



2024 Issue Paper: Elections

Position Statements

In the *Impact on Issues*, League of Women Voters of the United States states:

Founded by the activists who secured voting rights for women, the League has always worked to promote the values and processes of representative governments. Protecting and enhancing voting rights for all Americans; assuring opportunities for citizen participation and working for open, accountable, representative, and responsive government at every level—all reflect the deeply held convictions of the League of Women Voters.

In its *Program in Action*, the League of Women Voters of Washington states:

Election Methods

- Supports state election laws allowing for options for alternative election systems in governmental jurisdictions at both the state and local levels. (EM-1)
- Believes that consideration should be given, when evaluating elections systems, to how well they (promote “representative-ness”, citizen participation and accountability, as well as keeping cost of elections within range by holding them in regularly scheduled General or Special Elections (EM-2)
- In the event that the primary continues as a part of Washington’s election system, (LWVWA) supports a primary that has the following elements:
 - is an “open” system not requiring advance party registration,
 - keeps voters’ party preferences from becoming a matter of public record
 - encourages minor party participation (EM-3)
- Supports a presidential primary only if the results play a decisive part in selecting party nominees. (EM-4)
- Supports adoption of election methods that produce proportional representation when electing representative government bodies such as councils, legislatures, and Congress. (EM-5)
- Supports the concept of a majority vote requirement for winners of single offices such as mayor or governor, as long as it is achieved using a voting method such as the Instant Runoff Vote, rather than a second, separate runoff election. (EM-6)

Election Laws and Procedures

- The Voters Pamphlet performs a valuable service in promoting an informed electorate and should be continued at state expense. The intent and effect of each ballot issue should be clearly set forth in language readily understandable by the voter. (EL-1)

- Voting procedures should serve the voter with a maximum of convenience, simplicity and efficiency while ensuring that the requirements of secrecy, accuracy and impartiality are maintained. (EL-2)
- Permanent, personal registration should be continued. Lists of voters should be accurate and current. Registration should be simple and convenient for voters while ensuring accuracy. The Voter Registration State Database (VRSD) should not be used to deny people the right to vote. (EL-3)

Summary of Issues for the 2024 Legislative Session

Washington Voting Options, Implementation, Compliance, Education, and Standards Bill (WAVOICES)

This bill would provide legislative guidance to local governments and courts considering ranked choice voting (RCV). The City of Seattle will use RCV by 2027. The WA State Supreme Court in their June 2023 [decision](#) upheld the Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA), *and* clarified that the WVRA is not limited to “district-based” systems, and explicitly allows other remedies, including RCV. The opinion also stated local jurisdictions can voluntarily and proactively change their electoral system to remedy a potential violation of the WVRA. See [here](#) and [here](#)

The WAVOICES bill would provide consistent and clear rules and requirements to ensure uniform standards across the state for implementation and voter education. Jurisdictions would have the option to use RCV in for single-winner races such as mayor and county executive and/or multi-winner races such as councils that produce proportional representation.

The LWVWA Democracy team is working in coalition with [Washington for Equitable Representation](#) and [Washington Voting Justice Coalition](#) and has been engaged in discussions with legislators and auditors/election administrators on other elections-related proposed legislation. More details will follow in the weekly Legislative Action Newsletter throughout the session. [Subscribe here](#)

Final bill language is pending for the Secretary of State request legislation addressing harassment of election workers, improvements in processes for address changes and managing voter rolls, and resources for education and support. This is a bill that LWVWA will likely support.

A bill for process improvements for ballot curing is pending, and LWVWA will watch that as well.

The LWVWA Democracy team is collaborating with the LWVWA Criminal Justice issue team to support full restoration of voting rights for people who are incarcerated.

While there are no specific positions on these issues, the team will be watching and reporting on potential legislation on compulsory/universal voting, allowing local jurisdictions to move elections to even years to improve turnout and participation, and allowing younger voters 16 + to vote in school board elections.

We will continue to oppose any type of electronic voting, including ballot submission through a secure online portal because of privacy and security concerns.

For more details, and to hear from expert speakers, including former Secretary of State Kim Wyman, please view the recording of the [House State Government & Tribal Relations work session Oct 27, 2023](#).

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