

THE VOTER



This Newsletter is published by and for the
League of Women Voters of Yakima County
PO Box 723, Yakima, WA 98907 509-452-3419

On the Web at:
<https://lwvyakimacounty.org>
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2024
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We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work on the traditional lands of the fourteen Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

Core Principles

MISSION STATEMENT

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

VISION

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

VALUE STATEMENT

The League believes in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

Leadership Team

- Betty Van Ryder, Secretary
- Cindy Olivas
- Criss Bardill
- Dori Baker-Peralta
- Janis Luvaas, Treasurer and Membership
- Karen Pilon
- Karri Livingston
- Kitty Jubran
- Lee Murdock, President
- Steve Hill
- Susan Kaphammer

Meeting the first Monday of the month at 4:30 pm at the YWCA located at 818 W Yakima Ave, Yakima, WA 98901 in the second-floor conference room.

All members are welcome!

Calendar

- **4-10-24 and 4-13-24: Briefing on Washington State's new legislative maps** - Join the LWVWA Redistricting Reform Task Force for a briefing on Washington State's new legislative maps at 6:30 pm on the 10th and 10:30 am on the 13th. Register or learn more <https://linktr.ee/LWVWA>. **See article on page two.**
- **4-20-24: Earth Day** – Earth Day Yakima "Planet vs Plastic" Saturday, April 20, 2024, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm Sarg Hubbard Park 111 South 18th Street Yakima, WA 98901. Learn more at <https://earthdayyakima.org/>
- **4-22-24: Voter Services Committee** – Meets at noon at C&S Coffee shop in Terrace Heights.
- **5-6-24: Leadership Team** – Meets at 4:30 pm at the YWCA second-floor conference room.
- **5-15-24 Annual Meeting** - Meets at 4:30 pm at the YWCA second-floor conference room.

Save the Date

Join us for our Annual Meeting on May 15, 2024, for an evening of engagement and discussion.

Featured Presentation:

Mary Coltrane, President of the League of Women Voters of Washington, will speak on Empty Chair debates, followed by discussion.

To help us determine quorum, please **RSVP** by May 1, 2024, at: yakimacountylwvyc@gmail.com or 509-834-8173.

Message from the LWVYC President

We're honored to feature a message from **Alison McCaffree**, the Redistricting & Census Issue Chair and Chair of the Redistricting Reform Task Force at the League of Women Voters of Washington. Please take a moment to read her message. – Lee Murdock, LWVYC President

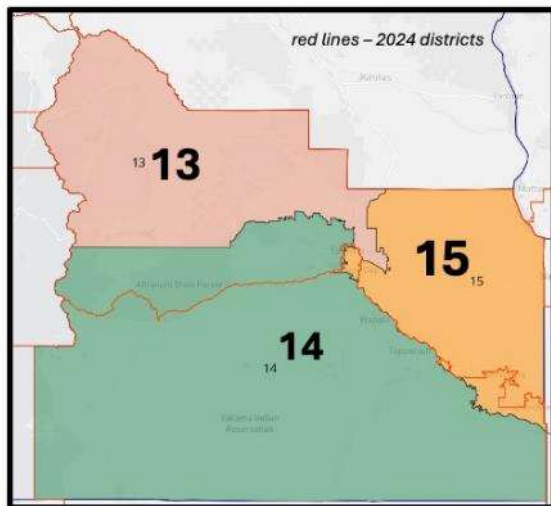
New Legislative Map. The Changes. The Solution.

By Alison McCaffree, LWVWA Redistricting Issue Chair

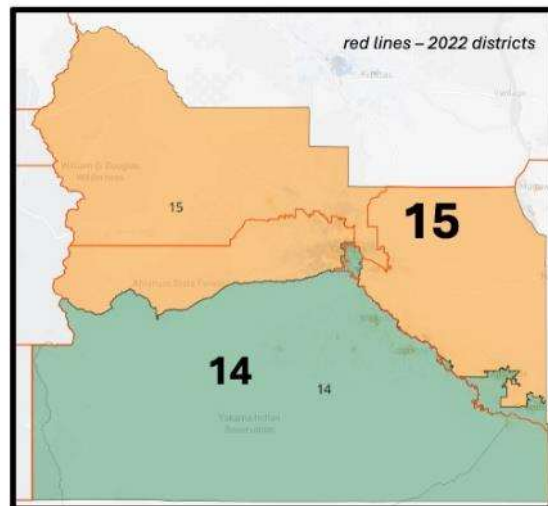
For the 2024 election, new legislative map boundaries will switch nearly half a million people to different districts and displace 5 current legislators. On Friday, March 15th, Federal District Court Judge Lasnik handed down the final remedy for the [Soto Palmer v Hobbs](#) lawsuit that declared a **Yakima Valley district (LD 15)** discriminatory to Latino voters. The latest order creates a new District 14 with the intent of giving better opportunity for Latino voters to elect a candidate of their choice. The League of Women Voters of Washington believes the uncertainty and churn caused by this lawsuit illustrate the need to change our state's redistricting process. We support a new kind of commission putting people first. This People First Redistricting Commission would minimize partisan influences and emphasize a consensus around what's best for all communities. You can help make this new commission a reality.

Learn more. Please join the Redistricting Reform Task Force for a briefing on Washington State's new legislative map. "How did we get here? Where do we go next?" Register for the virtual discussions on Wed. April 10th at 6:30pm and Sat. April 13th at 10:30am. Register or learn more <https://linktr.ee/LWVWA>.

2022 Legislative Districts



2024 Legislative Districts



The changes. The new legislative map changes thirteen legislative districts in fifteen counties. The League of Women Voters of Washington's Redistricting Reform Task Force estimates that 489,435 voters will switch districts. The new LD14 connects the Latino communities in East Yakima, Yakima Valley and East Pasco and combines it with the Yakama Nation's main reservation and its fishing villages. In Yakima County will see 3 types of changes.

- 66,483 people switched from LD15 to LD14 in Grandview, Sunnyside, Union Gap, and the eastern part of the City of Yakima.
- 87,757 people moved from LD14 into LD15 in the western part of the City of Yakima and Selah.
- 30,700 people moved from LD13 to LD15 in Terrace Heights, Moxie, Naches and Tieton.

A recent [LWVWA article](#) describes more about the changes¹.

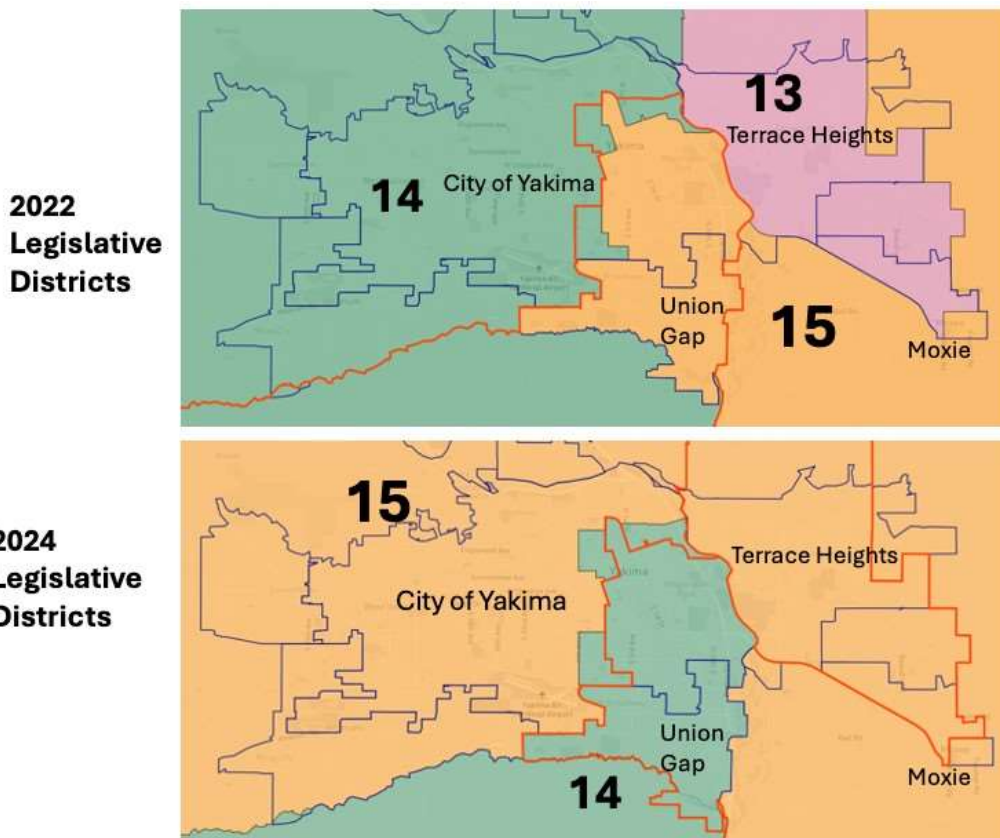
Is this final? On April 2, The Supreme Court of the United States denied hearing the appeal on an emergency stay. Therefore, the 2024 election will be held with this new map. However, a regular appeal Court will proceed in the summer. We will wait and see if the maps change again before 2026.

What district am I in? For now, if you want to find out your district, you can [click a map in Dave’s Redistricting App](#). Zoom into your house to confirm your new district (Use the Tools drop down select ‘zoom to a city or county’). Changes to the Find your District tool on leg.wa.gov will be available later.

The solution. Tired of the churn and uncertainty? Whether or not you like the outcome of this lawsuit, the League believes that this disruption is not good governance. A better process would likely have created a more representative map in the first place and avoided this new change of districts for so many voters.

The League supports a redistricting commission with expanded representation beyond the current two-party structure. All members would be ordinary citizens who represent Democratic, Republican, and other points of view but who are not officially affiliated with the political parties. “[Fair Maps in the State of California](#)” research shows that these commissions have higher public trust and have resulted in legislatures that are more representative of the people. The result is a process that “empowers communities and reduces the influence of political actors.” The LWWA supports a People First Commission for Washington.

You can get involved with the Yakima area local action team by contacting Dori Peralta Baker or Steve Hill. See lwwa.org/redistricting for more information about the Redistricting Reform Campaign.



¹ The Yakima County Auditor's Office has also published a [Proposed Legislative District Map \(yakimacounty.us\)](http://yakimacounty.us)

Member's Corner

Welcome New Members!

Please join us in extending a heartfelt welcome to **Nancy Lust** and **Megan Anderson Reilly**, our newest members of the League of Women Voters of Yakima County! Your commitment to advancing democracy and civic participation is truly inspiring, and we are thrilled to have you join us in our efforts to empower voters and effect positive change in our community.

Special Thank You to Susan!



Susan Kaphammer, member since 2018, became a Leadership Team member and Voter editor at the annual meeting in 2019, and has produced an engaged, informative, and highly readable Voter for the last 7 years. She has earned a well-deserved retirement!

Recently the Leadership formed an Ad Hoc Committee to plan for the Voter going forward, and the committee has developed a plan to distribute the responsibilities for Voter content among several people returning to a monthly schedule following the Leadership Team. Clearly, it will take many hands to fill Susan's shoes (please excuse the terrible mixed metaphor)!

At the April Leadership Team meeting, Susan was celebrated with a gift certificate to Roots Nursery, and many expressions of gratitude. I know I speak for all our members when I say thank you, Susan!

Submitted by Criss Bardill

Around Town



Senator Curtis King and League Members Criss Bardill, Betty Van Ryder, Dori Peralta-Baker, and Karen Pilon with Secretary of State Steven Hobbs

Secretary Hobbs and the Washington State Office of the Secretary of State staff were in Yakima where Sec. Hobbs kicked the trip off with a community leaders' dinner. In attendance were Yakima County NAACP, League of Women Voters of Yakima County, We Are Ella, Yakima Valley Veterans Coalition, LULAC Yakima Valley, United Way of Central Washington, and the Filipino American Community of the Yakima Valley.



Members Michael Murdock, Joy McKinney, and Betty Van Ryder braving the wind at Henry Beauchamp Community Center

Multiple Community Partners attended the 1st Annual OIC of Washington Family Health Fair to provide well needed resources to the community. They registered two people as well as answering multiple questions about the League and Voting. Special thank you Betty for donating one of the raffle prizes!

Member's Corner Continued

More Retirement!

RETIREMENT



Our President, Lee Murdock, has retired from her position as the Director of the Homeless Network of Yakima County after 20 years of service. The [Yakima Herald Republic](#) wrote a nice article about her retirement to spend more time with family.

Congratulations, Lee, and we wish you a little slower pace and some time to dig in the dirt!

Submitted by The Leadership Team

Reaching Out to Youth



Members Kitty Jubran and Barb Schultz reaching out to AC Davis Students

We were invited to participate in Student Led Conferences in partnership with AC Davis High School. Volunteers were encouraged to see so many students and parents engaged our democratic process.

Results of Quarterly Meeting Survey

SURVEY



Thank you to those League members who completed the recent survey on starting quarterly membership meetings, which was completed by approximately half of our members. Of those 24, 20 indicated they would be “Highly Likely” to attend quarterly meetings. The Leadership took that as a mandate to start quarterly meeting this year. The Annual Meeting will count as one of the quarterly meetings, and it was agreed this year that we would start the Annual Meeting on May 15th followed by a quarterly meeting three months later.

There was a strong preference for **Late Afternoon** meetings in a **Community Meeting Room**. The responses to “Days you would routinely not be available” were spread evenly over the week, with only a one or two count differences in the tally.

The responses to what would be of interest at quarterly meetings were strong in the categories of **Information and Updates from League Leadership; Presentations of Local and State Issues; and Discussion/Opportunities for Input**. “Informal and Social Time” scored the lowest, although comments suggested that members enjoy our occasional social events and hoped that might continue.

We appreciate the active participation of our members in shaping the future of our League through their valuable feedback. Your input is vital as we continue to strive for inclusivity and relevance in our activities.

Participating in Democracy

Contact My Representative: Making Your Voice Heard



One of the fundamental rights—and responsibilities—of citizens in a democracy is to communicate with their elected officials. Whether it's to ask them to support or oppose an issue, thank them for a vote you appreciated, or simply tell them which issue matters most to you, reaching out to your representatives can make a significant impact. However, many people feel daunted by the process, unsure of where to begin or how to effectively convey their message. This short guide aims to demystify the process and provide you with practical tips for contacting your elected officials, specifically focusing on those in Yakima County.

- **Finding the Right Contact Information:** Before you can make your voice heard, you need to know who to talk to. Contact information for your Federal, State, and Local officials can sometimes feel buried within the depths of the internet. Fortunately, the League of Women Voters of Yakima County has made this process easier. Visit our Web site at [\(Elections – League of Women Voters of Yakima County, WA \(lwvyakimacounty.org\)\)](http://Elections - League of Women Voters of Yakima County, WA (lwvyakimacounty.org)) and view or download the They Represent You (TRY). The TRY directory contains contact information for local elected officials as well as the county council, school boards, Washington State officials, legislative committees, political parties and more. Download the [TRY Directory](#)
- **Be Clear and Concise:** Once you've found the contact information for your representative, the next step is to craft your message. Whether you're writing an email, making a phone call, or sending a letter, clarity and conciseness are your best friends. Start by introducing yourself as a constituent and briefly mention why you're reaching out. Stick to one topic per communication to keep your message focused; this makes it easier for your representative's office to process and respond to your concern.
- **Personalize Your Message:** While it might be tempting to copy and paste a generic message, personalized communications are far more effective. Share a personal story or explain how the issue impacts you, your family, or your community. This not only humanizes your message but also makes it more likely that your representative will pay closer attention.
- **Follow Up:** After sending your message, consider following up, especially if you haven't received a response after a few weeks. A polite follow-up email or phone call can remind your representative of your concern and show that you are genuinely invested in the issue.
- **Stay Informed and Engaged:** Finally, keep yourself informed about the outcome of the legislation or policy you're concerned about. Attend town hall meetings, subscribe to your elected official's newsletters, and stay active in your community's discussions. Being an engaged and informed citizen not only helps you make more impactful communications in the future but also strengthens the democratic process.

Reaching out to your elected officials is a powerful way to influence the decisions that affect our lives and communities. By using the resources provided by organizations like the League of Women Voters and following these tips, you can make your voice heard in a meaningful way. Remember, democracy thrives on the active participation of its citizens. Your voice matters, so don't hesitate to use it.

State and National News

From the National League of Women Voters

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy Updated by the LWWUS Board 1/21/2024

Discrimination or harassment of any kind will not be accepted within the League, including but not limited to race, socio-economic status, age, ability status, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, gender identity, or marital status. The League is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, inclusion, access, and belonging for all people. The League is an organization that respects and values the richness of our community and our members. The collective sum of our individual differences and life experiences represents not only our culture, but our reputation and the organization's mission and achievements as well.

From the League of Women Voters of Washington

Local News and Democracy

Local news reporting plays a pivotal role in the health of our communities—and our democracy. Extensive research, including a [two-year study](#) by the League of Women Voters of Washington, reports on the benefits of credible news sources that keep us up to date about what's happening in our neighborhoods, at City Hall, in boardrooms and workplaces, in our schools and on our sports fields: Because of their reporting, we're more likely to vote, be more engaged in our communities, see more candidates seek office, and be less likely to hold polarizing political viewpoints.

Studies also show a link between quality local news coverage and *stronger public health campaigns and better oversight of government spending*.

After thorough study and discussion known as reaching consensus, the 2,400-member League adopted a public policy on local news: **“The League of Women Voters of Washington believes it is the responsibility of the government to provide support for conditions under which credible local journalism can survive and thrive.”**

Several factors prompted the League's study, “The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy,” and the subsequent adoption of our public policy position. Among them was Washington's loss of three daily and more than two dozen weekly newspapers between 2005 and 2022. Also motivating our efforts is newsroom staffing across the state decreased by two-thirds, resulting in considerably less coverage.

In the League's call for support for local news, we don't distinguish between news published in print on paper or online: **“The League supports credible and ethical local journalism, in whatever format it is published, as essential to our democracy.”** Important, too, is that regardless of the source of support or assistance, the League is adamant that “control of a publication's content must remain exclusively with the news organization.”

Learn more by going to [League of Women Voters of Washington - Local News and Democracy \(lwwa.org\)](https://lwwa.org)