

# The Voter

A newsletter from



## National Voter Registration Day



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# Become a Ballots and Baristas Host!

*Heather Kelly, President*

Ballots and Baristas is around the corner, and we need discussion leaders! This is an annual voter education event where League volunteers review the pros and cons of ballot measures with small groups of voters. It's a fabulous way to help get out the vote by demystifying the ballot, especially for new or hesitant voters. This year, we are turning the event into a series offered throughout the end of October and November in schools, community centers, senior living centers, and more! Where we go will depend on how many discussion leaders step forward, so we need you to help us expand our reach.

Scared of public speaking? Think you don't have what it takes? Then you are perfect for this gig. We need to show voters you don't *have* to be an expert to vote. By taking a small step out of your comfort zone, you can lead the way for someone else. We'll teach you so you can teach others...the true League spirit!

To sign up, look for the "Ballots and Baristas Lead" opportunity on our [Volunteer Sign-Up webpage](#). Then, join us for a training on Thursday, October 13 from 6:30-7:30pm to review do's, don'ts, and main talking points. We will also provide you with additional resources to give to voters to learn even more about each measure. Register in advance for that training

here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rceiurz4pGd1emYpgVPK8pbsOJrc0N5Uk>.

For updates on the dates and times of Ballots and Baristas events, stay tuned to the Tuesday weekly email. We will also hold two virtual events as follows:

Wednesday October 26 from 11:30am-1:30pm (register [here](#))

Sunday November 6 from 6:30pm to 8:30pm (register [here](#))

With nearly all eligible Washingtonians already registered to vote, LWVSKC must turn its energy to GOTV and voter education programs like Ballots and Baristas. Please help us answer the evolving needs of King County voters by volunteering for this important program.

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# Building Resilience to Mis/Disinformation

*Barbara Tengtio, Second Vice President*



Yes! You can build resilience to mis- and disinformation. In our September issue we shared ways you can identify mis- and disinformation as well as some suggestions of what to do when mis- and disinformation presents itself.

This month we share a video from LWVUS that you can watch on your own or in a small group - possibly with your unit - and then discuss further.

It is important that we continue to combat mis and dis-information as it drives cycles of fear and polarization, risking trust in our institutions, health and safety, and radicalization and civil unrest.

In this video you'll understand what makes mis- and disinformation stick, why people create mis- and disinformation and most importantly - **strategies for action!** These action strategies include:

- Not engaging (most of the time)!
- When to consider engaging
- Counter messaging strategies
- Structured conversations

Watch the video here:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AxrJEhdkTtwBlwJBR\\_vvb3p85sorDwjx/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AxrJEhdkTtwBlwJBR_vvb3p85sorDwjx/view)

Finally, you have the opportunity to volunteer with the Civic Listening Corps and along with other League partner volunteers report problematic content. Let's work to build resilience to mis- and disinformation and defend our democracy!

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## LWVSKC Voter Services Field Report

*Barbara Tengtio, Second Vice President*

*Heather Kelly, President*

High-energy LWVSKC volunteers were out in the community at approximately eight locations on National Voter Registration Day, September 20. Volunteers spent time at community centers, shopping malls, farmers markets and schools registering voters, discussing the work of LWVSKC and the upcoming elections. Thank you to all our Voter Services volunteers for supporting this important work.

Collectively volunteers spent over 45 hours supporting National Voter Registration Day. Interestingly, this massive effort resulted in only ten voter registrations, including a couple online through a QR code. This relatively low number accords with data showing that around 90% of those eligible are already registered to vote!

Equally important, however, was LWVSKC's presence in the community - promoting the importance of voting in general as well as the specific work LWVSKC does to empower voters and defend democracy. Volunteers in all eight locations were thanked for promoting the vote. Others inquired about the League and took literature about the upcoming election or copies of the TRY.

Moving forward this election season (and beyond), we are looking to shift resources from voter registration to **voter education and advocacy**.

#### **You can help in the following ways:**

- Volunteer at one or more of the upcoming **Ballots and Baristas** events scheduled for October. See related article in this edition of The Voter and our [volunteer sign-up page](#);
- Volunteer to work on the upcoming **advocacy forum on ranked choice voting and even-year elections**. See our [volunteer sign-up page](#).
- Volunteer to work on LWVSKC **education forums** held monthly throughout the year. Contact Mary Taylor at [mary.taylor@lwvskc.org](mailto:mary.taylor@lwvskc.org)
- Volunteer to support "Be a Voter" activities and get out the vote! See our [volunteer sign-up page](#).
- Volunteer to be a member of the **LWVSKC advocacy team** to inform our stance on issues around the county as well as ballot measures. Contact Lev Elson-Schwab at [action@lwvskc.org](mailto:action@lwvskc.org)
- Volunteer to help with voter education training - 4 training modules to be coming in 2023. More to come on this training!

Additionally, King County Elections is inviting LWVSKC members to be trained in observing the upcoming elections. Training times are listed below and up to five LWVSKC members can attend each of the trainings offered. **Please confirm by October 10** to Barbara Tengtio at [2ndvp@lwvskc.org](mailto:2ndvp@lwvskc.org) what training you would like to attend. Once trained, you will be able to observe election ballot processing in Renton in November. Observing occurs throughout the day, normally in 2 hour shifts.

Orientation will be held at King County Elections headquarters located at: 919 SW Grady Way, Renton, WA 98057.

- Session 1: Monday, October 17, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- Session 2: Tuesday, October 18, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- Session 3: Wednesday, October 19, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.
- Session 4: Thursday, October 20, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.
- Session 5: Friday, October 21, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

LWVSKC volunteers are at the heart of all successful LWVSKC work - empowering voters and defending democracy! Thank you for stepping up to register voters and furthering our mission by educating voters and advocating for your democracy!

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## Election Reform is on the Ballot!

*Lev Elson-Schwab, Action Chair*



This November, the voters of King County will have the opportunity to have our voices heard in significant electoral reform. You can help Washington State maintain our proud tradition of being leaders in democracy reform and ballot access. We will be asked to decide when and how certain elections should take place. Voters across King County will determine if elections for certain county offices currently held in odd number, “off

years” will be moved to even numbered years. Voters in Seattle will determine if elections for city office should remain a “first past the post,” choose-one candidate voting method, and should Approval Voting or Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) replace the current method of voting?

The board of the Seattle-King County League of Women Voters has researched, evaluated, and taken positions on even year elections, ranked choice voting and approval voting. They would like to share those positions with you here and encourage you to vote Yes for election reform, Yes on Ranked Choice Voting and Yes on Even Year Elections.

**Even Year Elections:** On the surface, even year elections might not seem like a big deal in the grand scheme of things. If passed, this measure would move elections for many

critical county offices from odd to even-numbered years. So why should you care? In the League, our positions support participation in elections by the maximum number of citizens, and representation of the broad political spectrum of the electorate. While King County has high turnout (almost 80%) in even numbered years, that turnout drops to under 50% in odd numbered years. This odd-year dip disproportionately disadvantages people of color, young voters, and those with limited income because those who vote in odd-years tend to be whiter, older, and wealthier than the electorate in even years.

By supporting this charter amendment, we will increase AND diversify turnout in county office elections and elevate public discourse about the future of King County and the issues that we face of the League's allies, including diverse organizations across the county supportive of empowering voters and defending democracy. These include More Equitable Democracy, Sightline, WinWin Action, WA Community Alliance Action Fund, WA For Equitable Representation, Seattle Metropolitan Urban League, Washington Bus, the Northwest Progressive Institute, and Asian Counseling and Referral Service. There is no organized opposition, and no one has submitted a statement in opposition to the King County Voter's Pamphlet.

It is for these reasons that we are asking you to vote **yes** on **King County Charter Amendment No. 1** regarding Even Numbered Election Years.

**Ranked Choice Voting;** Seattle voters are being given the opportunity to change the way our local officials are elected. We will have the choice to maintain our first-past-the-post, choose-one voting method or to move to a more progressive system, which would empower voters to have a stronger voice. Propositions for Approval Voting (1A) and Ranked Choice Voting (1B) appear on the ballot together. The ballot first asks you if you wish to maintain the current system or enact **either** of these proposals. Then in the second part it asks your preference between the two systems.

Earlier this year, I shared in an article in the Voter our opposition to Initiative Measure No. 134 regarding approval voting. In the article ["Approval Voting - Wrong for Seattle"](#), I shared our rationale for opposition which includes our strong support for Ranked Choice Voting. Approval voting is untested, with voters not being able to honestly vote for a less-preferred candidate without the risk of causing their first choice to lose, leading to increased opportunity for tactical voting. There is no evidence that approval voting leads to better representation for underrepresented communities. Finally, approval voting has limited local support, being almost completely funded by out-of-state interests.

Ranked Choice Voting, on the other hand is both tested and proven, having been used in over fifty different jurisdictions in the United States (as opposed to two for approval voting) where voters express overwhelming support for it. This success in other cities and states has resulted in increased election of people of color, women, and other typically underrepresented communities. By having voters rank multiple candidates, Ranked Choice Voting allows and encourages voter engagement, and eliminates the need for tactical or strategic voting.

Ranked Choice voting also has strong local and statewide support. Advocacy groups, justice organizations, and labor unions have been on the ground in Washington State and in Seattle for years building grassroots support for Ranked Choice Voting and educating voters. These groups, which includes the League of Women Voters of WA, are enthusiastic, ready, and able to work to support the eventual adoption of Ranked Choice Voting.

"We're thrilled that the League of Women Voters of Seattle-King County has endorsed ranked-choice voting! Ranked-choice voting is a simple, proven upgrade to our elections that Seattleites are rallying around. Together, let's strengthen our democracy by voting YES on one and YES on 1B this November." -Lisa Ayrault, Executive Director of FairVote Washington.

Your right to vote is powerful and sacred, and you have an opportunity to exercise that power to significantly improve our democracy this November. "Democracy is based upon the conviction that there are extraordinary possibilities in ordinary people." – Harry Emerson Fosdick. It is once again time for us, the voters of Seattle and King County to show why we are the vanguard of election reform. Please vote **yes on King County Charter Amendment No. 1** regarding **Even Year Elections**, **yes on City of Seattle Proposition 1** and **select 1B** to support the move to **Ranked Choice Voting**.

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## Let's Get Ready to Vote!

*Allison Feher, Administrator*

Congressional, Legislative and Judicial – oh my! Many types of candidates are up for a vote this fall and the election day deadline is Tuesday, November 8. Vote411 is a League resource to help you learn about who and what is on your ballot. It also helps people register to vote and understand vote-by-mail. Share this informational resource with your neighbors!

The calendar for the election is:

- Oct 19 – vote centers open; in-person registration, voting assistance, and ballots available up thru 8 p.m on November 8.  
<https://kingcounty.gov/depts/elections/how-to-vote/ballots/returning-my-ballot/vote-centers.aspx>
- Oct 19-21 – expect to receive your voter's pamphlets and ballot in the mail
- Oct 31 – deadline to register to vote by mail (must be received!) or online



Check our website calendar for details on our election related activities. We'll be doing some events where people can ask questions and discuss ballot measures, as well as an event that talks about why League has endorsed two of the ballot measures related to how elections are held.

- Thursday, October 20 – Election Action Forum, 7 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 26 – Zoom Ballots & Baristas, 1:30 p.m.
- Sunday, November 6 – Zoom Ballots & Baristas, 5:30 p.m.

LWVSKC is not doing any candidate forums this fall, other than the KC Prosecutor one held in July. Videos of other Leagues' events that might be useful for some King County residents:

- LWVWA's Secretary of State Debate – video recording
- LWV of Snohomish County's Congressional district 1 forum on October 18 at 7 p.m.
- LWV of Snohomish County's Legislative district 1 forum on October 25 at 7 p.m.

### **Ballot Measures in King County**

<https://info.kingcounty.gov/kcelections/Vote/contests/ballotmeasures.aspx?eid=33>

Click on each of these to see the information that is available online. They will be discussed at our Ballots & Baristas events around King County both on Zoom and near some of our schools.

Check our event calendar to find one that works for you.

[State Measures - Advisory Vote No. 39](#)

[State Measures - Advisory Vote No. 40](#)

King County

[Charter Amendment No. 1](#)

Even-Numbered Election Years for Certain County Offices

King County

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Conservation Futures Levy

*One or more of the following measures may appear on your ballot depending on your residence address.*

City of Bellevue

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Levy Lid Lift for Parks and Open Space

City of Clyde Hill

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Adoption of the Council-Manager Form of Government

City of Mercer Island

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Levy Lid Lift for Park Operations and Maintenance

City of Redmond

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Public Safety Levy

City of Seattle

[Proposition Nos. 1A and 1B](#)

City of Shoreline

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Maintenance and Operations Levy for Public Safety and Community Services

City of Tukwila

[Initiative Measure No. 1](#)

City of Tukwila Initiative Measure No. 1 concerns labor standards for certain employees.

Highline School District No. 401

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Bonds to Replace and Improve Deteriorating Schools

Renton School District No. 403

[Proposition No. 1](#)

Bonds to Improve Safety and Replace Renton High School

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## League Through a DEI Lens

*Barbara Tengtio, Second Vice President*

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) became a priority in LWVUS starting in 2018 and throughout 2019. Up until now a variety of DEI training has been offered through their website. LWVSKC has also recognized the need to infuse DEI in all our work and this past year all positions were updated to reflect this commitment. You approved these changes at the annual member meeting this past April.

To further LWVSKC's DEI work, we will be highlighting a LWVUS DEI training in *The Voter* throughout the year. We ask you to watch the video and then discuss it - either at a Unit meeting, with some League friends over coffee, at a committee meeting, and/or as any opportunity presents itself. **We need to be self-educating ourselves and then actively applying what we learn to our work.** This month we will look at the "DEI Lens".

**So what does it mean to participate in LWVSKC through a DEI lens?** A DEI lens is a way of examining a program, a process, a product, etc with regards to how it is perceived by a variety of communities, voices, and perspectives, and what if any, barriers may exist that are preventing it from being equitable or inclusive of everyone.

Watch this approximately one hour video to understand some specific examples that relate to League work.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/3831349821844389388>

One of the key takeaways from this training is the need for us to **build partnerships! LWVSKC's focus for the immediate future is to strengthen our work with youth and under-served communities.** To be successful, we must first identify groups in these communities that we can partner with and work together to register voters, encourage these communities to vote, and over time possibly join LWVSKC. We need to be patient, building relationships takes time and growing these necessary partnerships will be a multi-year commitment.

When you discuss the above-mentioned DEI training video with your Unit, friends, committee group, etc. ask yourselves the following:

**What community connections** do any of you have that you could expand upon? How can you meet these communities in their environs and contribute to their needs? If no community connections are known, how could you make some small inroads that could grow over time?

The video gives three examples of League's basic work: **Voter Registration, Voter Education, and Voter Protection;** and discusses this **work without and with a DEI lens.** Talk about these examples with your group. Do you see yourself in the examples? How might you better apply a DEI lens in your work going forward?

To achieve our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy, we must engage all communities in this work. Approaching League activities through a DEI lens is the way we will be successful!

Stay tuned for our next DEI training topic. In the interim, League US has a variety of resources on its website dedicated to DEI. You can find it here:

[https://www.lwv.org/league-management/content-library?keywords=dei+&sort\\_by=search\\_api\\_relevance](https://www.lwv.org/league-management/content-library?keywords=dei+&sort_by=search_api_relevance)

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## Leadership Circle Celebration

*Barbara Tengtio, Second Vice President*



On a bright August afternoon, LWVSKC **Leadership Circle members were celebrated** at a wine and cheese party hosted by President, Heather Kelly. Various LWVSKC Board members were in attendance to show their appreciation and acknowledge the very important contributions from Leadership Circle members.

In the past, Leadership Circle members were recognized at an annual luncheon. Due to the pandemic this annual celebration has been on hold.

While not all Leadership Circle members were able to attend, it was uplifting to be able to share once again, some in person time with LWVSKC benefactors. LWVSKC looks forward to returning to an annual celebratory lunch in the future.

**You too, can be a Leadership Circle member!** This program asks you to make a three-year pledge with a per month or annual donation as follows:

Grand Prix	\$22,500	\$7,500/year	\$625/month
Sustaining Visionary	\$15,000	\$5,000/year	\$250/month
Voter Promoter	\$ 9,000	\$3,000/year	\$250/month
Executive Councilor	\$ 4,500	\$1,500/year	\$125/month
President's Cabinet	\$ 3,000	\$1,000/year	\$ 83/month
Education Advocate	\$ 1,500	\$ 500/year	\$ 42/month
Friend	\$ 720	\$ 240/year	\$ 20/month

By making a three year pledge to LWVSKC, you can make a lasting impact on the work we do in voter services and education. Contact Meg Van Wyk, LWVSKC's Development Manager, at [meg.vanwyk@lwskc.org](mailto:meg.vanwyk@lwskc.org) to make your pledge today. *You* make the difference in empowering voters and defending democracy!

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## Units Unite Us!

*Sarah Beth Miller, LWVSKC Unit Liaison*

A big *welcome back* to all of the LWVSKC Unit leaders and members! This fall we are re-emerging from the pandemic, although we remain cautious about leaving the safety of our Zoom screens. But some Units, such as Queen Anne/Ballard/Magnolia, Northeast Seattle and Issaquah are determined to meet in-person for the first time since the spring of 2020.

This fall of 2022 is a busy one, with mid-term elections that may determine the future course of our democracy. Our Units are motivated and ready to register new voters throughout King County before the November Elections. This effort will “kick-off” with our Voter Registration Drive on Sept 20, National Voter Registration Day!

In keeping with the LWV’s 100 year-old mission, Units are embracing Civics Education as they introduce the League’s outstanding curriculum, [The State We’re In](#) to local school districts, libraries, and other civic organizations.

As always, the Fall brings a new slate of monthly forums on topics that have been selected by our membership. For example, the forum for September featured ‘Public Safety and the Role of the Prosecutor.’ Such forum topics give Units insight into local government and how it impacts average citizens. Forums inspire discussion, debate, and action among Units. Similarly engaging forums are planned for the remaining months of the year, so there will be plenty for Unit members to explore and discuss!

As Unit Liaison, I look forward to being in close touch with you all as the year progresses. I’m hoping that more visits from Board members to Units will occur, and that Unit members will attend Board meetings, too! We will continue our “Units Revitalize!” meetings so that Unit Leaders can keep learning from the best resource there is: *One another!*

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## Prosecutor Forum Discussion Questions

*Deb Carstens*

We hope you were able to attend September's forum--Public Safety and the Role of the King County Prosecutor: Know Before You Vote! If not, you can view it on the [League's](#)

[YouTube channel](#). The panelists engaged in a wide-ranging and informative discussion that highlighted the power of the prosecutor at every stage of a criminal case, from making the decision to bring charges through sentencing.

Some questions for discussion:

- Were you surprised to learn about how much discretion the prosecutor has? Do you think prosecutors have too much discretion?
- What did you learn about the impact of the cash bail system? Does it unfairly impact people who are living in poverty?
- What do you think about the facts that (1) 95% of cases are resolved by a plea bargain and (2) the system would collapse if more defendants exercised their constitutional right to trial?
- Do you think diversion programs such as Choose 180 are a good alternative to sending people to jail or prison? Why or why not?
- The prosecutor's role is to ensure that justice is done. What does this mean to you?
- What role can the prosecutor play in addressing racial inequities in the criminal legal system?

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## Board Brief - September

*Heather Kelly, President*

Our board had a fabulous first fall meeting on September 10. We continued refining our shared board calendar, one of the many tools we are creating to help future boards in their teamwork.

A main topic this month was volunteer coordination. We have had a steady influx of new volunteers thanks to a novel recruitment tactic. After circulating opportunities to our members, we also post openings on volunteermatch.org, a high-traffic website for folks looking to put their skills to use. So far, we've recruited two web administrators, a new Voter editor, a civics education survey lead and survey translator, and even a Voter Services Volunteer Coordinator to support our growing team (read on for what we did in the field last month)!

It's been fabulous to meet new people and introduce them to our phenomenal organization. These volunteers are taking on administrative tasks and freeing up the board to focus on mission-impact strategies. What's even more exciting is that many of these folks are contributing not only time and talent, but also through dues as new members!

The uptick in volunteers has been matched with a deluge of requests from the community for LWVSKC to register and educate voters. As I write this, we've scheduled Voter Services events at 15 different locations between September 20 and October 30, not including Ballots and Baristas. To meet this need, we launched a new Volunteer Sign-Up page and form for people to request volunteers (currently only available to members). Both tools can be found under the "Member Resources" tab on our website.

We are busy. We are back. We are moving forward.

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## Connecting with the Community

*Heather Kelly in conversation with Ellen Barton*

Watch the full interview with Ellen Barton here: <https://youtu.be/vnkYFhV2GFE>

HEATHER: Okay, well, here we are back in the saddle with the connecting to the community feature after a quiet-ish summer voter edition, and this time I'm here with Ellen Barton. Excited to chat and get to know you a little bit, and if you have questions for me answer those too, because it's a two way street, for sure. So yeah, thanks for being here.

ELLEN: You're welcome.

HEATHER: First of all, whereabouts do you live again? I know you told me.

ELLEN: Capitol Hill

HEATHER: That's right. Okay. Have you lived there long?

ELLEN: Well, no, since 2019, since right before COVID. So, yeah. Three years now.

HEATHER: Yeah. Okay, so were you moving from a quieter place in King County to like the central hustle and bustle, or?

ELLEN: Well, Yeah, I had been living in Ballard, and this is my mom's house. So mom passed away 2016. I think it was 2016, and my sister and I decided to sell both of our houses in Ballard and

moved to this one because it's a big house on Capitol Hill. So we're sort of downsizing and upsizing at the same time.

HEATHER: And like becoming roommates.

ELLEN: And becoming roommates. Yes. Yeah, and so I bring up things that annoy me. Right, and I'm thinking I should ask her to make sure that she brings up stuff that annoys her. Right?

HEATHER: Right. Totally. Totally. Well, presumably, you were roommates earlier in your life. At some point. That's awesome. So you timed that right before COVID hit, so you would have somebody to like keep you sane or maybe, like, make you crazy, whatever. But you had somebody to hang out with and your space.

ELLEN: I think it was way better to be here on Capitol Hill than Ballard during that time.

HEATHER: Yeah. Well, you know, I'm in Phinney Ridge and Ballard was, you know, it was like really kind of a ghost town. I mean, all of the other sort of micro downtown neighborhood, you know, micro communities. But at least Capitol Hill, you know, you have so many people just around you. I like that feeling of, you know, having the home of the city. So it got a little too quiet for me.

ELLEN: And then, of course, C.H.O.P./C.H.A.Z. happened. Right, but Right.

HEATHER: Right. I know, that was a whole thing, wasn't it? You know, it's funny, you bring that up. Because, actually like the C.H.O.P./C.H.A.Z. thing that we're using shorthand for those of you who listen to this later, we're talking about sort of the, I guess, occupation or community sit in, that popped up on Capitol Hill during 2020's sort of civil rights uprising, I guess. You know, listening to how that was described elsewhere in the country really, like reminded me of the importance of, you know, the league's role in sort of combating myths and disinformation. Because it's so easy to take a photo out of context, or do you mind like describing a little bit what it felt like, to you to be on Cap Hill?

ELLEN: Well, yeah, so we weren't immediately there. We were about six or seven blocks away, right from where it was because it was Cal Anderson Park. And I don't know, it was kind of like, at first, you know, it was really nice, right? All these people and there's vendors and there's music, and everybody's there because they care about social justice, right. And all the restaurants sort of went along with it, and they were doing to-go food and to-go drinks and we'd walk down there usually every day and walk through to see what was going on. It was the nighttime when, you know, it started to get really bad, and it just it was like ongoing battles every night until the police just left. And then it quieted down. So that was okay. But those first couple of weeks when they I mean, it sounded like a battlefield. It was crazy, and so the daytime it was certainly not scary at all. People were there with their kids and their dogs and just sort of occupying Cal Anderson Park, really. And they started this, they started a community garden there, and it did make you think about how Cal Anderson could be put to more use, whether it's a community garden or a homeless encampment. I mean, it did become a homeless encampment for a while. So then it did get, you know, as homeless encampments do. So. I don't know, it was, it wasn't what they said, in other parts of the country, and I have a feeling about Portland the same way



that other people probably have about Seattle. Right. It sounds like Portland was just crazy. Right? But maybe it wasn't right? So Right.

HEATHER: Yeah. I mean, I feel like what was interesting to me was, there was this it wasn't like new, but it was. It was new, we kind of what's the word I'm looking for? I guess, I'm talking about like, sort of confirmed that the folks who eventually became the heads of like converge media and some of those other sort of grassroots journalists that were really documenting on Facebook Live or other platforms, what it looked and felt like to be there during the day or to be there at night. And just the power of those new tools to capture what was actually happening in a way that felt like, sort of irrefutable, you know what I mean? For me, it was like, Oh, the value of having eyes on this moment in history, is just, you know, to be able to communicate out to everyone else, what's actually happening. It just felt like social media sort of catapulted us forward in the possibilities. But then, of course, social media is also responsible for a lot of the myths and disinformation. So that right?

ELLEN: yeah, I know.

HEATHER: I know, wild times. Well, okay, so backing up from that topic. I'm kind of interested. I usually, like lead off with sort of, when did you join the League? What brought you to the league? So why don't we, Why don't we back up and start with that? Do you mind sharing a little bit?

ELLEN: Sure. Um, so my mom was a member for many, many years. I think she was a member since we were little kids, and it was a different era. You know, these ladies were at-home moms, I think, and they sometimes wanted to get out of the house and talk to other at-home moms about politics and about what was going on. I like to think it was a simpler time then, but maybe it wasn't. And so she was very interested in getting me involved. And so she would join for me, right a couple of times, and then I took over and just kept signing up myself. I'm gonna say it was around 2004 2005, but I'm not sure. Anyway. So yeah, she was very involved in the league. Until her death, really.

HEATHER: Do you remember going to those meetings as a kid?

ELLEN: No, as a kid? Yeah, no, but I probably went, yeah.

HEATHER: I've asked because when I first joined in 2016, I would bring my kid, I only had one at the time, to all the social justice meetings, which were the first meetings I attended. And, you know, to get him kind of, I don't know mostly because, it was a convenient thing to do. And he was a pretty quiet kid. It was like, not too taxing. But I'm always going to wonder if he remembered that. I haven't been bringing him for a while, but you know, unless we go to a march or something. But yeah, it's interesting to think about what that might look and feel like through a kid's eyes, you know? What? What are they absorbing?

ELLEN: Oh, no, I mean, I remember other things, but not league meetings. Yeah. I don't know. We probably just put all the kids off in one corner and we just played.

HEATHER: Like, here's some snacks. Snacks. Actually, I think if he remembered something of the social justice meeting, it probably will be the snacks. Those were particularly memorable snacks.

So I'll say that I also remember them. Okay, so around the mid aughts you kind of became a member and involved in your own right. Was there a particular place that you first plugged in as a volunteer or as a new member?

ELLEN: Yeah, for some reason, I don't know why, but I was at an annual meeting or either an annual meeting or the program planning meeting, and I signed up to be on a committee that was going to look into the Port of Seattle. and do a report on it. Right? I don't know why I signed up for that one. But anyway, I did, and it was great. We had a great time, and I learned a lot about the Port of Seattle and how it's run and why it matters, and you know why they get to take money from us every, you know, taxes every month, and what they do with it, right. Then those port commissioners, you know, they don't get paid right? It's like school board, I think you don't get paid. They get a budget that they can spend, but otherwise, basically volunteers. But so we met some of them, and they were happy to talk to us, it was great. They were so excited that league was doing a study, because they think that nobody knows what they do and why they do it. So that was interesting. So that's how I first got involved. And then after that, I think that took us at least a year and a half and maybe two years to get it published. Right. But then they asked me to be on board. So then I started, I went on board, and I worked. I did that for like two or three years. And then they asked me to be president. One of the things I was gonna tell my advice to new members is learn how to say no, yeah, it's important to say no, and learn when to say yes too. It was just a really tough time in my life when, because I got diagnosed with breast cancer, like, just several months after I'd taken the role. And so I tried to step back, but that didn't work very well. So anyway, so I was going through treatment, and also trying to, and we were having similar problems that you're talking about that we had a drop off in membership. We had, you know, they always talk about how the Seattle league is the biggest in the country. Right? And they said, "oh, we're not the biggest anymore." Like, okay, and money budgeting is always an issue. We just decided to stop doing the well, probably a good thing, we stopped doing the auction, right, which was a big moneymaker for us. So we had to fill in with other things, and yeah, that was a challenge.

HEATHER: Yeah, absolutely. It sounds like there was an intensity part on the personal front, and sort of in the league transformation that were overlapping with your board tenure. It's, I mean, I really feel like, honestly, this conversation is probably long overdue, because, you know, you get into your role, and you're like, oh, man, if only if only, like, the members knew how, you know, sort of tumultuous or sort of breadth of challenges, or we're just, we're repeating a lot of the same, you know, cycles in some, in some senses. And other things are genuinely new and different, like a pandemic, right. But I mean, the challenges of nonprofits, like just don't go away. I mean, you kind of cycle through, and maybe you learn some new tools, or, but I think that's one of the things about league that, you know, that I've really been learning is, is just because we're mostly, except for one staff ever, volunteer organization, at the county level, unless you have a good succession plan in place and a way for people to learn from those who came before that's, like, efficient. It's really hard to avoid cycling through some of those same challenges. So I'm hoping to set my successors up, our successes up for maybe new and different challenges, not the same challenges

ELLEN: Now, the same ones, yeah. Yeah, no, no, fundraising is always going to be a problem. We talked about getting, hiring someone to do that. But there was some discussion about how we didn't want to do that. We wanted it to be volunteer. So

HEATHER: Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting, you bring that up, too. Because, you know, I think, especially with, like, young people that we're trying to sort of attract either as volunteers or prospective members or actual members there is kind of this growing expectation that people be compensated for their time, and especially young women, and rightly so. Right. I mean, of course, so, in some ways, it's sort of like how do we as an organization support a new generation in stepping into that professional world while serving the league, and it's something that other leagues are, fortunately, a little more experienced at so we can learn from them. But at the same time, you know, we want to make sure that we're really funding the opportunities that we're funding. We're also like realizing, benefit from of course, because we have to answer to our members, you're like, What are you doing with my dues? And so, but I mean, I worked as an intern paid and unpaid, and I always felt really proud of my work product. So far, I'm just learning a lot from our new interns.

ELLEN: I'm glad you have interns, I don't think we had any. I don't know why.

HEATHER: I was gonna ask you about that. Yeah. I mean, I think, well, I don't know. But I think this is the first time we've offered a paid internship, and we have the college student who is working on developing a survey that will be distributing to high schools and community colleges to identify their civic education needs and voter service needs. And so, you know, but she's like, well, here's how you want to get the word out if you're trying to get in touch with students, here's this platform that I think would be easiest to circulate among this population, and I'm just like, right, we need young people in the driver's seat on projects that impact them most.

ELLEN: I mean, it's going to be their world.

HEATHER: Right? I know

ELLEN: sometimes I just think I need to get out of the way.

HEATHER: Well, it's interesting that you say that too, because I'm learning as much from them as I am from the generation of women who've come before me. I just said this to a volunteer of onboarding the other day, like, I think one of the cool things about the league, you know, we're an organization that's in a pretty crowded space, at least in this region, as far as like democracy loving, politically engaged people. There's a lot of organizations doing similar work right now. But like, the intergenerational aspect of the league is something really special. I'm hopeful that, you know, we'll continue learning how to wield that. In what we do. Did you find when you were, like, first joining that there was that kind of age spread? Or was it more it? Was it like more homogenous? Or how was the membership makeup? Back then?

ELLEN: Well, yeah, when I joined, it was mostly older retired women, men too but mostly women. Yeah, at times, I felt like at the time, I felt like I was the youngest person there. We did well, we were having trouble recruiting not only young people, but also people of color. It just seems to be an upper middle class, white woman's organization, and nothing wrong with that, I guess. But we were hoping to have more diversity. And because obviously, and that's one thing that the summer of our discontent 2020 taught me is that there's a lot of things that as white women we take for granted, that isn't true for people of color, and you just don't think about it. So it is awesome to get more, and certainly to get younger people too. The thing that I kept, they kept emphasizing to me was, but the league has this history and tradition, and that's our

strength. I'm sure you've heard that lecture. Right? So no, we don't change quickly. You're right. The funny thing is usually, whatever I come up with, it's already been thought about already, you know, that doesn't mean that our position shouldn't evolve, right? Because I think they have on certain issues, and it's great when they do but it's a process. It's not quickly done. I think that's the is that the league, but it is frustrating at times. I'm assuming it's frustrating for new, younger members. The other thing about the league? That was frustrating to me, you didn't ask me, but I'll tell you. It was sort of mysterious to me, how do things get done? Right? How, how, until I was on board, of course, and then I thought, oh, that's how it gets done. We do it. We do it all. But yeah, it's a steep learning curve, I think for new league members.

HEATHER: It is. I mean, it's, you know, I think that there are certain members for whom that the technological innovation that we're doing and the website revamp and all of that makes some of that stuff a little more transparent and accessible. You know, we can get a new member training video up and running. We can get a volunteer signup thing going on a web page, and so people have a bit a little bit better of a bird's eye view about not only all the opportunities, but what different people are doing in different parts of the league. But oh my goodness, yeah. Like just what, where's Can I get an org chart? Like? How are we organizing ourselves and because like our capital is our members time and energy. You know, it's when you don't have that sense of what the infrastructure is it's hard to be efficient and coordinate across geographic regions. So we're trying to do that. But of course, like the challenges, then it feels like we're leaving some of our members out of the loop who are, you know, their phone people, and they are super effective and efficient on the phone. But you know, an email is not going to get read, or it's going to be more challenging for them to respond to. And so just learning different formats, and trying different things and seeing what works for most people and finding accommodation for others. That's really where we're at. Are you like, totally zoom exhausted, like everyone else?

ELLEN: Well, you know, I was working up until December of 2021. Right? We had zoom meetings every week, because we couldn't go into the office and, yeah, but I kinda like it. I don't mind it at all. I think it's very efficient, right? Less wasted time, than if you're in a meeting, personally, but obviously, you miss the human contact every day. But yeah.

HEATHER: Right. Which is like another thing, people are like, "when are we going to start having in person forums again?" and it's like, yes, we totally should do that. And it turns out, those didn't work for like most of our members. Because, you know, and certainly aren't going to work if what we want to do is get people from outside Seattle to feel really like, welcome and included in the league, you know, critical sort of programming. So now, you know, having this hybrid concept come for that other organizations are brave enough to try out. We can replicate. You know, it's, it's sort of like a new world where I mean, and I don't think any of that would be going on if it weren't for COVID. Like the idea of doing something in person and live stream. I mean, you know, so I guess that's a side benefit of having to, you know, hunker down, but okay, so going back to advice for new members. So setting clear boundaries. Yeah, that's a good thing to be able to do. Are you saying that you were working while you were president?

ELLEN: Yeah. So yeah. I thought I could take one thing, right, in addition to being president, but then when I had to add other things.

HEATHER: Yeah, it kind of snowballs, doesn't it? So, okay, tell me a little bit about your career. What type of work do you do?

ELLEN: So I'm a lawyer. I'm not a lawyer anymore, because I retired. But I was a lawyer. And most of the last, I would say, almost 20 years, I think, no-15 maybe I was doing elder law. So trusts estates, but it could involve litigation at times people do like to litigate wills, probates, that kind of thing. That's what I was doing for about the last 15, 10-15 years.

HEATHER: Okay, I do feel like this is ringing a bell. I mean, my brain assumed but because I also am a lawyer. But criminal defense, but yeah, I mean, finding other league members who have a passion for litigation. I'm always like ding-ding-ding these are my, these are my people. Do you miss it? Now that you said you were working until last year December.

ELLEN: Oh, yeah, no, I don't miss it.

HEATHER: Are you finding other ways to fill your time Ellen?

ELLEN: Well, I for a while I did not much. Well, I went to the gym. I joined the gym and I'm going all the time. But now I took a job with Argosy cruises because I was worried about the stock market. So I'm doing reservations for Argosy. So that's kind of fun.

HEATHER: Okay, wait! Have you been on all the cruises?

ELLEN: I've been on one. I've been on the harbor cruise. I haven't done the locks cruise yet.

HEATHER: You have got to do the locks cruise! Are you kidding me? This is like a total overlap with your Port study. Yeah, you gotta get through the locks on the Argosy cruise boat. It is super fun. The salmon are running right now. Yeah, you're already there. You're already doing reservations. So you might as well just put yourself in.

ELLEN: Yup. So this winter, I'm going to work at a ski resort. I don't know if it's going to be local or somewhere else, but that's my plan.

HEATHER: Well, my kids will be at Alpental. So I because they will be at Alpental So I recommend a different place.

[Both laugh]

HEATHER: Well, let's see. I mean, there's so much more I want to talk to you about but I just I feel like with this would become a feature film. Do you have any other thoughts to share with like, where you want to see the league going next? Or are you just kind of like, along for the ride?

ELLEN: Well, there was a time I think I wanted the league to do more. But I'm pretty, I think you guys are doing a good job. We're, we're doing a good job. I think that the voter services that we do is the most important thing to be done. I mean, there are other organizations that you know, deal with women's rights and deal with social justice and environment and things like that. But the league is known for voter registration, voter services, that kind of thing. I think that's really important. And again, because it is non partisan, although, you know, anyway, it is non partisan. I think it has more credibility, perhaps than other organizations that do the same thing. So far, I don't think that Veritas project or whatever is trying to come in and interview us and get us to say stupid stuff right

HEATHER: No Oh, my goodness, I know. I do feel like the you know, the, the ballots and baristas events that we've been doing, which this year, we're going to be trying to execute in schools to support some of our first time voters. I really, I think that's a really cool function of voter services that is unique to League. Because people have a chance to like talk through some of the concepts and have them sort of demystified for them live and just can vote right there or take the information home. And it's sort of like that casual community, sort of Fireside Chat vibe, rather than some big lecture hall. But um, so I guess, maybe that's just like my shameless plug for ballots and barista hosts to raise their hands. Get lots of different locations lined up the way we did for national voter registration day.

ELLEN: Yeah, well, I do that is one thing. I, well, when I was really involved with board. We, my sister and I sort of organized just in our neighborhood, we'd go to a tavern and vote. Everyone would bring their information and they bring their ballots, and then we would vote, and it was just so much fun. You know, because nowadays, we don't, you know, with our absentee ballot, every ballot by mail, you just lose part of that community feel that you're doing something as a community. Right. So that is I'm excited that the league is sort of starting to do that kind of thing. Yeah. We're usually we tried to at least vote before we had our second beer. Right?

HEATHER: Totally. Yeah. Yeah. You know, I think voting parties or really just any party at this point. It's something that we can really we just everyone just really needs it, you know, and it has to have like a date where you're gonna know you're going to show up and do your duty and actually not have it be like a duty but have it feel like a social engagement, you know, engagement is, Yes, yes to all of that. We do have you know, Reuben's brews in Ballard reached out to us. They're gonna have a voter registration drive in October, and I'm just like, more of that, please.

ELLEN: Yeah, I volunteered for that one.

HEATHER: Yeah, that's right. Okay, cool. That's your old stomping grounds. All right. Cool. I'll see you over there. And we can officially cheers each other. How about that? All right. Well, um, this has been great. I really appreciate your time. And all the things you've done for League across the years, but also just, I don't know, it's really lovely to have fun loving folks, and getting to know folks in this particular format. So thank you.

ELLEN: All right. Thank you. Good luck, and I'll see you in October, I guess.

HEATHER: Absolutely. If not before.

ELLEN: All righty.

HEATHER: All right. Take care Ellen. Bye

ELLEN: bye.

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## Partnerships - More Important Than Ever!

*Barbara Tengtio, Second Vice-President*

Over the years League has partnered with a variety of organizations to further our mission to empower voters and defend democracy. Today, more than ever, achieving this mission depends on working with others — **“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.”** — Ryunosuke Satoro

Watch the attached video from League US on partnerships and learn from specific examples across the country: [Recording Here](#)

Highlights include:

- **Sharing accurate information in a non-partisan way is League’s strength to contribute.**
- **League does not have to lead in all partnerships.** Often it is most appropriate to be a supporter.
- League does not have to fully aligned with partners. **LWVSKC can align on specific positions** and work in partnership this way.

Let’s look at a quick example. **Ranked-choice voting\*** is on the Seattle ballot this November. LWVSKC has researched this voting option and is in support of this change. LWVSKC can partner with other local organizations on this specific position, even though League may not align on other issues, and promote approval of this voting option.

**How do we build partnerships?** Slowly, over time. It starts with informal conversations to determine shared value(s). It takes repeated outreach with a willingness to meet people in their own locale. We need to reach out to other groups and be open to attend their meetings, learn about their work and look for common ground. It is in building these partnerships that LWVSKC can have bigger, stronger, and more lasting impact in Seattle King County.

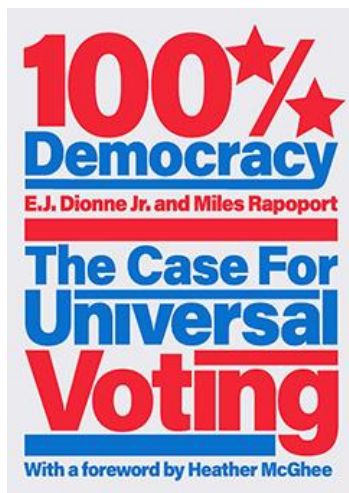
**Want to learn how to be a better ally?** [Go Here](#) (from the Y)

\*A ranked-choice voting system (RCV) is an electoral system in which voters rank candidates by preference on their ballots. If a candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, they are declared the winner. If no candidate wins a majority of first-preference votes, the candidate with the fewest first-preference votes is eliminated. First-preference votes cast for the failed candidate are eliminated, lifting the second-preference choices indicated on those ballots. A new tally is conducted to determine whether any candidate has won a majority of the adjusted votes. The process is repeated until a candidate wins an outright majority.

## 100% Democracy: The Case for Universal Voting

By E.J. Dione Jr and Miles Rapoport

*Review by Vicky Downs*



Dionne and Rapoport show us many ways we have tried to stop people from voting. For example, “contrary to the lofty goals of the nation’s founding...our democracy has created a system that has depressed the participation and influence of communities of color.” In addition, our “campaign finance system allows the wealthiest among us - individuals and corporations alike - to have a vastly disproportionate influence in our public life.” Many of us fear our country is so divided, we may soon lose our democracy.

Meanwhile, Australia gives us an example of an altogether different way of voting democratically. The Aussies make it compulsory. For more than a hundred years, on a Saturday holiday ‘Down Under’, they have ensured that every single eligible person has voted, even if some simply vote for “none of the above.”

The authors point out that in the U.S., we are required to pay taxes, serve on juries, get driver’s licenses and occasionally go to war, but our courts do not require every eligible American to vote. This is good news for people like Donald Trump who warned that if it was easy to vote, “you’d never have a Republican elected in this country again.”

If voting was required, the authors believe, “it would be a major step toward democratic renewal.” They suggest that if we took resources now devoted to protecting the right to vote, we could use them to work on such issues as social justice for all, or even appeal to formerly uncontacted groups of people.

One such group might be young adults including those in high school who should be encouraged to vote. Choosing just one issue they care about would be a start. Once a person votes, they are more likely to care about issues and vote again, than those who don’t vote.



This book explicitly suggests that universal voting could be used to protect against voter suppression. Perhaps it could become a system true to the aspirations of the *Declaration of Independence*, by creating a government based on the consent of **all** of the governed.

The United States at the federal, state and local level would have to enact reforms to make it not only possible but convenient for voters to fulfill their new legal responsibilities. Institutions such as schools, companies and “both civic and community organizations [ would need to] make it a larger part of their activities and culture.” It would require media and communication systems to work hard to ensure people knew what they needed to do and where they needed to go. Those who did not vote would be subject to a small noncompliance fee, but would be allowed to hand in an empty ballot.

This book suggests making universal voting a civil duty as well as a right, might go far to strengthen our troubled democracy.

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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](mailto:info@lwvskc.org) or 206-329-4848!

**Membership coordinator** Saunatina Sanchez is at [membership@lwvskc.org](mailto: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:

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And if you're looking for the editor of *The Voter*, reach out to [votereditor@lwvskc.org](mailto:votereditor@lwvskc.org)!

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