

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>
Find us on Facebook

May/June
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
- 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

- **6-14-24: Voter Services Committee** – Meets at noon at C&S Coffee shop in Terrace Heights.
- **6-15-24: Juneteenth** – Come see us at Southeast Community Park at 1211 S. 7th Street from Noon to 5pm.
- **6-18-24: Attorney General Primary Candidate Forum** - Will be live streamed at <https://www.youtube.com/live/tCtf6J8NtNo>
- **7-1-24: Leadership Team** – Meets the first Monday of the month at 4:30pm at the YWCA – All members are welcome!
- **7-4-24: 4th of July Celebration** – Come see us at the 4th of July Celebration held at Yakima Fairgrounds at 1301 South Fair Avenue. Kids Zone and food concessionaires will open @ 2:00 pm
- **7-14-24 Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market** – Come see us at the Farmers Market at the Farmer's Market Pavilion from 9am to 1pm.

Announcement

It's time to renew your membership! To our friends who have not yet joined: now is a great time to pay the annual membership dues and support our important work! Our fiscal year begins July 1st and each year at this time we ask members to renew their annual dues. You can do this in two ways:

- You can go to our Web site at <https://lwvyakimacounty.org/membership/>
- Use the membership form in this newsletter and send it to

PO Box 723
Yakima WA 98907

Message from the LWVYC President

The Power of Volunteering with the League of Women Voters of Yakima County

Volunteering is at the heart of what we do in the League, and it brings immense value not only to our community but also to each one of us as individuals. Our collective efforts in encouraging voter registration, educating the public, and advocating for informed and active participation in government are fundamental to our mission. As we prepare for our upcoming events, I want to take a moment to share some inspiring words from our dedicated members and emphasize the importance of volunteerism within our League.

Kitty Jubran, a long-time member, eloquently captures the spirit of our efforts:

"I joined the League to encourage voter registration which has led to two decades of registering voters at tabling events. Our events are respected, and people count on our ability to answer questions in an informative and nonpartisan manner. It is part of the League's DNA. At a recent event, a woman shared her reluctance to vote, feeling it didn't matter – we were able to express the ways it did matter. She walked away smiling, saying, 'Thanks, I needed that.' To which I heartily agree – this is why I volunteer."

Similarly, Karri Livingston highlights the personal rewards of volunteering:

"I volunteer to be at League events so that I can share what the League is all about and to encourage people to vote. I always come away from these events with positive, encouraging stories about the people I meet and the members I share the event with."

Criss Bardill adds another valuable perspective on the welcoming nature of our community:

"We frequently receive warm welcomes from people passing by. I've never had someone approach that was looking for an argument or wanted to criticize the League. Tabling always presents an opportunity to get to know a fellow volunteer better. I like supporting the visibility of the League in our community."

These testimonials underscore the profound impact we have on our community and the meaningful connections we build with each other. For those considering volunteering for the first time, rest assured that new volunteers are always paired with experienced members who have tabled in the past. This not only ensures a smooth and effective experience but also provides a wonderful opportunity to get to know fellow League members better.

The benefits of being an active member of the League extend far beyond the immediate tasks of registering voters or answering questions. Volunteering with the League allows us to grow as individuals, develop new skills, and form lasting friendships. It strengthens our community and reinforces our commitment to making democracy work.

Furthermore, the more engagement we have from our members, the more we can accomplish. Increased participation enhances our capacity to host more events, reach more people, and expand our impact. Your involvement is crucial to our success. By joining together and contributing our time and talents, we can continue to make a significant difference in our community.

As we strive to serve our community, I encourage each of you to consider how you can contribute your time and talents. Whether you are a seasoned volunteer or new to our efforts, your participation is invaluable. Together, we can continue to make a difference and uphold the values of the League of Women Voters.

Lee Murdock

Member's Corner

Welcome New Members!

Please join us in extending a heartfelt welcome to **Dorothy Stolz**, our newest member 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.

YWCA Luncheon

On May 14, a full table of League members and friends attended this annual event. We heard retired Seattle Seahawks player, Jermaine Kearse, speak to us about

his awareness of domestic violence, and how having 2 daughters helps shape both his concern and activism.



Barb Schultz, Criss Bardill, Betty Van Ryder, and Marci Barton

We also watched a very moving video of a domestic violence victim

who is receiving housing and support for herself and her daughter. The YWCA announced a project of converting the old Nursing School on the closed

hospital campus on S 9th and W Walnut to housing for Domestic Violence victims and families, including some



Mary Stephenson, Elaine Smith, Ulla Whitmont, Joy McKinney, and Jackie Hertel

units designated for male victims. We fully support the YWCA in their vitally important work in our area.

Around Town



Criss Bardill and Kitty Jubran at the Market!

We are back at the Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market once a month. We had a great time talking to community members, registering voters, and enjoying being part of the community. Our next market day will be 7/14/24, come and say hi!



Mike Bardill, Raine Murdock, Joy McKinney, Criss Bardill, and Steve Hill marched with us in the Pride parade!

Members of the League of Women Voters proudly march in the Pride Parade, demonstrating our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. By participating, we affirm our dedication to creating a community where everyone, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, feels valued and respected. Our presence at the parade underscores our ongoing efforts to foster a culture of belonging for all people.

Member's Corner Continued

Around Town



Members of the League of Women Voters proudly participated in the Earth Day celebration, highlighting our commitment to environmental sustainability and justice. By joining this event, we emphasize the importance of protecting our planet for future generations and ensuring equitable access to clean air, water, and natural resources. Our involvement reflects our dedication to fostering a community that values diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects, including our collective responsibility to care for the environment. A special thank you to our volunteers Betty Van Ryder and Criss Bardill.

Reaching Out to Youth

Presentation to OIC Students

On May 30th, League members presented to the OIC of Washington's Culinary Students, sharing why they joined the League of Women Voters and what we do. They talked about when the League was established and the 15th and 19th Amendments to the Constitution. They highlighted the League's ongoing efforts to promote informed and active participation in government. Lastly, they encouraged students to vote and left Voter Registration Forms with students. Special thank you to League volunteers - Karri Livingston, Maryrose Gonzalez, Ulla Whitmont, Barb Schultz, and Kitty Jubran.

Join Voter Services!

The League of Women Voters' Voter Services Committee is actively working to enhance voter engagement and education in our community. We invite you to join us for our next meeting on June 14, 2024, at noon at the C&S Coffeehouse. Here are some highlights of the important work we're doing:

Community Education

- **OIC Foodbank:** We plan to distribute educational flyers about voting in food boxes at the OIC foodbank to reach more community members.
- **Senior Engagement:** We're organizing a Ballot Walk Thru Party for seniors at the Henry Beauchamp Center during the week of July 29th. We are coordinating with Meals on Wheels for this event.
- **EPIC Parent Night:** We're excited about hosting a Ballot Walk Thru Party for EPIC parents in October.

Candidate Meet and Greet

We're planning a post-primary Meet and Greet with candidates from the 14th and 15th Legislative Districts, as well as County Commissioner candidates. This event is scheduled for September.

Vote 411 Initiative

Our committee is requesting that local legislators provide their insights on the initiatives that will be on the November ballot. Karri is handling this request to the State League's Vote 411 Committee.

Get Involved!

Our next meeting is on June 14, 2024, at noon at the C&S Coffeehouse. Join us to learn more about these initiatives and how you can contribute to making a difference in our community. Your participation and input are invaluable as we strive to empower voters and strengthen our democracy.

We look forward to seeing you there!

Participating in Democracy

2024 Annual Meeting Recap

On May 15, League members gathered at the YWCA for our Annual Meeting. The evening began with a light dinner and some social time, providing an opportunity for members to connect and share ideas. Criss Bardill, standing in for President Lee Murdock, officially convened the meeting.

Business Highlights

During the meeting, Karen Pilon was honored for her many years of dedicated service on the Board and Leadership Team, including her role as Secretary from 2010 to 2021. Her contributions have been invaluable, and she will be greatly missed.

The Nominating Committee presented a slate of current Leadership Team members whose terms were expiring at the end of June. These members agreed to be reelected for an additional two-year term, ensuring continuity in our leadership. The only change to the team was the departure of Karen Pilon.

Special Presentation by State President Mary Coltrane

Following the business meeting, we were privileged to have State League President Mary Coltrane present. She guided us through the LWV US Guidelines for State and Local Leagues Debates, including the protocols for Empty Chair Debates. This topic became particularly relevant in 2023 when three Yakima City Council candidates declined to participate in a League-sponsored City Council Election Forum.

Mary's presentation emphasized the potential risks associated with hosting empty chair debates, particularly how they could jeopardize the 501(c)(3) status of our Education Fund. She highlighted the relevant regulations from both the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that govern these activities.

For those interested in the detailed guidelines, you can access the document discussed by Mary through this <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/voter-services/guidelines-state-and-local-league-debates-including-empty-chair>.

LWVYC Civic Textbook donations to WA State Prison libraries

On March 20th, several local League members attended an event featuring Steve Hobbs, Secretary of State, who spoke to a local group of people representing agencies and organizations with an interest in the civic engagement and election security work of the SOS office.

One topic that Secretary Hobbs focused on was the SOS's responsibility for the libraries in our state prisons, and their work in helping prisoners understand their rights and exposing them to civic education.

In a follow-up, the Leadership Team authorized the donation of 11 copies of the civic textbook, *The State We're In*, published by the WA State League of Women Voters. Copies are going to all the 8 state prison libraries, as well as the two state hospitals and the juvenile center for females at Echo Glen.

We are pleased our donation will expand the civic education resources in these important libraries.

State and National

Upcoming Changes to the Dues System



The national organization of the League of Women Voters is in the process of restructuring the dues payment system for all local leagues like ours. Starting next year, all local dues will go directly to the national organization. In turn, local and state leagues around the country will receive a percentage of those dues to support our state and local operations. This change aims to streamline the process of dues renewal and expand the overall membership of the League of Women Voters.

More information about this restructuring will be shared with you in future newsletters. For now, we want to highlight a significant upcoming change in the renewal process for annual dues. Currently, if you pay your renewal after July 1, the start of our fiscal year, your active membership still ends on June 30 of the following year, which means you may not receive a full 12 months of membership. With the new system, once dues start going directly to the national league, your membership renewal date will be 12 months from the date you paid. This ensures you will always have a full 12 months of membership regardless of your payment date.

Changes will begin to be implemented in January 2025. We will keep you updated as more details are shared from the national office.

LWWVA Takes Stand Against Three Ballot Initiatives

The League of Women Voters of Washington announces its opposition to three initiatives that will appear on the November ballot:

- **Initiative 2109, Repeal Capital Gains Tax:** if passed, would terminate a significant source of income for education and school construction that is generated from the state's wealthiest individuals. Collections to date have exceeded nearly \$1 billion in 2023 from only 3,895 taxpayers. This tax not only supports the state's mandate to amply fund education but also shifts the balance in the state's revenue structure toward equity from the most regressive tax structure in the US.
- **Initiative 2117, Prohibiting all state agencies, counties, and cities from implementing any type of carbon tax credit trading [Repeal the Climate Commitment Act (CCA)]:** if passed, would prevent the state from achieving the greenhouse gas emission reduction targets set in 2020, which are necessary to deter further climate change impacts. The state would lose a significant funding source for implementing programs to correct past environmental damage and injustice resulting from lack of scientific perspective, short-sighted or poor policy creation and implementation, and unintended consequences. The funds available through the CCA support clean transportation, clean buildings, clean energy development, siting and transmission, environmental justice measures, and more.
- **Initiative 2124, Opting out of Long-Term Services Insurance Program:** threatens to jeopardize the state's groundbreaking mandatory long-term care benefit which guarantees access to vital long-term care and home health care services for all employed individuals in Washington. This benefit is sustained by contributions from employees over time, serving as a crucial safety net for the 70% of the population who will inevitably require long-term care at some stage. However, rendering this fund optional would jeopardize coverage for those in need and likely lead to its financial collapse, rendering it ineffective for those who do contribute to the fund.

"Our stance against these initiatives is a reflection of the League's firm commitment to equitable education funding, climate resilience, and accessible long-term care," said Mary Coltrane, president of the League of Women Voters of Washington. "We're safeguarding our state's future with each vote against these regressive measures." To learn more, go to <https://www.lwwva.org/in-the-washington-news/13344327>

Talking about the League

We have had multiple requests from members on how to best describe the work we do as the League of Women Voters – see below for three examples for explaining what we do as an organization:

1. The League is a political grassroots network and membership organization that believes the freedom to vote is a nonpartisan issue. For more than a century, we've worked to empower voters and defend democracy. As a women-led organization, we encourage everyone to take part in our democracy. Today, the League has expanded our vision of a more inclusive democracy where all Americans, regardless of gender, sex, race, ability, or party can see themselves represented in our government. To build this vision, we bring an anti-racist, social justice lens to the issues of:
 - Expanding Voter Access;
 - Fighting Voter Suppression;
 - Money in Politics;
 - Redistricting; and
 - Safe and Fair Elections;

Additionally, we promote social and economic justice through the lenses of health care, the environment, immigration reform, and the Census.

2. The League of Women Voters (LWV) is a nonpartisan, grassroots nonprofit dedicated to empowering everyone to fully participate in our democracy. With active Leagues in all 50 states and more than 750 Leagues across the country, we engage in advocacy, education, litigation, and organizing to protect every American's freedom to vote.
3. The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan American political organization that has pursued its mission of promoting active and unhampered participation in government since its establishment in 1920.

Watch the OSPI Candidate Forum

On May 20, the LWVWA sponsored a public forum to hear from candidates seeking election to the office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The forum was held at Ridgeline High School in Liberty Lake, and candidates answered questions posed by the area's high school students. You can view the recording at: <https://twv.org/video/league-of-women-voters-superintendent-of-public-instruction-candidate-forum-2024051047/?eventID=2024051047>

National League of Women Voters Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

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.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA COUNTY

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Cordially invites you to: JOIN US!

New Member Renewing Member

Name: _____

Membership Categories:

Address: _____

_____ \$10 Student

_____ \$60 Basic

Phone: _____

_____ \$40 Each added

family member at the same
residence

E-Mail: _____

Scholarships are available for potential members who cannot afford dues. Please contact us at yakimacountylwvyc@gmail.com

Additional Sustaining Gift: \$60 _____ \$40 _____ \$25 _____ Other: _____

Your Sustaining Gift will help support our local activities.

Make checks payable to: LWVYC And mail to: LWVYC, PO Box 723, YAKIMA WA 98907

Please note: Our fiscal year is July 1 through June 30. Initial dues received before December 31 will be subject to renewal on June 30 of the following year. Initial dues received after January 1 will be subject to renewal on June 30 of the year following that year.