Ruth Schroeder, a former President of the League of Women Voters of Washington, suggested that I review Toobin's book, and I agreed it was an excellent choice. It is written in a clear and lively style, providing a helpful account of the Court and the way it works.

Toobin focuses on the last 15–20 years, showing the variety of personalities who make up a Supreme Court that is in no way monolithic. He demonstrates that each justice's background does indeed influence his decisions. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, for example, had been an Arizona state senator, "building coalitions, making deals, pushing bills through the process...She got along with people and liked to get things done." She took a "pragmatic approach to the subject of abortion... that she would show on the Court."

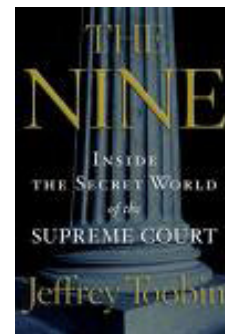
The justices also have personalities. Justice Antonin Scalia is shown as "the dominant personality on the Court, and has had the clearest, most identifiable judicial philosophy among the justices." However, Toobin points out that Scalia did not have "much influence on his colleagues." Those who were already conservative often voted with him, but for their own distinctive reasons, not because Scalia had convinced them.

One of the most fascinating sections of the book deals with the Court's role in the Bush-Gore

election in the fall of 2000. "The crisis of Bush v. Gore came up in the court" quickly and ordinary business had to be shunted aside while each justice worked with his clerks to write and adjust the wording of his opinion. Toobin reports it was unfair to say the Court "stole the election for Bush. Rather what the Court did was remove any uncertainty about the outcome." He goes on to say, "The tragedy of the Court's performance...was not that it led to Bush's victory but the inept and unsavory manner in which the justices exercised their power." The big loser, Justice Stevens made clear, "is the Nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law."

The "Supreme Court operates at a higher plane" than we mortals on the ground, but Toobin shows us that the "Court is a product of a democracy and represents...the best and the worst of the people." In fact, "we can expect nothing more and nothing less than the Court we deserve."

*The opinions in this review 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.

## October Program: General Ballot Issues

### NOVEMBER 3 GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT ISSUES AND LEAGUE POSITIONS AS OF SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

<b>STATE BALLOT ISSUES</b>	<b>LEAGUE POSITIONS</b>
Initiative 1033	The League of Women Voters of Washington opposes Initiative 1033
Referendum 71	The League of Women Voters of Washington and the League of Women Voters of Seattle support Referendum 71
<b>KING COUNTY BALLOT ISSUES</b>	<b>LEAGUE POSITIONS</b>
King County Charter Amendment No. 1	No position
King County Charter Amendment No. 2	No position
King County Charter Amendment No. 3	The League of Women Voters of Seattle and the League of Women Voters of King County South support King County Charter Amendment No. 3
King County Charter Amendment No. 4	The League of Women Voters of Seattle and the League of Women Voters of King County South support King County Charter Amendment No. 4
<b>CITY OF SEATTLE BALLOT ISSUE</b>	<b>LEAGUE POSITION</b>
Proposition 1	Has not yet taken a position

Note: There are no consensus questions for the October meetings. Units are free to discuss the ballot



# The League of Women Voters of Seattle

## Summaries of Ballot Issues

November 3, 2009 General Election

9/24/2009

### **Prepared and Reviewed by**

Brita Butler-Wall, Beatrice Crane, Lindsay Cummings, Allison Feher, Sarah Luthens, Jan O'Connor, Betty Sullivan

The League of Women Voters of Seattle has made every effort to present objective, nonpartisan information about the November 3, 2009 general election ballot measures, with no attempt to influence voters or evaluate arguments advanced by proponents or opponents, other than to ensure that arguments have a factual basis. League volunteers research and analyze each measure, work with ballot issue proponents and opponents and obtain information from a variety of sources. The League encourages voters to read the official Voters Pamphlet, newspapers and other sources of election information.

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## Washington State Initiative I033

### BALLOT TITLE

Initiative Measure No. I033 concerns state, county and city revenue. This measure would limit growth of certain state, county and city revenue to annual inflation and population growth, not including voter-approved revenue increases. Revenue collected above the limit would reduce property tax levies. Should this measure be enacted into law?  Yes  No

### BALLOT MEASURE SUMMARY

This measure would limit growth in state revenues deposited in funds subject to the state expenditure limit, and limit growth in county and city revenues deposited into the county and city current expense funds. The limit would be adjusted based on annual growth in inflation and population. The limit also would apply to revenues transferred out of these funds. The limit would exclude voter-approved revenue increases. Revenues above the limit would reduce property tax levies.

### BACKGROUND

Major sources of revenue for Washington's state, county, and city governments are the property tax, sales tax, business and occupation (B&O) tax, and gasoline tax. In 2008, state general fund revenues included funds from the following sources:

Property taxes	11 percent (dedicated to basic education)
B&O tax	22 percent
Sales tax	54 percent
Gasoline tax	7 percent (dedicated to highways)

At all levels, general fund revenues also include numerous fees and other lesser sources of income. In contrast to the state, local jurisdictions depend on the property tax for about 60 percent of their revenues, and on the sales tax for 20 percent.

In 2006, Washington ranked 29th among the 50 states in amount of property tax collected per \$1000 of personal income. Washington does not have a state income tax. Its sales tax is one of the highest in the nation. Washington ranks eighth nationally in terms of personal income. Total per capita taxes paid by Washington individuals are \$4,333, slightly above the national average.

The collection and use of various taxes is subject to various restrictions. Those currently applying to the property tax include:

The maximum amount of tax that may be levied on a parcel of property is one percent of its market value, or \$10 per \$1000 of assessed value (AV). Since property taxes are levied by the state, counties, cities and other junior taxing districts, each district is limited in the maximum rate it can levy. The state may collect \$3.60 per \$1000 AV, which is used only for the support of the public schools.

Counties, cities, road districts and junior districts share \$5.90. Counties may receive up to \$1.80; cities may receive up to \$3.60 if they are providing library and fire protection services. Unincorporated areas which are not part of cities may receive up to \$2.25 for roads. Numerous

junior districts such as water districts, hospital districts, airport districts and many others share the balance of the \$5.90.

Six additional specified purposes may share the remaining \$.50. They are: open space preservation, emergency medical services, affordable housing, metropolitan parks, criminal justice, and ferry service.

None of the three levels of government are currently levying to their allowed maximum, since increasing the property tax levy is subject to several restrictions and growth in assessed property values has increased in most years.

In 1971, property tax revenues were limited to 106 percent of the highest amount levied during the past three years (an increase of six percent). In 2007, a measure passed by the legislature limited the increase each year to one percent of the highest prior lawful levy. If Initiative 1033 were passed, growth in total general fund sources of revenue would be limited to a rate determined by inflation and population growth.

Taxing districts can increase the amount of the property tax collected through special levies including levy lid lifts. Most taxing districts in Washington State pass special levies for the support of schools and other local interests.

### **WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF INITIATIVE 1033?**

If revenues to the general fund at the state, county, or city level exceed revenues collected the preceding year, adjusted for population growth and inflation, the excess amount will go into a fund that will be used to lower the property tax. It is unclear whether this will establish a new base for future levies. Since the collection of property taxes is based on a levy that originates with a budget, property tax collections are not likely to exceed expectations.

According to the fiscal note on the Secretary of State's website, if enacted, I-1033 would reduce the state general fund revenues that support education, social, health and environmental services, and general government activities by an estimated \$5.9 billion over the next six years. The initiative would also reduce general fund revenues that support public safety, infrastructure and general government activities by an estimated \$694 million for counties and \$2.1 billion for cities. The sponsors of I-1033 believe these estimates to be low.

**Those in favor say:**

- ➡ I-601, approved by the voters in 1993, allowed government to grow at a sustainable rate while setting limits on its fiscal policies. I-1033 closes loopholes added to I-601 by the state legislature and returns to the policies established by I-601, with a reasonable allowance for growth.
- ➡ The Washington State property tax is obscene and unsustainable; lowering the property tax will stimulate economic growth and give relief to working families and fixed-income senior citizens. Initiative 1033 will provide a way of limiting government and stabilizing revenues and expenditures.

**Those against say:**

- ➡ Initiative 1033 would severely limit the state's flexibility in meeting changing needs or using increased revenues during good times to improve services, since all revenues beyond the established limit would be moved to a fund to lower property taxes.
- ➡ The county and certain cities also collect the sales tax and B&O taxes. Both of these taxes are generally criticized as being unfair. Sales taxes impact low and moderate income residents disproportionately. Businesses pay B&O taxes on their gross receipts, not their net income. Initiative 1033 would shift even more of the cost of government to these sources and severely limit their availability to meet changing needs.

**ORGANIZED SUPPORT FOR I-1033**

- ➡ Voters Want More Choices  
<http://www.permanent-offense.org/>

**ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO I-1033**

- ➡ The No on 1033 Committee leads the opposition to I-1033, with endorsements from many unions and environmental, health, education, community and political organizations; for a complete list, go to [no1033.com](http://no1033.com).

Note: This analysis was sent to the campaigns; we regret that we received no comments before its publication.

# Washington State Referendum Measure 71

## BALLOT TITLE

The Legislature passed Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5688 concerning rights and responsibilities of state-registered domestic partners and voters have filed a sufficient referendum petition on this bill.

This bill would expand the rights, responsibilities, and obligations accorded state-registered same-sex and senior domestic partners to be equivalent to those of married spouses, except that a domestic partnership is not a marriage. Should this bill be  Approved  Rejected

## BACKGROUND

In 2007, the Washington State Legislature created a domestic partnership registry for same-sex couples and senior couples where one partner is at least 62 years old. Domestic partners who registered with the state then had some initial protections such as the right to visit partners in the hospital and the right to inherit and make medical and end of life decisions when partners were no longer able to make such decisions for themselves. In 2008, other protections were added, such as community property, and support and child custody rights at dissolution. In 2009, the third and final piece of the domestic partnership laws was enacted. This law added domestic partners into the remaining areas of state law not previously covered, including the right to take family medical leave to care for a critically ill partner, the right to unpaid wages and pensions upon death, the right to certain insurance and workers' compensation coverage, victims' rights, including the right to receive notifications, business succession rights, and legal process rights, such as the ability to sign certain documents. As of 2009, there are more than 12,000 people in registered domestic partnerships in Washington. Registered domestic partnerships are not marriages, and marriage is prohibited under state law except between one man and one woman.

## FISCAL IMPACT

Estimated costs to the budget range from \$1 million to \$4.25 million. The bulk of cost estimates are related to state employee pension survivor benefits, worker compensation and crime victim claim benefits. Not included in this figure are some administrative costs at the county and city levels of government.

For fiscal years 2009–15, the following estimated costs would be incurred:

\$1.1 million – Additional workers' compensation and crime victim claim benefits.

\$2.6 million – Additional state employee pension survivor benefits.

\$300,000 – Changes to public rules, information systems, publications and other administrative costs.

E2SSB 5688 extends eligibility for public employee health benefits to all registered domestic partnerships. However, the Public Employees Benefits Board has exercised its statutory discretion to extend public employee health benefits to all registered domestic partnerships independent of E2SSB 5688. Therefore, costs estimated by the Health Care Authority for the implementation of the bill are excluded from this estimate.

While the fiscal impact cannot be determined, counties and cities would incur some expenses related to revision of property tax laws, additional court cases and related matters.

A more detailed fiscal note can be found on the legislature's website.

### **THE EFFECT OF THE BILL IF APPROVED**

If approved, E2SSB 5688, the Domestic Partnership Expansion Act of 2009, would take effect as passed by the legislature. The bill amends references in approximately 200 state statutes so that rights, responsibilities, and obligations granted by or imposed by state law on married couples and their families would apply equally to state-registered domestic partners. The terms spouse, marriage, marital, husband, wife, widow, widower, next of kin, and family, when used in state statutes and in the Washington Administrative Code, would be interpreted as applying equally to state-registered domestic partnerships as well as to marital relationships and married persons. Similarly, references to dissolution of marriage would apply equally to state-registered domestic partnerships that have been terminated, dissolved, or invalidated. Gender specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law would be construed to be gender neutral, and applicable to individuals in state-registered domestic partnerships.

The bill provides state-registered domestic partners a number of rights and responsibilities such as: the ability to use available sick leave to care for a seriously ill domestic partner; the right to receive disability benefits when a domestic partner is injured on the job; the right to receive unpaid wages upon the death of a domestic partner; the ability to receive unemployment benefits, disability insurance benefits, or workers' compensation coverage where such benefits and coverage is provided to married spouses; rights under insurance policies that accrue as a matter of law after the death of a spouse, such as conversion rights and continuing coverage rights; rights and responsibilities related to adoption, child custody, and child support; and rights related to business succession applicable to married spouses.

Currently, state-registered domestic partners can, in certain circumstances, dissolve their partnerships without going to court. If the measure is approved, then that process would no longer be available. In that event, the process to dissolve all state-registered domestic partnerships would be akin to obtaining a divorce.

If the bill is approved, then registered domestic partners will have almost all the rights and responsibilities granted to legally married couples under state law except that clergy will not be able to validate for legal purposes a domestic partnership, and unlike a marriage certificate, a domestic partnership registration makes no attempt to confer federal protections such as Social Security or equal treatment under the IRS tax code. Other federal protections are also not included.

### **THE EFFECT IF THE BILL IS REJECTED**

If the bill is rejected, E2SSB 5688 would not become law and registered domestic partners and their families would not get the protections contained in the law.

Rejecting the law in Referendum 71 would leave in place only the state-based domestic partnership benefits and duties included in the laws passed in 2007 and 2008.

**Those in favor say:**

- All families in Washington deserve to be treated equally under the law and to have essential protections for their families, especially in times of crisis, such as when a parent or partner dies.
- Police officers and firefighters who risk their lives to protect our communities need domestic partnership laws if they are hurt or killed in the line of duty, so that their families are taken care of by their pension or workers' compensation.
- Some elders who are widowed or divorced end up sacrificing hard-earned Social Security, health care, military or pension benefits if they remarry. The domestic partnership law allows senior couples to have the legal protections they need, take care of each other, be able to provide insurance or take family or medical leave if a partner is gravely ill, and make critical decisions for one another in times of crisis, without losing benefits that for many may be their only source of income. They should not have to live in poverty in order to be together with the person they love.

**Those against say:**

- If the proposed measure passes, Washington State will immediately become subject to litigation by same-sex partners demanding that the courts overturn the Defense of Marriage Act and impose "same-sex marriage." Such a result would demolish the state's historical understanding and definition of marriage as uniting a man and a woman for life.
- Children need both fathers and mothers. Thousands of studies show that children raised in a family with both a mother and a father are healthier emotionally and physically than those raised in a non-traditional family.
- Senate Bill 5688 will redefine terms such as "husband" and "wife" as gender neutral terms. According to the wording in the bill, "Where necessary to implement this act, gender-specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law shall be construed to be gender neutral, and applicable to individuals in state registered domestic partnerships."
- Homosexuals have the right to live as they choose; they do not have a right to redefine marriage for everyone.

**ORGANIZED SUPPORT FOR Ref. 71**

- The Approve 71 campaign has been endorsed by more than 180 organizations, including an array of large and small businesses, labor groups, education groups, civic groups, social-service providers, churches, faith-based, senior, women's, social justice and people-of-color organizations. R-71 was approved by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Chris Gregoire in May of this year.

For a complete listing of organizational coalition members, go to [www.approve71.org](http://www.approve71.org).

**ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO Ref. 71**

- The campaign to reject the measure in Referendum is led by Protect Marriage Washington. Its endorsers include the Knights of Columbus, some state legislators, and leaders of some churches and faith-based organizations.

For more information go to [www.protectmarriagewa.com](http://www.protectmarriagewa.com).

## King County Charter Amendments

### BACKGROUND

The King County Charter is a bit like a constitution for the county; it sets out the basic structure of county government. It was first adopted in 1969 and is subject to review every ten years to insure that the framework continues to reflect and meet the needs of a diverse and changing area. Any changes to the charter must be approved by the voters in King County. Every ten years a charter review commission is appointed by the county executive, composed of members representing different political, geographic and other concerns. The most recent commission of 21 members met for over a year, hearing testimony, soliciting public input and finally, drafting recommendations. Their final report was issued in May of 2008. The county council receives the report and can decide whether to place the recommended amendments on the ballot; the council can also propose its own changes. The charter can also be amended by initiative from the people. Several of the recommendations in the May 2008 report were placed on the ballot last November, along with a separate proposal from the council and an initiative to amend the charter. This year four recommendations from the commission will be on the ballot, leaving three which may be acted upon in the future.

**The proposed amendments are as follows:**

### King County Charter Amendment No. 1 Repeal of Section 350.20.30 and Portions of Article 9 – Transitory Provisions

#### BALLOT TITLE

Shall those no longer relevant portions of King County Charter Article 9 relating to the county's prior transition to a home rule charter and King County Charter Section 350.20.30, relating to the county's transition to a metropolitan form of government, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 16484?  Yes  No

#### WHAT THIS MEASURE WOULD DO

This proposed amendment was described in the commission's report as "non-substantive, technical." It relates to sections which regulate the transition to a charter-based system of government and the consolidation with Metro. Since these changes are now complete, the sections are no longer needed.

#### Those in favor say:

- The removal of obsolete language makes the charter clearer and less expensive to print and distribute.

#### Those against say:

- No opposing arguments found

#### ORGANIZED SUPPORT FOR KC Charter Amendment No. 1

- King County Charter Review Commission,  
King County Council

#### ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO KC Charter Amendment No. 1

- None found

## King County Charter Amendment No. 2 Repeal of Charter Section 475 – Work Programs and Allotments

### BALLOT TITLE

Shall King County Charter Section 475, relating to preparation of work programs and requested allotments and to appropriation transfers, be repealed, as provided in Ordinance No. 16546?

Yes  No

### WHAT THIS MEASURE WOULD DO

This is another “non-substantive, technical” amendment. It relates to a form of budget oversight and control that was developed prior to computerization of bookkeeping. With computerization, more frequent reporting is now available. Both the executive and the council agree to this change.

#### Those in favor say:

- ➡ This measure is necessary to allow county agencies more flexibility in their budget processes; it removes a section of the charter which relates to processes that are no longer used.

#### Those against say:

- ➡ No opposing arguments found.

#### ORGANIZED SUPPORT FOR KC Charter Amendment No. 2

- ➡ King County Charter Review Commission,  
 King County Council

#### ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO KC Charter Amendment No. 2

- ➡ None found

## King County Charter Amendment No. 3 Amendment of Section 800 – Charter Review

### BALLOT TITLE

Shall King County Charter Section 800 be amended to clarify that charter commission appointees are to be confirmed by the council and to provide that the council is required to consider proposed charter amendments and act on them at an open public meeting, as provided in Ordinance Nos. 16547 and 16599?  Yes  No

### WHAT THIS MEASURE WOULD DO

This proposal contains two items. The first would make it clear that the executive appointment of commissioners to the charter review commission is to be confirmed by the council. In general, the charter requires confirmation of executive appointments; however, there was some uncertainty for this particular situation. The second item would require the council to hold a public meeting and make a formal decision on all commission recommendations. Under the present system the council can simply ignore items in the report it doesn't wish to consider. Some have argued that commission recommendations should simply go straight to the ballot without needing council intervention.



**Those in favor say:****Those against say:**

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <p>➤ This amendment is necessary to resolve discrepancies in the current charter and provide a clear appointment process, as well as to require the council to respond publicly to charter commission recommendations.</p> | <p>➤ No opposing arguments found.</p> |
|--|---------------------------------------|

**ORGANIZED SUPPORT FOR  
KC Charter Amendment No. 3****ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO  
KC Charter Amendment No. 3**

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| <p>➤ King County Charter Review Commission,<br/>King County Council</p> | <p>➤ None found</p> |
|---|---------------------|

## King County Charter Amendment No. 4

### Adding New Section 897 – High Conservation Value Properties

**BALLOT TITLE**

Shall the King County Charter be amended to add a new Section 897 that would provide enhanced protection for certain county properties designated as high conservation value properties by prohibiting the county from conveying or relinquishing its interest in those properties or authorizing their expanded use, except in specified circumstances, as provided in Ordinance No. 16600?

Yes  No

**WHAT THIS MEASURE WOULD DO**

This proposal is a modification of a recommendation by the charter review commission. The commission's recommendation had a list of parcels, either county-owned or in which the county had development rights, that would be permanently protected from being sold or having the use changed. These "high conservation value" parcels were to be protected in order to safeguard the county's drinking water, preserve habitat for native species, provide recreation and support the rural timber economy. Changing the ownership or use of any parcel in the future would have required a vote by the people like any other charter amendment. The proposal on the ballot instead gives the council authority to create an inventory of "high conservation value" properties from those already owned by the county and sets a supermajority requirement of seven votes to create or make changes to the inventory. In addition, specific findings regarding the need to make a change must be made before a parcel can be sold or its use changed.

The original commission recommendation was one of the more contentious proposals in the final report and resulted in a minority report by three of the members, who objected to using the charter for land use regulation. None of those three object to the current proposal.

**Those in favor say:**

- ➔ The main argument for adopting this amendment is that these lands provide unique benefits to our community that would be lost forever if changes in their use were to occur. This amendment helps ensure that hasty and/or ill-informed decisions will not be made with respect to the use of these lands.

**Those against say:**

- ➔ This amendment adds an extra layer of bureaucracy that is unneeded. Land use regulations could be used to reach the same goal and allow the council greater flexibility when making decisions to sell, swap, or change the use of county-owned lands.

**ORGANIZED SUPPORT FOR  
KC Charter Amendment No. 4**

- ➔ This proposal is supported by the King County Council and a group of organizations and individuals, including the Municipal League of Seattle, many environmental groups and a number of current and former elected officials. For a complete list, go to [openspaceamendment.org](http://openspaceamendment.org).

**ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO  
KC Charter Amendment No. 4**

- ➔ None found; individuals only.

Please note: When a recommendation of the commission is placed on the ballot, it is done so by adopting an ordinance which includes how the text of the charter will be amended. If you wish to review the actual text of the ordinances, go to the King County website at <http://kingcounty.legistar.com> and put in the ordinance number.

## City of Seattle Proposition No. 1 - Housing Levy

### OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE

The City of Seattle's Proposition 1 concerns a low-income housing levy proposed by Ordinance 123013. This proposition would authorize property taxes for affordable housing programs for low-income households. It would lift the RCW 84.55 limit on regular property taxes, allowing \$145,000,000 in additional taxes over seven years beginning in 2010, limited to \$20,714,286 annually. The 2010 regular tax rate would not exceed \$3.60 per \$1,000 assessed value, including about \$.17 in additional taxes. Should the levy of these taxes for housing be authorized?  Yes  No

### BACKGROUND

Seattle voters have approved four low-income housing measures in the past. In 1981, voters approved a \$48,178,000 housing bond measure for low-income elderly and disabled persons. This measure exceeded its goal of producing 1,000 units by 20%. As a result of the 1981 measure, 1,198 apartments were produced or preserved.

In 1986, voters approved a \$49,975,000 housing levy that produced or preserved 1,818 apartments for families and persons with disabilities. The levy exceeded its goal of creating 1,000 units by 82%.

In 1995, Seattle residents passed a third housing levy with a cost of about \$34 per year to most homeowners. In conjunction with nonprofit partners, developers and financial institutions, this seven-year, \$59.2 million housing levy exceeded production goals by over 50% and generated over 2,000 affordable units.

And in 2002, the latest Seattle housing levy was authorized. The \$86,000,000 levy represented a cost of \$49 per year to the average homeowner. This appropriation also surpassed each of its stated goals. It has produced or preserved 1,552 affordable rental units, and has provided rental assistance to over 4,000 area households. The 2002 levy will expire in 2009.

### WHY DO WE NEED ANOTHER HOUSING LEVY?

The current levy is expiring and Seattle has insufficient affordable housing to meet current and anticipated needs.

The gap between local wages and housing prices is growing. According to a study released by the Seattle Office of Housing in 2009, more residents than ever are struggling to afford housing in Seattle, and homelessness is on the rise. Those that do have shelter are forced to spend an ever-larger percentage of their income to keep it. From 2000 to 2008, the median price of a single-family home increased 73%, while the annual median income of a Seattle worker increased only 31% in the same period.

Local renters are also facing climbing costs. Seattle rents have risen 21% since spring 2004, and are predicted to increase another 17% through the end of 2010. More than 20,000 renter households spend over 50% of their income on rent.

As more and more of Seattle's workers are forced to live outside the city, the environmental costs of their increased transportation needs also grow.

## WHAT WOULD THE LEVY DO?

Seattle Proposition No. 1 would lift what is known as the “levy lid” to allow a property tax increase above the limit set by law if a majority of voters approve the measure. Specifically, the proposition asks Seattle voters to authorize additional regular property taxes for seven years to provide up to \$145,000,000 for low-income housing assistance programs. The anticipated programs include construction and preservation of affordable rental units, an operating and maintenance program for rental housing, rental and homebuyer assistance programs, and a short-term loan fund to aid the Office of Housing in acquiring new property at the reduced rates current market conditions have created.

Lifting of the levy lid would mean that for seven years Seattle could levy up to \$20,714,285 per year in property taxes above what would otherwise be allowed by the levy lid. The actual amount collected would vary with changes in the assessed value of taxable property in the city. The specifics of the tax calculation are included in the ballot title.

## HOW MUCH WILL THE 2009 LEVY COST?

The 7-year, \$145 million package translates to a median cost to Seattle homeowners of \$65 per year, or \$5.50 per month. The levy would maintain the 2002 level of assistance – the proposed increase in funds would cover rising construction costs and inflation.

## WHAT PROJECTS WILL BE FUNDED WITH THE LEVY PROCEEDS?

### **Rental Production and Preservation - \$104,000,000 (1,670 homes)**

- Affordable rental housing for people with disabilities, the elderly, the homeless, low-wage working people and families with children.
- At least 60% of program funding for housing will serve people working at minimum wage, seniors on fixed incomes, and people coming out of homelessness (up to \$17,700 for a one-person household, or 30% of median income).
- 30% of program funding can be used for housing serving households with incomes up to \$40,440 for a two-person household (60% of median income).

### **Operating and Maintenance - \$14,400,000 (220 households)**

- Building operating support to owners of levy-funded housing for 20 years, supplementing rent for lowest income residents.

### **Rental Assistance - \$4,248,000 (3,025 households)**

- Temporary assistance to families and individuals to help preserve their housing, preventing eviction and homelessness (up to 50% of median income).

### **Homebuyer Assistance: \$9,090,000 (180 home purchases)**

- Loans to first-time homebuyers with incomes up to \$51,200 for a two-person household (80% of median income), including programs that promote long-term affordability of ownership housing.

### **Acquisition and Opportunity Loans: \$6,500,000 (175 households)**

- Short-term acquisition loans for strategic purchases of buildings or land for rental or homeownership housing development that will serve low-income households.
- Loans will be made with other levy program funds that are not yet expended.

## WHO WILL THE HOUSING LEVY SERVE?

More than half of the proposed funds would be dedicated to families and individuals earning minimum wage or less, including seniors living on fixed incomes. Other populations the levy would serve include disabled persons and persons with special needs; veterans; victims of domestic violence including mothers and children who, for personal safety, may have few resources and lack adequate housing; low-income first-time home buyers; and persons coming out of homelessness.

## DOES THE LEVY PROVIDE FOR ACCOUNTABILITY AND OVERSIGHT?

Yes. Every two years, the Office of Housing would be required to prepare an Administrative and Financial Plan covering all of the levy programs. The plan must also include criteria for evaluating and selecting projects, guidelines for loans or grants, requirements for project sponsors, and progress and performance reports on ongoing projects. The plan would be submitted to the city council for adoption by ordinance.

An Oversight Committee would be established for the purpose of monitoring the progress of levy programs. The committee would report to the mayor and city council, and consist of 13 voting members. Two would be city employees – one appointed by the mayor, one designated by the city council. Of the remaining members, the mayor would appoint six and the city council five.

<b>ORGANIZED SUPPORT FOR Seattle Prop. I</b>	<b>ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO Seattle Prop. I</b>
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- An organization called Yes For Homes leads the support for Proposition I, which has been endorsed by many community organizations, unions, businesses and individuals. For a complete list, go to [www.yesforhomes.org](http://www.yesforhomes.org)

- None found

**Those in favor say:**

- Seattle needs affordable housing. Seattle voters have overwhelmingly passed affordable housing measures since 1981. The four earlier measures surpassed goals in producing and preserving affordable and low-income housing, yet a housing shortage remains and escalating rents continue. The annual cost to the average homeowner would only be about \$65 per year. A full or partial property tax exemption is available for qualified persons whose income is below \$35,000.
- The levy will benefit all low-income households and address the broader goals of building community and revitalizing neighborhoods. 60% of the levy would provide housing to those most in need – those whose income is at or below 30% of area median income. These funds would provide emergency, short-term assistance to renters facing a temporary economic crisis, preventing homelessness. The levy would help other low-income families realize the American dream of owning a home and will provide other assistance. For both renters and owners, the possession of a permanent residence increases the sense of having a stake in the community. Those with stable housing tend to care more about the well-being of their neighborhoods and neighbors, and are more likely to be civically engaged. These programs also allow more people to live closer to the location of work, promoting transit use and reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions.
- The housing levy is a good investment. Seattle's housing programs strengthen the local economy in a variety of ways. According to the Seattle Office of Housing, from January 2003–June 2008, housing projects created over 4,000 new jobs and generated over \$31 in municipal revenue. For every dollar raised by the levy, an additional \$3 was secured from banks, foundations and other funding sources, and this would also be the case for the 2009 levy, if passed.

**Those against say:**

- Voters don't need new taxes – rates are already too high. Property owners shoulder an unfair share of the burden of providing services for those in need.
- The levy fails to target those most vulnerable. 40% of proposed funds would benefit households with incomes above 30% of the local median, or above \$17,700 for an individual. The levy should devote even more of its assistance to those most in need – with incomes at or below 30% of median.
- This levy is a significant increase over the previous levy – 68%. The middle of a recession is not the time to increase the burden on property owners who are themselves struggling.

# Unit Meetings

Email	Phone	Time	Location
<b>Monday, October 5</b>			
<b>Southend</b> - Sam Scharff webcats@speakeasy.net		7:30 pm	Lila Bulen 3716 Cascadia Ave. S
<b>Issaquah Evening</b> - Ann Thornton anninissaquah@gmail.com		6:30 pm	TBA, call (206) 329-4848
<b>Thursday, October 8</b>			
<b>Issaquah Day</b> - Margaret Austin margaretaustin@comcast.net		10:30 am	Issaquah City Hall and Police 130 E Sunset Way, Coho Room (upstairs)
<b>Kirkland/Redmond</b> - Sheila Hoff srhoff123@yahoo.com		7:00 pm	Liv Grohn, (206) 329-4848 338 10th Ave, Kirkland (call for directions)
<b>Mercer Island</b> - Lucy Copass/Cynthia Howe lucyco@speakeasy.org howe.john@comcast.net		9:15 am	Mercer Island Presbyterian Church 3605 84th Ave. SE, Mercer Island
<b>Shoreline</b> - Juliet Beard juliet@windermere.com		4:30 pm	Richmond Beach Congregational Church -NW 195th and 15th Ave. NW
<b>North Central</b> - Jan Orlando orlanre@aol.com		7:30 pm	Alice Rasp, (206) 329-4848 4523 5th Ave.
<b>University House</b> - Barbara Denis/ Judy Coskey bdenis340@comcast.net tjcoskey@msn.com		10:00 am	University House 4400 Stone Way N
<b>Monday, October 12</b>			
<b>First Hill</b> - Jeannette Kahlenberg kahlenb@gmail.com		10:00 am	Mary Margaret Pruitt Horizon House, 900 University St. Sky Lounge
<b>Capitol Hill/Montlake</b> - Jan O'Connor oconnor.js@gmail.com		7:15 pm	2344 McGilvra Blvd. E
<b>Tuesday, October 13</b>			
<b>Bellevue</b> - Bonnie Rimawi bonnierim@aol.com		10:00 am	Bellevue Regional Library Rm 3 1111 110th Ave. NE, Bellevue
<b>West Seattle Day</b> - Ethel Williams/Ann Bowden etheljw1@q.com		12:30 pm	Ann Bowden The Kenney, 7125 Fauntleroy SW

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**Wednesday, October 14**

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**Magnolia/Queen Anne/Ballard Eve - Bettina Hosler**

glencoe1985@aol.com

7:30 pm Fremont Neighborhood Center  
708 N 34th St. (just east of troll)**North End Afternoon - Jo Dawson**

warrenandjo@comcast.net

12:30 pm Cora Lee Doty (206)363-7181  
2133 N 115th St.**View Ridge - Gail Winberg**

winbergeng@comcast.net

12:45 pm Gail Winberg (206)524-7801

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**Saturday, October 17**

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**Ballard/Queen Anne/Magnolia Day - Kim Peterson/Kerry Peterson**10:00 am Seattle Public Library-Magnolia  
Branch, 2801 34th Ave. W

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**Wednesday, October 21**

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**North King County - Rejean Idzerda**

idzerda@comcast.net

9:30 am Lake Forest Park Third Place  
Books, 17171 NE Bothell Way



# Board & Committee Contacts

Term	Executive Committee		
2009–2011	<i>President</i>	Allison Feher	president@seattlelwv.org
2008–2010	<i>1st V.P. Outreach</i>	Maria Brusher	outreach.seattlelwv@gmail.com
2008–2010	<i>2nd V.P. Program</i>	Nora Leech	nleech2002@yahoo.com
2008–2010	<i>3rd V.P. Voter Service</i>	Sarah Luthens	luthens.seattlelwv@gmail.com
2009–2011	<i>4th V.P. Voter Editor</i>	Beatrice Crane	votereditor@seattlelwv.org
2009–2011	<i>Secretary</i>	Brita Butler-Wall	secretary@seattlelwv.org
2009–2011	<i>Treasurer/ Unit Coordinator</i>	Judy Bevington	gbeving@eskimo.com

Term	Directors		
2009–2011	<i>Membership</i>	Kelly Powers	membership.seattlelwv@gmail.com
2009–2011	<i>Director</i>	Christal Wood	gimme_steam@hotmail.com
2009–2011	<i>Public Relations</i>	Jean Carlson	jean.carlson@att.net

Term	Education Fund Board		
2009–2011	<i>Co-President</i>	Denise Smith	issaquahsmith@msn.com
2009–2011	<i>Co-President</i>	Laura Weese	laura899@earthlink.net
2008–2010	<i>Treasurer</i>	Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis	terrylucy2u@comcast.net
2009–2011	<i>Secretary</i>	Kris Bushley	abushley@earthlink.net
2008–2010	<i>Officer</i>	Dorothy Y. Sale	saledy@comcast.net

## Off-Board Positions

<i>CIS Coordinator</i>	Cynthia Howe	howe.john@comcast.net
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## Committees

<i>Civics Education</i>	Dana Twight	dctwight@u.washington.edu
<i>Economics &amp; Taxation</i>	Nora Leech	nleech2002@yahoo.com
<i>Education</i>	Lucy Gaskill-Gaddis	terrylucy2u@comcast.net
<i>Social Justice Committee</i>	Jayne Freitag-Koontz	jfkoontz@comcast.net
	Kathleen Randall	kathleen.randall@overlakehospital.org
<i>Immigration Study</i>	Barbara Reid	barbereid@yahoo.com
<i>International Relations</i>	Ellen Berg	ellenzberg@msn.com
<i>Land Use</i>	Karen Kane	kanek@iopener.net
<i>Transportation</i>	Janet Winans	janetwinans@earthlink.net
<i>Port Study</i>	Linda Brown	brownlj@comcast.net
<i>Privatization Study</i>	Nora Leech	nleech2002@yahoo.com

The League of Women Voters of Seattle  
1620 18th Ave, Suite 101  
Seattle WA 98122

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Call the League office at (206) 329-4848 or  
email [info@seattlelwv.org](mailto:info@seattlelwv.org)

## **LWV SEATTLE: OCTOBER FORUM**

### General Election Forum

Seattle First Baptist Church  
1111 Harvard Ave. (Harvard and Seneca)

**Thursday, October 1**

5:30 Get to Know League Dinner  
7:30 Forum

*Featuring candidates for*

Seattle Mayor

King County Assessor

Pro and con speakers for ballot issues

Washington Initiative 1033

Washington Referendum 71

King County Charter Amendments

Seattle Proposition 1

All forums are free and open to the public.