

September 2022

The Voter

A newsletter from



Public Safety and the Role of the King
County Prosecutor: Know Before You Vote!

Thursday, September 8, 2022 at 7:00pm



Felicia Hudson (Moderator),
Federal Way Black Collective



Anita Khandelwal,
King County Public Defense



Chanel Rhymes, NW
Community Bail Fund



Dan Satterberg, King County
Prosecuting Attorney



Sean Goode,
Choose 180

Register on Zoom to submit questions or tune in live on YouTube!

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September Forum: Collaboration Makes a Fabulous Forum

Heather Kelly, President

As we previewed in the Summer Voter, the September forum will focus on the role of the prosecutor. The evolution of this forum offers some important lessons on collaboration and creative thinking.

When planning first kicked off back in April, our forum team wanted to present information on the wide-ranging discretion of the prosecutor, a less common focus of criminal justice discussions. In May, however, Washington Innocence Project and Town Hall presented a marvelous panel on precisely that topic, called “The Power of the Prosecutor: A Community Discussion About Achieving True Justice.” I highly recommend watching the recording here: <https://townhallseattle.org/event/the-power-of-the-prosecutor/>).

After some initial hemming and hawing (mostly on my part) about where to go next, forum team lead Deb Carstens posed a wonderful question, “What if we just reach out to those panel organizers and see how we can build on that conversation?” This mindset, stressing collaboration and outreach rather than competition, laid the foundation for our September event. Deb connected with Felicia Hudson of Federal Way Black Collective and Jude Ahmed of the Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle, and together they came up the idea of giving voters a kind of prosecution primer: What that official does at different stages of a criminal case and why our vote matters.

With the topic decided, our planning took another exciting turn. David Endicott with the Puget Sound Passport Rotary Club previously asked to stay in the loop as we planned forums, and he eagerly signed on to help organize this one.

Together, our four organizations convened an incredible panel and undertook a broad marketing campaign, which hopefully will yield a big turnout!

Overall, this planning process was a great reminder that we are stronger together. Forums shouldn’t be about spotlighting the League, but serving the voters. We reach more voters when we join with other organizations behind that common goal. I’m so grateful for the opportunity to learn and grow in partnership with other community leaders, particularly on topics such as this one where the League still has a lot of learning and listening to do.

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Yes You Can!

Barbara Tengtio, Second Vice President



Yes, you can do something about mis/disinformation! Feeling a bit helpless or don't know what to do when you see mistruths on social media or hear them in conversation? Take action with these tips below and be a difference maker! Be a League of Women Voters Seattle-King County (LWVSKC) advocate for truth!

Let's start with some definitions. **Misinformation** is inadvertently sharing false information without the intent to harm. **Disinformation** is creating and sharing false information with the intent to harm.

So, **why should combating** mis/disinformation be important to you? Four reasons:

1. Disinformation spreaders continue to find vast audiences in today's hyper-networked social media eco-system - more than 8 in 10 Americans get their news from their digital devices.
2. Voter suppression, intimidation and disinformation is not a new problem for targeted populations, especially voters of color, but social media has created new opportunities, threats and context (Speed of transmission and low to no cost for malign actors; Many more platforms to build on and amplify division and inequality, contributing to radicalization - stoking fears and tying it to election disinformation creates conditions where violence is acceptable).
3. Disinformation has many harms and is often connected - we frequently see connections between racialized disinformation, covid disinformation, abortion rights disinformation, and election disinformation.
4. Combating mis/disinformation is a racial justice issue.

To combat mis/disinformation you need to be able to **identify it**:

1. Research the Source - identify who is sharing the content that can provide you with more context.
2. Check the Date - confirm if it's a current event or a past event that is being re-circulated.

3. Cross-Check - check to see if reliable sources are reporting the same information.
4. Read Past the Headline - avoid falling for click-baits, content and headlines taken out of context to make it seem more dramatic to get people to engage.
5. Pause and Question - if the content triggers a visceral, emotional response from you (fear, anger, excitement). This is a red flag!

Here is **what you can do** to stop mis/disinformation:

1. Don't Engage, Avoid Amplification - it might sound counter-intuitive, but do not provide the oxygen to false content by engaging (commenting, reacting, sharing).
2. Debunk Misinformation with the Correct Information - counter mis/disinformation that is spreading rapidly with messaging the right information. Steps to take include:
 1. Name what is false.
 2. Name the motivations behind why the bad actors are spreading it.
 3. State the truth and link information with trusted sources. Never link the mis/disinformation content.
3. Avoid Cross-Pollination - avoid sharing from one social media to another platform.
4. Report When Needed - whenever you see mis/disinformation, flag it for removal from the social media network. (Election Disinformation Tipline - <https://reportdisinfo.org/>).

And LWVSKC (you and me) can do more! We can out-organize mis/disinformation by inoculating voters with the right information by:

1. Connecting and educating voters on important election issues (register, promote "Be a Voter").
2. Saturating your social media with fun and informative/truthful information.
3. Equipping voters with the tools necessary to debunk and report mis/information when they encounter it (sharing this article).
4. Providing voters with candidate forums and equipping voters with [VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org) and other information on candidates' priorities and platforms.

It's election season. Let's all do our part to help ensure voters are seeing and hearing truthful election information to make informed voting choices.

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The Fight to Vote

Barbara Tengtio, Second Vice President



Can you count the number of ways to suppress a vote? Did you know there were multiple ways? And that the number of ways to suppress voting is growing? Get educated - watch "Suppressed and Sabotaged - The Fight to Vote", a documentary film about all the ways voter suppression is occurring throughout the United States. You can access

the film* here:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/play/Zsfr2vLucMTorRMoQOpLYrO7LbhsM1_0eYCdpD3um9voEEB8z1Mh6mfb_QP5pUm-17j6

This film documents the various ways votes were suppressed during the 2018 Georgia governorship election as well as steps taken throughout 2021 and 2022 to further suppress voting throughout all of the United States. Specifically, in 2018, minority voters' ability to vote was suppressed in Georgia in the following ways:

- Polls Were Closed - since 2012 Georgia has closed 214 polling places affecting 1.3 million voters, 75% of which were in majority African American counties.
- Registrations Were Put on Hold - during 2018 53,260 registrations were put on hold, 80% were people of color. (The election was decided by 54,723 votes.)
- Voters Were Purged - in a single night in July 2017 over half a million people were purged - 8% of Georgia's registered voters. Since 2013, over 890,000 eligible voters have been purged. (Democratic counties are purged at a rate of almost four times that of Republican counties)
- Absentee Ballots Were Not Delivered - 281,490 Georgians requested absentee ballots for the 2018 election but tens of thousands did not receive them in time to vote. (97% of new absentee ballots in 2018 were from Democratic counties.)
- Polling Station Inequalities - fewer booths were provided at minority polling locations leading to long lines. Voters in minority voting areas waited several hours to vote. This led to less voting because voters got tired of waiting and/or could not wait any longer and left without voting.
- Exact Match Law - voters were declined the right to vote because of exact match discrepancies. (Latinos and Asian Americans are six times more likely to be victims of exact match law. African Americans are eight times more likely to be victims of exact match law.)
- Provisional Ballots Not Counted - provisional ballots can only be counted if the voter comes back within 3 days with valid ID. This was not communicated and so most ballots were not counted.

- Poll Tax - Fewer voting booths were provided in minority voting areas which led to hours of waiting and lost income for many voters.

Did you count the ways? Eight different ways to suppress votes were deployed in Georgia during the 2018 election. Since then, the ways to suppress voting have grown throughout our country.

In 2021, nineteen states passed 34 laws to restrict access to the ballot. Some examples include:

- Florida - put limits on the number of drop boxes and implemented vote by mail changes that require re-enrollment every election cycle. (6 million Florida voters who previously got mail ballots no longer automatically receive them.)
- Texas - banned 24-hour voting and drive through voting.
- Georgia - rewrote rules around ID requirements and implemented drop box and mail in voting restrictions.

For 2022, the attack against voters is continuing with election subversion and the election of partisan officials who have responsibility for the integrity of elections. During our recent primary in Seattle and the Eastside “This Ballot Dropbox is Under Surveillance” signs appeared in an attempt at voter intimidation.

While this film seems to paint a very bleak picture for our democracy, the message is “If your vote didn’t matter, they wouldn’t be trying to stop it.” And LWVSKC agrees! Every vote counts. We continue to stand firm behind our mission to empower voters and defend democracy. We will continue to conduct voter registration events throughout the county, especially targeting under-served areas and we will encourage all to be voters. You can help your community by becoming a voter services volunteer. Take action! Contact voterservices@lwvskc.org.



*Thank you to Fixed Democracy First, Meaningful Movies Project and Brave New Films for sharing their recorded movie evening and panel discussion with LWVSKC. The film is less than an hour to watch and the panel discussion follows.

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Observer Corps Report: Newly Appointed King County Sheriff on the Right Track!

Mary Taylor, First Vice President

Each month, Keela Williams observes the King County Council Law, Justice, Health, and Human Services

Committee (KCLJHH) hearings. She then summarizes the meeting in a written report. Keela not only summarizes the content of the meeting, but she also documents how the meeting was conducted, noting simple but important aspects of the meeting such as, accessibility, promptness, attendance, adherence to a pre-released agenda and civility among the members of the committee.

Keela is a member of the LWVSKC Observer Corps. Keela, a former Montessori Teacher who operated her own small school before retiring, has been politically active since college. She joined the League in February 2022 after learning about the “good and extensive work that is being done by the League”. She then joined Observer Corp in April 2022.

Observer Corps offers League members an opportunity to follow local issues of their choice and share the information with other League members and the public. The objectives of Observer Corps are to verify that the government is following open meeting laws, promoting transparency and accountability in government through regular oversight, educating the public about what is going on in government and identifying issues for League advocacy.

When observing and reporting on meetings, League members can also dig deeper into issues that have been the focus of League endorsements, positions, forums, and committees. Keela’s most recent report gave her the opportunity to dig deeper into the League’s 2020 endorsement of King County Charter Amendment No. 5 - Making the King County Sheriff an Appointed Position. A major component of the League’s rationale for endorsement of appointment versus election was that appointment would provide increased accountability to residents, flexibility when change is needed, and keener oversight of performance and compliance with county ordinances and policies. A key part of Keela’s July Observer Corps report was a summary of the newly appointed King County Sheriff Patti Cole-Tindall’s presentation to the KCLJHH Committee that confirmed the Sheriff’s commitment to this approach.

Highlights of the Sheriff’s revised vision, mission, and goals included: policing with compassion, treating everyone with respect and kindness and incorporating these values into the Sheriff’s Office Strategic Framework and Policy; another goal is to strengthen the partnership between law enforcement and the community. Sheriff Cole-Tindall will

be creating two new divisions: Community Programs and Services and Special Operations. She is committed to transparency and stated they are supportive of oversight as expected by the community working with the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO).

The Sheriff emphasized that the Sheriff's Office Dashboards concerning use of force and internal investigations are available to the public.

When Keela was asked about her experience as an Observer Corps volunteer, she said, "I enjoy listening in on the process and being the eyes and ears of the League and reporting to the public". She was also "pleasantly surprised and relieved to hear that some real work is being done to improve the practices and policies of the Sheriff's Office, as well as building trust between all communities and the Sheriff's Office". She noted that "while she has found it challenging to whittle down an entire meeting to a concise report, it has been a good challenge". Observer Corps is a win/win – the observer and the public learn and benefit from the process.

If you are interested in Observer Corps, or becoming an observer, please visit the Observer Corps Webpage at https://www.lwvskc.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=711832&module_id=465235, or email me directly at marytaylor@LWVSKC.org

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Kimonti Carter Released from Prison

Heather Kelly, President



In May, the League hosted a forum and discussion based on the film *Since / Been Down*. The film told the story of Kimonti Carter, who was sentenced to life in prison for his role in a gang-related murder. In prison, he became "a teacher, mentor, leader, and advocate for the power of transformative justice." (See <https://www.kimonticarter.com/>.)

After the forum, numerous League members and supporters wrote letters supporting Kimonti's release. Those letters were included in materials provided to the judge who was considering his case for resentencing. The hearing was held on the afternoon of July 8. Based on the evidence of Kimonti's rehabilitation, along with changes in law requiring

the judge to consider Kimonti's young age at the time of his crime, Kimonti's sentence was reduced to 25 years—the time he had already served. He was released from prison on July 22.

Kimonti is now rebuilding his life and continuing to share his passion for transformative justice with the public. A fund has been established to support his re-entry into the community. If you are moved by his story, please join me in donating to the fund by clicking [here](#).

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Member Obituary: Betty Culbert

Margaret Austin, Fellow League Member

Betty Culbert, longtime lovely member of Bellevue and Issaquah units of LWV Lk Wa East and LWV Seattle-King County passed away peacefully in June 2022.

Betty's contributions to League came from her particular experiences and background, interests, passions, and daily reading.

She and her husband Bill lived in Japan and Geneva, Switzerland during Bill's career in the U.S. State Department's Diplomatic Corp. In Switzerland their whole family learned to ski, hike, and sail (on Lake Geneva).

Upon Bill's retirement, Boeing encouraged Bill to move to Seattle. He did. Our League benefited!

As an avid hiker Betty worked with Harvey Manning to develop trails and lead hikers in the Issaquah Alps. She was an enthusiastic member of the "Renton Women's Hiking Group" which is about to celebrate its 50th anniversary. In Maple Valley, Betty was a docent at Lake Wilderness Arboretum. As an artist she created beautiful driftwood sculptures.

At LWV unit meetings Betty would often bring ideas to share from newspaper clippings concerning the topic of the day and was always interested in what others had to say. She belonged to her local library book club and even when becoming blind, she would listen to the assigned book on tape so she could participate in her "zoom" book club meeting.

As was her wish, her cremated remains will be scattered in three places: Mt. Rainier, Cougar Mountain, and at Tahoma National Cemetery next to her husband of sixty-seven years.

The funeral took place shortly after her death; a celebration of life will be announced later.

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League Support for Reproductive Rights

Meg Van Wyk

This special alert is important to be fully aware of the League's official position on reproductive rights. Quoted from page 17 of our "League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County Full Public Policy Positions Revised and adopted 5/21/2022":

- **Support policies that promote reproductive choice. 1994**
 - A. The constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices should be protected. Restrictions impose undue burdens on the right to an abortion.

With this constitutional right under siege we must now gather in unity to protect our rights. The majority of Americans support these rights. The League helps activate their voices at the ballot box.

Please [donate to the League](#) now so the League can continue to defend the rights of girls and women. The full text of our Policy Positions can be found here: [LWVS-KC Public Policy Positions](#).

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Meet Our New Editor

I'm Angela Sponsler and I am excited to work as the editor of The Voter. I have lived in Seattle for eight years. Currently I am an Office Manager at a local foundation and have worked in administrative and operations roles for most of my career. In the past couple of years I earned my Masters in Library and Information Science from UW. My partner and small dog help me enjoy my free time with hikes, long walks and art projects. I am an avid reader and always love chatting about recent great finds.



Recapping the Board Retreat

Barbara Erickson, Secretary

The Board, consisting of 13 directors, four of whom are new to the Board this year, met for its annual retreat on July 31st at the home of President Heather Kelly.

Two main themes surfaced: The need to increase and engage volunteers/members and the need to ensure the health of the Board itself. As to the first requirement, several avenues were addressed which are designed to raise the profile of LWVSKC in the eyes of the membership and the public:

- To be alert for and available for community events, press release communications, and partnering with other organizations in the area. At these events, take photos, get quotes, and write a brief summary.
- Commit to attending at least one unit meeting, interfacing with Unit Liaison Sarah Beth, to maintain the units' connection to the Board and continue to strengthen two-way communications.
- Be aware of and communicate to the Development Committee ways to spread the donor base, e.g., dissemination of events via Facebook and other social media outlets, which promote League involvement.
- Increase membership among younger voters and historically disenfranchised communities by working collaboratively with other organizations.

Prioritizing the health of the Board and other League leaders is paramount. The goal here is not simply to avoid burnout—we want to really enjoy doing this work! The viability of our volunteer base is no less important than accomplishing our stated missions. As to this goal, we discussed:

- Reducing the number and scope of our projects this year to ensure greater efficacy when our time and energy are limited.
- Focusing our resources on projects that will have the greatest impact.
- Seeking efficiency, connectivity and commitment in ourselves and our members.

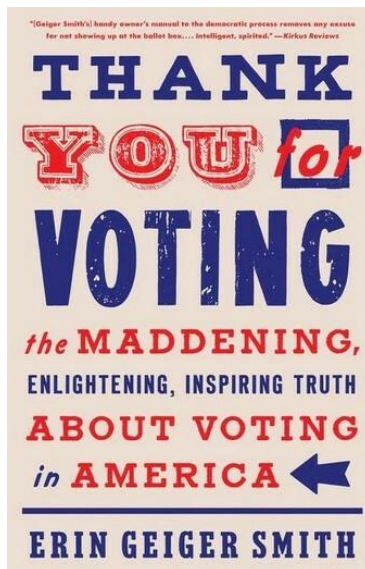
The Board members demonstrated their creativity, willingness to work hard and their dedication to the League and to the other Board members. All agreed that solidifying more limited goals this year will hopefully build stronger, more sustainable practices in the years to come.

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Thank You For Voting : The Maddening, Enlightening, Inspiring Truth About Voting In America

By Erin Geiger Smith

Review by Vicky Downs



E.G.Smith tells us that for many years we have been a democracy in name only. “The 1965 Voting Rights Act gave many people alive today their first opportunity to vote,” and other ground breaking laws benefited the parents and grandparents of today’s America. “A white woman born in 1900 would have been one of the first to vote when she turned twenty-one, while many Asian immigrants born that year would not have their citizenship approved until they turned fifty and an African American living in the South might not have cast a ballot until she was 65 years old.”

Each state has its own rules for voting. While felons in Vermont and Maine retain their voting rights when incarcerated, states such as Illinois and Ohio restore rights immediately after felons are released from prison. Texas and

Georgia require felons to complete probation before voting. Felons in Iowa are barred from voting, for life.

In the past, voting suppression was “crude and blunt.” Literacy tests and poll taxes made it almost impossible for African Americans to vote. Today gerrymandering and other rules can make it difficult for some, especially minorities and the poor.

In recent years “gerrymandering has exploded in the public consciousness.” What is it? Gerrymandering means to divide an area into voting districts that give unfair advantage to one political party.

It has been done “for hundreds of years [by] politicians of both parties when they have a chance.”

Can the Supreme Court stop it? Not likely. One day in 2019 the Supreme Court heard two partisan gerrymandering cases. Four liberal justices “indicated that they wanted to find a way for the court to stop gerrymandering.” The attorney for the LWV said, “Yes, the Supreme Court must step in.” Three months later “a majority of the court disagreed” by a 5-4 vote. Chief Justice Roberts wrote, “Excessive partisanship in districting leads to

results that reasonably seem unjust.” “We conclude that partisan gerrymandering claims presents political questions beyond the reach of the Supreme Court.”

The author helps us to do much better: she explains Ranked Choice Voting, which seems to work well in Maine, and helps avoid gerrymandering. She also shows us how to use language appropriate to the people whom we would like to help become voters. If new voters are still teenagers, it is important to learn to understand and speak their language. If someone is in a minority culture, it is important to understand their problems and their values, to know what THEY think is needed.

This book offers ways to increase voting. After registering to vote, Smith suggests you might “choose five friends” to vote with you. Every ten days or so, before the election make sure your friends know what they will need to do to actually vote.

Smith describes how Michigan voters created a map in which redistricting is done so as to be as equal as possible. When no group is advantaged, it becomes difficult to change the map. We need to create such “equal” maps in every state.

This is a handy manual on voting, teaching us how to fight against those who want to control voting, and removing every possible excuse for not handing in your ballot every single election.

Book Citation:

Smith, E. G. (2020). *Thank you for voting: The maddening, enlightening, inspiring truth about voting in America*. Harper.

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We'd Like to Hear From You!

Not sure who to reach? You can always find us at info@lwvskc.org or 206-329-4848!

Membership coordinator Saunatina Sanchez is at membership@lwvskc.org and holds in-person and virtual office hours. Check our [events calendar](#)!

Want to stop by our office? We have office hours every Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We're located at:

Melbourne Tower
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Executive Committee of the Board of LWVSKC

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Education Fund of LWVSKC

Board members listed above also serve as the Education Fund Board.

Education Fund Treasurer	Joanna Cullen	eftreasurer@lwvskc.org
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Member	Ellen Barton	nominate@lwvskc.org
Member	Cathy Dormaier	nominate@lwvskc.org

And if you're looking for the editor of *The Voter*, reach out to votereditor@lwvskc.org!

Find us on the web at lwvskc.org!

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