

♦ SPECIAL SECTION ♦

YOUR VOTE

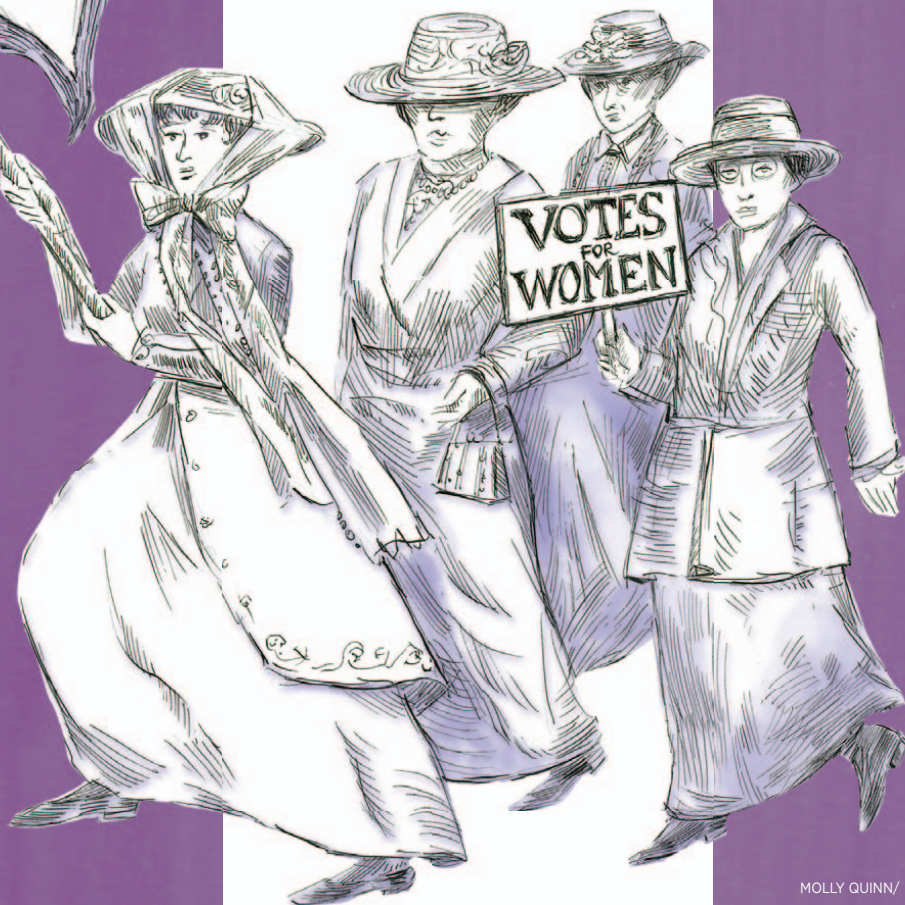
The direction of our country, state and local communities is set by voters. Casting a ballot may seem like a simple act, but information aimed at voters trying to make intelligent choices can be confusing.

VOTING DEMYSTIFIED
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WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE 1920 ~ 2020



MOLLY QUINN/
THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF WASHINGTON

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

TIMELINE: THE RIGHT TO VOTE

Original voting requirements of the 13 states:

- 21 years of age
- White
- Property owner
- In some states, Protestant

The property requirement is eliminated in all states.**The 14th Amendment passes.**

It grants citizenship and the right to vote to former male slaves.

Southern states, however, begin implementing voting taxes and literacy tests to keep African American men from voting. When those tactics don't work, they use intimidation and violence to suppress the black vote.

First state gives women the right to vote.

Wyoming becomes the first state with a constitution that gives women the right to vote.

The 19th Amendment passes.

All women are given the right to vote.

All Native Americans are given the right to vote.**Voting Rights Act passes.**

The 1965 Voting Rights Act bars states from imposing restrictions on who could vote.

1789 1792 1856 1868 1882 1887 1890 1920 1922-23 1947 1952 1964 1965 1971

New Hampshire eliminates the property requirement.

It takes more than 65 years for all states to remove the requirement that a voter own property.

People of Chinese ancestry are barred from voting.

Congress passes laws barring people of Chinese ancestry from voting.

Native Americans are given the right to vote with restrictions.

The Supreme Court rules Native American men can vote, if they give up their tribal affiliation.

Congress later says they will have to apply for citizenship.

The U.S. Supreme Court rules immigrants from Japan can't become citizens and vote.

Those from India are similarly barred in 1923.

All Asian Americans are given the right to vote.**Poll taxes are outlawed.****The 26th Amendment passes.**

In the midst of the Vietnam War and the draft, the 26th Amendment lowers the voting age to 18.

Source: Staff research

MOLLY QUINN/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

VOTING IS A RIGHT THAT'S OFTEN IGNORED

Opportunity to cast ballots sometimes has been trampled

Voting is a right for all American citizens, but is often one of the most ignored rights, and occasionally one of the most trampled rights.

Any American citizen – native born or naturalized – who meets the residency requirements that his or her state sets down, and hasn't lost the right by being convicted of a felony or ruled mentally unfit by a court, is eligible to register and vote.

It wasn't always that way.

Originally, only white male property owners could vote, and in some states they'd also have to be Protestant. When George Washington was elected, only about 6% of the population could vote. It took more than 60 years for all states to remove the property owning requirement, the Civil War to allow African American men to vote, and another 100 years to outlaw voter suppression tactics like poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses and voter intimidation

that were used in Southern states.

It was about 100 years after the adoption of the U.S. Constitution before the first state – Wyoming – allowed women to vote and another 30 before the 19th Amendment gave all American women the right to vote.

Native Americans couldn't vote for more than 100 years, and for another 65 only if they gave up their tribal affiliation and applied for citizenship the way immigrants did. Asian American residents of Chinese, Japanese or Indian heritage weren't guaranteed the right to vote until 1952.

The last major change to American voting laws, which lowered the voting age to 18 in the midst of the Vietnam War and the last compulsory military draft, occurred in 1971, just five years short of the 200th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

A 2018 survey by the U.S. Census Bureau estimated there were 229 million Americans eligible to vote in that year's midterm elections. But only 153 million said they were registered

to vote, and only 122 million of them voted in that year's midterm election.

Put another way, more than 75 million of those who could vote didn't bother to register, and of those who did, 31 million didn't bother to cast a ballot.

Political scientists warn that the Census Bureau figures usually overstate registration and turnout, because those figures are extrapolated from what people say, and some people are embarrassed to admit they don't register or don't vote.

Washington state had some 5,228,000 citizens eligible to vote in 2018, with 4,362,459 registered for that November's election; 3,133,462 voted. In other words, about 850,000 potential voters didn't register, and more than 1.2 million who were registered didn't vote.

Among the world's democracies, the United States ranks 26th – between Estonia and Luxembourg – for percentage of residents who are eligible to vote and cast a ballot in a national election closest to 2016, the Pew Research Center reported. It also has the biggest gap between the number of

people who registered and those who actually voted.

A 2017 study by the center concluded that people who don't register have a significantly different view of participating in the political process than those who register but rarely vote. The most common reason for not registering – cited by 44% of those surveyed – was "I don't want to vote."

Those who are unregistered were twice as likely to say they dislike politics as those who are registered but rarely vote. They also were more likely to say voting has little to do with the way "real decisions" are made, or that their one vote wouldn't affect the outcome. About 1 in 7 unregistered voters surveyed said their religion discourages voting and 1 in 11 said registering was inconvenient.

Those who are registered but rarely vote were more likely to say they don't like any of the candidates on the ballot, weren't informed enough to make a good decision or were too busy.

Both groups were equally likely to say they "just don't think about voting."

Over the last several decades,

Washington elected officials have made registering and voting easier in ways designed to address some common complaints expressed in the Pew Center study. The state has made registering more convenient by allowing Washington residents to sign up by mail or online as well as in person, and starting in 2019 allowed them to register and cast a vote on Election Day if they go to a location designated by their county elections office.

The state sends out voter guides before the general election in even-numbered years, when partisan elections for federal and state offices occur, and in odd-numbered years if there are statewide initiatives on the ballot. That voter information is also available on the Secretary of State's website.

County elections offices also provide guides for local offices, either printed and mailed to all registered voters, or on their websites.

Convenience was one of the reasons lawmakers cited for switching Washington to the vote-by-mail system, in which

See **VOTING, 3**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

Close elections

A common refrain from people who don't vote is "my vote isn't going to make a difference." In many elections, that's mathematically true because one candidate finishes ahead of the other by thousands, tens of thousands, or even hundreds of thousands of votes.

But not always. Most years, at least a few elections are so close they remain undecided until ballots are recounted. Here are some of Washington's closest races:

In 1940, Republican Agnes Gehrman finished 10 votes, or 14-hundredths of 1%, ahead of Democrat T.C. Bloomer for a state Senate seat in Pacific and Grays Harbor counties. It was so close the Democratic-controlled Senate refused to seat Gehrman until a Senate committee could conduct a recount. When they did, they discovered Gehrman had actually won by 25 votes. She was sworn in.

In 1989, Katie Reikofski beat Bob Apple for a Spokane City Council seat by 89 votes out of 47,379 cast, or 19-hundredths of 1%. That was less than one vote per precinct.

In 1992, incumbent Spokane County Commissioner Steve Hasson finished 253 votes, less than one vote per precinct or 0.16 of 1%, ahead of Republican challenger Jack Hebner. He marked the occasion by jumping out a courthouse window and sprinting down the street to avoid talking to reporters.

In 1995, John Logan and Joe Coombs tied for the office of mayor of Spangle at 64 votes each. To break the tie, they drew three cards from a deck spread out on a counter in the Spokane County Elections Office. Coombs drew a queen, a jack and a four. Logan drew a queen, a jack and a five, and was declared the winner.

In 1999, the city of Spokane switched from a city manager form of government with citywide council elections to a strong mayor and council president form of government with district council elections by 164 votes out of 54,656 cast, or 3-tenths of 1%.

In 2000, Democratic challenger Maria Cantwell beat Republican U.S. Sen. Slade Gorton by 2,229 votes out of some 2.46 million cast, or 9-hundredths of 1%. That's less than one vote per precinct in King County.

In 2002, Ed Mitchell beat Kevin Entze by 1 vote in the Republican primary for a House seat in South Puget Sound's 26th Legislative District. Mitchell lost in the general election by about 3,400 votes.

In 2004, Republican Dino Rossi finished 261 votes ahead of Democrat Chris Gregoire in the first full count, and 42 votes ahead in the machine recount. But Gregoire finished ahead by 129 votes out of some 2.75 million cast, or 49 ten-thousandths of 1% in the subsequent hand recount and was sworn in. The outcome survived a court challenge which ruled four of Rossi's votes were illegally cast by felons ineligible to vote, and moved the margin to 133. That's still less than a four-vote shift in each of the state's 39 counties.

In 2018, Republican Sen. Doug Erickson beat Democratic challenger Pinky Vargus by 46 votes, and Republican Rep. Luanne Van Werven beat Democratic challenger Justin Bonneau by 80 votes out of more than 72,000 cast in northwest Washington's 42nd District.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

King County elections workers Linda Sanchez, left, and Colleen Kwan look over poll books on Jan. 5, 2005 as they work to reconcile the number of voters who participated in the general election with the number of votes cast in a recount of the governor's race between Republican Dino Rossi and Democrat Chris Gregoire.

VOTING

Continued from 2

ballots are mailed out about three weeks before the election, giving voters until 8 p.m. on Election Day to deposit their ballot in a drop box or have it mailed and postmarked. It would also help voters who claim not to have enough information, supporters said, by giving them time to research candidates or issues in voters pamphlets or online and avoid being caught unaware by an issue or race at the polling place. Washington began

making it easier to register in 1990 with "Motor Voter," which allowed people to sign up when they got their driver's license, and expanded that to online registration in later years. It allowed counties to conduct all elections by mail in 2005, and by 2011 all counties were mail-only.

But those changes have produced mixed results for participation. The state saw its highest percentage of eligible citizens registered in 1952, at nearly 91%. The number of registered voters went up every presidential election year since then, but in most cases not as fast as the population. The percentage

of registered voters casting ballots stayed relatively steady, between 75% and 80%, for those big elections.

But the state sees dramatic drop-off in the percentage of eligible residents registered and of voters casting ballots in mid-term elections. The 2018 midterm was the first since 1970 where nearly 72% of registered voters – and more than 50% of eligible citizens – cast ballots.

While the state can change the mechanics of registering and voting to make it easier and more convenient, that doesn't really answer some of

other reasons cited in the Pew Center survey that people who are eligible don't participate in elections. The antidote for apathetic or disaffected voters is often controversial ballot measures or closely contested and well-financed races between candidates, elections officials say.

"It's the money being spent on advertising and the awareness," Spokane County Elections Manager Mike McLaughlin said as ballots poured in at a record pace for the 2018 midterm. "People have made up their minds and they want to vote."

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

Registration, voting demystified

Tips to make sure you receive, can cast your ballot

The process of registering to vote and casting a ballot in Washington state has several distinctive features, which can create some confusion after a resident moves to a new address from either within state borders or from another state with different electoral laws. Spokane County Auditor Vicky Dalton, who's served 20 years in the office and is among the longest-serving elected auditors in the state, provided a list of common misunderstandings in the process, from applying for a ballot through casting it.

1 *If I notify one agency of my new address, others will automatically get the memo.*

Simply updating your address with the U.S. Postal Service or with the Department of Licensing isn't enough to ensure you'll get the correct ballot delivered to your door prior to Election Day.

The easiest way to update your address after a move is to notify your county auditor online. Washington voters can do so by visiting voter.votewa.gov. Updating your address online is available until the week before Election Day, and then again two or three weeks after the date ballots are due.

If voters prefer, they can contact their auditor's office by phone or in person to update their address. A full list of county auditor offices in Washington is available by visiting the Secretary of State's website at sos.wa.gov and clicking on the "County Auditors" link.

2 *Registering to vote requires Washington state identification.*

While county auditors prefer Washington-issued ID cards, they aren't necessary in order to



DAN PELLE/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Four-year-old Addison Havel of Newman Lake, Wash., beams as her mother, Sherri Havel, registers to vote for the first time in October 2012 at the Spokane County Elections Office. "It's time to be part of the decision-making process," said Havel.

register to vote in an election in the state if the person registers in person.

Prospective voters will be required to submit the last four digits of their Social Security number if they don't have a valid Washington ID card, and they must sign an affidavit attesting they are a citizen of the United States, have lived in Washington

for 30 days, are at least 18 at the time a ballot is cast and have no restrictions on their ability to vote because of a felony conviction or court order.

3 *Election workers will be able to read all of my handwriting.*

If you're registering to vote at a registration drive, take a few

extra moments to make sure your handwriting is legible. Election workers check names and Social Security numbers against databases to ensure a potential voter is who they say they are, and being unable to read handwriting can slow or end that process.

Dalton said the easiest rule is to print. Don't assume that a

worker will be able to read your cursive.

4 *Prospective voters must be 18 in order to register.*

While voters must be 18 in order to cast an official ballot, those interested in voting may register at age 16 or 17 in order to

See **DEMYSTIFIED, 5**

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

DEMYSTIFIED

Continued from 4

ensure they'll receive their ballot on their first Election Day.

If your 18th birthday falls on an Election Day, you'll have to visit an elections office in person in order to cast your ballot. Officials are not allowed to mail out ballots to prospective voters under the age of 18.

5 *If I don't have my registration completed or my ballot dropped off by exactly 8 p.m. on Election Day, my vote won't count.*

Whether you're walking into an Elections Office trying to register at the last minute or in line to drop off your ballot in the waning seconds before the 8 p.m. cutoff, the deadline applies only to beginning the process of voting, not completing it, Dalton said.

That means you can show up to the office on Election Day a few minutes before 8 p.m. and, as long as you've started your registration paperwork, you'll be given a ballot that will count in that election. The same is true if you arrive at a ballot dropbox just as the clock strikes 8 and there's a line of cars or people waiting to deposit their votes.

"The same thing used to apply at poll sites, we would mark the end of the line," Dalton said. "We do the same thing with cars on election night that are lining up to drop them into the bins."

6 *I have to mark every race on my ballot for my votes to count.*

Leaving one of the races blank on a ballot will not invalidate your votes. Election officials track the number of ballots in each contest that have no choice marked and consider those "under votes," a category that is included in official results published by county auditors.

"Not voting is a legitimate response by the voter," Dalton said.

Whether you vote in one contest, multiple contests, all of the races or none of them, the elections office counts your votes and includes them in the official results of the election. (The office also counts what are known as "blank ballots," or



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Mary Coltrane, voter service liaison for the League of Women Voters, holds up her own ballot as she stands with Gypsy Temple lead singer Cameron Lavi-Jones and urges audience members to vote during a performance at Shoreline Community College Thursday, Oct. 25, 2018.

those with zero markings at all, that arrive in their office – there were 35 such ballots out of 112,094 cast in the August primary in Spokane County.)

7 *My ballot must be placed in the provided yellow security envelope in order for my votes to count.*

While election officials prefer your ballot to be sealed in the yellow, unidentifiable envelope that comes as part of your elections packet in the mail, forgetting to do so won't invalidate your votes.

Workers are instructed, if it appears the ballot is not within the security envelope as a mailing is opened, to place the votes in one themselves in an effort to protect the anonymity of the voter, Dalton said.

"We will rescue you from yourself," she said.

This policy also prevents another misconception that voters may have about elections staff: They know how you voted. There are no identifying marks

on the ballot itself, meaning staff responsible for tallying votes has no way of knowing who voted for whom.

8 *My ballot may still be counted, even if I forget or fail to sign my name on the outside of the envelope.*

Election workers check all signatures of submitted ballots against a database of signatures from voters' driver's license registration forms.

Not a sampling, Dalton said. All of them.

Failing to sign the outside of the envelope is the surest way for your ballot not to be counted in the upcoming election. The Washington Secretary of State's Office allows voters to check the status of their ballot by visiting the website mentioned above, voter.votewa.gov. Head there if you're worried you might have forgotten.

9 *Phone calls and email solicitations from candidates and political parties come from*

information local election officials collect and release publicly.

County auditors in Washington collect an address, a name and a birth date for each individual voter that may then be released to candidates or political parties that ask for them. They also have records about how often you've submitted a ballot.

If a voter is receiving phone calls or emails from a party or candidate, that information was received from another source, Dalton said. But, if you're looking to stop those phone calls and end the mailers arriving at your home, the sure way to do so is to cast a ballot, she said. Candidates and campaigns are notified of when your ballot is received and it's unlikely they'll continue to send you reminders once your ballot is in.

10 *As long as I drop my ballot in the mail on Election Day, it'll be counted.*

Your ballot must be postmarked by Election Day. When dropping your ballot in the

mail on Election Day, make sure there's a pickup scheduled after the time you drop it off. If not, the mail won't be collected until the following day and your ballot won't count.

Dalton and her office worried that the advent of free postage for ballots in 2018 might mean more people dropping their ballots in the mail for the first time and forgetting to check whether their ballot would be postmarked on time. In August, 981 ballots out of 112,094 cast were postmarked too late, which equates to about 0.9% of ballots cast. Dalton said it's typical to see that number between 0.5% and 1%.

If you don't know when the pickup time is for a particular mailbox, consider taking it to a local library or ballot drop-off location, just in case. Ballots dropped off in those official election ballot boxes will count as long as you drop it in by 8 p.m. on election day. You can find a list of those locations on your county auditor's website.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

WHEN ARE ELECTIONS HELD?

EVEN-YEAR ELECTIONS

THE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT

Like the federal government, Washington's state government has three branches.

Executive

The executive branch is led by the governor and includes agencies led by the governor or leaders elected separately, including the commissioner of public lands.

Legislative

The Legislature is made up of the House and the Senate.

Judicial

The judicial branch includes the Supreme and appellate courts. Unlike the executive branch, judges in Washington are elected, not appointed.

Sources: Washington Association of County Officials, League of Women Voters, state constitution

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COUNTY OFFICES

Most counties in Washington hold elections for county officers in even years to four-year terms.

Commissioners

Most counties have commissions that act as the legislative as well as executive branch of the government. The numbers of commissioners varies from three to nine, depending on decisions made in each county. Four counties, King, Whatcom, Snohomish and Pierce, have a separately elected county executive.

Clerk

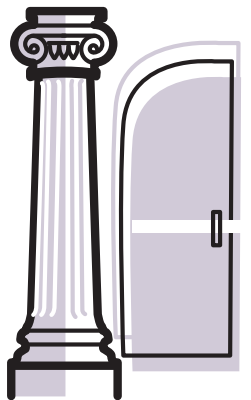
Acts as the financial and records officer of each county's superior court.

Assessor

Places values on property so property owners pay a fair share of property taxes.

Auditor

The auditor has many duties, including overseeing elections; maintaining county records, including property records; and issuing marriage licenses. In most counties, auditors are in charge of the accounting system for their counties.

**Coroner**

Determines the cause of death under numerous circumstances, including when people in apparent good health die without being in medical care within the 36 hours before their death, when the cause of death appears suspicious and when the person died in jail or prison. Some counties have moved away from having an elected coroner and instead hire a professional medical examiner. The duties of the coroner in counties with populations of 40,000 or less are handled by the county prosecutor.

Prosecutor

The county prosecuting attorney represents the government in court when someone is accused of a crime. The prosecutor also defends the county when it is sued.

Sheriff

Serves as the chief law enforcement officer in the county and "conservator of the peace."

Treasurer

Acts as the chief banker for the county and some other local governments, including fire and water districts. Collects various taxes on behalf of county and other local governments.

STATE OFFICES

**Governor**

Runs the executive branch of the state government. Hires and supervises about 40 state agency directors, including agencies that run state prisons, issue licenses, provide health care and social services and protect the environment. Writes the first draft of the state budget. Has the power to veto bills or parts of bills including the state budget bill.

Lt. governor

Presides over sessions of the state Senate. Casts tie-breaking votes. Takes over the duties of the governor when the governor is out of the state or if the governor leaves office before his or her term is up.

Secretary of state

Supervises elections. Publishes state voters guide. Maintains state archives. Registers corporations. Implements the state's record management laws. Would take over governor's duties if governor's and lieutenant governor's offices were vacated.

Treasurer

Manages the state's money and debts.

Auditor

Charged with ensuring that state and local governments follow rules on the spending of public money.

Attorney general

Acts as the legal adviser for state officers. Defends state laws challenged in courts.

Commissioner of public lands

Oversees millions of acres of state-owned land, most of it forestland that can produce timber the state can sell.

Insurance commissioner

Makes sure insurance companies treat customers fairly and follow regulations. Establishes and oversees implementation of the Affordable Care Act.

Superintendent of public instruction

Handles the state's responsibilities for public schools. It is the only nonpartisan executive office that is elected statewide.

STATE LEGISLATURE

Washington has 49 legislative districts. Each district has two representatives and one senator.

See map on page 8

State senator

Senators serve four-year terms.

State representative

Representatives serve two-year terms.

JUDICIAL

State Supreme Court

Justices are elected to six-year terms.

Court of Appeals

Judges are elected to six-year terms.

Superior Court

Superior Courts generally handle felony cases. Judges are elected to four-year terms.

District Court

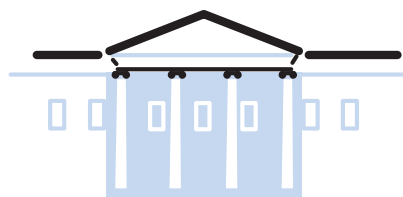
District Courts generally handle misdemeanor cases. Judges are elected to four-year terms.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

WHEN ARE ELECTIONS HELD?

EVEN-YEAR ELECTIONS

FEDERAL OFFICES



President

In presidential elections every four years, voters determine which candidate will get the state's 12 electoral votes in the Electoral College.

U.S. senator

Senators serve six-year terms. The seat held by Maria Cantwell will next be up for election in 2024. The seat held by Patty Murray will next be up for election in 2022.

U.S. representative

Representatives serve two-year terms. Washington has 10 congressional districts.

Sources: Washington Association of County Officials, League of Women Voters, state constitution

Commission named every 10 years to redraw boundaries

Every 10 years, Washington adjusts the boundaries of its congressional and legislative districts to account for changes in population.

In most decades since statehood, that has meant creating a new congressional district because Washington grew faster than most other states. In 2011, the state went from nine to 10 congressional seats.

The state has had 49 legislative districts since 1933, so with each census, the number of residents a legislator represents has grown. Because the population grows at different rates across the state, one or two of those districts is usually moved to faster-growing Western Washington from Eastern Washington.

Under a constitutional amendment approved in 1983, the boundary lines are drawn by a bipartisan commission. After the data from the latest census is released, one member each is appointed by the Republican and Democratic legislative leaders: the House speaker, the House

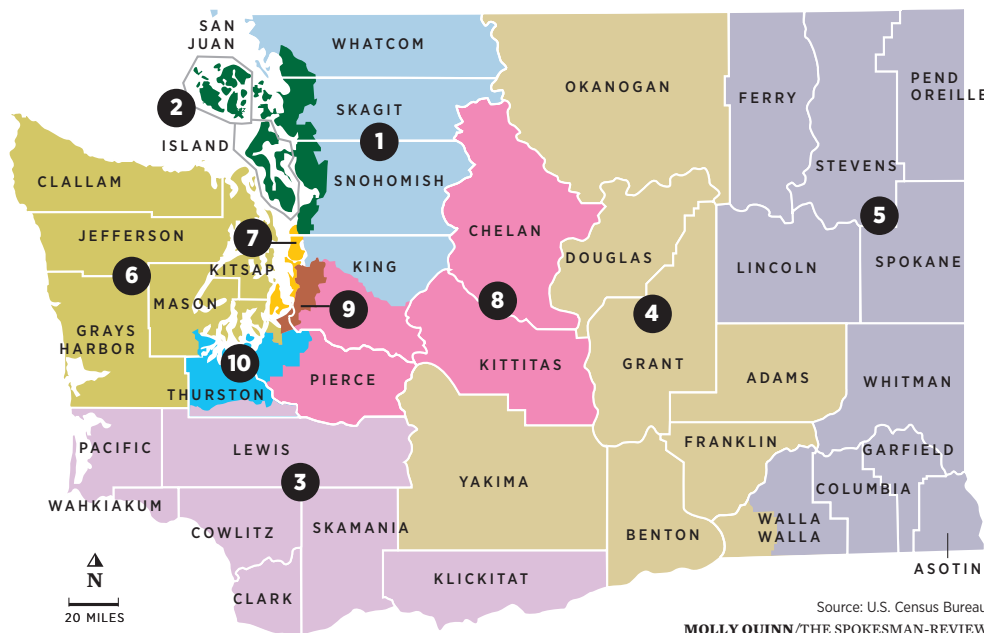
minority leader, the Senate majority leader and the Senate minority leader. The commissioners can't be elected officials or political party officials. Those four commissioners select a non-voting chair to run the meetings and oversee the process.

The commission officially starts in January of the year after the census and holds hearings around the state. It accepts suggestions for new boundary lines, but also has staff to analyze the census data and voting patterns.

The final plans must be approved by at least three of the four commissioners, and sent to the Legislature by Nov. 15 of that year. The Legislature has 30 days at the start of the next year's session to make changes, and any changes must pass with two-thirds majorities.

If the final plan can't get at least three votes on the commission, the state Supreme Court has until April 30 to develop a plan. The new district lines will be in place for the 2022 elections.

WASHINGTON STATE CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

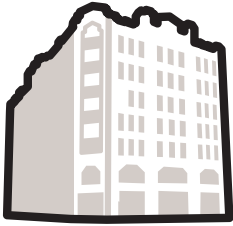
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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

WHEN ARE ELECTIONS HELD?

ODD-YEAR ELECTIONS

CITY OFFICES



Washington has 281 incorporated cities and towns. About 65 percent of the state's population lives within those cities. Cities have a variety of options for shaping their governments. Cities are in charge of the public safety, streets, water service, sewage, libraries, parks and other services. Some of those services can be contracted out to other local governments, such as counties or fire districts.

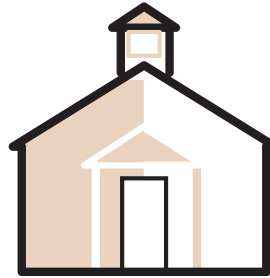
Mayor

Duties of mayors can vary significantly. While all mayors serve in elected office, some mayors may be elected a city council member and then elevated to mayor by a vote of the city council. Strong mayors are elected directly by the people and are a separate branch of the government, overseeing the administration of the city. They also have veto power over the council. Some mayors act more as the leader of the city council and may be voted to the position by the people or appointed by the rest of the council after winning a city council seat.

City council

City councils control the finances, taxes and policies of a city.

LOCAL DISTRICT OFFICES



School board

School boards control the finances and policies of school districts. Most school board members serve four-year terms. Some board members in larger districts serve six-year terms.

Fire commissioners

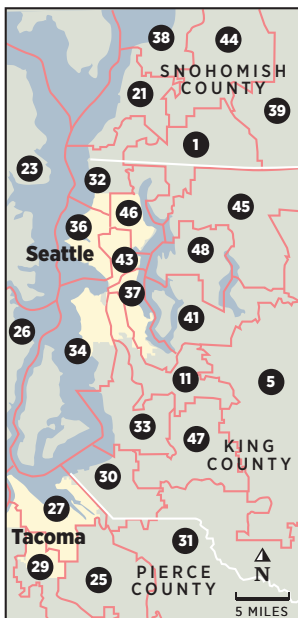
Fire districts are the fire departments serving rural areas and other areas outside cities. They may also contract to provide service within cities when those cities don't have fire departments of their own. Fire commissioners serve six-year terms.

Other commissioners

There are many other kinds of local governments that may serve where you live, including water districts, cemetery districts and park districts. Those local governments that control spending and policies have elected boards.

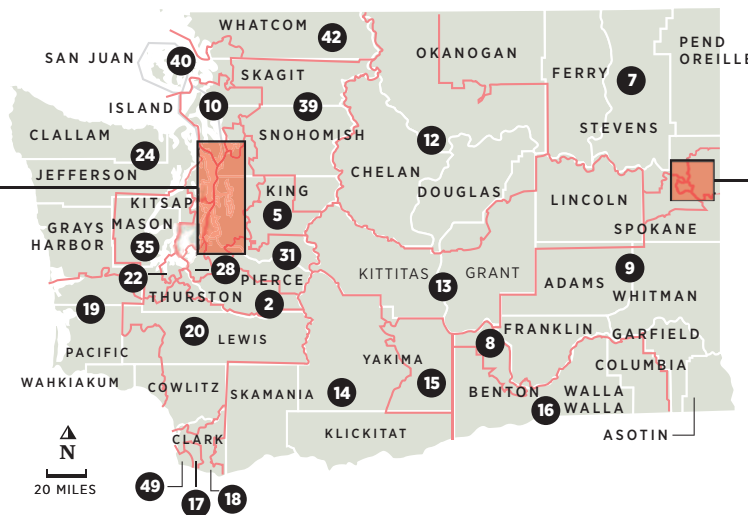
Sources: Association of Washington Cities,
The Spokesman-Review

SEATTLE-AREA DETAIL

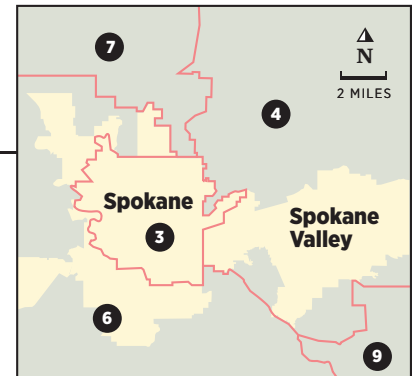


WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS

There are 49 legislative districts in Washington state.
Each district sends two representatives and a senator to the state Legislature.



SPOKANE-AREA DETAIL



Source: Washington Secretary of State
MOLLY QUINN/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

TIPS ON HOW YOU CAN BE A SMART VOTER

Preparation begins
with what you care about

Make a list of the values you have and what you care about. Then you will be ready to look for candidates and issues that match.

Make a candidate report card

List the qualities you want in a candidate, such as experience and open-mindedness. List the issues you believe are most important. For example, you may rank health care, education and taxes as most pressing topics. Then rate the candidates on their ideas and style and how closely they match.

**Learn how other people
view the candidate**

Check endorsements and ratings. Are they from an organization you can trust?

**Take a careful, critical look at
campaign literature for each side**

Does it provide substantive information about the candidates' stands on issues and their qualifications? Is it designed to appeal to your emotions, does it simply attack the other side or does it offer specific facts and truthful information?

**Examine the candidate's
campaign finances**

Is the candidate using personal funds? Getting large donations from a few people or corporations or small donations from many people? Are political action committees (PACs) and Super PACs – groups formed to raise and distribute money – playing a big role? Is the candidate open about who is funding the campaign?

**Look for reliable sources
of information**

Check out websites run by nonpartisan political organizations such as the League of Women Voters, at www.Vote411.org. Consult newspapers and other media. Check with the political parties. By going to a variety of sources, you'll have a broader and more reliable perspective.

Watch debates and forums

Candidate debates and forums are an opportunity for you to directly compare the candidates and their positions. During a debate, candidates meet face-to-face to answer questions, state their views and respond to their opponents' statements.



KATHY PLONKA/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Candidates for mayor of the city of Spokane from left, Jonathan Bingle, Kelly P. Cruz, Shawn Poole, Ben Stuckart and Nadine Woodward talk about issues during The League of Women Voters candidate forum at City Hall on June 5.

**Rate the candidates
on how they campaign**

Are they open and honest? Do they answer questions or evade them? Do they talk about issues or do they just try to stir up your emotions?

Before the debate, prepare

Decide which campaign issues are most important to you.

Think about what else you need to know to make your decision.

Open your mind to new opinions and impressions of the candidates.

Consider watching the debate with a group. Discussing it with others may help you clarify your thoughts about what was said and how the candidates performed.

During the debate, ask

Does each candidate have an equal opportunity to speak and respond?

Are the questions clear, fair and equally tough on all candidates?

Is the moderator in control of the debate?

Do the candidates answer questions directly, or do they evade them?

Do they give specifics, or do they speak in generalities?

Do they talk about their own policies and positions, or do they mostly attack their opponents?

Can they actually carry out the promises they are making?

Do they explain how their backgrounds and experience qualify them to hold the office?

Are their answers consistent with their previous positions, and if not, why not?

What image are they trying to create?

Do their responses appear "canned"?

Are reaction shots or other techniques used to create a sense of drama or conflict?

After the debate, reflect

How are the pre-debate and post-debate commentaries trying to influence you?

Which candidate appears most qualified for the office?

Determine how you agree and disagree with each candidate.

What did you learn about the issues or the candidates?

What do you want to look into further?

**Think critically
about campaign ads**

Listen to the ad with your eyes closed. What feelings did you have while listening to the ad?

Now both watch and listen to the ad. What feelings did you have while watching the ad?

What created those feelings? Consider music, other sound, visual quality, background scene and people shown in the ad.

What new factual knowledge did you gain from the ad?

Would the ad make you more likely to support or oppose the candidate it talks about? Why or why not?

Be a careful consumer of campaign advertising and messaging. Look for statements of fact and recognize when there is an attempt to manipulate your emotional response. Also pay attention to who paid for the ad. Was it authorized by the candidate or another group? If the top donors are listed, do you recognize any of the names? Are they individuals or groups with which you typically agree?

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

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Washington women voted before 19th Amendment



COURTESY OF TACOMA PUBLIC LIBRARY
Emma Smith DeVoe of Tacoma was one of the prime movers behind the effort to get Washington state women the vote in 1910. She was president of the Washington Equal Suffrage Association and a paid staffer for the National Suffrage Association. She collaborated with Spokane's May Arkwright Hutton on the suffrage effort, though the two women had vastly different styles.



FILE PHOTO
Ida B. Wells was born into slavery and became a leader in the struggle against racism and for women's suffrage. She helped found the Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago in 1913.

Sue Lean made a pilgrimage to Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1994. She was in the neighborhood because her daughter had just graduated from Cornell University, and, flipping through a park brochure, she noticed the state of Washington mentioned prominently in the timeline.

In 1910, Washington women won the vote. The brochure noted Washington "inspired nationwide campaign."

"The phrase I almost had tattooed – or needle-pointed, more likely for me – was from that national parks brochure," joked Lean, Washington Women's History Consortium vice chairwoman.

On Aug. 26, 1920, women's right to vote in the United States will turn 100. The 19th Amendment cleared its final hurdle when the Tennessee Legislature ratified the amendment on Aug. 18, 1920, coming down to a tie-breaking vote from a young lawmaker, Rep. Harry T. Burn, who had a note from his mother.

"Don't forget to be a good boy and help Mrs. Catt with her 'Rats,'" Fobbs Burn wrote to her son, referencing Carrie Chapman Catt, who served as president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association and founded the League of Women Voters.

The big party for Washington came much earlier, on Nov. 8, 1910, when it became the fifth state to give women the vote, but its role in the national suffragist movement was pivotal.

"When Washington state finally got the vote in 1910, we ended what they called the 14-year doldrums," said Karen Blair, Central Washington University history professor emerita. "Progress had slumped for a decade and a half, and when Washington gave women the vote in 1910, Oregon quickly followed and California, too. So a snowball began."

The fight for the women's vote



Dr. Anna Shaw and Carrie Chapman Catt, founder of the League of Women Voters, lead an estimated 20,000 supporters in a women's suffrage march on New York's Fifth Avenue.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

traces back to the first women's rights convention in July 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York. One of the first suffragists, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, asked Frederick Douglass – a prominent writer, orator and abolitionist who was formerly enslaved – whether they should pursue the vote.

"I have never yet been able to find one consideration, one argument, or suggestion in favor of

man's right to participate in civil government which did not equally apply to the right of woman," Douglass said at the convention.

Authored by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and purposely modeled after the Declaration of Independence, the Declaration of Sentiments was a list of women's grievances.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and

women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed," the document read.

Nearly the entire document was considered uncontroversial at the meeting, with the notable

exception of the women's right to vote.

"That was really considered men's business," Blair said. "Maybe you could argue women need education to teach their children, maybe you could argue that they should have jobs in case they're widowed and have to feed their kids, but asking for the vote in 1848 was really saying women should shape public policy."

There were many people who were both suffragists and abolitionists, but the relationship could often be strained, said any Peloff, League of Women Voters Washington administrator.

"Abolitionists weren't necessarily anti-racist," Peloff, University of Washington affiliate faculty in gender, women and sexuality studies, said. "Just because they believed that slavery was wrong

didn't mean that the white race wasn't still superior, and a large part of the abolitionist movement was predicated on the belief that the enslaved people would go back to Africa."

A notable instance of the movements clashing was when Susan B. Anthony, National Woman Suffrage Association co-founder, opposed the 15th Amendment, which gave the vote to black men

but did not include women. Anthony was quoted saying, "I will cut off this right arm of mine before I will ever work or demand the ballot for the Negro and not the woman."

Lean said this Anthony quote has been taken out of context. "Well, that makes her look terribly racist when in fact she's been an abolitionist for years and it was her abolitionist friends that asked her to set women's rights aside," Lean said. "She said no way in no uncertain terms, but it's been used to smear her reputation."

Peloff said we shouldn't put anyone on a pedestal. "I do think that we do have to respect the work that white suffragists put into this fight for the vote, but we also have to acknowledge the flaws that they brought to that work, the issues that kept them from being able to do that work in a holistic way that really addressed all of the problems around inequality," Peloff said.

A photo that was extremely striking to Peloff was that of Ida B. Wells in 1913 at the first suffrage parade in Washington, D.C., which was organized by the National American Woman Suffrage Association. When Wells and 60 other black women arrived to march with the Illinois delegation, they were advised to march in the back so as to not offend the Southern delegates.

"Either I go with you or not at all," Wells said, leaving the parade. "I am not taking this stand because I personally wish for recognition. I am doing it for the future benefit of my whole race."

But she didn't actually leave, and the photo is of her returning to the group and marching. Peloff said a focus of Washington League of Women Voters in the upcoming centennial has been taking a closer look at these stories.

"Having this opportunity to reflect on the history of the

See SUFFRAGE, B



THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW ARCHIVES
May Arkwright Hutton, along with her husband, Levi Hutton, made their fortune in Silver Valley mining at the turn of the 20th century. May Hutton was renowned in Spokane as a supporter of labor unions and women's causes and was one of the prime movers behind the effort to get the vote for women in Washington state in 1910.



COURTESY OF NORTHWEST MUSEUM OF ARTS AND CULTURE
May Huli, a homesteader in Colfax and mother of five, shows her support for women's voting rights in this 1910 photo. Washington granted women the right in 1910.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

Voters can make laws when legislators won't

They've done it repeatedly in recent decades

Washington voters can take the law into their own hands and it's perfectly legal.

Although most laws come from the Legislature, voters have ways to pass their own laws if legislators can't or won't address key issues. They can also cancel a law the Legislature just passed, or approve one when lawmakers ask them to.

They've done it repeatedly, passing laws on abortion, assisted suicide, commercial liquor sales, recreational marijuana, gun control and tax restrictions, to name just a few topics in recent decades. They've approved legislative action on same-sex marriage and domestic partnerships and temporarily blocked charter schools.

Washington has among the most open rules for initiatives and referendums in the nation. For \$5, anyone can file an proposed law that could go straight to voters, or go first to legislators for their approval but on to voters if they won't pass it.

The fee for filing a document with the Secretary of State's office was set in 1893, before the initiative and referendum clause was added to the state Constitution, and has remained the same despite inflation and occasional efforts by lawmakers to raise it.

Once the initiative has been filed, it can't be revised. It only can cover one issue but the broadness of an issue is sometimes a cause for litigation if it passes.

Whether a sponsor wants it to go on the ballot or be sent to the Legislature, the



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Abigail Doerr, campaign director for Yes on 1631, speaks at a podium at left, as supporters, including members of the Quinault Indian Nation, cheer at a rally on May 10, 2018. Initiative 1631, which would have created a fee on carbon and other greenhouse-gas emissions in Washington, was rejected by voters in the November 2018 election.

proposed law must first collect hundreds of thousands of signatures from registered Washington voters, who can only sign once.

The number of signatures is set by law at 8% of the ballots cast in the last gubernatorial election, so it changes every four years. Through 2020, that number is 259,622, but because some people sign who either aren't registered to vote or sign more than one petition for the same proposal, sponsors always have to

collect tens of thousands more than that minimum to have a chance of getting to the ballot or the Legislature.

Signatures are checked against the state voter records by the Secretary of State's office.

Initiatives to the voters usually are filed at the beginning of the year they would go on the ballot and must be turned in by early July. The earlier they are filed, the longer sponsors have to gather signatures, although on rare occasions, a successful petition drive has

been completed in a matter of weeks, using armies of people paid to gather signatures.

Critics of paying people to collect signatures contend it flies in the face of the original purpose of the initiative – the Progressive Era idea to counter legislators so beholden to moneyed interests that they won't pass laws the people want. It can result in today's moneyed interests spending millions to get legislation they wrote on the ballot and into law.

The Legislature tried to ban paying people on a per-signature basis in 1993. A federal court threw that out a year later, because the U.S. Supreme Court has said paying signature gatherers is protected as free political speech.

A voter initiative that collects the required number of signatures almost certainly makes it to the November ballot because the state Supreme Court rarely interferes before voters have a chance to weigh in. If the measure

fails, there's no point; if it passes, the court can overturn measures that try to do something unconstitutional or have multiple issues.

For the two years after it passes, the Legislature needs a two-thirds majority to amend or eliminate an initiative. After two years, it's a simple majority.

Initiatives to the Legislature have the same requirement for the number of valid signatures, but a

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

SUFFRAGE

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suffrage movement as a whole is really a useful opportunity to think about what kind of an organization we want to be moving forward," Peloff said.

The passage and ratification of the 19th amendment is an example of the imperfection of politics and people, and the compromises made along the way, said Lunell Haught, president of the League of Women Voters of Washington.

There were many competing interests in the fight to get women the vote. An important opponent to women's suffrage was the saloon interest. There was great concern that if women were given the vote, they would make the sale of alcohol illegal. This was, after all, what Washington women did when they won the vote the first time around.

When Washington was still just a territory, women won the right to vote in 1883, and exercised that right, mainly by supporting prohibition measures. Women lost the vote on February 1887, briefly regained it on Jan. 16, 1888, only to lose it once more on Nov. 14, 1888.

Abigail Scott Duniway, a prominent suffragist in Oregon, blamed this loss on suffragists joining forces with temperance groups. One of the largest national woman organizations was the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

"The WCTU believed that alcohol was the source of an awful lot of family violence, domestic violence, abuse, that men got drunk and men harmed their wives and children, and men went to the bars and treated their friends to drinks and spent the

family's food budget," Blair said.

Duniway advised women on this manner.

"One of the things that she said was women don't tell men that you're interested in the vote because you hate alcohol, they'll never vote for you if they think you're going to take away their beer," Blair said.

Washington was among 33 of the 48 existing states that banned the sale of alcohol prior to the 18th Amendment.

"As soon as women get the vote, that's what they do in our state," Blair said.

The women of Washington used various techniques – flyers, parades, postcards – to give the suffrage movement momentum, and this learning experience better served the western states which won the vote after Washington, as well as the national campaign.

In 1996, the Washington Women's History Consortium celebrated the 125th anniversary of Anthony's first of three visits to the Northwest, and Lean said some of these postcards popped up in a garage sale in Olympia.

"It had a purple ribbon banner that runs most of the way around the card, and the words on the top of the banner says, 'Think it over,' and then it says, 'An ounce of persuasion precedes a pound of coercion.'"

Peloff said she imagines if the women who fought for the right to vote were still around, they would find more work to be done.

"My sense is that even when women first got the right to vote, they didn't necessarily exercise that right, and I think that sense of disenfranchisement despite being enfranchised is something that they would be interested to note is still happening today," Peloff said.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this 2018 photo, staff members for the Yes on I-1639 campaign, a gun safety initiative, prepare campaign materials at their headquarters in Seattle. Voters approved the measure that would toughen background checks for people buying semi-automatic rifles, increase the age limit to 21 for buyers of those guns and require secured firearm storage.

INITIATIVES

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slightly longer time limit. They can be filed in the spring, and submitted in late December or early January ahead of the coming legislative session.

As the name suggests, they go first to the Legislature, which has three options: Pass it, and it becomes law; reject or ignore it, and it goes to voters on that year's general election ballot; pass a revised version of the original initiative, and both go on the November ballot.

Because initiatives often contain controversial issues, the Legislature often opts to let the voters decide. In 2018, when facing an initiative that would rewrite the standards on the use of deadly force by law

enforcement, lawmakers tried to find a way around their three options by passing a bill that had changes to the initiative and having it signed by the governor before they passed the initiative. No can do, said the state Supreme Court, which put the original initiative on the ballot, but not the revisions. It passed, and the Legislature mustered the super majority at the beginning of the 2019 session to pass the changes.

Referendums are ballot measures that allow voters to weigh in after the Legislature takes action. Sometimes legislators will put a clause requiring a statewide vote on a controversial bill to get the votes needed to pass it. The law doesn't take effect unless voters approve it in November.

Demanding a

referendum clause on a bill that is going to pass is often just a political tactic by opponents to claim it's something voters should decide rather than the Legislature.

A bill that has passed can also be challenged by a referendum measure by people who think it's a bad idea. They have to collect half as many signatures as an initiative – through 2020 that's 129,811 – but the petitions must be filed within 90 days of the end of the session, which is when most laws from a session take effect. Because many controversial bills are delayed until the final days of the session, that's only three months to get the referendum measure filed, petitions printed, the necessary signatures gathered and turned in.

State voters also get to express an opinion on tax

increases any November after the Legislature raises an existing tax or approves a new one. Tax advisory votes provide a short description of the bill and how much revenue it's expected to collect over 10 years, and ask whether voters think that change should be "Repealed" or "Maintained."

Unlike initiatives and referendums, which have detailed arguments for and against in the state Voter's Guides, Tax Advisories only have the state's yearly cost projections and a record of which legislators voted for and against it. They also don't usually attract campaign contributions for or against.

As the name says, they are advisory only, and the Legislature doesn't reconsider those bills even a strong majority votes they should be repealed.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

Washington's 2020 election changes

Presidential vote process requires the entire year

In the United States, political parties use two different systems to select their presidential nominees, primaries and caucuses. Most states use one or the other – the most familiar are probably the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary.

Washington has used a hodgepodge of the two systems since voters passed an initiative creating a presidential primary 28 years ago. But Democrats stuck with the caucuses because of national rules, and Republicans choose their delegates through a combination of the two systems.

In 2020, for the first time in state history, Washington voters of both major parties will cast ballots in a presidential primary that will help select the two parties' nominees.

But the parties won't abandon the caucus system entirely. The delegates to national conventions, where those candidates are nominated, will come through a process that starts with caucuses at the precinct, or neighborhood voting district, or legislative district level.

Sound confusing? It is, but only slightly more so than presidential elections every four years since 1992, when the first presidential primary system required by an initiative was held, even though the two parties were free to ignore those results in favor of the caucus system.

In some years, voters could choose a Republican, Democrat or independent ticket. In others, it was strictly a partisan choice and voters, who in Washington



COLIN MULVANY/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

During a Democratic precinct caucus at Rogers High School in Spokane in March 2016, supporters of candidate Bernie Sanders raise their hands. In 2020, Democrats in Washington use results of a primary, instead of caucus to select their pick for president.

don't register by party, had to say that for the presidential primary they considered themselves a member of the same party as the candidate they selected. The law set the primary in late May, after the nominations are usually decided, but in some years it was moved to March to attract more candidates and national media attention.

In two election cycles, 2004 and 2012, the presidential primary was canceled to save money.

To give the presidential primary more weight, the Legislature passed a law in 2019 that tried to address complaints that the primary was too late to matter and at \$10 million for the statewide vote, not worth the money for something the parties could ignore. The election will be held on the second Tuesday in March – March 10 – a week after the 15-state Super Tuesday event and the same day as primaries in Idaho, Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio, as well as caucuses in Hawaii and North

Dakota.

The list of candidates on the Washington ballots will be finalized in early January and sent to voters in late February before the winnowing of the first caucuses and primaries, so state voters should have a large selection of candidates, even if some have suspended their campaigns. They can be marked and sent back any time before 8 p.m. March 10.

The Democratic and Republican parties will use the results of the primary to

apportion delegates. Those delegates will go on to help select each party's nominees at national conventions next summer.

In exchange for the Democrats' participation in the primary system, the state had to limit the balloting to people who will declare a party preference and not offer voters an independent or unaffiliated ballot. In past elections when that was done, some Washington residents refused to declare a

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party and wouldn't vote.

The parties have different formulas for determining how many delegates each state has and how they will be awarded. For the Democratic nomination, Washington has 107 delegates, with 89 awarded to candidates based on primary results and 25 automatic delegates – top-ranking elected officials sometimes called super delegates – who can support whomever they want.

The 89 “pledged” delegates are divided further, with 58 split among the state's 10 congressional delegations based on population, and another 19 chosen statewide and 12 designated party leaders to be awarded based on statewide results. To qualify for delegates, a candidate must get at least 15% of the primary vote in a congressional district or state, but in some districts there may not be enough delegates for every candidate above 15%.

If no one gets 15% – mathematically possible if there are many candidates running for the nomination – there's an even more complicated formula for awarding delegates at the top of the heap.

For the Republican nomination, Washington will have 44 delegates. A candidate will have to get at least 20% of the statewide primary vote to get a share of those delegates, and if any candidate gets more than 50%, he or she will get all of them.

People interested in becoming a delegate to a national convention will have to do considerably more than mark their presidential primary ballot.

Republicans will start their delegate process with precinct caucuses on Feb. 29, and committed activists will move on through county conventions to the GOP state convention on May 14 through May 16 in Everett. The Republican National Convention starts Aug. 24 in Charlotte, North Carolina.



JESSE TINSLEY/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Charlie Wichser, third from right, gestures while giving his opinion on U.S. foreign policy in his precinct group in March 2012 at a GOP caucus event at the Corbin Senior Center in Spokane. In 2020, Republicans and Democrats in Washington use caucuses to select delegates to their parties' conventions.

Democrats will start their delegate process with legislative district caucuses in March and April, followed by county conventions and congressional district caucuses in April and May, and the Democratic state convention in June in Tacoma. The Democratic National convention starts July 13 in Milwaukee.

The presidential election is Nov. 3, 2020, although in Washington voters will be mailed their ballots nearly three weeks before that date, and county elections offices will count ballots received for nearly two weeks after that, provided they are postmarked by Election Day.

But that's not the end of the process, because the United

States doesn't have a nationwide presidential election. It has presidential elections in the 50 states plus the District of Columbia, which send “electors” to individual Electoral College meetings about six weeks after Election Day. Each state gets a number of electors equal to the total of their two U.S. senators and the number of members in the House of Representatives. That's a total of 538 electors total, and the candidate who gets at least 270 Electoral College votes is declared the president.

In most cases, all of a state's electors go to the candidate who got the most votes in the state – even if he or she won by only one vote. Maine and Nebraska have laws that can split their electoral votes if one candidate

finished first in a congressional district but another won the overall state vote.

In Washington, which has 12 electoral votes, the parties choose their Electoral College members at their state convention along with their national convention delegates. The party with the presidential candidate who receives the most votes in the November election sends its electors to that December meeting in the state Capitol.

Because they are selected by their party, they usually cast votes for the candidate who won the election. In 2016, however, four of the Democratic electors decided not to vote for Hillary Clinton – who won Washington by more than 500,000 votes, to

make a statement by for voting someone else. All were fined \$1,000 under the state's “faithless elector” law – which was enacted in 1977 after Republican elector Mike Padden voted for Ronald Reagan rather than Gerald Ford, who had won the state.

Three of the 2016 electors appealed their fines, saying it violated their right of free speech, but the state Supreme Court upheld the law. By seeking the role of an elector, they were agreeing to follow the state's rules, the court said.

In 2019, the Legislature changed the law so that any elector who won't vote for the person who won the state will be automatically replaced by an alternate who will.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

Tracking campaign donors, advertising

Court rulings key,
but so are laws
in our state

When the calendar nears Election Day all over Washington, it can seem like the stream of political advertisements from the TV and radio will never end.

The First Amendment largely protects the contents of these advertisements, and while it can be easy to link a particular candidate or campaign to some of the spots broadcast into your home or car, others aren't so simple.

"If it's a federal race, like for president or the Senate or the House, it's pretty easy," said Travis Ridout, the Thomas S. Foley distinguished professor of government and public policy at Washington State University in Pullman, who specializes in political communications. "If it's the outside groups that are more difficult."

Recent court rulings, chief among them the Supreme Court's decision in the case *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* in 2010, have given groups and individuals with a lot of money the ability to spend on political communications at a much greater rate – and with less transparency – than was previously allowable. Still, Washington state laws require any entity spending on an advertisement for or against a candidate or ballot measure, whether it be a TV or radio commercial, in print or on a billboard, to list the names of their top contributors on the advertisement.

There are exceptions. Advertisements paid for by candidates and their



KATHY PLONKA/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

Stacks of mailers pertaining to Initiative 1631, a proposed fee on carbon. Both sides of the proposal spent millions on campaigns.

campaigns are not required to provide the names of those donors, and state laws do not apply to federal election communications, including races for Congress.

Disclosures are difficult to see in a short, 30-second TV advertisement, Ridout said, and the names of some political action committees – organizations formed to raise and spend money to influence elections – are often named after innocuous or idealistic

concepts in an effort to obscure who or what is behind the organization. In the 2017 contest for a Spokane City Council seat, for instance, a group calling itself Spokane For Honest Government produced mailed advertisements attacking a candidate for health violations at a restaurant he owned. A large portion of that group's funding came from another political action committee representing the union of

Spokane firefighters, a fact that wasn't readily apparent on the advertisement but could be determined through reviewing public disclosure records.

So-called "super PACs" were created after the *Citizens United* ruling, and are not subject to the same contribution limits as traditional political action committees, which are restricted to spending between \$2,800 and \$5,000 on a particular candidate

depending on how the committee was formed. However, those groups cannot advocate for the election of a specific candidate. They are required, however, to reveal donors to the Federal Election Commission.

Other groups, often referred to as raising "dark money," have no such requirement. These tax-exempt organizations may raise and spend to influence politics as long as

they aren't endorsing a specific candidate. They must also prove that political spending is not their primary purpose. Because of this lack of reporting and restrictions on supporting a specific candidate, these dark money groups are often the source of negative advertisements targeting a specific candidate.

Negative ads frequently make claims about a

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particular politician and may even include a citation to a specific law or respected news outlet as a source for the claim. Such citations aren't required by law, Ridout said, and are often included to demonstrate legitimacy behind the claim being made in the ad, even if the conclusion is overly simplistic or lacking context.

The only recourse the target of a negative ad has, if they believe their opponent is playing fast and loose with the facts, is to approach the station broadcasting the ad and request it be removed from the airwaves. There are Washington state laws restricting "false political advertising," but the content must be produced with what is termed "actual malice," a special kind of intent in defamation that applies to public figures. It must be proved the person who created the ad knew the information contained in it was false, or negligently made no attempt to determine whether it was true before broadcasting it.

"By and large, the First Amendment applies," Ridout said. "The way you counter speech is with more speech."

Social media and the rise of 'fake news'

With access to outlets such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and Instagram, there are plenty of options out there for providing "more speech" in today's political climate and thus influencing elections or policy.

That's true of both voters and the candidates they seek to put in office. Politicians have made the jump to social media in a big way over the past decade, with perhaps the most prominent example being President Donald Trump's use of Twitter as a way to deliver official statements and



ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this 2018 photo, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg pauses while testifying before a House Energy and Commerce hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington about the use of Facebook data to target American voters in the 2016 election and data privacy.

staffing decisions that had previously been fodder for news conferences and news releases.

The current White House's reliance on social media to directly reach voters isn't a strategy for political communication that developed in a vacuum. Trump's opponent in the 2016 contest, Hillary Clinton, announced her campaign in a self-produced video released on YouTube. And Barack Obama and Mitt Romney also made extensive use of the video-sharing platform in their 2012 contest, according to research by the Wesleyan Media Project, an initiative of the Connecticut university.

Researchers also found that self-produced, online videos by candidates tended to be more positive than those aired on traditional broadcast outlets. However, internet users more frequently viewed and shared the online ads that attacked an opponent. Those findings suggest that impartial efforts to fact-check political communication within the social media sphere are becoming more and more important, as social media users are subjected not only to potentially misleading attacks by the candidates themselves, but also websites intentionally peddling false information in an attempt to sway voters'

minds.

Enter fact-checking websites like Snopes, PolitiFact and the Washington Post's own fact-checking website, Fact Checker. These are go-to sources when you see a claim made in an ad or at a debate and want to see if it's based in fact.

But even these sources are limited in their reach, and in some instances may be providing outlets that produce false news fodder for additional stories. A 2018 study published in the journal *New Media & Society* found that once fact-checking websites published stories debunking myths about the environment,

Washington campaign contribution rules

Candidates for local and state offices and campaign organizations must follow laws that differ somewhat from federal laws.

Voters required more transparency in political campaigns with an initiative in 1972, setting up the state Public Disclosure Commission, which oversees campaign reports and handles complaints of violations.

Candidates for governor and other statewide executive offices, and for judicial posts, may receive only \$2,000 per election from any individual, while legislative and local candidates are limited to \$1,000 per election. Political action committees, unions and corporations have the same limits as individuals.

Because most offices involve both a primary and general election, those individual limits are essentially doubled.

Political parties also are limited in how much they can give candidates, based on a formula that involves the number of voters in the candidate's district.

Contributions to initiative and referendum campaigns have no limits.

A person or organization can spend unlimited amounts to support or oppose a candidate through an independent expenditure if it is not connected or coordinated in any way with the campaign. Any independent ad must carry the name of the sponsor and the top five donors to the campaign.

Under a law passed in 2019, the state added new disclosure rules for political committees that sponsor independent ads, to prevent them from hiding donors by setting up a series of separate committees that contribute to the one sponsoring the ad. If any of the top five donors is another committee, the top three donors of that committee must also be listed in the ad.

unemployment, crime and gun control efforts, websites producing what could be considered "fake news" followed suit with their own inaccurate pieces, which were then shared on the internet.

There's also evidence that politicians are now co-opting the conventions of fact-checking outfits to appear more trustworthy to social media users. The social media teams for candidates have begun performing their own "live tweeting" fact checks during broadcast debates or campaign events, in addition to the work by professional journalists working for fact-checking outfits and traditional media sources.

The potential harm,

writes the media watchdog nonprofit Poynter, is that viewers will grant the speech of politicians the same trustworthiness as independent journalists.

"On an individual basis, these impostor fact-checking projects may be somewhat harmless," reads a story from Poynter published in July, as the government of Mexico announced its own, state-sponsored fact-checking bureau. "But taken together, they comprise a potential threat to fact-checkers' future credibility online. Because if readers think they're getting fact checks directly from politicians, they may be less inclined to actually do their homework."

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF WASHINGTON

State elections are a long process

Election Day lasts more like a month in Washington

In Washington, Election Day is a misnomer.

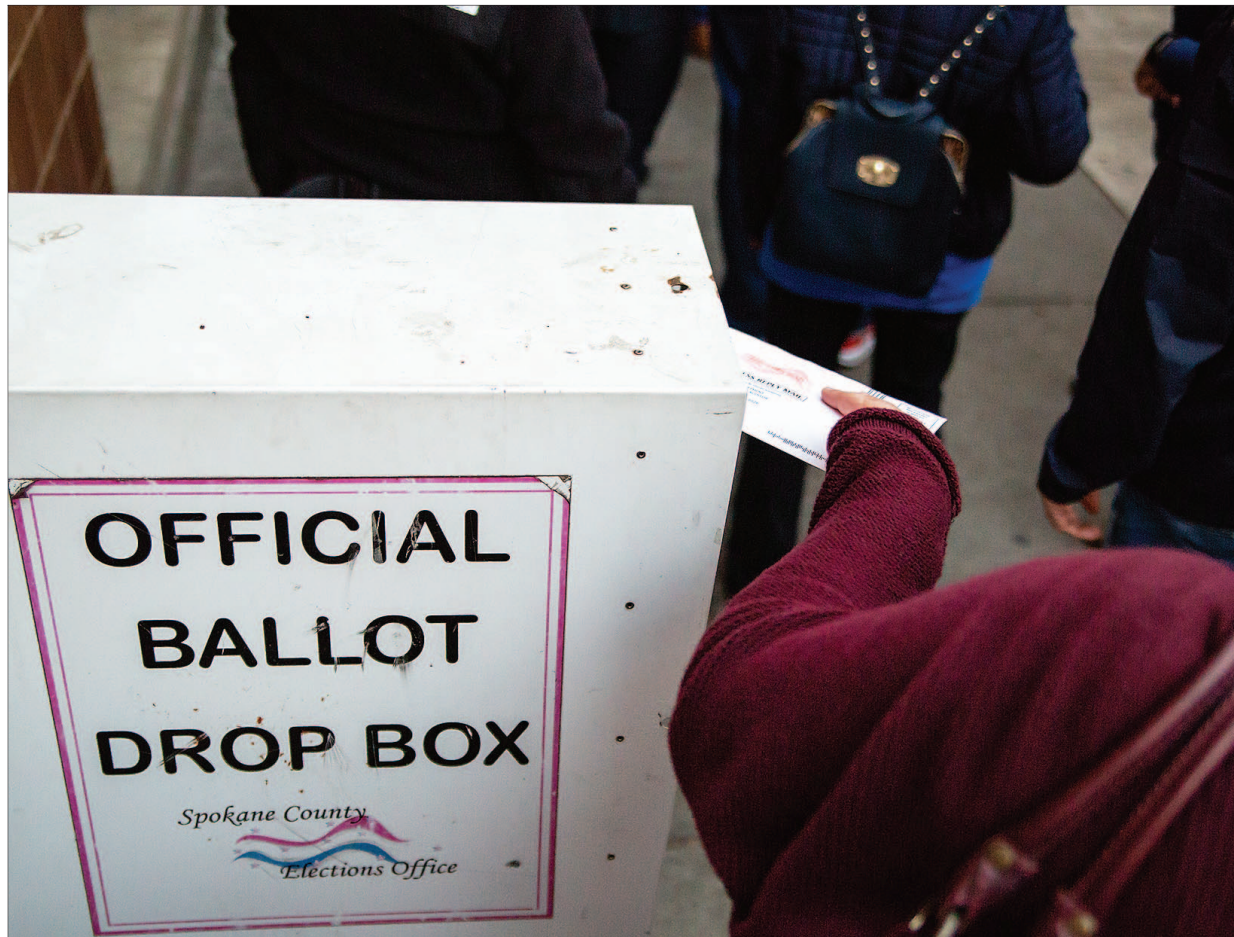
In the state's all-mail balloting system, registered voters get their ballots delivered to their legal residence about 18 days before the deadline for returning them, and local election officials continue to count properly cast ballots that arrive for as many as three weeks after that deadline.

Election Month-or-So is more accurate but will probably never catch on.

The process takes longer than those 39 days because ballots have to be prepared and printed, placed in envelopes and mailed to voters in mid-October. But once they arrive in the mailbox, ballots can be marked, sealed and returned any time before 8 p.m. on the final day of voting, which for general elections is the Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

They can be mailed and postmarked – with the state picking up the postage – or deposited in a drop box before that 8 p.m. deadline. Each county elections office selects its drop box locations, and recent laws have increased the number required.

Ballots are placed in two envelopes, and the outer envelope must be signed and dated by the voter. That signature is checked by staff at the county elections office, which causes some voters to wonder if elections



A voter casts her ballot in October 2018 at the downtown Spokane Public Library. The box is on the east wall of the building facing Nordstrom.

LIBBY KAMROWSKI/THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

workers know how they vote, but the process is designed to prevent that.

Election workers compare the signature to the one in the registration files. If it doesn't match, the unopened ballot is set aside while the voter is contacted and given a chance to come in, show

identification and correct the file.

If it matches, election workers remove the inner envelope, unopened and with the ballot still inside, and place it in a basket full of unopened inner envelopes that are opened separately. At that point the marked ballots – a few

might actually be blank, but people who sent those will still get credit for participating in the election – are scanned by a computer.

The paper ballots are saved and stored for 22 months after federal elections and at least 60 days for local elections, in

case any challenges to the results arise. Those ballots help protect Washington elections from people or groups that want to interfere with them, state Elections Director Lori Augino said.

In 2019, the state switched to a new

computerized system for registration, VoteWA, because the old system was no longer able to be updated with new technology to ensure its security, Augino said.

The state also has an extensive, regularly

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ELECTIONS

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updated firewall designed to identify and stop attempts to invade the registration system. Most of those attempts are what Justin Burns, the office's chief information security officer, calls standard "internet space junk" that any American company with an online presence sees. The majority come from China, Russia and Ukraine. The elections offices are also on the alert for phishing campaigns in emails that are "spoofed" to look like they come from people the offices regularly deal with.

"We're more targeted by email than anything else," Burns said. So far, none have been successful, "knock on wood."

Hacking into Washington elections to change the results would be difficult, because the system is decentralized, Augino said. It's not run by the state, but by each of the 39 individual counties, and their tabulating machines are not connected to the internet. The machines are also tested before and after an election to make sure they are properly counting ballots, and representatives of both parties are allowed to observe.

Washington has a Security Operations Center for elections in the Secretary of State's office and is part of a system operated by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to analyze and share information about attacks on elections departments.

"There are new protections that need to be continually put in place," Augino said.

Voter registration rolls are online, as that's one of the ways Washington



ASSOCIATED PRESS

King County Election official Joseph Emanuel loads ballots after collecting them from a drop box in Seattle. If control of the U.S. House comes down to any of the races in Washington and California, the public might have to wait because of the way those states handle mail-in votes.

residents can sign up or update their information. But voters can always check VoteWA to make sure their address is correct in the weeks before ballots are mailed out, and check to make sure it arrived at the the local elections office a few days after they return it. Voters can report problems with either to the elections office.

Shortly after an 8 p.m. deadline, county elections offices tally the ballots that they've opened and scanned, and the public

gets its first look at the results. Unlike the days of poll site voting, when the counties updated results throughout the night and into the next morning as more precincts turned in their ballots and the computers counted them, the results of all ballots that have been processed that night come in that single report, with updates over the next several days.

For most elections, that first count is about half the ballots that will eventually be tallied, because ballots that arrived by mail that

afternoon and those deposited in drop boxes that evening usually can't be verified, opened and scanned that same day.

Also, because some voters procrastinate to learn a little more about the candidates for a particular office, or study more facts about a particular ballot issue, the largest number of ballots are often mailed on that final day, which means they arrive on Wednesday or Thursday and have to be processed.

As long as a mailed ballot

is properly postmarked, it can be processed and counted up the time the local canvassing board meets to certify the election.

In most elections, the results from that first night don't change much as more ballots are counted. But in close elections, it's not unusual for a candidate who was slightly behind the first night to inch closer or pull ahead in later counts, or for the lead to move back and forth for the next three weeks.

By state law, the ballots

of any race that is closer than one-half of 1% are automatically recounted by the computers, and any race that is closer than one-fourth of 1% is automatically recounted by hand.

A losing candidate who questions the results – regardless of how close they are – can also demand a recount of all the ballots or just specific precincts. But he or she would have to pay the costs of that recount unless it changes the outcome of the election.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

ROLLIN' OUT THE BALLOTS



ASSOCIATED PRESS

A voter drops a ballot into a ballot drop box Aug. 2, 2016, in Seattle. Washington's voters at the time were weighing in on dozens of races across the state as they winnowed their choices for offices ranging from Congress to the Legislature.

The Elections Calendar

Washington voters face four major elections through 2020. Here's a look at what's on the calendar:

2019

Oct. 18: Ballots for the general election begin arriving in mailboxes.

Nov. 5: Voting in general election ends at 8 p.m.

Nov. 26: Counties certify results of general election.

2020

Jan. 7: Deadline for party officials to submit names of candidates for Presidential Primary.

Feb. 21: Ballots for Presidential Primary begin arriving in mailboxes.

March 10: Voting in Presidential Primary ends at 8 p.m.

March 20: Counties certify results of Presidential Primary.

May 11-17: Filing week for candidates in state general election.

July 17: Ballots for state Top Two Primary begin arriving in mailboxes.

Aug. 5: Voting in Top Two Primary ends at 8 p.m.

Aug. 18: Counties certify results of Top Two Primary.

Oct. 16: Presidential and State general election ballots begin arriving in the mail.

Nov. 3: Voting in Presidential and State general election ends at 8 p.m.

Nov. 24: Counties certify Presidential and State general election Results.

Dec. 14: Electoral College meets.



DAN PELLE/ THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

The Spokane County Elections Office rolled 18 carts with ballots into a Ryder truck headed to the post office on Oct. 18, 2018. The Elections Office is mailing out more than 310,000 ballots for the general election.

Need more details to fill out a ballot? Here are sources to help.

Below are some sources of information to help you make an informed choice on your ballot.

The League of Women Voters' nonpartisan resource for election and voting information: www.vote411.org

The Spokesman-Review's election guide:

www.spokesman.com/elections

Northwest Passages, The Spokesman-Review's book club, which holds candidate forums prior to elections: spokesman.com/northwest-passages

The Washington Public Disclosure Commission,

which compiles fundraising information for candidates: www.pdc.wa.gov

The Federal Election Commission regulates campaign finance and compiles fundraising information for federal candidates: www.fec.gov

The League of Women Voters of Washington: www.lwvwa.org

The League of Women Voters (national): www.lwv.org

The Center for Responsive Politics – nonpartisan site on money in U.S. elections: www.opensecrets.org

Nonpartisan resource on trends in public opinion: www.pollingreport.com

Nonpartisan resource for judicial elections in Washington state: www.votingforjudges.org

About us

The League of Women Voters of Washington is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. There are about 20 local Leagues throughout Washington that have more than 2,200 members.

The League provides voter and election education in public programs and in schools. Its textbook, "The State We're In," is used throughout Washington. Trained members frequently provide classroom

assistance on civics. The League's Voter Services Program holds candidate forums, provides voter information and helps people to register to vote.

The League also has a nonprofit arm for advocacy.

The Spokesman-Review is the largest news organization in the Inland Northwest and devotes considerable resources every year to cover dozens of election contests statewide and in Spokane County. Besides our regular coverage online and in print, it also publishes a comprehensive election guide each October. Newspaper editors

and reporters also organize and help moderate forums and candidate debates as part of its Northwest Passages book club.

The newspaper's goal is to help our readers stay informed so they can make informed choices on their ballots from president to Congress to mayor to school board member and fire commissioner.

Given the many shared interests of the League and Spokesman-Review in civic engagement and democracy, they have partnered to create Our Vote, a guide to voting in Washington.