

**Handbook  
The League of Women Voters  
of  
Tacoma-Pierce County**

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***2015-16***

***Working in the community  
for quality government . . .***

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## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

### **Executive Committee**

President	Ruth Ann Hatchett	2015-2017
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow	2015-2017
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	Julie Offner	2014-2016
Secretary	Paula Eismann	2015-2017
Treasurer	Susan Eidenschink	2014-2016
Treasurer Ed Fund	Cynthia Stewart	2015-2017

### **Directors**

Ingrid Curtis	2015-2017
Cheryl Mann	2015-2017
Sharon Peace-Doane	2014-2016
Julio Quan	2015-2016
Cynthia Stewart	2015-2017
John Thurlow	2014-2016
Ann Williams	2014-2016

## **STATE LEAGUE**

League of Women Voters of Washington  
1402 Third Avenue, Suite 430  
Seattle, WA 98101  
1-206-622-8961 or 1-800-419-2596 FAX 206-622-4908  
website: [www.lwwwa.org](http://www.lwwwa.org)  
e-mail: [lwwwa@lwwwa.org](mailto:lwwwa@lwwwa.org)

## **NATIONAL LEAGUE**

League of Women Voters of the United States  
1730 M Street NW Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20036  
202-429-1965  
website: [www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)  
e-mail: use the "Feedback Form," on the "contact us" page of the website.

## **Unit Meetings**

Unit meetings are open to all members and their guests. They are the best and most enjoyable way to keep informed about League study and activity. We encourage you to attend the most convenient unit meeting. If you have questions about a particular unit, please call or e-mail the unit leader or the office.

### **EAST PIERCE COUNTY UNIT**

Day: **Second Saturday**  
Time: 10 a.m.- Noon  
Leader: Ellen Zulauf, eazul@comcast.net  
Place: **Puyallup Library**  
324 S. Meridian, Puyallup

### **GIG HARBOR-KEY PENINSULA UNIT**

Day: **Second Saturday**  
Time: 2:00 p.m.- 4:00 p.m.  
Leader: Sharon Peace-Doane, hrdoanes@comcast.net  
Place: **Harbor History Museum**  
4121 Harborview Drive, Gig Harbor

### **LAKEWOOD AND NEIGHBORS UNIT**

Day: **Second Friday**  
Time: 10 a.m.- Noon  
Leader: Ann Elliston, phone (253) 564-4102  
Place: **Steilacoom Community Center**  
2301 Worthington Street, Steilacoom

### **NORTH END UNIT**

Day: **Second Thursday**  
Time: 1:00-3:00 p.m.  
Leader: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow, Lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com  
Place: **North Tacoma Police Substation**  
5140 North 26th St, Tacoma

Please check your **VOTER** for any changes in meetings,  
or contact the office at 253-272-1495,  
or by email at lwvtacomapierce@gmail.com

**NONPARTISAN POLITICAL POLICY**  
**of the**  
**League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County**

The purpose of the League of Women Voters is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League of Women Voters is nonpartisan in that it does not support or oppose any political party or candidate; it is political in that it takes positions on selected governmental issues after member study and agreement.

Every League of Women Voters member must take the responsibility for clearly differentiating between her/his personal opinions and League positions.

The League of Women Voters recognizes that its members are active members of their communities, in partisan and nonpartisan roles. We feel that this inter-involvement works to the mutual benefit of both as long as the distinction is clearly maintained between a member's (and his/her family's) personal activities, and her/his representation of League as a nonpartisan organization.

The exceptions are the President, Action Chair, and Voter Service Chair, who must remain completely nonpartisan in every way because of their visibility in the community as representative of League. Other members of the Board of Directors, with permission of the Board, may run for nonpartisan office. No member of the Board may run for partisan office.

*Adopted 1981, Amended 1986 and 2008, Re-adopted Annually*

**PRINCIPLES**  
**of the**  
**LEAGUE of WOMEN VOTERS**

The League of Women Voters believes in representative government and in the individual liberties established in the Constitution of the United States.

The League of Women Voters believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation in government and requires that governmental bodies protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings and making public records accessible.

The League of Women Voters believes that every citizen should be protected in the right to vote; that every person should have access to free public education which provides equal opportunity for all; and that no person or group should suffer legal, economic or administrative discrimination.

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should be responsive to the will of the people; that government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation; promote the conservation and development of natural resources in the public interest; share in the solution of economic and social problems which affect the general welfare; promote a sound economy; and adopt domestic policies which facilitate the solution of international problems.

The League of Women Voters believes that cooperation with other nations is essential in the search for solutions to world problems and in the development of international organization and international law is imperative in the promotion of world peace.

## **MISSION of the LEAGUE**

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

*Amended 2007*

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### **LEAGUE PROGRAM: Study and Action**

Program is the League's "reason for being," the basis for both education and action efforts.

The League program consists of those governmental issues that League members choose for concerted study and action. It includes both adopted positions upon which action is taken and issues for study that will lead to a position and action.

The League principles are the League's philosophy or concepts of government. League principles provide the authorization for adoption of national, state, and local program.

The League program process begins with selection and discussion, and culminates in action and change. It involves members of the League and members of the community, and it cuts across government and League levels both horizontally and vertically. Local Leagues work simultaneously on local, state, and if applicable, regional program issues which reflect community concerns.

*From "In League"*

**BYLAWS**  
**of the**  
**League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County**

**ARTICLE I - NAME**

Section 1. Name. The name of this organization shall be the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County, hereinafter referred to in these bylaws as LWVT-PC or as the League. This local League is an integral part of the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS), and of the League of Women Voters of Washington (LWVWA).

**ARTICLE II - PURPOSES AND POLICY**

Section 1. Purposes. The purposes of the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County shall be to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government and to act on selected governmental issues.

Section 2. Political Policy. The League shall not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

**ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1. Eligibility. Any person who subscribes to the purposes and policies of the League shall be eligible for membership.

Section 2. Types of Membership.

- a) Voting members. United States citizens at least 18 years of age shall be voting members of the local and state Leagues and of the LWVUS.
  - 1) Those who reside outside the area of any local League may join a local League or shall be a state member-at-large. Those who reside inside the area of any local League may join that local League or any local League.
  - 2) Those who make a lump sum life membership payment to the LWVUS shall be paid life members and those who have been members of the League for 50 years or more shall be honorary life members excused from the payment of dues.
- b) Associate members. All others who join the League shall be associate members.

**ARTICLE IV - OFFICERS**

Section 1. Qualifications, Election and Term. All officers shall be voting members of the LWVT-PC. The Officers shall be a President, a first Vice-President, a second Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, who shall be elected for terms of two years by the general membership at an Annual Meeting. All officers shall take office on July 1.

The President, first Vice-President, and Secretary shall be elected in odd-numbered years. The second Vice-President and Treasurer shall be elected in even-numbered years. Offices may be shared.

Section 2. The President. The President shall preside at all meetings of the organization and of the Board of Directors. The President may, in the absence or disability of the Treasurer, sign or endorse checks, drafts, and notes for budgeted and Board-approved items with the written approval of two additional members of the Executive Committee. The President shall be, ex-officio, a member of all committees except the Nominating Committee. The President shall



have the usual powers of supervision and management as may pertain to the office of the President and perform such other duties as may be designated by the Board.

Section 3. The Vice-Presidents. The two Vice-Presidents, in order of their rank (first, then second) shall, in the event of absence, disability, or death of the President, possess all the powers and perform all the duties of that office, until such time as the Board of Directors shall elect one of its members to fill the vacancy. The Vice-Presidents shall perform such other duties as the President and Board may designate.

Section 4. The Secretary. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings of the general membership, the Executive Committee and of the Board. The Secretary shall notify all Officers and Directors of their election. The Secretary shall sign, with the President, all contracts and other instruments when so authorized by the Board and shall perform such other duties as the President and the Board shall direct.

Section 5. The Treasurer. The Treasurer or designee shall collect and receive all moneys due. The Treasurer shall be the custodian of these moneys and shall disburse funds under the direction of the Board. The Treasurer shall present statements to the Board at its regular meetings and an annual report to the Annual Meeting.

## **ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Section 1. Selection and Term. The Board of Directors shall consist of the officers of the League, six elected Directors, and not more than six appointed Directors. Three of the elected Directors shall be elected by the general membership at each Annual Meeting, and shall serve for a term of two years beginning July 1, or until their successors have been elected and qualified. The elected members shall appoint such additional Directors, not exceeding six, as they deem necessary to carry on the work of the League. The terms of office of the appointed Directors shall be for one year or less and shall expire on June 30. One of the appointed director positions may be reserved for the outgoing President at the discretion of the Board.

Section 2. Qualifications. No person shall be elected or appointed or shall continue to serve as an officer or director of this organization unless that person is a voting member of the LWVT-PC.

Section 3. Vacancies. Any vacancy occurring on the Board of Directors by reason of resignation, death, or disqualification of an officer or elected member may be filled, until the next Annual Meeting, by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board of Directors. Three unexcused absences from regular Board meetings shall constitute resignation, subject to the review and decision of the Board. Written or verbal notice to the President or a Board member shall constitute an excuse.

Section 4. Powers. The Board shall manage and supervise the business, affairs, program, and activities of the LWVT-PC subject to instructions from the general membership and the adopted policies of the LWVT-PC. It shall select delegates to state convention and council and the national convention. It shall plan and direct the work necessary to carry out the program as adopted by the LWVUS and LWVWA. The Board shall create such committees as it may deem necessary, except as limited in these Bylaws.

Section 5. Meetings. There shall be at least nine regular meetings of the Board of Directors annually. The President shall call a special meeting upon the written request of five members of the Board.

Section 6. Quorum. A majority of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Executive Committee. The Executive Committee shall be composed of the President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Executive Committee shall meet upon call of the President to transact necessary business and may allocate funds up to the amount of \$150.00 per item if approved in the budget. Meetings for this purpose may be held in person or via e-mail. The Executive Committee may act for the full Board of Directors in an emergency, provided that any action shall be presented to the Board for ratification at its next meeting. The committee will approve the agenda for the Board of Directors meeting, and the proposed agenda may be sent by the president to the committee for approval by e-mail within 3 days prior to the next meeting, if an in-person meeting is not scheduled. Three members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum. The Treasurer may sign all checks for budgeted and Board-approved items. For unexpected, unbudgeted items costing in excess of \$600.00, written authorization from the President is required to make the payment.

#### **ARTICLE VI - LIMITATION OF LIABILITY AND INDEMNIFICATION**

Directors and Officers. The Corporation shall indemnify all present and former directors and officers against any liability, including expenses and advance of expenses, arising out of any proceeding (including by or in the right of the Corporation) to which a director or officer may be a party by reason of the fact that he or she is or was a director or officer of the Corporation, all as defined in and to the fullest extent permitted by the Nonprofit Act, and to the extent applicable, the REVISED CODE OF WASHINGTON, RCW 23B.08.320 and 23B.088.600, indemnification of agents Officers and Directors.

#### **ARTICLE VII - FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION**

Section 1. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the LWVT-PC shall begin July 1 each year.

Section 2. Audit. The financial records shall be audited at the end of the fiscal year or on occasion of change of treasurer.

Section 3. Dues. Annual dues shall be payable on July 1st and shall be considered delinquent on September 1st. Provisions may be made with the Treasurer for dues to be paid in installments. The amount shall be set by the members at the Annual Meeting. Any member who fails to pay dues within two months after they become payable shall be dropped from the membership. When two members reside at the same address in a common household, a payment equal to one and one-half times the payment determined by the Annual Meeting shall be made. Student members shall pay an amount equal to one-half (1/2) the annual dues. A student is defined as an individual enrolled either full or part-time in an accredited institution. A new member who joins after January 1st and before May 1st shall pay one half (1/2) the annual dues. A new member who joins after April 30th will pay the full amount of dues, which will be valid until June 30th of the following year.

Section 4. Budget. A budget for the ensuing year shall be sent by the Board of Directors to all voting members at least twenty (20) days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Section 5. Budget Committee. A Budget Committee shall be appointed by the Board of Directors at least two months prior to the Annual Meeting, to prepare a budget for the ensuing year and recommend any change in annual dues. The Treasurer shall not be eligible to chair the Budget Committee.

## **ARTICLE VIII - MEETINGS**

Section 1. Membership Meetings. There shall be at least two general membership meetings each year. Time and place shall be determined by the Board of Directors. The Board may call a special general membership meeting and shall call a meeting upon the written request of twenty-five (25) of the voting members.

Section 2. Annual Meeting. An Annual Meeting shall be held at a general membership meeting before the end of each fiscal year, the exact date to be determined by the Board of Directors.

The membership attending the Annual Meeting shall:

- a) Adopt a local program.
- b) Elect officers and directors, chair and two members of the Nominating Committee.
- c) Adopt an adequate budget.
- d) Transact such other business as may properly come before it.
- e) Amend the Bylaws. Absentee or proxy voting shall not be permitted.

Section 3. Quorum. Ten percent of the members shall constitute a quorum at general membership meetings of the LWVT-PC.

## **ARTICLE IX - NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

Section 1. Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall consist of five members, two of whom shall be appointed from the Board of Directors by the President at the first Board Meeting after the Annual Meeting. The Chair and two members, who shall not be members of the Board, shall be elected at the Annual Meeting. Recommendations for Officers, Directors, Nominating Committee Chair, and members may be sent to the Nominating Committee by any voting member.

Section 2. Report of Nominating Committee and Nominations from the Floor. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be sent to all members at least twenty (20) days before the date of the Annual Meeting. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be presented at the Annual Meeting. Immediately following the presentation of this report, nominations may be made from the floor by any voting member, provided the consent of the nominee shall have been secured.

Section 3. Elections. The election shall be by ballot, provided that when there is only one nominee for each office, it shall be by voice vote. A majority vote shall constitute an election.

## **ARTICLE X - PROGRAM**

Section 1. Principles. The governmental principles adopted by the National Convention, and supported by the League as a whole, constitute the authorization for adoption of the program.

Section 2. Program. The program of the LWVT-PC shall consist of action to implement the principles and those local governmental issues chosen by the membership at the Annual Meeting for concerted study and action.

Section 3. Adoption. At the Annual Meeting, the membership shall adopt the program using the following procedures:

- a) The Board of Directors shall consider the recommendations from voting members two months prior to the Annual Meeting and shall formulate a Proposed Program.
- b) The Proposed Program shall be sent to all members at least twenty (20) days before the Annual Meeting.

- c) A majority vote of voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting shall be required for adoption of subjects in the Proposed Program as presented at the Annual Meeting by the Board of Directors.
- d) Recommendations for Program submitted by voting members at least two months prior to the Annual Meeting but not recommended by the Board of Directors may be considered at the Annual meeting provided that:
  - 1) A majority vote at the Annual Meeting shall order consideration.
  - 2) A two thirds vote at the Annual Meeting shall adopt the item.

Section 4. Program Changes. Except for positions, emergency program changes may be made provided that information concerning the proposed changes has been sent to all members at least two weeks prior to a general membership meeting at which the change is to be discussed and final action taken.

Section 5. Program Action. Members may act in the name of the League of Women Voters only when authorized to do so by the appropriate Board of Directors. They may act only in conformity with, and not contrary to, a position taken by the LWVT-PC, the LWVWA and the LWVUS. Members who are not authorized to speak for the League, and who have misrepresented League in a public forum, are subject to expulsion from membership by the Board of Directors. Reinstatement requires a consensus of the Board of Directors.

#### **ARTICLE XI - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

The rules contained in the current Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the organization in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these Bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE XII - AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at the Annual Meeting, provided the amendments were sent to the membership in writing at least twenty (20) days in advance of the meeting.

*Amended June 2014 & 2015*

**POLICIES**  
**of the**  
**League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County**

1. Policies approved by the Board will be affirmed at the Annual Meeting and included in the Handbook.
2. The Board will establish a process for sanctions against any members who do not follow these Policies.
3. The Board will establish, as appropriate, Policies and Procedures for LWVT-PC meetings and events at which we participate. The Board will establish additional Procedures when and as necessary.
4. Members' personal information is for League use only and may not be shared or disseminated for non-League business.
5. Any member with a conviction for a violent felony or stalking will not receive a copy of the League Directory.
6. Board Meetings:
  - 6a. Any member may attend Board meetings, and may speak with permission of the President.
  - 6b. Non-members may attend only at the invitation of the President.
7. Publications:

Members' personal information may not be used in The Voter or on the website without the member's permission.
8. Office:
  - 8a. Use of the League office for non-League activities must be cleared with the President.
  - 8b. Use of the copier for non-League activities should be limited and paid for at 10¢ per copy.
  - 8c. Non-League materials may not be stored on the League computer.
  - 8d. E-mail messages for mass distribution should be sent as BCCs (blind copies) to protect our members' privacy.

*Approved by the Board, March 2013, re-affirmed annually*

**LOCAL POSITIONS**  
**LWV OF TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY**  
**Position on**

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County recognizes the need for more affordable housing. We support a multi-faceted approach, including zoning changes, manufactured homes, regulatory measures, special needs housing, and financial incentives, to increase the amount of affordable housing.

*Zoning:* LWVT-PC supports the use of inclusionary housing, infill housing (in urban areas only, and if it meets the character of the community), Planned Development Districts (if they meet the character of the community), and transfer of development rights.

*Manufactured Homes:* LWVT-PC supports: educating manufactured home buyers on the potential problems of not owning the land beneath their home, the potential for eviction, and the depreciation of the home's value; a relocation fund to assist those forced to relocate (funded by park sellers and buyers); a transfer of development rights for park owners; short plats to allow residents to buy the land beneath their homes; and use of a Housing Trust Fund to help residents buy their parks. Pierce County and its municipalities should implement land-use policies which assist residents to acquire their parks.

*Regulatory:* LWVT-PC supports density bonuses, expedited permitting, and reduced zoning (in keeping with the character of the community). We also support property taxes based on current use, not highest and best use.

*Special Needs:* LWVT-PC supports zoning which encourages Single Room Occupancy residences (not concentrated in one area), units for people with disabilities, and transitional housing.

*Financial:* LWVT-PC supports regional, county and municipal Housing Trust Funds, which would establish dedicated revenue sources for affordable housing. We also support using surplus land, in urban growth areas, for affordable housing.

*Fair Housing Laws:* Pierce County and its municipalities should add those who participate in a Section 8 program, and receive vouchers for subsidized rent payments, to their Fair Housing Laws as a protected class. Adopted, April 2008

LWVT-PC supports seeking all assistance options available to increase the supply of affordable housing. Adopted, April 2009

**HAZARDOUS WASTE**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports measures which will assist in identification of sites, implementation, and enforcement of hazardous waste management programs. We support measures which will assign responsibility for supervision of hazardous waste and will encourage public education.

1. Both the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) should be involved in a hazardous waste management program. The EPA should set up national guidelines and Ecology should implement them.
2. There should be both a hazardous waste disposal site and a regional transfer or holding site in Washington.
3. Generators of hazardous waste should be allowed to store it on site, provided there is strong, close supervision with environmental safeguards.

## **LAND USE**

The LWVT-PC finds that land offering habitat for diverse native wildlife benefits the general public. It confers multiple ecosystem services to communities throughout Pierce County, including resilience to natural disasters. We support:

1. Adopting policies and regulations that preserve and restore areas of rich native biodiversity,
2. Managing population and economic growth in a way that retains wildlife corridors and prevents native habitat fragmentation;
3. Offering incentives to landowners who use responsible land stewardship;
4. Supporting non-governmental organizations' biodiversity missions;
5. Inserting the word "biodiversity" into regulatory language wherever appropriate;
6. Aligning county zoning with biodiversity conservation; and
7. Pursuing the work of the Pierce County Open Space Task Force.

The LWVT-PC finds that it makes more economic sense to protect resource areas than to rebuild and restore ecosystem services damaged by poor development decisions. We support:

1. Funding staff positions and/or staff time for biodiversity conservation efforts and for development and enforcement of land use regulation;
2. Educating citizens about the value of sustaining native biodiversity;
3. Educating public maintenance staff on the use and care of plants that benefit wildlife;
4. Acquiring and restoring land to provide wildlife corridors;
5. Providing incentives for land-use development that preserves native biodiversity.

The LWVT-PC finds that the work of retaining biodiversity is not reserved for rural areas and open spaces alone. We support residents in urban and suburban areas:

1. Educating themselves and their elected representatives on biodiversity conservation in land use; and
2. Providing native wildlife habitat in urban spaces.

The LWVT-PC finds that protecting endangered species, imposing pollution controls, managing storm water runoff, reducing the impact of construction, providing public open spaces, and conducting sustainability campaigns all help conserve native biodiversity. We support:

1. Protecting areas that provide significant ecosystem services through stewardship programs and incentives to refrain from development;
2. Designating buffer zones, greenbelts, or open spaces planted with native species where development has destroyed habitat.
3. Planting native species wherever possible when designing or redesigning public spaces.

## **LIBRARY SERVICES IN PIERCE COUNTY**

Believing that public libraries serve the common good, the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports free access to public library services.

Libraries are important to the quality of life of communities, and, like schools and parks, should be funded by all taxpayers.

The LWVT-PC supports adequate funding for library needs. We encourage libraries to explore innovative avenues for expanded sources of funding.

Reciprocal agreements are good public policy, as cooperation among library systems expands access to resources that may not be available in any one system. Library systems should cooperate and coordinate to resolve any issues.

The LWVT-PC supports partnerships with community organizations, schools, and businesses to develop and maintain advocates for libraries. We see Friends of the Library groups as an effective way of increasing local advocacy.

The LWVT-PC supports increased visibility of library services.

The LWVT-PC supports outreach services to those who are not able to come to the library and to those with special needs.

*Adopted April 2007*

## **PARKS**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports measures to achieve park systems that are well-managed, adequately financed, and offer a variety of active and passive recreational opportunities for all.

Specifically, we support:

1. A comprehensive plan for each park system with periodic updating and specific plans for individual parks.
2. Structured opportunities for citizen participation in the planning and budgeting process.
3. Free general admission to park lands.
  - a) There may be a use charge for specific facilities, such Point Defiance Zoo and Northwest Trek, but provisions should be made for periods of free admission and/or lower rate passes.
  - b) A parking or auto entrance fee may be imposed where it is necessary to control or limit automobile access.

## **PIERCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports the work done by the Pierce Conservation District.

Public awareness of its work could be achieved through:

- Increased publicity in the media;
- Publicity by Conservation District grant recipients;
- Increased presence at farmers' markets, fairs, and other public events;



Community organizations, environmental organizations, and schools helping to spread awareness.

The best way to increase awareness of the Pierce Conservation District would be to have their elections for Supervisor on the general election ballot, which would give it publicity, put candidates in the voters' guides, and get the candidates invited to participate in candidate forums.

***The Election/Selection Process:***

The election process of conservation districts is governed by RCW89.08.190, and by Guidelines of the Washington State Conservation Commission. Under the current system, elections of Supervisors are not included with any other election, nor is the election run by the Auditor. The effect is to have very few people participating in the elections.

We believe that, in the interests of democracy and citizen participation in government, the selection process needs to change.

We could support an election system or an appointment system.

In either system, the size of the Board of Supervisors should increase to the same number as the number of County Council districts, and a Supervisor would be selected or elected to represent each district. The needs and concerns of each district are not the same. District representation could help ensure that the various conservation needs of the district are known and met.

***Election System:***

If we retain an election system, candidates would only have to campaign to represent one district, rather than having to run campaigns for the entire county.

Elections should be held in November, be run by the Auditor, and appear on the general election ballot.

Positions should be nonpartisan.

Terms should be staggered so that there is continuity on the Board of Supervisors, and so that elections do not have to be held every year.

***Appointment System:***

A system for appointing the Board of Supervisors would save the money which is spent running elections, but runs risks of political appointments.

The Board of Supervisors would be appointed by the County Council.

As with our election system recommendation, terms should be staggered to ensure continuity.

*Adopted May 2008*

**PIERCE COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports a home rule charter for Pierce County. We endorse the separation of executive and legislative responsibilities as delineated in the charter adopted in 1980.

1. The Executive Branch should have:
  - a. Clear lines of authority and administrative accountability.
  - b. Responsibility for the preparation of the annual budget, including goals and programs.
  - c. Appointed department heads, including the Auditor and Assessor-Treasurer.
  - d. An Executive elected by the voters.

2. The Legislative Branch should have:
  - a. A single body of sufficient size to represent the citizens of Pierce County.
  - b. An exclusively legislative role.
  - c. A prohibition against concurrent service on another legislative body.
3. We affirm the following charter provisions:
  - a. The rights of initiative, referendum, and recall.
  - b. Mandatory redistricting following each federal census.
  - c. Amendment, repeal, and periodic citizen review.
  - d. Personnel system based on merit and in compliance with charter and ordinances regulating nondiscrimination and affirmative action.
  - e. Code of ethics.
  - f. Comprehensive planning. *Revised June 1994*

### **PORT**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports public port districts with emphasis on public accountability, coordinated planning, and environmental values. Specifically, we believe there should be:

1. Cooperation and coordinated comprehensive planning with regional, state, or international agencies to facilitate orderly planning and public accountability.
2. Intergovernmental cooperation within Pierce County to resolve local issues.
3. The Port of Tacoma Commissioners should continue to find ways to expand public awareness by improving communication both from the Port to the public and the public to the Port, and to protect citizens' right to know by:
  - holding open meetings
  - adopting written rules and procedures for conducting their meetings
  - providing adequate notice of proposed actions
  - making public records easily accessible.

The public has the right to expect transparency and consistency.

4. As part of improving communication and increasing responsiveness, Port Commissioners should hold public hearings before making planning decisions and should formally adopt planning documents.
5. The goals of the Port of Tacoma should include partnerships with the public for the public good. Attention should be paid to community needs, including recreation and the environment.

*Amended and adopted, May 2006*

### **TACOMA CITY GOVERNMENT**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports the Council-Manager form of government for the City of Tacoma, and we will continue to evaluate actions and proposals that might strengthen its operation, improve its efficiency and enhance its responsiveness to the public.

We support the continuation of procedures that provide for communication between citizens and elective and administrative officials.

Specifically, we endorse the following aspects of Council-Manager government:

1. City Council and Mayor
  - a) The Council is the legislative branch of City government, elected by the Tacoma citizenry to decide policy, to pass laws and to appoint a City Manager.
  - b) The Mayor and Council should be part-time positions, and their salaries should correspond with the concept of part-time service. Council members should have adequate support staff.
  - c) Elect some Council members by district and some at large.
2. City Manager
  - a) The Manager is appointed by the Council to be responsible for the administrative branch of City government, and serves at the will of the Council without tenure.
  - b) The Manager should be hired on the basis of executive and administrative qualifications, with consideration to previous experience in public administration.
  - c) The City Attorney should be appointed by the City Manager.

*Amended and adopted, May 2006*

## **TRANSPORTATION**

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports action to achieve a balanced transportation system that is integrated, adequate and effective.

The LWVT-PC supports a county in which many forms of personal mobility are equitably available and compatible with attractive, livable, accessible and affordable communities. We support the preservation of optimum open space systems that both enhances urban areas and protects agricultural, recreational and other natural resource areas. Without meaningful protection from environmental pollutants, there can be little talk about amenities in an urban environment.

The LWVT-PC thinks of mobility in terms of moving people, more than of moving automobiles, and supports a transportation system which gives all people, whether or not they use autos, convenient and affordable access to the jobs, amenities and the opportunities of the county and region. There should be modest road improvements so that reasonable auto travel options would be open in most areas. Transit should be considered a public service. Operating costs should be subsidized consistent with the subsidization of other public services, considering the public goals to be achieved. Employers should be encouraged, or required, to help make transit accessible and use for their employees.

The LWVT-PC supports improved travel alternatives such as bikeways and walkways to work, shopping, and transit stations. We believe bike lanes should support effective commuting trips as well as recreational trips. We support improved transit service between regional multiple centers, not just from the outlying areas to the downtown areas.

The LWVT-PC supports passenger ferry service between the Gig Harbor/Peninsula area, Tacoma and Seattle. The passenger ferry service must be linked to other transportation systems in order for the system to function effectively.

The LWVT-PC supports reduction in the consumption of energy through an efficient and convenient transportation system. We support the transporting of freight via rail, including laws and subsidies to that effect, in order to lessen the amount and size of trucks on the freeways. We support this move for energy efficiency as well as safety reasons.

The LWVT-PC supports the establishment of an effective transportation planning process in Pierce County. The planning process should give serious consideration to the Telecommunications/Telecommuting issue as an element that will have a dramatic long-term impact on transportation. The planning process should recommend methods to implement that shoulders and/or sidewalks be required on all streets and roads to increase the safety and convenience of pedestrians and bicyclists.

The LWVT-PC supports effective coordination between and among governments - local and regional, private enterprise and the community. We support efforts to make certain that all modes of transportation from buses (public and private), rail, ferries, park and ride lots, pedestrian, and bicycles are planned to work together in an integrated system.

The LWVT-PC supports options for future improvements to the transportation system by taking advantage of advances in technology and transportation research.

The LWVT-PC supports a regional rapid transit system that connects Tacoma in Pierce County to the rest of the Puget Sound region.

The LWVT-PC supports and recommends that land use planning and development be coordinated with state, regional, and local transportation planning and investment.

*Adopted June 8, 1991*

## **WATER RESOURCES IN PIERCE COUNTY**

### ***Water Quality***

1. We support the maintenance of the present purity of the Tacoma area water supply with the minimum treatment necessary, with special attention to further restricting access to the watershed.
2. We support the concept and maintenance of a water quality and quantity program for all surface and underground waters within, bordering and affecting Pierce County.
3. We believe in the separation of sanitary and storm sewers.
4. We support measures to improve or expand sewage and storm water treatment in Pierce County.
5. We favor the establishment of a single authority to provide adequate drainage facilities in Pierce County.

### ***Water Governance***

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports keeping water supplied by Pierce County purveyors, within the boundaries of Pierce County for use by Pierce County residents.

Any effort to move water beyond the Pierce County boundaries by a Pierce County purveyor should:

1. Include full disclosure of the nature and conditions of the move, full citizen participation and a public vote by all affected parties to the transfer and/or sale of that water, and

2. Be for a limited time span and be discontinued when water is needed in Pierce County, and
3. Include strict conservation requirements that must be in place by the requesting water supplier.

The ability to look for new sources of water can only be granted when all of the following have occurred by the requesting party:

- 1 Partial to total implementation of a conservation plan. If partial implementation of a conservation plan has occurred then strict time limits must be in place for the completion of the plan within a reasonable time.
- 2 Partial to total implementation of a water quality pollution control plan. If partial implementation of a pollution control plan has occurred then strict time limits must be in place for the completion of the plan within a reasonable time. The purpose of this plan is to assure that practices that pollute drinking water be stopped, and that continued pollution of drinking water is not used as an excuse to seek new water sources.
- 3 Requirements for recharge of the groundwater are in place in all areas, for all new developments (residential, commercial, manufacturing, etc.), and for everyone. Remodeling permits will be the trigger and used to require compliance with recharge efforts by existing development.
- 4 Water can only be shared within the boundaries of Pierce County and only within individual watersheds.

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County supports a competitive environment with a variety of water suppliers and water sources serving the people of Pierce County. No one supplier or source should be allowed to dominate the water supply.

In order to enhance and maintain instream flows in the rivers and streams of Pierce County there should be:

- 1 strong restrictions on future land development,
- 2 strong conservation and recharge requirements in place, including gray water usage,
- 3 control of water pollution,
- 4 habitat preservation,
- 5 and a limit on tree harvesting within watersheds.

*Adopted June 2000*

## **2013 – 2015 STATE PROGRAM**

(Positions in Brief)

### **-Government-**

**Education** Support in principle the Basic Education Act (1977) and the Levy Lid Act. Obtain a balanced tax structure and to maintain uniform assessment practices to ensure equitable and sufficient financing. Support adequate and stable state funding of common schools in Washington including the costs of in-service training. Increase visibility, accessibility and accountability of the office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education. Support closer links between schools and social services, so that every child is ready to learn. Support greater involvement of parents, an increased role in decision making for teachers, and more flexible state education requirements. Provide greater access to public higher education to all, at whatever point in life it can be beneficial. Expand the definition of Basic Education to include the birth to five years.

**Port Districts** Encourage cooperation among port districts, but with local options for voter control over major policy and expenditure decisions.

**Privatization** Core services, functions and assets critical to the well-being of the people, should remain with government and not be transferred to the private sector. Public agencies are required to make a documented finding of adequate return on investment for the public for any government contribution of funds or assets to the private sector. Government employees and elected officials after leaving government service should be prohibited for two years from working for any private company for which they had oversight responsibilities or authority over awarding contracts.

**Representative Government** Facilitate changes in the state constitution to achieve a representative and effective state legislature. Promote an informed electorate. Limit methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the election process. Support the initiative and referendum process, adopt improvements to the process and require additional information for voters. Protect the interests of all affected parties in considering the formation of new counties. Clarify in legislation the processes in county formation and to require that the entire county have the ability to vote on separation. Support election methods that promote "representative-ness," citizen participation and accountability and that produce proportional representation. Support a majority vote requirement if achieved through a mechanism such as Instant Runoff Voting (IRV). Support a primary that is "open" and encourages minor party participation if a primary continues to be used.

**State Tax Policy** Obtain a balanced tax structure that is fair, adequate, flexible, and has a sound economic effect.

**Washington State and Indian Treaty Rights** Enhance salmon resources, establish a procedure for retrocession of jurisdiction to the tribes and support tribal land use planning of trust lands.

## **-Transportation-**

**Transportation** The League supports a balanced state transportation policy that defines the role of the state and supports increases in funding to provide adequate revenue and flexibility for a multi-modal system of transportation.

## **-Natural Resources-**

**Energy** Support an energy policy within Washington State. Educate the public on energy conservation. Establish incentives for efficient use of current energy sources and the greater use of alternative energy sources.

**Global Climate Change** See LWVUS Impact on Issues.

**Resource Management** Obtain coordinated planning and ensure environmental quality in the use of water, air and land resources. Insure that forest management is carried out in a manner that will sustain healthy forests, streams and habitats.

**Waste Management** Coordinated control and reduction of solid waste. Reduce the amount of hazardous waste generated in Washington and action to promote safe management of that waste which is produced, including toxics in the home.

## **-Social Policy-**

**Administration of Justice** Ensure that our courts are fair, efficient, accessible, and staffed with qualified personnel. Maintain a separate court system and facilities for youths that will balance the procedural rights of the adversary system with the protection of youth's basic rights. Realize equity in sentencing standards. Obtain alternatives to incarceration is of prime importance.

## **Children's Programs**

***Child Support and Custody*** The League of Women Voters supports vigorous, efficient and innovative child support enforcement methods and broad education regarding the responsibilities and consequences of parenthood. The best interest of the child should be the overriding consideration in determining custody, visitation, and an appropriate level of child support. The physical and emotional security of the child should be paramount. Children are entitled to support that is adequate to meet basic needs commensurate with the parents' income, resources, and standard of living. Courts should have the discretion to order post secondary educational support in appropriate circumstances.

***Children's Services*** Support stable and adequate funding for children at risk, with priority given to prevention, early identification and intervention services, community based treatment programs, day treatment programs and residential care.

***Day Care for Children*** Provide for the general welfare of children in day care centers. Ensure that the state enforces minimum standards that include provision for a safe, healthy,

clean environment. Support sufficient staff with emphasis on competence and ability to provide a creative, challenging and caring environment.

**Early Care and Education of Children** Support the quality of early care and education, birth-5 to maximize the child's future development. Support parents so all children develop to their full potential. Support improvements to child care programs, quality child care programs for children birth to five, increased access to preschool programs, programs for special needs children, home visiting, encouraging public-private partnerships and expanding the definition of Basic Education to include birth to five years.

**Economic Diversification** Ensure a balanced state economy with a strong mixture of large and small businesses. Support measures to contribute to long-range planning and cooperation between all levels of government with local initiatives wherever possible.

**Gun Control** Provide governmental regulation of ownership and possession of firearms, and measures that limit their accessibility.

**Health Care** Provide universal access to affordable health services for all residents of the state of Washington and to control total system expenditures with seamless coverage regardless of ones health status.

**Human Resources** Achieve equal rights for all. Achieve equality of opportunity for education, employment and housing regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation or disability. Obtain measures that provide basic human needs for those unable to provide for themselves. Ensure that there are emergency support services for those involved in physical and/or mental violence.



**2014-2016**  
**NATIONAL PROGRAM**  
**League of Women Voters of the United States**  
(Positions in Brief)

## **REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT**

**Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.**

### **Voting Rights**

***Citizen's Right to Vote*** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

***DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation*** Secure for the citizens of the district of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

### **Election Process**

***Apportionment*** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

***Campaign Finance*** Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

***Selection of the President*** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote and work to abolish the electoral college; promote the National Popular Vote campaign; support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections.

### **Citizen Rights**

***Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation*** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision making.

***Individual Liberties*** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

***Public Policy on Reproductive Choices*** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

### **Congress and the Presidency**

***Congress*** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

***The Presidency*** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

### **Privatization**

Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of government services and/or functions to the private sector. *Adopted 2012*

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.**

### **United Nations**

Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

### **Trade**

Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

### **U.S. Relations with Developing Countries**

Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

### **Arms Control**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

### **Military Policy and Defense Spending**

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.**

### **Natural Resources**

Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

### **Resource Management**

Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

### **Environmental Protection and Pollution Control**

Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

***Air Quality*** Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

***Energy*** Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

***Land Use*** Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

***Water Resources*** Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

***Waste Management.*** Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

***Nuclear Issues*** Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

## **Public Participation**

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

## **Agriculture Policy**

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices, and increased reliance on the free market.

## **Federal Agriculture Policies**

Provide financial support to subsidize agriculture in specific instances, enforce federal antitrust laws to ensure competitive agricultural markets and apply clean air and water regulations to all animal and aquaculture production. The federal government should fund basic agricultural research to provide adequate safety of our food supply.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

**Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.**

### **Equality of Opportunity**

***Equal Rights*** Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

***Education, Employment, Housing*** Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

***Federal Role in Public Education.*** Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12. *Amended 2012*

### **Fiscal Policy**

***Tax Policy*** Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

***Federal Deficit*** Promote responsible deficit policies.

***Funding of Entitlements*** Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

### **Health Care**

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents and controls health care costs.

### **Immigration**

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

### **Meeting Basic Human Needs**

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

***Income Assistance*** Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

***Support Services*** Provide for essential support services.

***Housing supply*** Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

### **Child Care**

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

### **Early Intervention for Children At Risk**

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

### **Violence Prevention**

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

### **Gun Control**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

### **Urban Policy**

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

### **Death Penalty**

The LWV-US supports the abolition of the death penalty.

### **Sentencing Policy**

Alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses. Adopted *2012*

### **Human Trafficking**

Oppose all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

**Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well-defined channels for citizen input and review.**