



Creating A More Perfect Democracy



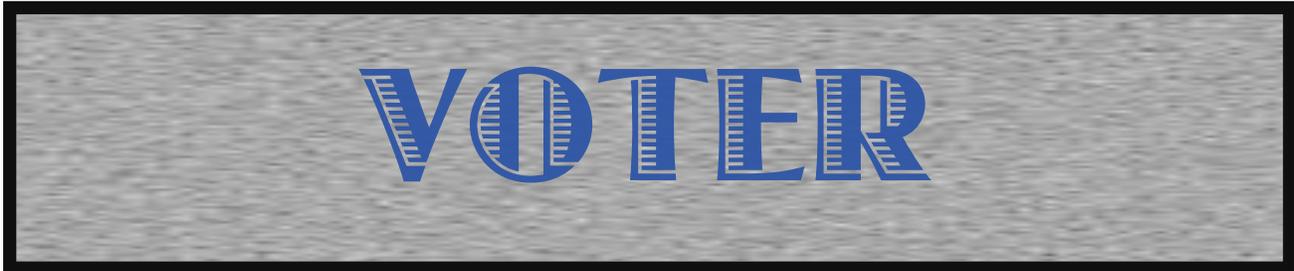
CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

General Meeting

MARCH 13 @11:30

2404 N. HOWARD

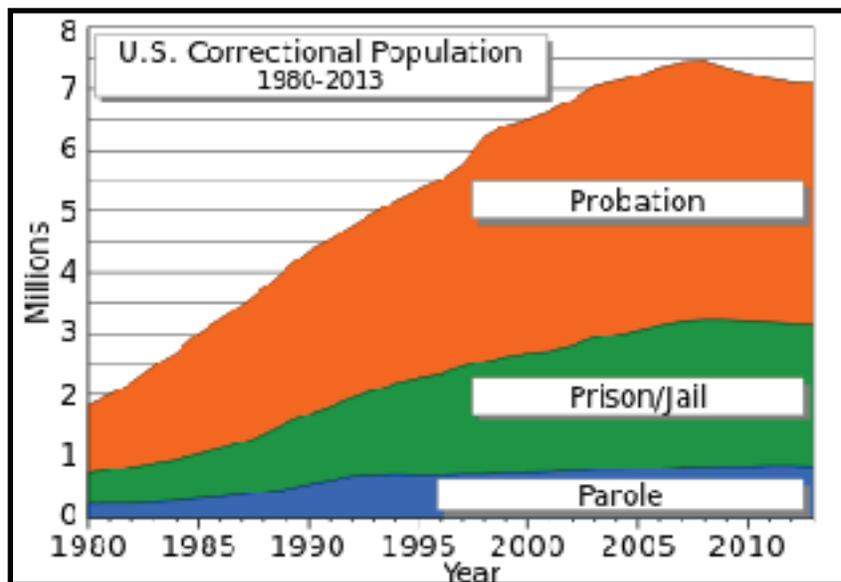
Downstairs



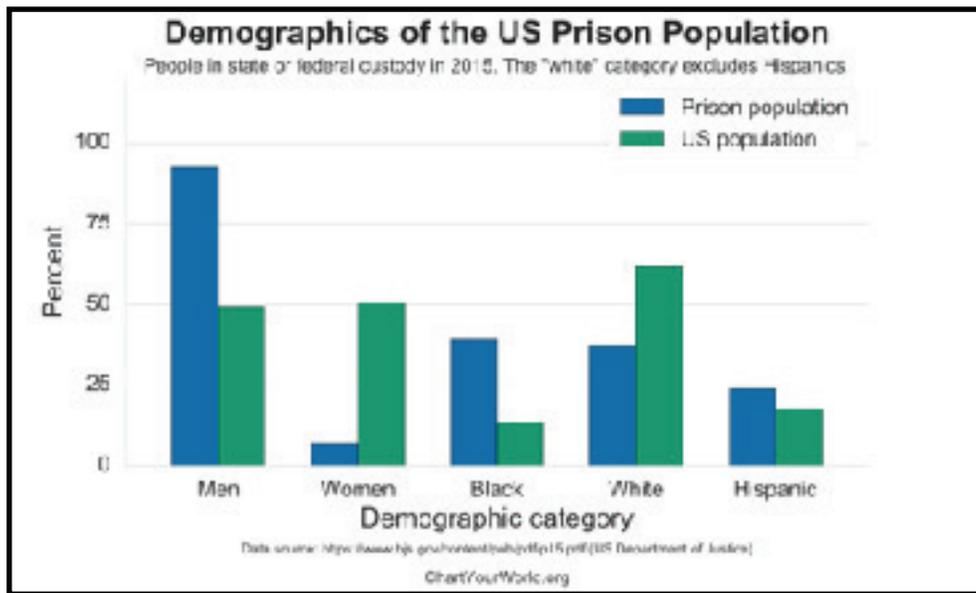
Criminal Justice Reform in Spokane County

A document, **Sentencing Guidelines Commission: Spokane County Criminal Justice Reform Efforts**, recently prepared by Honorable Mary Ann Moreno, Spokane County Superior Court, and Dr. Jacqueline van Wormer, Spokane Regional Criminal Justice Administrator, outlines problems in the criminal justice system and why our community as well as the Nation is seeking reform. Three statistics make clear the problem we have in the US.

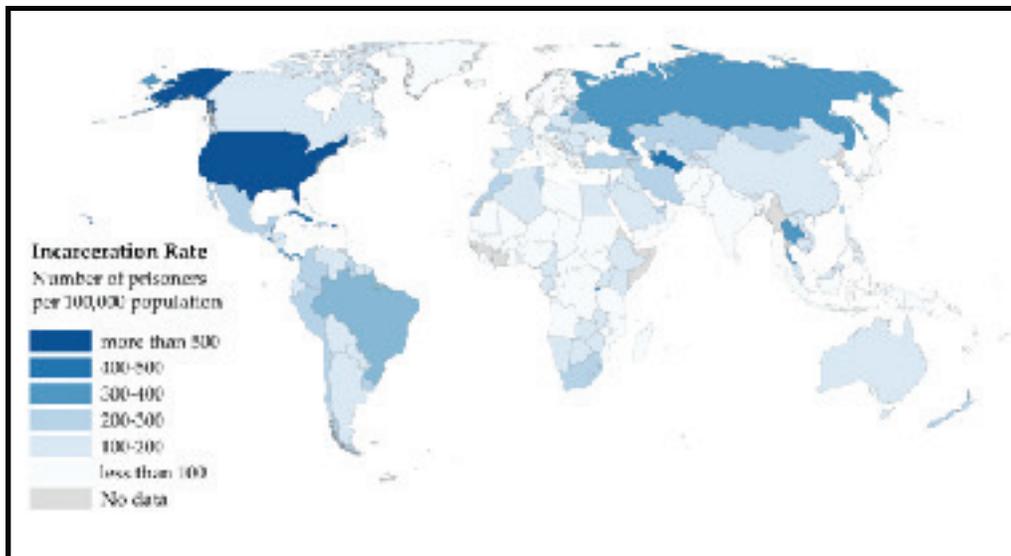
The first statistic is the growth of the number of people in the prison population. (Incarceration in the United States, wikipedia, US Bureau of Justice Statistics)



The second statistic is the comparison of race and sex in the prison population. (Incarceration in the United States, wikipedia, US Bureau of Justice Statistics)



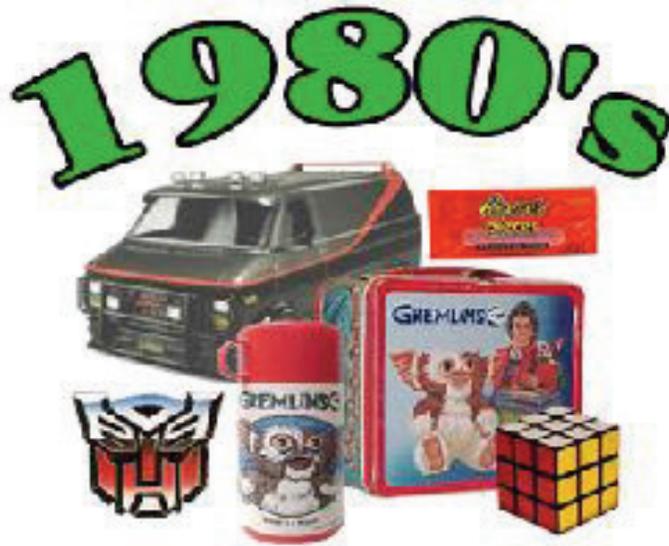
The final statistic is how incarceration rates compare with the rest of the world. (Incarceration in the United States, wikipedia, Jannick88)



As the County builds a baseline for reform, they have focused on the length of detention, the amount of money required for bail and pre-trial services.

Please join us for an information session on this topic at 11:30 on March 13 at the "Office."

Thank You for Your Membership Renewals and Donations



Many of us may remember being in school, teaching school, or having children in school in the 1980's. If any of these situations fits you and you lived in Washington State, you may recall learning about civics--the importance of and actions involved in being a good citizen. Fast-forward 30 years, and we all might need a refresher course or at least a constant reminder that voting is both a privilege and a duty and that all branches of government have separate and balancing roles and all branches have an impact on our lives.

The State is doing catch-up, too. After over 30 years, a stand-alone civics education course has become a priority with both chambers in the Legislature, as HB 1896 has

passed into the Senate with provisions for curriculum and teacher development in civics education ("Civic Education seems to be the big topic in the Legislature these days. Both parties are anxious to get more students involved in civic life." *The Voter* LWV, Spokane Area, February 2018, http://www.lwvspokane.org/files/feb_2018_pdf.pdf).

Spokane District 81 has recruited a teacher on special assignment, Susie Gerard, to lead social studies curriculum for the district, and as evidenced by her informed and inspiring presentation to the Spokane Chapter in February 2018, she is a champion for civics education. Aside from sharing civics education resources (*Pam -- see attachment*), she suggested several ways the local chapter could support civics education in the schools.

The local chapter responded, and a small Civics Education Committee formed with the initial goal of building on Gerard's ideas and adding our own. Here are the committee's beginning ideas for partnering in civics education:

- Voter registration in high schools
- Classroom presentations
- Recognition of students' classroom civics work

This committee needs members and their ideas. Please consider attending a Civics Education Committee meeting on Tuesday, March 13 (following the regular League meeting at 11:30 am). Your input is important so organizing and brainstorming can continue and lead to school partnerships supporting civics education. Contact Beth Pellicciotti, pelliccmb@gmail.com, if you would like more information on the work of this committee.

Thank you, AVISTA, for printing the LWV Spokane "TRY's" - They Represent You!

County Commissioners Update

House Bill 2887, called Expansion of Commissioners Bill, addressing county commissioner elections, has passed through the state house and senate and is at the Governor's desk. The League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area supported this bill because it will create a better format representation for Spokane County. Spokane County is the 4th most populous county in the state. Citizens in such a large county need to know that their views are heard and represented. This is difficult when only three commissioners represent the same 488,000 and growing number of people.

This bill will add two county commissioners for counties over 400,000; elect commissioners by district in a primary and general election, and draw district lines by a bi-partisan committee.

This means each commissioner can more adequately represent the people of the district, can prepare for and attend more Committee and Commission meetings than are currently possible and two commissioners can discuss pertinent issues outside of public meetings.

The language was crafted from current state law and county charter models for improved representative government.

In 2015 the voters of Spokane County rejected a ballot measure to add two county commissioners. The opposition to the measure pointed out: the new commissioners would still be elected county-wide which did not improve representation and the county commissioners, two of whom would be running for office, would draw the district lines.

The issue of cost was not fully explored but one might assume an increase of two commissioners salaries to the County budget.

Following a failure of the measure, various people began a grass-roots effort to craft legislation that would be supported by local officials. League was approached by Mary Lou Johnson, a League member and one of the grass-roots activists, and the Board, with a strong majority, supported the measure on Jan 25, 2016. With the support from the LWVSA Board, the League of Women Voters of Washington supported the bill by signing in to hearings.

The original bill failed in 2016 and the local grass-roots committee continued to lobby legislators and introduced new legislation for 2017-18 biennium. The bill and went to the floor with the sponsorship of Riccelli, Holy, Volz, Ormsby, Shea, McCaslin, and Frame. The bill passed both the House (83 yeas/14 nays) and the Senate (38 yeas/10 nays) with most area legislators supporting. **At this time, it is before the Governor**

Spokane Area League supports a county charter. That is a long shot given the failure of the attempt in the 1990's. We still function as a county under the State. This lobby effort is the only movement in a long time to improve local government. Beginning on pg. 6 of the Membership Handbook, our position includes support of "a legislative body large enough to provide adequate representation." That is what this law will do, move us from a Nineteenth Century form of government to a Twenty-First Century form of government.

I do regret that I, personally, did not post the actions of the Board or inform the members of the actions at the state level. I did not take an interest in the issue because, after past experiences, I did not expect it to succeed. For me, it is a lesson learned.

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

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: H _____ W _____

Email _____ Fax _____

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

Please make check payable & mail to: LWVSA 2404 N. Howard St., Spokane WA 99205 and indicate amount enclosed: _____

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



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TO: