

THE VOTER



October 2009
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This Newsletter published by and for the League of Women Voters of Yakima County

MISSION STATEMENT

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.

VISION

To empower citizens to shape better communities worldwide.

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Secretary of State:
www.secstate.wa.gov/
Yakima Co. Auditor:
www.co.yakima.wa.us/auditor/
LWVWA: www.lwvwa.org

Notice ! Notice !

The Yakima County League of Women Voters' newsletter, The Voter, will be going ELECTRONIC with the January, 2010 issue. The change will mean a savings to the local League in printing and postage costs. Members who have internet service will be able to access Voter issues by "hyperlink" to the state League internet website.

Under these circumstances, it is essential that we have current email addresses from those members who are able to access The Voter electronically.

Doris Ayyoub is the keeper of League addresses. dayyoub@charter.net Please contact her or me, Elaine Smith, augusta03@earthlink.net if you have questions or want to update your contact information. (**Note:** League members without internet access will continue to receive mailed copies of The Voter.)

On October 7th in downtown Yakima, sixteen curious people were immersed in local building history from boiler rooms to mysterious upstairs spaces hidden behind false ceilings. Original art-deco designs and beautiful tile restrooms, a buried bank vault, and coal cart in a basement recess, opened our eyes to a past unfamiliar to many. Yes, right in the center of Yakima.

The LWVYC Downtown Committee hosted this walking tour to the Larson Building (built in 1931) and the Vida Rug Gallery, once the Yakima Valley Bank and Hotel (built in 1906). Joe Mann, a well-known entrepreneur, and Hannah Mock, on the staff at Vida Rug Gallery, guided the two tours of about 45 minutes each. Afterwards, we dispersed to Plaza Socievole and Kana wineries for wine tasting, compliments of the wineries and hors d'oeuvres provided by the committee. Some dined at Socievole and others closed Kana for the evening

This downtown event was **a success** not only in entertainment for the participants but for a nice contribution to the local League treasury.
Jackie Call

Calendar

Tues.Nov. 3rd Election Day

Thurs. Nov. 12th League Board Meeting, League Office

Saturday, Nov 7th, LWVWA Action Workshop, Benton/Franklin County. Register at lwvwa.org. (see registration form page 3)

DUES REMINDER:

Membership in the local League is now due to the Treasurer. We have to date received payment from about 2/3rds of the local membership.

Help keep your local league alive with your membership.

Here are talking points on Ballot Initiative 1033 and Referendum 71 from the **Seattle League Voter** for friends and acquaintances. Complete summaries are on line on the League's state website, and on relevant ballot measure websites. Washington State League positions from the 2009 Convention: **No on 1033** and **Yes on Referendum 71**.
Cynthia Garrick

Ballot Initiative 1033

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF INITIATIVE I033?

If revenues to the general fund at the state, county, or city level exceed revenues collected the preceding year, adjusted for population growth and inflation, the excess amount will go into a fund that will be used to lower the property tax. It is unclear whether this will establish a new base for future levies. Since the collection of property taxes is based on a levy that originates with a budget, property tax collections are not likely to exceed expectations.

According to the fiscal note on the Secretary of State's website, if enacted, I-1033 would reduce the state general fund revenues that support education, social, health and environmental services, and general government activities by an estimated \$5.9 billion over the next six years. The initiative would also reduce general fund revenues that support public safety, infrastructure and general government activities by an estimated \$694 million for counties and \$2.1 billion for cities. The sponsors of I-1033 believe these estimates to be low.

Those in favor say:

- ♦ *I-601, approved by the voters in 1993, allowed government to grow at a sustainable rate while setting limits on its fiscal policies. I-1033 closes loopholes added to I-601 by the state legislature and returns to the policies established by I-601, with a reasonable allowance for growth.*
- ♦ *The Washington State property tax is obscene and unsustainable; lowering the property tax will stimulate economic growth and give relief to working families and fixed-income senior citizens. Initiative 1033 will provide a way of limiting government and stabilizing revenues and expenditures.*

Those against say:

- ♦ *Initiative 1033 would severely limit the state's flexibility in meeting changing needs or using increased revenues during good times to improve services, since all revenues beyond the established limit would be moved to a fund to lower property taxes.*
- ♦ *The county and certain cities also collect the sales tax and B&O taxes. Both of these taxes are generally criticized as being unfair. Sales taxes impact low and moderate income residents disproportionately. Businesses pay B&O taxes on their gross receipts, not their net income. Initiative 1033 would shift even more of the cost of government to these sources and severely limit their availability to meet changing needs.*

ORGANIZED SUPPORT I-1033

- ♦ *Voters Want More Choices* <http://www.permanent-offense.org/>

ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO I-1033

- ♦ *The No on 1033 Committee leads the opposition to I-1033, with endorsements from many unions and environmental, health, education, community and political organizations; for a complete list, go to **no1033.com**.*

Ballot Referendum 71

THE EFFECT OF THE BILL IF APPROVED

If approved, E2SSB 5688, the Domestic Partnership Expansion Act of 2009, would take effect as passed by the legislature. The bill amends references in approximately 200 state statutes so that rights, responsibilities, and obligations granted by or imposed by state law on married couples and their families would apply equally to state-registered domestic partners. The terms spouse, marriage, marital, husband, wife, widow, widower, next of kin, and family, when used in state statutes and in the Washington Administrative Code, would be interpreted as applying equally to state-registered domestic partnerships as well as to marital relationships and married persons. Similarly, references to dissolution of marriage would apply equally to state-registered domestic partnerships that have been terminated, dissolved, or invalidated. Gender specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law would be construed to be gender neutral, and applicable to individuals in state-registered domestic partnerships. (Cont. page 3)

THE EFFECT OF THE BILL IF APPROVED (Cont. from page 2)

The bill provides state-registered domestic partners a number of rights and responsibilities such as: the ability to use available sick leave to care for a seriously ill domestic partner; the right to receive disability benefits when a domestic partner is injured on the job; the right to receive unpaid wages upon the death of a domestic partner; the ability to receive unemployment benefits, disability insurance benefits, or workers' compensation coverage where such benefits and coverage is provided to married spouses; rights under insurance policies that accrue as a matter of law after the death of a spouse, such as conversion rights and continuing coverage rights; rights and responsibilities related to adoption, child custody, and child support; and rights related to business succession applicable to married spouses.

Currently, state-registered domestic partners can, in certain circumstances, dissolve their partnerships without going to court. If the measure is approved, then that process would no longer be available. In that event, the process to dissolve all state-registered domestic partnerships would be akin to obtaining a divorce.

If the bill is approved, then registered domestic partners will have almost all the rights and responsibilities granted to legally married couples under state law except that clergy will not be able to validate for legal purposes a domestic partnership, and unlike a marriage certificate, a domestic partnership registration makes no attempt to confer federal protections such as Social Security or equal treatment under the IRS tax code. Other federal protections are also not included.

THE EFFECT IF THE BILL IS REJECTED

If the bill is rejected, E2SSB 5688 would not become law and registered domestic partners and their families would not get the protections contained in the law. Rejecting the law in Referendum 71 would leave in place only the state-based domestic partnership benefits and duties included in the laws passed in 2007 and 2006.

League of Women Voters of Washington

ACTION WORKSHOP 2009

REGISTRATION

Cost: \$25 per venue per person

Lunch Provided

Choose one or both venues:

- Benton/Franklin Counties, November 7, 2009**
- Bellevue, November 21, 2009**

Name _____

Tel/email _____

VISA M/C

Card # _____ exp. date _____

Check enclosed

Mail to: LWVWA, 4730 University Way N.E., Suite #720, Seattle, WA 98105

League of Women Voters Of Yakima County
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Voter

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF YAKIMA COUNTY
Cordially invites you to: JOIN US!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Membership Categories:

_____ \$10 Student Associate

_____ \$60 Basic

_____ \$70 Contributing

_____ \$80 Supporting

_____ \$40 Each additional family member
at the same residence

Student Associate is not a voting member

Make checks payable to: LWVYC

And mail to: PO Box 723

Yakima, WA 98907

Observer Corps Opportunities October 2009

Yakima County Commissioners
Yakima City Council Chambers
Tuesdays, 10 am
129 North 2nd Street 574 1500
[yakima county.us/cmrs/](http://yakima.county.us/cmrs/)

Yakima City Council
1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6 pm
(See Y Pac, Cable 22 for broadcasts)
Yakima City Council Chambers
129 North 2nd Street 575 6050
ci.yakima.wa.us/council/

Please call Jackie Call, Mary Crago, Jackie Hertel, or Marilyn Shearer for forms and information to get started.