

THE VOTER



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

On the Web at:
<https://lwvyakimacounty.org>

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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

- Cindy Olivas, President
- Janis Luvaas, Treasurer and Membership
- Tracy Levy, Communications Chair/The Voter Editor
- Barb Schultz
- Steve Hill, Budget Chair
- Susan Kaphammer

The Leadership Team meets on the first Monday of the month at 4:30 pm in the second floor conference room at the YWCA, 818 W Yakima Ave, Yakima, WA.

KNOW YOUR LEAGUE

Yakima County League: <https://lwvyakimacounty.org/>

Washington State League: <https://www.lwvwa.org/>

Our National League: <https://www.lwv.org/>

CALENDAR

Friday, July 17, 5:00 pm **350 Yakima & Save Our Wild Salmon** Get Out the Vote for the Planet. Rooted Yakima Valley, 26 N. 1st Street, Yakima

Friday, July 17, 5:30 pm **NAACP** A Day of Good Trouble, honoring John Lewis. Performance Park, N 2nd Street & Sgt. Pendleton Way, Yakima

Saturday, July 18, 11:00 am **NAACP** Create Your Will Experience. Greater Faith Baptist Church. 816 S. 6th Street, Yakima

Monday, July 27, 2:00 pm **LWYYC** Immigrants, guest speaker Danielle Surkaty. West Valley Library, 223 S. 72nd Avenue, Yakima

Monday, August 3, 4:30 pm **LWVYC** Leadership Team Meeting. YWCA, 818 W. Yakima Ave. All members welcome!

Tuesday, August 4 **PRIMARY ELECTION DAY!**
Drop your ballot off by 8:00 pm at one of the ballot boxes around the county (locations listed in voters' pamphlet or [here](#).) If mailing ballot, **mail at least 7 days prior!** Remember to sign your ballot, provide your phone number and date the envelope with the date of return

Saturday, August 8, 10:00 am **LWVWA/LWVYC** Day of Action: Train the Trainer. Best Western Plus Ahtanum Inn, 2408 Rudkin Road, Yakima

Saturday, August 15, 5:30 pm **350 Yakima & Save Our Wild Salmon & The Sierra Club & WA Conservation Action** Yakima Environmental Justice Film Series, "The River Remembers," Glenwood Square, 2110 Tieton Drive, Yakima

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

Big news, voters in Washington will continue to be able to send their ballots in the mail! Make sure that your ballot is postmarked on or before Election Day. The advice is to send your ballot at least a week before the primary Election Day deadline of August 4, 2026. All registered voters should have received the Voters' Pamphlet via USPS. Your ballot will be mailed out starting July 14. Your alternative to return your ballot at a designated Official Ballot Drop Box (locations listed in attached flyers, voters' pamphlet or [here](#)) or in person at the Elections Office at the Yakima County Courthouse. Remember to sign your ballot on the return envelope as it is matched to the signature on your most recent driver's license, add date mailed, and your telephone number in case there is a question about your ballot. In your conversations with family, friends, co-workers and neighbors, remind them to vote. Do not forget to vote!

I hope that you will take the time to watch the Congressional District 4 (CD4) Candidate Forum recording that is posted on the [LWVYC website](#). There will be another CD4 forum recording added to the website soon that was hosted by AARP and the League of Women Voters of Benton-Franklin Co. and the Yakima Co. back in June at the WSU Tri-cities Campus.

The June 16th LWVYC Annual meeting was well attended as I counted eighteen members and six guests in person, along with four members online via zoom. A big 'thank you' to Peter and Amy (Peggy Peterson's daughter and grandson) with the Unity of Yakima Spiritual Life Center for their diligence in setting up the zoom meeting. Rev. David Hacker of St. Michael's Church and chair of the Between the Ridges (BTR) opened the meeting with a Tribal Land Acknowledgement. It was great tribute to the ancestors of this land. Thank you for sharing the importance of the land acknowledgements, Rev. Hacker.

One of the highlights of the Annual Business Meeting was the nomination and election of two new members to the Leadership Team (LT). The new members are Tracy Levy and Susan Kaphammer. Tracy is going to be our Editor for The Voter. Susan has previously been on the Leadership Team. The Leadership team truly welcomes you both. Thank you to Lana, Kitty and Ulla, for taking on this task. At this meeting Peggy Peterson and Dori Perales-Baker were elected as the new Nominating Team for this fiscal year. The third member will be from the LT. The Nominating Team only serves for one year as stated in our bylaws. We are still looking for a member to step up as a Treasurer. In addition, we have LT members Barbara Schultz, Janis Luvaas, and Steve Hill for a total of six. Stepping down from the LT are members Criss Bardill, Joy McKinney, Karri Livingston, Kitty Jubran, and Lana Barnes. They will continue to be at tabling events as part of the Voter Service Committee. Another highlight was the adoption of three programs that the LWVYC members voted to focus on for this next fiscal year. The programs will be on Immigrants' Rights, Getting Out the Vote (GOTV), and Data Centers/AI. If you are interested in researching and being a part of one of these programs, please reach out by email or contact one of the Leadership Team members. Members, if you belong to an organization who are interested, especially if this is your group's field of interest, please let us collaborate and work together. It will take all of us to move forward with these programs. The last highlight was celebrating all our members who recently joined and those who have been members for years. Thank you!

Members, feel free to reach out to me with your ideas, and thoughts for getting involved in community events. Also, any thoughts on fundraising. Last, consider joining the leadership team if you are interested in being a treasurer, or an LT Chair of a committee. These are the committees established: Voter's Service Committee, Program Focus Committee, Action Program Committee, Communication Committee, Members Service Committee, and Budget Committee.

With appreciation,

Cindy Olivas, President

VOTER SERVICES COMMITTEE UPDATE

League members (from left to right) Joy McKinney, Peggy Peterson, and a surprise visit by Steve Hill. Many people celebrated the Juneteenth Day event on Saturday, June 13 at MLK, Jr Park in Yakima. It was a great day and I was early enough to get a shady area to set up the table and canopy. There were lots of wonderful organizations to connect and share comradeship with. I enjoyed listening to the rhythms from Eric Lee's Mumba Drums group and watching Rosie Lee's Rosebud's Cheer and Dance Team. There was a wonderful singer from the Seattle area who sang R & B songs from the 70-80's, which is one of my favorite genres of music. Free hotdogs and chips were given out to attendees at the park. At our tabling event, we had a wonderful connection with 89 attendees that stopped by and chatted with us. Three people took Voter Registration Forms but did not complete and return. Although no one registered to vote, I was glad to share information about mail-in voting, the SAVE Act, and a couple of initiatives that will be on the November Ballot. Again, the popular items for attendees were the pocket Constitution Books. The swag items such as ink pens, voting buttons, and dum-dum pops were also popular. Many thanks to NAACP.



League members: Joy McKinney, Peggy Peterson, and a surprise visit by Steve Hill

Shared by your president and the Voter Service Team.

UNITE & RISE FOR VOTING RIGHT: AUGUST 8

On Aug. 8, 2026, join the League and our partners as we host a nationwide day of honor on the anniversary of the *Voting Rights Act of 1965*.

In addition, the LWVWA is partnering with the LWV Yakima County to host redistricting educational workshops for non-profit leaders in Aug. and for the public in Oct. If you would like to be a part of these events please reach out yakmacountylwvyc@gmail.com



IT'S PRIMARY ELECTION SEASON

The Primary Elections are upon us as the ballots are now being mailed out to all voters in Yakima County. The Elections Office gave the League the voter reach-out flyers via email to share with others. You can find the flyers to share at the end of this issue of The Voter.

Here is a thought to GOTV that takes very little time and effort. Share the flyers with family, friends, organizations, stores, churches and community in your neighborhoods. I walked downtown and passed out some flyers to the radio station main office and the library in West Valley. The Yakima Regional Library has the flyers and will do interdepartmental mail service to the other libraries. The Elections Office mentioned that the flyers were given to all city councils in the valley. Celebrate with others after sending your ballot in for the count!

Cindy

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT 4 CANDIDATE FORUM A BIG SUCCESS!

The turnout was great, with a packed room and a few people standing outside to listen! The Fruitvale Grange was decorated in advance of the event by the Fruitvale Grange members, and they hosted the reception following the forum. There were 180 people counted inside the main meeting room at the Fruitvale Grange on Tuesday, July 7th. The Candidates all arrived by 5:45 p.m. and received the forum rules and agreement in advance. Those who had not returned the signed agreement did so when they arrived. All eleven candidates who are running for the CD4 position were invited to attend the CD4 Candidate Forum. Amanda McKinney, Ken Vaz, Zac Rossi and Matt Boehnke (cancelled that afternoon) were not present. The doors opened at 5:30 p.m., and the forum started around 6:05 p.m. as staff organizers were rushing to set up more seating around the room. Yakima Indivisible hosted the event in partnership with the Fruitvale Grange, the LWVYC, and the Washington Youth Alliance (WYA) Youth Council -Yakima Chapter. All the partners worked together to set up, organize, and set the structure for non-partisan rules and carefully worded the questions. Heidi Pelletier, Chief Development Officer at Yakima Valley Community Foundation and Preston Tucker, president of the WYA Yakima Chapter were co-moderators. Each took turns asking questions and reminding the audience and the candidates of the rules. Several members of the WYA Yakima Chapter were greeters and two were timekeepers of the candidates' answers during the forum. After the forum, the guests were able to speak with candidates individually for the last half hour. Videographer Gary Hughes recorded the forum, and it will be made available to the partnering organization and the candidates. Yakima Indivisible will also have it available on their website, as well as your League of Women Voters of Yakima County. The forum was over at 8:00 p.m.

Many folks were pleased and praised the organizations for their professional and well-organized forum. There were comments made to me about having more candidate forums in the community as this allows voters to feel confident about who they are voting for. My favorite part of this forum experience was seeing people that aren't regulars attending and using the program book for writing notes about candidates. There was diversity tonight in many ways, not just by color of skin, but attendees young and old, community people from different backgrounds attended.

As partners, we were able to set up a table with voting resources and swags. Our League was represented well. There were 41 contacts/interactions to our table. The pocket constitution books, vote buttons, and ink pens with vote messages were popular. I also had handouts provided by the Yakima Elections Office on where Ballot Drop Box Locations are in Yakima County and a County Election Guide 2026 brochure giving dates of voting for the primary and the general elections. Nobody registered to vote, but that was not a surprise. Kitty Jubran and Judy Backer were a great help at the table. Angie Girard, with Yakima Indivisible, and former league member, was valuable in organizing this successful event. Thank you to all the partners, candidates, tv news, newspaper reporters and community people that made this possible. I am ready for another forum, are you?

President Cindy Olivas



The candidates from left to right: John Duresky, Favian Valencia, Elpidia Saaverda, Jerrod Sessler, John Hughs, Devin Poore, and Jacek Kobiesa



A back view of attendees at the forum.

Mail-in Ballots safe – for now UNITE & RISE FOR VOTING RIGHT: AUGUST 8

By Alison McCaffree, LWV of Washington, Democracy Issue Chair

Thanks to a surprise decision by the U.S. Supreme Court on June 29 [in Watson v RNC](#), voters in Washington will continue to be able to put their ballots in the mail as long as they get them postmarked on or before Election Day. In addition, [another federal court decision](#) stopped President Trump's Executive Order requiring the U.S. Post Office to only mail ballots to a federally created list. The order was deemed outside the scope of presidential powers, declared an unconstitutional violation of the separation of powers and violated a [settlement in a 2020 case brought by the NAACP](#).

One of the last decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court's term, Watson v RNC was a case challenging the practice of Mississippi counting ballots mailed by Election Day but counted up to 5 days afterwards. The decision was written by Justice Barrett and signed by Chief Justice Roberts as well as the three liberal justices Kagan, Sotomayor and Brown-Jackson. The decision concludes "The election-day statutes say nothing about ballot receipt, and we cannot add to the words Congress chose."

The threats to our voting system are not over. The decision brought an increase in misinformation about voting fraud and election stealing from the President and others in his administration. We can expect there will be more attempts to confuse voters and block ballots.

You can help.

The League of Women Voter of Washington, as member of the [Washington Voting Justice Coalition \(WVJC\)](#), is running a test of USPS from counties most at risk of being affected by slow mail processing of ballots. Volunteers will send postcards to a designated partner, and we will track the date sent and received.

We must be ever vigilant in making sure the elections run smoothly and every vote gets counted.

For more information, see the [Washington State Vote-By-Mail \(VBM\) Fact Sheet](#) produced by the Office of the Secretary of State and "[VICTORY! Democracy wins, authoritarians lose as laws allowing postmarked ballots to count are upheld in SCOTUS stunner](#)" in NPI's *Cascadia Advocate*.

THE LEAGUE ACTS...

only after careful study and member consensus;
to achieve reasonable, equitable and responsible policy.

SO YOU CAN...

Connect with and strengthen your community.
Research issues from many points of view.
Foster dialogue on important issues.
Advocate for positive change in your community.
Work with others to create stronger communities.
Help preserve our constitutional rights and civil liberties
Learn about a broad range of issues.



MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION FORM

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA COUNTY, OR
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

CONTACT INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____

Street Address

City

State

Zip Code

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Understanding the demographics of LWV's membership base helps us progress in our value of being a fully inclusive organization. **Please fill out as much of the following info as you are comfortable with:**

Gender: _____ Pronouns: _____ Race/Ethnicity: _____ Birth Year: _____

DUES AMOUNT

Please select the dues amount you wish to pay. **The recommended rate is \$75.00**, but you may choose an amount below that, down to a minimum of \$20.00. Higher dues payments help to allow some members to pay below the recommended amount but do not grant additional benefits. *Attach a check payable to the League of Women Voters of the United States.*

☐ \$75.00/year ☐ \$150.00/year ☐ \$250.00/year ☐ \$500.00/year

☐ Choose your own amount (minimum \$20.00): _____

The amount you choose to pay in dues will be split between your local, state, and national League. Would you like to make an additional donation exclusively to your local League?

☐ Yes ☐ No Amount: _____

Pay by credit card or bank account online by clicking on the join/renew form on our website's [Join Page](#) or scanning this QR code:



To pay by check: fill out this form and mail to:

LWVYC, PO Box 723,
Yakima, WA 98907

ADDITIONAL FAMILY MEMBERS?

Do you have a household member wishing to join or renew LWV membership? Please complete an additional form and send in with additional dues, thank you!