

THE VOTER



This Newsletter is published by and for the
League of Women Voters of Yakima County
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On the Web at:
<https://lwvyakimacounty.org>
Find us on Facebook

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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

- **8-14-24 Membership Meeting** – Join us for our first quarterly Membership meeting. Details below.
- **9-2-24 Leadership Team** – Meets the first Monday of the month at 4:30pm at the YWCA – All members are welcome!
- **9-8-24 Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market** – Come see us at the Farmers Market at the Farmer's Market Pavilion from 9am to 1pm.
- **9-13-24 Voter Services Committee** – Meets at noon at C&S Coffee shop in Terrace Heights.
- **9-14-24 El Grito de Independencia Celebration** - Heritage University is delighted to announce its upcoming El Grito de Independencia celebration, scheduled to take place from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. This lively event will be held at the picturesque Toppenish campus, in commemoration of Mexican Independence Day. Loteria, Kids crafts and games, food and beverages, Cultural performances, and Community resource fair.
- **10-6-24 Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market** – Come see us at the Farmers Market at the Farmer's Market Pavilion from 9am to 1pm.

Announcement

We invite all members to our first quarterly meeting to learn about current projects and discuss the future direction of the League. We will be meeting at 4:30pm on 8-14 at Yakima Neighborhood Health Services. Light refreshments will be provided. We look forward to seeing you there!

YNHS 12 South 8th Street - 7th Street entrance
Check in at reception and go to the 3rd floor Paddock Room

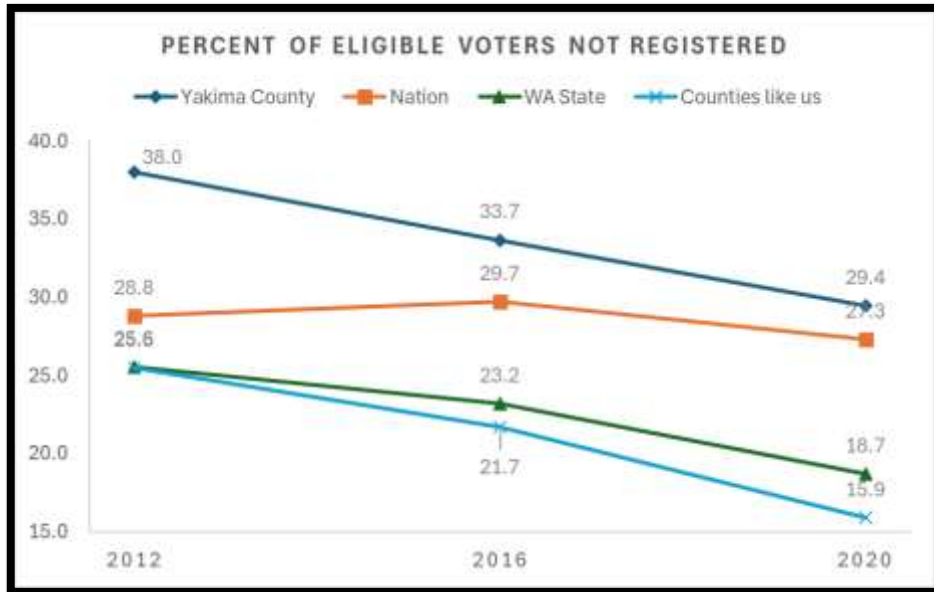
We just ordered Yard Signs – come sign up for yours at the General Membership meeting!

Message from the LWVYC President

The Urgency of Voter Registration

As we approach another pivotal election year, the importance of voter registration cannot be overstated. Our mission has always been to empower voters and defend democracy, and this begins with ensuring that every eligible citizen is registered and ready to vote.

Progress Made, But We Must Do More

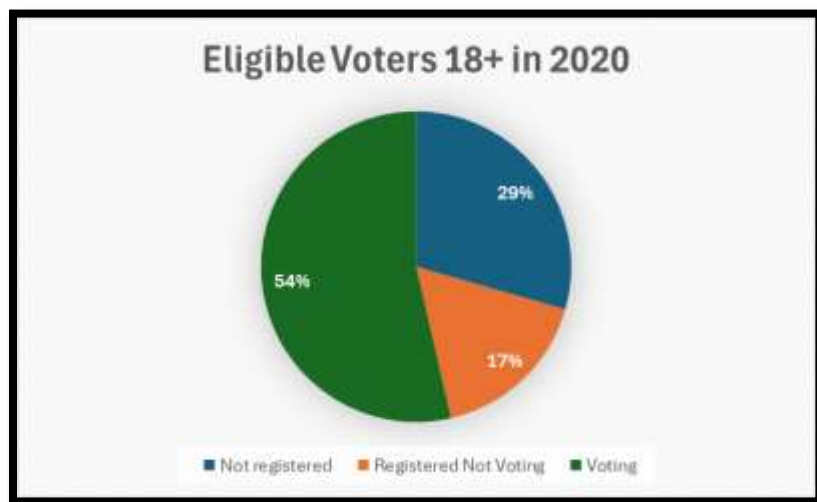


Over the past decade, we've made significant strides in Yakima County. The percentage of unregistered voters has decreased from 38.0% in 2012 to 29.4% in 2020. While this progress is encouraging, it's important to acknowledge that Yakima County still lags behind similar counties. In 2020, counties like ours had an average unregistered voter rate of 15.9%, nearly half of our rate.

This disparity is a clear signal that we have a lot of work to do. It's not just about closing the gap—it's about ensuring that every eligible voter in our county has the opportunity to make their voice heard. These insights are drawn

from the *Risk and Protection Profile for Substance Abuse Prevention in Yakima County, July 2024*.

The Power of Participation



Registration is just the first step. We must also focus on encouraging those who are registered to exercise their right to vote. In 2020, out of 180,940 eligible voters in Yakima County, 96,985, or about 5.4 out of 10, cast their ballots. This means that nearly half of our eligible population did not have their voices heard.

Encouragingly, as of today, there are 129,783 registered voters in Yakima County—a notable increase from the 127,692 registered in 2020. This increase reflects the ongoing efforts by organizations like ours to engage the community and drive voter registration. However, this number also highlights the need for continued engagement

and outreach to ensure that every registered voter is motivated to participate in the electoral process. This information was provided by the Yakima County Auditor's office.

Use your voice – Vote!

Let's continue to build on the progress we've made and work towards a future where every voice is heard, and every vote is counted. Thank you for your continued dedication to our cause.

Lee Murdock

Member's Corner

Welcome New Members!

Please join us in extending a heartfelt welcome to **Wendy Verkist**, 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.

Reaching Out to Youth



Cindy Olivas and Dori Peralta Baker talking to youth and families
The League was present at OIC of Washington's *Schools out Summer is Here* event which hosted ~400 members of the community enjoying food, music and learning more about what our partners at OIC of Washington are all about.

Around Town



Figure 1 Barb Schultz and Criss Bardill at the Farmers Market

Thank you to Barb and Criss for talking to voters and registering people at the Downtown Yakima Farmer's Market!

New Member Spotlight



At the League of Women Voters of Yakima County, our strength lies in the dedication and passion of our members. In this new feature, we are proud to introduce and celebrate the individuals who contribute to our shared mission of empowering voters and defending democracy. Each month, we will highlight a member whose efforts and commitment inspire us all. We hope these stories not only recognize their invaluable contributions but also encourage others to get involved in meaningful ways.

Welcome Dorothy Stolz!

Dorothy joined the League of Women Voters of Yakima County last month.

Dorothy is a first generation American, whose parents live through World War II and emigrated to the United for a better life and opportunity. Post high school she became a Board-Certified Radiologic technologist and Computed Tomography Technologist. She has enjoyed working in healthcare for 43 years and has since then retired from her health career in 2022.

Dorothy's hobbies include time in her kitchen with her granddaughters, teaching them cooking, baking and food preservation. She loves to spend time in her garden and is actively involved with Grace of Christ Church locally.

She became interested in The League of Women Voters approximately one year ago from her friend and neighbor, Betty Van Ryder. She supports everyone being represented in our Democracy and subsequently has become a member of our local League of Women Voters.

State and National

National - New LWV CEO!



We're proud to introduce our new CEO, Celina Stewart! A legal scholar, esteemed public speaker, and lifelong democracy defender, Celina formerly served as LWVUS's chief counsel.

Her many accomplishments include spearheading countless voting rights cases as well as implementing our People Powered Fair Maps™ campaign and our One Person, One Vote campaign.

As Pinny Sheoran of LWV Arizona said: "We are so fortunate to have such a powerful woman, a woman of color, a woman who brings such depth and

understanding of the issue of what it takes to make democracy work."

Celina herself has a direct message to League supporters: "We are living in a truly unprecedented and historic time. Every day there's a new attack, and women are being called to save our country...all I need to know now is: who is with me." We can't wait to embark on this new journey with Celina at our helm! - Team LWV

State - 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."

Check back regularly to this page to learn more about our efforts to pursue this important mission—and how you can be involved. [League of Women Voters of Washington - Local News and Democracy \(lwwva.org\)](https://lwwva.org)

Advocacy – Use Your Voice

Take Action: Protecting Democracy and Our Future

As members of the League of Women Voters, we stand together to advocate for a fair and just democracy. This month, we are focusing on three critical issues that require immediate action. These initiatives, guided by our National Office, offer you the opportunity to make your voice heard through petitions and direct communications with your elected officials.

1. **Urge Your Members of Congress to Support the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act** - The freedom to vote is a fundamental right, yet it is under constant threat. Since the 2012 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder*, states have passed laws that disproportionately impact Black voters and other communities of color. The John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (HR14 and S4) aims to restore and modernize the Voting Rights Act to ensure that discriminatory voting practices are stopped. Your voice is essential in urging Congress to support this vital legislation.
2. **Urge Congress to Address the Climate Crisis and Protect Our Youth** - Climate change is not just an environmental issue; it's a matter of justice. Vulnerable communities, especially our youth, are disproportionately affected by the climate crisis. The Children's Fundamental Rights and Climate Recovery Resolution seeks to address this by advocating for a science-based, comprehensive climate recovery plan. Let Congress know that protecting our future demands urgent and bold action.
3. **Support the Expansion of Voting Rights** - Despite the progress we've made, voting rights are still not fully guaranteed for all Americans. By signing this petition and advocating for pro-voter policies, you can help ensure that every eligible voter has equal access to the ballot. Join us in calling for the expansion of voting rights to strengthen our democracy.

Each of these actions is crucial in the fight for equality and justice. Please take a moment to review the details below and make your voice heard by participating in these advocacy efforts.

Urge Your Members of Congress to Support the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act

Every day, the freedom to vote is under attack. Since the 2012 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted the *Voting Rights Act* (VRA), at least twenty-nine states have passed ninety-four laws that make it harder to vote, with the burden falling hardest on Black voters and other voters of color.

We need a fully restored VRA to defend our democracy and protect the freedom to vote. That is why the League is proud to support the reintroduction of HR14 and S4, the *John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act*, vital legislation that is needed to fully restore and modernize the VRA and ensure that discriminatory voting policies are stopped in their tracks. Tell your members of Congress to protect the freedom to vote and support the passage of the JLVRAA. Equality — and our democracy — cannot wait.

[Urge Your Members of Congress to Support the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act | League of Women Voters \(lwv.org\)](https://www.lwv.org)

Urge Congress to Address the Climate Crisis and Protect Our Youth

Climate change and its effects threaten the physical, psychological, and economic well-being of our nation. It disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities, including youth, that have contributed the least to climate change-causing emissions. The League of Women Voters (LWV) believes that climate change is a serious threat facing our nation and planet. LWV supports climate goals and policies consistent with the best available climate science to ensure a stable climate system for future generations.

In July of this year, Congress reintroduced vital legislation known as the *Children's Fundamental Rights and Climate Recovery Resolution*. This resolution recognizes the disproportionate impact of the climate crisis on the health, economic opportunities, and fundamental rights of children in the US. It also acknowledges the need for a national, just, comprehensive, and science-based climate recovery plan to meet necessary emissions reduction targets and stabilize the climate system. The League has endorsed this resolution, but we need your help in telling Congress that this crisis requires bold action now.

Do not let future generations inherit the climate crisis. Urge your Members of Congress to cosponsor the *Children's Fundamental Rights and Recovery Resolution* to address climate change and protect our youth's rights and future!

[Urge Congress to Address the Climate Crisis and Protect Our Youth | League of Women Voters \(lww.org\)](#)

Support the Expansion of Voting Rights

More than 50 years after the *Voting Rights Act* was passed, full protections for voting rights are not guaranteed for all voters. While we have made progress in expanding voter access, many people still face challenges to participating in elections due to factors including income, health, age, race, disability, and gender. Voting is a fundamental right, and all Americans deserve an equal opportunity to make their voices heard in our democracy. Increased accessibility to the electoral process ensures that every eligible voter can exercise their right to vote. Congress must know how the people feel: empowering eligible voters to cast their ballot strengthens our democracy. Please add your name to show Congress that we support voting rights!

In addition to signing this petition, which will show Congress the breadth of support for voting rights, you can also advocate for specific pro-voter policies by sending a message to your Members of Congress via [the League's Action Alerts](#). Leaders of the Republican and Democratic parties have made proposals this Congress that would impact voting. The League would like to see the introduction of bipartisan legislation that includes expanding early voting, allowing no-excuse absentee voting, implementing automatic and online voter registration, improving operations of the Election Assistance Commission, improving language access, and ensuring proper voter list maintenance. Through our work supporting voter access, the League also advocates for same-day voter registration, access for disabled voters, and access for native voters.

Voting rights impact everyone. Urge Congress to protect the right to vote!

[Support the Expansion of Voting Rights | League of Women Voters \(lww.org\)](#)

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 yakimacountylwyc@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