



Working for Drug Law Changes

The League of Women Voters of Washington has been working with a broad range of medical, legal and civic organizations for constructive change in the way our society deals with distribution and use of psychoactive substances. We, like our partner organizations, are concerned that the scare-'em and lock-'em up approach, generally labeled "the War on Drugs," has not succeeded in reducing the harm of "illicit" drug use and may have created disastrous unanticipated consequences. A major study by the King County Bar Association began to identify alternative approaches that show promise of "a better way."

The League has participated in an informal Washington State Coalition for Drug Policy, joining the Washington State Medical Association, the Washington State Bar Association, the National Alliance on Mental Illness/WA, the Washington Society of Addiction Medicine, the Washington State Pharmacy Association, the Washington State Public Health Association, the Washington Academy of Family Physicians, the Washington State Psychological Association, the King County Medical Society, the Seattle League of Women Voters, the Loren Miller Bar Association, the Church Council of Greater Seattle, and the King County Bar Association.

One of the Coalition's first actions has been to request the Washington State Legislature to create a Study Commission on Regulation of Psychoactive Substances. We expect to introduce a bill in the 2007 legislative session. Please take any opportunity you may have to communicate support for this proposal to your state representative or senator. In addition to the proposed Study Commission, our Coalition is exploring several other initiatives, including:

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JUDICIAL ELECTIONS

Cheryl Bleakney

League members know the importance of the judicial branch in our system of government-- to impartially preside over disputes and interpret the law. In Washington, judges are elected and nonpartisan. For much of our history, judicial elections have not been vigorously contested, and most incumbents have had no opposition, or only a token opponent looking for a little publicity. In the last few years that has been changing for candidates for the Supreme Court, and this year all three incumbents on the Supreme Court face spirited competition. Issues of special-interest involvement and excessive contributions have increased interest in the three races. Moreover, the primary election assumes even greater importance since any candidate receiving a majority of the vote is elected. In cases where there are only two candidates, the primary is decisive.

Given this background, the legal community and major community organizations have formed a Judicial Selection Coalition under the leadership of John Ruhl and the King County Bar Association to examine methods of promoting the impartiality and independence of the judiciary. This writer has been representing the League of Women Voters of Washington on the coalition.

Since spring, a committee established by the Coalition has been working with a professional to develop a website to provide citizens with one-stop shopping for information on Supreme Court and other judicial races. Every effort has been made to provide fair and factually balanced information. The site will include each candidate's resume, a list of his/her endorsements, evaluations by Bar and Civic groups, major contributors (referenced to Public Disclosure Commission), and links to each candidate's website. LWVWA has a link to the site. Check it out at www.votingforjudges.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November 7 - General Election
November 10 - LWVWA Board Meeting
November 18 - LWVWA Action Workshop,
9:30am-3:00pm, Bellevue
January 8, 2007 - Washington State
Legislature convenes
January 19 - Lobby Day, Olympia,
8:00am - 2:00pm
April 22, 2007 - Good In Government Gala
June 21-24, 2007 - LWVWA Convention,
Vancouver, WA
Don't forget to check out your local League's
website at www.lwvwa.org

**BOARD SPLINTERS
September 2006**

The LWVWA Board voted to:

- support the campaign for No on 920: the initiative to repeal the estate tax
- join the Poverty Action Network in their campaign to educate the public about Predatory Payday Lending
- support the Drug Policy Project Coalition's proposal to the legislature for a state study commission
- join LWV/Tacoma/ Pierce County in support of Charter Amendment Three which would replace the Primary with Instant Runoff Voting in Pierce County
- endorse the Walk a Mile program for foster youth



**Winter VOTER Deadline
January 12, 2007**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person of voting age, male or female, may become a League member.

The *Washington State VOTER* is published quarterly by the League of Women Voters of Washington, 4710 University Way N.E., Suite #214, Seattle, WA 98105. Yearly subscription is \$10.00. Members of the League of Women Voters of Washington subscribe through their annual dues. Call 206-622-8961 for a local League in your area or go online at www.lwvwa.org

Send address changes to the League of Women Voters of Washington, 4710 University Way NE, Suite #214, Seattle, WA 98105.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We're back! While some Leagues have picnics and events during the summer, most of us give League activity a rest and spend our time in the yard, at the beach or the lake or on a plane to visit friends and family. But then comes Labor Day, with all the speeches, and the day after, when the first campaign fliers hit the mailbox. That's when Leagues put on their running shoes and go into high gear. It is time, once again, to educate and advocate. This is where we shine.

Ballot measures are high on the list of League priorities for getting information out and spreading the word about League positions. State board members and others have been hard at work with coalitions for **No on 920, No on 933, and Yes on 937.**

I represented League at the kick-off press conference for the No on 933 campaign last Thursday. While all the campaigns are a priority for League, No on 933 is especially high

on the list. You will find information about each of the ballot measures in this *VOTER*. Each coalition has speakers available to come to your forum and debate or information for you to distribute.

Most of us have, I hope, arranged candidate forums; if not for the primary, certainly for the general election. I know some local Leagues are large and have multiple state and national candidates standing for election, but forums can be arranged by the various units and they are really important. Candidates count on League for their non-partisan forums. Remember the motto on www.washingtonvoter.org: "no ads, no bias, just info". I hope you all have a stash of bookmarks left that advertise the League voter service web site – THE most comprehensive web site for election information. If not, call the League office and order

some. Libraries love them, and they can be distributed at meetings and forums.

Action Workshop – what is it? Action Workshop is the place where League members go to get in-depth information about issues we think are important to our advocacy program for the coming legislative session. Has the time come for the legislature to seriously discuss public financing of campaigns for state offices? We think it might be, so we are having two speakers who have a long involvement with the movement to get it passed. Is the independence of the judiciary in danger? The legislature thought it might be. They passed a law last year limiting campaign contributions for judicial candidates. We need to hear more about that. And what does our crystal ball tell our Lobby Team about the hot button issues for the next legislative session? Come and find out. EVERY League needs to send at least one delegate to report to their membership.

And don't forget the studies. Four is a lot to cram into one League year, I know. But remember who voted for all of them at Convention. It was you, we, us. And they are all worth our time.

I have my running shoes on and am ready to make this a great year for League. How about you?

Barbara Seitle, bseitle@whidbey.com

A Correction and Apology

In the Summer *VOTER* I left out LWV/Spokane Area and their co-president Ann Murphy as a League that sent a delegate to LWVUS Convention last June.

LEAGUE JOINS EFFORT TO HELP CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA

LWVWA, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, and the American Lung Association of Washington and Idaho have sent the following letter to HMOs in Washington State. This action was based on LWVW and LWVUS positions to reduce exposures in the home, the prevention of disease, and health promotion. This action will help to answer the question posed in our Fall 2003 *VOTER*:

WHY SHOULD CHILDREN WITH ASTHMA SUFFER WHEN WE CAN SAVE MONEY?

John Roberts, Chair, Home Environment Committee

HMO Director and Board:

An estimated 120,000 children in Washington State have asthma that reduces their ability to play, learn, work, and live.¹ Four recent scientific studies demonstrate that providing allergy control bedding covers, asthma education and home visits by outreach workers reduces the cost and suffering from childhood asthma.^{2,3,4,5}

In a survey of asthmatic children served by HMOs, Finklestein found 65% of asthmatic children did not have allergy control mattress covers, and 84% did not have allergy control pillow covers⁶. Studies suggest there will be a competitive return on the initial investment of providing allergy control covers including fewer hospital and ER visits, less school and work absenteeism, and an improvement in the quality of life for the family.

Blue Cross of California has begun providing home visits and supplying allergy control covers to people with asthma. They report a 60% decrease in hospital admissions and a 46% drop in ER visits for asthma.⁷

The California model serves adults and children. We believe the greatest savings and affects will be demonstrated by providing services to children with moderate to severe persistent asthma. Estimates show that providing allergy covers, education, and home visits to families of the 39,000 children with the most severe asthma (more than two symptom days per week)^{1,8} will provide savings in the range of \$800 to \$1200 per child per year, or \$31 to \$47 million per year in Washington.

The Master Home Environmentalist program of the American Lung Association of Washington (ALAW), the Healthy Home program of Public Health - Seattle & King County, and Clean Air for Kids of the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department, have over 20 years of combined experience in all aspects of

selection, training, and coordination of outreach workers who provide home visits as well as supplying allergy control bedding.

We would welcome an opportunity to meet with you and share our experiences and programs. Please call Aileen Gagney (206) 441-5100 or Carrie Nyssen (360) 921-1384 if you have any questions. Thank you for your interest and consideration in taking steps to improve the management of asthma among our children.

Sincerely,

Marina Cofer-Wildsmith, Chief Executive Officer, American Lung Association of Washington and Idaho

Barbara Seitle, President, League of Women Voters of Washington

Nancy Dikeman, Toxics Coordinator, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

(References available)



continued from front page

Working for Drug Law Changes

- Requesting the legislature to direct the Washington State Institute For Public Policy to undertake a Performance Audit of the costs and benefits to the various levels of government of the current state policies on controlled substances;
- Supporting initiatives to provide funding for street-level therapeutic interventions, including pre-booking diversion and the provision of treatment and other vital services;
- Supporting innovative medically supervised treatments, including pharmacological interventions;
- Supporting increased funding for drug courts;
- Supporting the creation of safe administration sites, such as those proven to be effective in improving public health in several European countries.

If you are interested in participating in this work, please contact Peggy Saari (peggyaari@comcast.net, 206-525-0132), who is our representative to the Steering Committee of the Washington Drug Policy Coalition.

ELECTION 2006

VOTE Tuesday, November 7

VOTE NO ON I-933

You have all recently received the letter from Barbara Seitle, state League president, and Aisling Kerins, No on 933 Campaign Director, providing cogent reasons for becoming involved in the No on 933 campaign. Your help is really needed now.

Of key importance are people who can do doorbelling. Getting the word out about this initiative is critical to bringing about its defeat. The more people know about its provisions and impacts, the more they dislike and will vote against it. Contact the campaign by email or telephone (206.323.0520) to volunteer for this essential activity.

Now is the time to put up that NOon933 yard sign; have that conversation with family members, neighbors, and friends about the damaging impacts if 933 should pass; write that letter to the editor; send emails to everyone in Washington with whom you communicate by email; contribute to the campaign.

League opposed a similar initiative in 1995, and we can do it again in cooperation with a very broad coalition **IF** each League member takes some specific action (even better, more than one) to support the No on 933 Campaign. Re-read the article in the LWVWA Summer VOTER for the specifics of League opposition. Re-read Barbara's letter. For a wealth of information about the initiative, check out the website for the campaign, www.NOon933.org. Check out the ways in which 933 is bad for farmers, neighborhoods, working families, business, and the environment.

Become informed about the broad range of organizations and leaders supporting the No on 933 campaign, now more than 200 and growing everyday as people become better informed about the true impacts of this initiative. Check out the section on the website entitled "933 Questions Left Unanswered by 933" (it is under "Why Vote No"). There are precisely 933 unanswered questions raised by this far-reaching, poorly worded, sweeping, ambiguous initiative. Attorneys continue to debate as to what is really meant by its provisions.

Three things are clear about 933:

1. Costs to administer it will be extremely high, which we know from a similar but less extreme measure in Oregon. That is before any actual payment is made on any claims for reduced property value. Who pays such costs other than taxpayers?
2. Loopholes will allow individual property owners and developers to file claims for reduced value of their property and because local government will not be able to pay, it will waive for that individual claimant the property protections afforded neighborhoods. Again, we know this is what will happen by observing what has happened in Oregon (Oregon has had more than 2000 claims filed and none so far has been paid).
3. Litigation will continue for years as entities, organizations, neighborhoods debate what is really meant by the initiative. Government, i.e. taxpayers, will have to pay their attorneys fees under a 933 provision.

VOTE NO ON I-920

LWVWA has joined the coalition "No on 920". Initiative 920 would repeal the estate tax that the Washington legislature enacted in 2005. Because the tax applies to estates over \$2 million for an individual (\$4 million for a couple) only about one-half of one percent of estates would be subject to the tax each year. Family farms are exempted. Repealing the tax would make Washington's tax system even more regressive than it is today. Revenues from the estate tax provide approximately \$100 million a year for the Education Legacy Trust that supports K-12 education improvements as well as access to higher education opportunities.

As kick-off events, "No on 920" held a series of press conferences and campaign briefings in major cities around the state during September assisted by local Leagues in those communities. Leaguers can support the campaign in a number of ways: volunteering to be a speaker, writing letters to the editor, doorbelling, contacting friends and neighbors. Talking points are being distributed to local League presidents. Other information is available at the "No on 920" campaign website www.NoOn920.org. Barbara Bush is the LWVWA liaison to the "No on 920" campaign.

**VOTE YES ON I-937**

This November, Washington voters have an opportunity to choose a clean energy future. Initiative 937, Washington's Clean Energy Initiative, will help us clean up the air, reduce energy use and save money for Washington consumers. Initiative 937 is our chance to take hold of our energy future. As Washington's demand for energy grows, we can choose to get our electricity by burning more fossil fuels like coal that pollute the air. Or we can use cleaner, cheaper renewable energy like wind and solar power – produced right here in the Northwest.

What does Initiative 937 do? It requires the largest electric utilities to get 15% of their electricity from new renewable energy by 2020. Utilities will also be required to pursue all cost effective energy conservation opportunities for their customers. Now is the time to take advantage of homegrown, abundant sources of clean, renewable energy like wind and solar power and break our addiction to dirty fossil fuels.

Initiative 937 is a great opportunity for Washington State to be a leader in the fight against global warming. With a victory in November, we can move towards a cleaner future and safeguard precious natural habitat from fossil fuel pollution. It will make a strong statement about the public's desire to protect the environment. However, the polluters are lining up to defeat Initiative 937 with the usual distortions and scare tactics. There is a strong, well funded opposition campaign, led by the Association of Washington Businesses and Weyerhaeuser that wants to stop clean energy in its tracks. That's why the campaign, Yes! on I-937, needs everyone who cares about working toward a clean energy future to get involved this fall. To find out what you can do to help, please contact the campaign staff at (206) 283-3335 or email them at info@yes937.org.

A Vote for I-937 is:

- **A Vote for Cleaner Air.**

The reduction of pollution from increased use of renewable energy and energy efficiency would be equal to taking one million cars off Washington's roads by 2020. I-937 will help keep Washington's air clean and reduce global warming emissions. By decreasing our dependence on fossil fuels, which contribute to global warming, smog and increased cases of asthma and lung

disease, I-937 will protect the environment and health of the people of Washington State.

- **Vote for Cheaper Energy.**

I-937 gives us cheaper, renewable alternatives like wind and solar. According to Puget Sound Energy, just two Washington wind farms are projected to save \$170 million. I-937 will also make sure utilities take advantage of all low-cost conservation opportunities which means we will use less energy. This means a direct savings for consumers as it requires utilities to offer energy efficiency programs like cash rebates for energy efficient appliances, home weatherization and lighting, heating and cooling systems for businesses.

- **A Vote for a Better Future.**

The time has come for us to take hold of our energy future. I-937 will guarantee that utilities invest in new clean, renewable and affordable energy sources, reducing global warming pollution and ensuring that our children and grandchildren will live in a world less dependent on fossil fuels.

 **Salute to a Leader – Wanda Haas** 

We were saddened to learn of the death of Wanda Haas on July 23, 2006. Wanda was active in League for many years, serving as president of the League of Women Voters of Washington as well as president of LWV/Lake Washington East and LWV/Snohomish County. Wanda served on the Sno-Isle Library Board and chaired the Sno-Isle Library Foundation. And her work on behalf of affordable housing earned her an award by the State Council for Affordable and Rural Housing. Throughout her unstinting involvement in family, church, and community, Wanda believed in stepping up to make a difference. We salute her years of leadership by example.

ORDER FORM

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A Report by
The League of Women Voters of Washington

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August 2006

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The League of Women Voters of Washington's **Growth Management Act Study** and **Election Reform Study** are now **online** at www.lwwwa.org

ACTION WORKSHOP

Saturday, November 18, 2006
St. Andrews Lutheran Church, 2650 – 148th Ave SE, Bellevue

Registration begins at 9:30am with coffee and rolls

PROGRAM

10:00 - 11:30 - Public Financing of Campaigns

11:30 - 12:30 - Forecasting the 2007 Legislative Session

12:30 - 1:30 - Lunch with the portfolio chairs

1:30 - 3:00 - Maintaining an Independent Judiciary. Selecting Judges: Is There a Better Way?

Send a check for \$20 (includes a salad lunch) to LWVWA, 4710 University Way NE, #214,
Seattle, WA 98105 or download a registration form at www.lwvwa.org

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Mark Your Calendar!!

LOBBY DAY

January 19, 2007, 9:00am -3:00pm
Columbia Room, State Capitol Building

The agenda includes Washington Learns and it's new Early Learning Department, Environmental and Government issues. More details and registration materials will be made available as we finalize the agenda. Legislators will be invited to join us for a buffet lunch.



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