



General Meeting

SEPTEMBER 8
 11:30 AM - 1 PM
 2404 N. Howard
The Social Hall

NATURALIZATION CEREMONY

Sep. 17 & Oct. 29
Noon @ Bing
Bev Austin

CANDIDATE FORUM

September 17
 City Hall
 5 PM
Susan Gray

VOTER

General Election Candidates Forum

As you all probably know, LWVSA is sponsoring a forum for the candidates in the November 3, 2015 General election, that will be held on Thursday, September 17, 2015 in the City Council Chambers starting at 5PM. Candidates for Mayor, City Council President, all three City Council districts and two school board races will participate.

If you haven't seen one of these before, they're very instructive. Not merely staged events where the candidates deliver their stump speech. In our forums the candidates have to think on their feet. Candidates are each asked the same questions, taking turns going first. I changed my mind about a couple of candidates in the last election as a result of seeing them at our forum.

The League Forums are taped for later broadcasts on CityCable 5, but are open to the public and, though discouraged from audible comments or applause, the presence of interested spectators adds "positive energy" to the proceedings. Stay for the whole thing or come in or leave at any time between races. If you can't make it to the forum, the rebroadcast schedule will be available around the time of the taping.

Check it out.

Susan Gray

OVERCOME
A Brief History of the Black Vote

The New York Times Magazine August 2, 2015

1870 As part of the Republican led Reconstruction after the Civil War, the 15th Amendment bars states from denying the franchise based on race.

1870 Hiram Rhodes Revels, a Republican, begins his first term as US senator from Mississippi, which was then majority black, becoming the first black man to serve in Congress.

1877 President Rutherford B. Hayes recalls US troops from the former Confederate states, ending Reconstruction.

1900 North Carolina amends the Constitution to require a literacy test and a poll tax.

Exercising the Franchise

League members are already convinced of the importance of being informed voters, but what do we say to our uncommitted kids, grandkids and friends to make them realize that informed voting is an important civil duty?

First, understand what our disengaged citizens are thinking. The LWVSA website has a link to a League-sponsored video interviewing non-voters on their reasons for not 'exercising their franchise'. See: <https://vimeo.com/15406586>

Here are some tips to briefly persuade the reluctant voter.

Sometimes the race is really close – your vote may be crucial.

Examples in recent years:

- 2004 WA Governors race between Dino Rossi and Christine Gregoire – 133 vote victory margin out of 2,810,058 votes cast.
- 2000 US Senate race between Maria Cantwell and Slade Gorton - 2229 vote victory margin out of 2,461,379 votes cast.
- 2000 US Presidential election between George Bush and Al Gore – 537 votes separated the two candidates, out of 5,962,657 cast.

It's your tax money being spent. Tax burden in the US averages to 26.9% of GDP (Wikipedia figures). Don't you want a say in how all that money is being spent?

Certain age groups vote more faithfully than others, something our politicians are quite aware of, when they are legislating. "Age: Young people are much less likely to vote than older ones. From [1972 to 2012](#), citizens 18-29 years old turned out at a rate 15 to 20 points lower than citizens 30 year and older. Gender: [Women's voter turnout](#) has surpassed men's in every presidential election since 1980. In the 2012 election, 7.8% more women than men voted. Interestingly though, older women are actually less like to vote than older men. In 2008, 72.2% of men 75 years and older voted, compared to only 64.9% of women that age.

Socio-economic status: Wealthy Americans vote at much higher rates than those of lower socio-economic status. During the [2008 presidential election](#), only 41% of eligible voters making less

Overcome, cont'd

1965 The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. leads the last of three marches for voting rights from Selma, Ala.

1965 The Voting Rights Act is signed into law by Lyndon B. Johnson.

1993 Congress passes the National Voter Registration Act significantly increasing black voter registration nationwide.

2000 Following the Florida recount, George W. Bush becomes president; he staffs his Department of Justice with ideologues who aim to dismantle the Voting Rights Act.

2011 Republican legislators in Alabama, Kansas, Mississippi, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin pass new voter-ID laws.

2012 President Obama is re-elected; black turnout exceeds white turnout for the first time in American History.

2013 With *Shelby County v. Holder*, the Supreme Court strikes down major provisions of the VRA.

2015 Plaintiffs in *North Carolina NAACP v. McCrory* argue in Federal Court that a North Carolina voting law was purposefully written to have a discriminatory effect against black voters.

than \$15,000 a year voted, compared to 78% of those making \$150,000 a year or more. **Studies** have shown that this difference in turnout affects public policy: politicians are more likely to respond to the desires of their wealthy constituents than of their poorer constituents, in part because more of their wealthy constituents vote.” *-fairvote.org*

Primaries are important. Primaries determine which two candidates will appear in a general election race. The most ideologically committed vote in the primary. Consequently, primary winners tend to skew to extreme candidates. Don't you want candidates who are sensible, rather than the best shouters? Example: In Spokane County's August 2015 primary, 29.6% of registered voters cast ballots. The Secretary of State estimates only 76% of eligible voters are actually registered, so that means **22.5% of eligible voters decided who will appear on our ballot in November.** *Dismal, though we beat King County, in which only 24.5% of registered voters cast ballots.*

Voting in Washington is convenient. Washington State voters have so many advantages over other states. We can register to vote online, by going to the WA St Secretary of State site: <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/myvote/>. We vote by mail, so there are no issues with waiting in line, or juggling work schedules to make it to the polling place. We can study our ballots, taking as much time as we need to make our decisions.

Candidate information is readily available. The League maintains a website, <http://www.vote411.org>, with customized questions for candidates. The Spokesman Review has a robust election section on its website: <http://www.spokesman.com/elections/>. There are websites dedicated to fact-checking national candidates' statements. See: <http://www.factcheck.org> or <http://www.politifact.com/>. On <http://www.opensecrets.org/> find out where candidates' donations come from. LWV has put together a document helping people evaluate candidates. See it at: <http://lww.org/content/how-judge-candidate>.

Did you know that <https://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/myvote/> has election participation information for yourself, and others? I use it to see if my kids need to be *reminded* to pull their ballots out of the junk mail pile, and mark them.

Encourage disaffected friends and relatives to go to at least one 'meet the candidate' event. I don't have any stats on this, but I have found it inspiring to meet our local candidates, whether or not they were in the 'right' party. For the most part these folks seem civic-minded and thoughtful, and amazingly willing to take criticism and put energy into trying to serve the public. It's an antidote for easy cynicism about politicians. One of the best forums is the League's *Spokane General Election Forum* on Sept 17th, 5 PM, in the City Council Chambers.

- Sally Phillips

In Memory

Martha Lee Sandlin Preece, born Nov. 24, 1920, died Aug. 9, 2015, was an activist and long time member of the Spokane League.



GMA Report from State Convention: Lunell Haught

Be it resolved that the LWVWA form a committee to review Goal 7 of the Growth Management Act, **Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.**

Background: Land Use Development applications ‘vest’ when the application is filed, not when it is approved. Vesting occurs when development laws ‘freeze’ in relation to a particular permit to build. Vesting laws are aimed at assuring developers and other land owners a reasonable level of certainty in the rules they will have to abide by when they build. Currently most counties don’t have a practical sunset for the vesting (similar to ‘grandfathering’). The other issue is that an application can be filed when land use categories and zones are changed by the County (expanding the growth boundary) and if the decision is appealed to the GMA Hearing Board or court, despite the land use change being reversed, the vested projects can still be built. There is no recourse. This issue occurs primarily when a jurisdiction changes (expands) the urban growth boundary.

The Growth Management Act was adopted by the State of Washington in 1990. In 2006 the League of Women Voters of Washington (Washington Education Fund) published “The Growth Management Act of Washington State: Successes and Challenges” which examined results in several of the Act’s 13 planning goals. It has been referred to in League documents as both a study and a report. The report addressed two goals but did not address Goal 7 (Permits). It was not addressed in the 2006 report because at the time it did not seem to be a significant factor in the implementation of the Act.^{1[1]} Since that time there has been concern that some developments and urban growth boundary expansions appear to violate the intent of the Act in some Washington counties.

RCW (36.70A.020), 13 planning goals are used to guide the development and adoption of comprehensive plans and development regulations. The topics of the goals include (not in priority order):

1. **Urban growth in areas where facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner.**
2. **Reduce sprawl. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development.**
3. Transportation,
4. Housing.
5. Economic development.
6. Property rights.
7. **Permits. Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability.**
8. Natural resource industries.
9. Open space and recreation.
10. Environment.
11. Citizen Participation and coordination.

12. Public facilities and services.
13. Historic preservation.²

The League was active in 1968 -1973 in adopting positions and these were used to support advocacy which resulted in Washington State's adoption of the Growth Management Act. When adopted there was legislation and initiatives to challenge the Act, based on the assumption that it would create a decline in property values and rights. League consistently educated voters and supported the Act.

The way vesting/permitting is handled in several counties (Snohomish, Pierce, Thurston, Spokane, Benton, Kitsap) has resulted in a subverting of GMA Goals 1, 2, and 7 with no citizen remedy.

Positions on which Resolution is based: The Program In Action 2013-2015 refers to an Appendix on pages 43 and 44 which address GMA issues, and this is unavailable on the electronic version on the LWVWA website, however

LU-2 p. 31 states: Local land use plans must be comprehensive and should consist of policies, goals, and a current inventory of pertinent planning elements. All local governments should be required to have a valid land use plan and to regulate land use consistent with such a plan. ... Exceptions to some planning requirements should have to be substantiated by the responsible government and granted conditionally and for cause.

LU-3 p. 31 states: A comprehensive statewide land use plan must address urban growth as well as long-range and use goals, policies and guideline. All decisions made by other state agencies should be consistent with this plan.

Rational: Several counties in Washington are out of compliance with the Growth Management Act, and one of the areas it is most devastating is in situations where there is permanent land use change, subsequent building, with no recourse. This way of developing is a newer practice that results in unintended consequences impacting neighborhoods, rural lifestyle, wildlife and natural areas, as well as creating an unfair advantage for developers who know how to use this tactic.

The advantage of studying it now is that the economy is heating up, meaning more building will occur, it is an ongoing problem to those who don't believe it is in the spirit of the GMA, and there is legislation being introduced each year to both support the practice and to change it. There are other organizations (Futurewise) who have addressed this and testified in favor of legislation to address the issue.

The reason not to do this is there may be little energy and time for it. I don't know about budget. But it's easier to find money than time. This is a complex issue and like most of our work requires focus, patience, relentless attention. **The GMA was an important issue for LWV, and a review and correction is appropriate. Our interests are ongoing, not just getting the law passed, but making sure it works as intended.**

² 2002 c154§ 1; 1990 1st ex.s. c 17 § 2.

Evidence issue is a priority: SB 5921, HB 1394 and HB 2245, which got no traction, but I believe with LWV involvement more attention and support could be generated to fix this, either administratively or legislatively.

One of the reasons it isn't considered a statewide issue is that 'there's just a few bad actor counties' but state League involvement would demonstrate this is a state issue, not just something a few (big) counties are interested in.

Time sensitive and government action? People are moving to Washington, they need to live somewhere. People are having babies, they're growing up and wanting to stay here. Pressure is on our natural resources to do this as best as we can, or let growth happen haphazardly. Government action? This is a government Act implemented through government agencies.

Membership Payment Form

Yes, I want to join/renew membership in LWV/ Spokane Area

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: H _____ W _____

Fax: _____ e-mail _____

I would like to receive the newsletter by mail or email (please check one)

Please indicate amount enclosed: _____

Please make check payable to & mail to: LWVSA 2404 N. Howard St., Spokane WA 99205

Pay by Credit Card through Pay Pal at www.lwvspokane.org/join.html

- \$70 Individual Dues: Local \$20 - State \$19 - Nat'l \$31
- \$105 Household
- \$110 Sustaining Member
- \$150 Benefactor
- \$ 35 Scholarship (call for application)
- \$ 35 Student

Coming soon!

Watch your email box for our upcoming **League Drinks** event.

Date and location TBD, but join us if you can for this informal sharing of ideas and thoughts on our local political scene!

From LWVUS

Ninety-five years ago, after decades of tireless advocacy, women finally won the right to vote with the certification of the 19th Amendment!

It took just over a year after Congress approved the 19th Amendment for the required two-thirds of states to ratify the amendment and enshrine women's right to vote in our Constitution. During this final push, Carrie Chapman Catt, leader of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, founded the League of Women Voters to "finish the fight," and educate millions of women about the power of their votes.



[Test your knowledge of the 19th Amendment and learn more about the fight for women's suffrage in the U.S. with our interactive quiz!](#)

The trajectory of American history has always been to greater, not less, freedom. But Making Democracy Work® has never been easy, nor is it ever finished. And as such, the fight Catt charged us with in 1920 continues today: ensuring that every eligible voter has free and fair access to the polls.

Calendar

September 8	General Meeting, 11:30 AM - 1 PM. Ted McGregor of The Inlander on Campaign Accuracy.
16	Board Meeting @ the office. 9 AM.
17	Candidate Forum @ City Hall. 5 PM.
22	National Voter Registration Day
October 13	General Meeting, 11:30 AM - 1 PM. Ballot Issues and Constitutional Amendment Study from National.
21	Board Meeting

The 19th Amendment opened the democratic process to 23 million women in 1920 – do you know how many of them turned out later that year? [Find out and learn more about the fight for the 19th Amendment through our fun quiz!](#)

In 1920, the League was founded as an outgrowth of this vital movement. From the beginning, the League has sought to strengthen our democracy by empowering voters to engage with their government and to tackle the most important issues in our communities, states and nation. Today, we are building on this legacy by working to keep the power of our democracy in the hands of the people.

The fight for universal voting rights continues today, so as we mark this historic anniversary, we are reminded how valuable our right to vote remains.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF THE SPOKANE AREA
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WWW.LWVSPokane.ORG

TO:

“The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government, and influences the public policy through education and advocacy.”