



# The Voter

February, 2015

The League of Women Voters of Tacoma—Pierce County

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## In This Issue

	Page
Funding for Schools	1—2
Co-President’s Message	3
Studies & Observer Corps	3
Meet New Member Janet Siano	4
Board Members	4
Donors and New Members	4
January Unit Meetings—Hospital Mergers	5
Unit Meeting Topic Changes	5
Unit Meeting Location & Topics	6
Opportunities for Action & Participation	7
Join the League	8
Make a Monthly Donation	8
Calendar	9
She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry	10

LWVWA: <http://www.lwvwa.org/>

LWVUS: <http://www.lwv.org/>

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

## Funding for Schools – Consequences of the McCleary Decision

The issue of school funding and how to resolve the McCleary case are the dominant issues in this year’s legislative session. It has been said that there is enough money in the current revenue forecast to cover the cost of education and meet the McCleary mandate, but there would not be enough money for anything else – unless there is new revenue.



The immensity of the funding gap, the problems reaching agreement on budget priorities, and the philosophical differences among legislators make this conundrum seem unsolvable at times. It is not expected that the Legislature will reach a budget resolution until late spring, or possibly this summer.

### Background of McCleary

Funding of public schools in Washington comes primarily from three sources: the state of Washington, federal funds for specific needs, and local levies. The extent of State funding has been the subject of many court decisions.

Article IX, Section 1, WA State Constitution states that it is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children. The courts have defined “paramount” as “superior to all others” and “ample” as “more than adequate.” In other words, the state’s most compelling responsibility is to assure more than adequate resources for education of all children. In 1977, there was a decision by Judge Doran: The legislature must define and fully fund basic education through regular and dependable tax sources and must not rely on local excess levies for that funding. In 1983, another Doran decision expanded and clarified the state’s responsibility for basic education to include Special Education, Remediation, Bilingual and Transportation.

In 1993, the Legislature defined Basic Education, set standards and established required assessments. In 2009, a new funding formula was established. In 2010, the Legislature set up timelines to fund Basic Education by the 2017-18 school year. *Continued, next page*

## Funding for Schools – Consequences of the McCleary Decision, *cont'd*

In 2010, Judge Erlick's decision in the McCleary case ordered the State to fully fund the actual costs of providing all children with an education with stable and dependable State sources – and to proceed with real and measurable progress. In 2012, the State Supreme Court upheld the McCleary decision and ordered the Legislature to fund education as mandated by the 2017-18 school year. Last session, the adopted 2013-15 State Budget increased Basic Education funding somewhat, but the 2013 court-ordered detailed plan to fully fund Education by 2018 with a stable state funding source was not produced.

As a result, the Supreme Court, in January 2014, again ordered the Legislature to submit a plan no later than April 30, 2014 that included a schedule for fully funding Basic Education by 2018. The Legislature did not produce the plan, and on September 11, 2014, the Supreme Court held the Legislature in contempt. If the 2015 Legislature doesn't act, the Supreme Court will reconvene to decide sanctions.

### Revenue Options

The Washington State tax structure relies on three main sources of revenue: retail sales taxes (36%), property taxes (30%), and B&O taxes (11%) account for 77 percent of state revenues as of 2011. The remaining 23 percent came from more than 60 other taxes and more than 100 license taxes.

**Retail sales taxes** are directed to both state and local government entities, generating \$10 billion in 2011. While retail sales taxes account for 36% of all state and local tax revenues, they provide more to the state coffers (42%), primarily the general fund (50%). The state tax rate is 6.5%, and offers local governments additional funding possibilities of up to 3.0%; the total

authorized state/local sales tax may top out at 9.5%.

**Property taxes** provide the majority of revenue for local governments, including schools, cities, counties, fire districts, library districts and many others. The value of property for purposes of taxation depends to a large degree on legislative definitions, exemptions, voter approved standards, and court decisions. For example, the law allows taxing districts to exceed the 1.0 percent growth limit with voter approval, but most taxing districts have avoided a vote for an increase in regular levy rate.

The **B&O tax** provided \$3 billion in revenue to the state, and another \$300 million to the cities. It is described as a gross income/gross receipts multistage "turnover" tax with different tax rates applying to different types of activities. It applies to all levels of economic activity such as extracting, manufacturing, wholesaling, retailing and services. It applies to all forms of business organizations, including sole proprietors, partnerships, nonprofit co-operatives and corporations. It also applies to certain activities of government (e.g., government utilities). It is not the same as a net income tax.

However, even as the economy improves following the multi-year recession, these revenue sources are insufficient to fund education as mandated by the Supreme Court. The Washington Budget and Policy Center graphically portrayed a shortfall of \$2.5 billion if the Senate majority proposal were adopted. This proposal is to require two-thirds of any expenditures of new revenue to the state general fund and related funds be used for state education programs rather than raising additional resources to meet the needs of our state. This would fall far short of what is needed.



For more details, [click here](#) to see the Network for Excellence in Washington Schools, January 2015 Newsletter

## Co-President's Message



The start of a New Year brings new resolutions for some of us, a change of year for all of us, and hopefully, a fresh outlook on the tasks before us in our lives, in League and in the 2015 Legislative Session. You should have received the first Legislative Newsletter from the

State office providing news about what's happening in Olympia. The Newsletter invites us to take action on issues. The letter has a different format this year, and we'd appreciate your input on how it works for you.

The TRY is ready to go. It has a new bright look and reads easily. Distribution will take place soon, so use your TRY to contact elected officials and make your

concerns known. Thanks to all who participated in the editing, updating, formatting and will participate in the distribution, and especially to John Thurlow, who did a superb job heading the effort this year.

We're off to a great start this year. Two studies were proposed at our December program planning meeting—one examining Pierce County Funding (local) and the other recommended to LWVWA on Voter Turnout (state). Volunteers have indicated their willingness to serve on the study committees. We also have members willing to serve as League Observers at local city council meetings and other local governmental bodies. Please consider joining any of these committees and be a part of the experience.

In conclusion, having heard the constant news of conflict, poverty, war and extremism, it is comforting to remember the inspired words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. when he said, "All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity and importance and should be undertaken with painstaking excellence."

## Studies and Observer Corps

*By Paula Eismann*

The study of government issues is an important League function, where an issue is studied in an in-depth and unbiased exploration and ultimately provides both education and advocacy. The process takes time, effort, and produces a report that is shared with members for discussion. It can lead to further action by members and ultimately to consensus.

Our selection of studies from the December general meeting brought an enthusiastic group of members willing to serve on the proposed studies. The Pierce County Budget Study includes Nancy Pearson, Cynthia Stewart, Paula Eismann, Mary Moore, Worth Gurley, Renee Rich, and Kathy Sommers. The LWVWA proposed Voter Turnout study are Julio Quan, Jack Cameron, Julie Offner, Lyz Lathrup, Janet Siano, and Sharon Peace-Doane.

One of the League's activities is having our presence at public local council meetings to inform the members of actions taken and gain visibility for the League. Volunteers include Helen Sohlberg, (Affordable Housing Consortium), John Thurlow (Port Commission) Gretchen Wilbert, Julie Offner, Sharon Peace-Doane, Ingrid Curtis, Diane Kerlin, Mary Kohli, and Paula Eismann (local city councils). Training for observers will take place in February. Date to be determined; League members will be emailed when the date has been set.

A huge appreciative thank you to all of you in giving your time, efforts and talents as you go about doing the League's work.

## Meet New Member Janet Siano

New member, Janet Siano, came to the League by a circuitous route. She retired from teaching after a 23-year career in New Jersey and two years in Shanghai, China, and moved to Gig Harbor in November 2013 to be close to her daughter and two grandchildren in Tacoma.

Seeking knowledge about critical issues facing our planet, she took advantage of courses offered by the Harbor Institute at Tacoma Community College's Gig Harbor campus. Courses addressing global climate change and what you can do about it - and human rights - led her to delve more deeply into the issues and look for honest brokers of information. The League was one of those she identified.

Janet was also inspired by the recent PBS series on the Roosevelts and specifically Eleanor's role in establishing the League. She sought out the Gig Harbor Unit and attended her first meeting in October 2014. An active participant since, she recently traveled to Olympia to support our lobbying efforts on climate change and carbon emissions reduction.



## Thanks to our generous donors since the last Voter:

Terri Baker  
Patricia Mail

Ingrid Curtis  
Meg Penalver

Mary Kohli  
Kathy Sommers

Liz Lathrop

## Welcome to our new members:

David Harrowe

Alison McCaffree

Ken Lazarus

**Next Board Meeting: Wednesday, February 11, 2015,  
3:00-5:00 p.m., at the League Office**  
*All League members are welcome to attend*

## LWVTPC Board Members

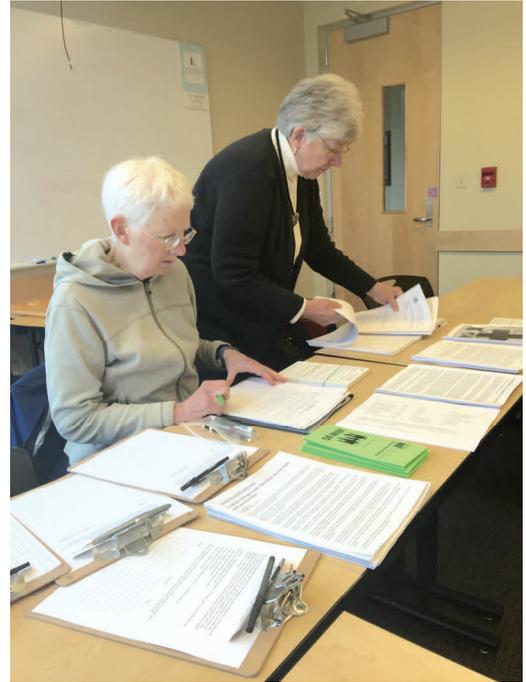
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	Sharon Peace-Doane	253-265-0841; hrdoanes@comcast.net
	Cynthia Stewart	360-413-1210; stewdahl@comcast.net
	John Thurlow	253-219-1617; johnthurlow@harbornet.com
	Ann Williams	253-759-3355; willar12000@yahoo.com

## January Unit Meetings—Hospital Mergers, Why Do They Matter?

Susan Eidenschink and Cynthia Stewart met with all four unit meetings during January to discuss the complex issue of hospital mergers. They discussed the various forms in which doctors, clinics, pharmacies and hospitals are realigning to address cost containment concerns—and how these realignments may have an effect on which services are provided.

The League's position is that health care should be affordable and accessible, so that if faith-based organizations manage hospitals they must assure that all legal health care services that are recommended by physicians in the patient's best interest should be allowed. In some cases, faith-based hospitals do not allow certain family planning, abortion or death with dignity services.

Citizen activism in many communities has served to assure that access remains available.



### Unit Meeting Topic Changes

During January, the Board reassessed the unit meeting schedule and made several changes. You will see these reflected in the Calendar in this Voter.

- **March** unit meetings will now be "Unit Choice". Originally scheduled in May, this was moved to March because it came to the attention of the Board that the Citizens United Study, which was converted to a Tool Kit, will not be available in time for the March unit meetings.
- **April** unit meetings, which were originally intended to be consensus meetings for the Mental Health Study approved by the membership last June, will now focus on an interim report from the Mental Health Study committee and discussion questions. The final report and consensus meetings will be scheduled at a later date, when the committee has reassessed its completion date.
- **May** unit meetings will focus on the Citizens United Took Kit. Many League members have been looking forward to this assistance in addressing the concerns about the Citizens United case and its impacts on elections.

### Keeping up with League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County

For those of you who are not on Facebook, look for LWVT-PC online posts at The Suburban Times, thesub-times.com, and Patch, patch.com. Both of these news sites have become easy to use. For Patch, select your desired community (Find your Patch) and scroll among the latest Bulletin Board posts.

## Get Involved! Attend a Unit Meeting and Bring a Friend (or two)

### Tacoma

#### 2nd Thursday of the Month

1:00—3:00 pm

North Tacoma Police Station

5140 N. 26th St.

Tacoma

Contact: Lyz Kurnitz-Thurlow,  
lyzkurnitz@harbornet.com

### Lakewood & Neighbors

#### 2nd Friday of the Month

10:00 am to noon

Steilacoom Community Center

2301 Worthington St.

Steilacoom

Contact: Ann Elliston, 253-564-  
4102

### East Pierce

#### 2nd Saturday of the Month

10:00 am to Noon

Puyallup Library

324 S. Meridian

Puyallup

Contact: Ellen Zulauf,  
eazul@comcast.net

### Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula

#### 2nd Saturday of the Month

2:00—4:00 pm

Harbor History Museum

4121 Harborview Dr.

Gig Harbor

Contact: Sharon Peace-Doane, 253  
-265-0841

For more information, see

[www.lwvwa.org/tacoma/](http://www.lwvwa.org/tacoma/)

### This Month: February—State of WA Budget & Implications of the McCleary Decision

At our February Unit meetings, we will find out how the WA State Legislature is handling the task of funding K-12 education, as the WA Supreme Court directed in the McCleary decision. Finding places to cut will be a challenge since other needs of the state like mental health care, early learning expansion, higher education, and many others have already been cut over the past several years. These cuts have left the state's most vulnerable without the resources they need to live safe and healthy lives.

### Next Month: March — Local Unit Choice

For our March Unit meetings, local Unit participants will be able to choose the topic. We needed to switch the topics for the March and May Unit meetings because the Citizens United Toolkit will not be available prior to the March Unit Meetings. Bring your program ideas and speaker suggestions and reserve some time at your February meeting to discuss them. Please let me know what topic you choose for your Unit meeting, so it can be included in the March Voter. Susan Eidenschink, susaneiden@harbornet.com.

### Last Month: January – Hospital Mergers

In January, we discussed hospital mergers and how these mergers of religiously affiliated hospitals with secular hospitals may affect the range of care that is delivered. Cynthia Stewart and Susan Eidenschink, who are members of the State League's Hospital Merger Committee and of a coalition of groups concerned about this matter, led the discussion on these issues and emphasized how public comment has been affecting outcomes. Many pertinent information handouts were given to attendees who expressed their appreciation for this information. If you missed the Unit meetings, you can find out more about this subject [here](#).

## Opportunities for Action and Participation

**End Human Trafficking Advocacy Training** – On **February 5, 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm** at **The Salvation Army Community Center, 1110 South Puget Sound Ave.** Attendees will learn about the current policy gaps to reduce and eliminate human trafficking, and learn ways that individuals and groups can advocate for change. Washington Engage leaders will explain the advocacy work they are doing in Washington State.

**Death Penalty Lobby Day** – **February 10 at 9:00 am** at **Washington State Capitol in Olympia**, Washington Room in Pritchard Building, 415 15<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, Olympia. The League of Women Voters of Washington is a member of Safe and Just Alternatives (SJA), a campaign that seeks to end the death penalty. SJA is organizing teams of constituents to meet with lawmakers. The death penalty is very costly and unequally applied. The death penalty does not protect public safety, nor does it serve the needs of many victims' family members. If you want to help with this effort, register at <https://www.aclu.org/secure/make-your-voice-heard> by 2/3/2015. If you have questions email [info@sjawa.org](mailto:info@sjawa.org) or call 206-624-2184.

**Pay 2 Play film** – **February 21 at 10:00 am** at **Mail Branch of the Tacoma Public Library, Tacoma** - Restore the American Dream (RAD) is sponsoring this film. Pay 2 Play: Democracy's High Stakes lays out a compelling case against corporate personhood and money as free speech. The film follows filmmaker John Ennis' quest to find a way out from under the Pay 2 Play System, where politicians reward their donors with even larger sums from the public treasury through contact, tax cuts, and deregulation. The film emphasizes the difference one person can make to take back our democracy. See more at [www.pay2play.tv](http://www.pay2play.tv).

**Tacoma Proposition 1 – Raise the minimum wage in Tacoma to %15 per hour.** The goal is to collect enough signatures (3,500 valid signatures) by mid-May to place this proposition on the Tacoma City Ballot in November. This is a grassroots effort, which has a weekly meeting on Saturdays from 4:00 pm to 5:30 pm at the First United Methodist Church, 621 Tacoma Ave S. If you want to help with signature gathering in Tacoma, attend the meeting, checking out the website <http://15nowtacoma.info/>, or contact Sarah Morken at 253-973-8153.

**Citizens United Initiative – Initiative to the Legislature** – Signature gathering begins in April. WAmend will sponsor an initiative to the Legislature this year. This measure would urge the Washington Congressional delegation to propose amending the Constitution to clarify that constitutional rights apply to natural persons, not corporations, and to authorize greater regulation of political contributions and expenditures. Sixteen states have passed similar resolutions either in their Legislation or by initiative. See more about this initiative at <http://www.wamend.org/>.

**Restore the American Dream** – **March 7, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon** at **First United Methodist Church, 621 Tacoma Ave S.** A grassroots group organized an event on October 11, 2014, called Restore the American Dream. That same group will present Restore the American Dream 2.0: Money, Politics and You the Voter. This event will be especially important during this time when the Washington State Legislature is working to solve the huge problem of funding K-12 education without cutting other essential state services.

### Voter Production & Distribution Volunteers

Your Voter is brought to you by the following people:

#### Editorial Volunteers:

Cynthia Stewart  
Susan Eidenschink  
Julie Offner

#### Distribution Volunteers

Susan Eidenschink  
Bobbie Fletcher  
Judy Payne  
Ingrid Curtis

### Visit us on Facebook at

[www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Tacoma-Pierce-County/312747775413](http://www.facebook.com/pages/League-of-Women-Voters-of-Tacoma-Pierce-County/312747775413)



## Join the Tacoma—Pierce County League of Women Voters !

**The League of Women Voters of Tacoma – Pierce County invites you to join us!**

Any citizen of voting age, male or female may become a member.

**Yes, I'd like to become a Member of the League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County.**

This application also entitles me to full membership in and mailings of the Washington State and National League of Women Voters (LWVWA and LWVUS)

Membership for one year for an individual is \$60 (for two members of a household - \$90). Student membership is \$30. If you are not a citizen and/or 18 years of age, you may become an Associate Member for \$30. Please indicate the type of membership you desire. We have scholarship memberships available at this time. Membership dues are NOT tax deductible. Contributions to the Education Fund (by separate check, and they are tax deductible) and/or the General Fund are welcome.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

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**Mail to:** League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County  
702 Broadway, Suite #105 / Tacoma, WA 98402-3710

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### Consider making a monthly contribution to the League It's Easy!

Looking for a method to make an affordable but larger contribution to the League? Just set up a monthly "account" in your checking account Bill Pay system. All you need is the League's address and phone number.

- For "account number", call it "contribution".
- The payee, of course, is "League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County".
- The address is:
 

League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County  
702 Broadway, Suite 105  
Tacoma, WA 98402
- And the phone number is: (253) 272-1495



## LWVT-PC Calendar February—June 2015

<b>February 5</b> 7:00 – 9:00 pm	<b>Human Trafficking Advocacy Training</b> Salvation Army Community Center 1110 S Puget Sound Ave, Tacoma	<b>March 14</b> 10:00 am – noon	<b>East Pierce Unit Meeting</b> Your Choice of Topic
<b>February 10</b> 9:00 am – noon	<b>Death Penalty Lobby Day</b> Washington Room, Pritchard Bldg. WA State Capitol, Olympia, WA	<b>March 14</b> 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	<b>Gig Harbor-Key Peninsula Unit Meeting</b> Your Choice of Topic
<b>February 11</b> 3:00—5:00 pm	<b>LWVT-PC Board Meeting</b> 702 Broadway, Tacoma	<b>March 20</b>	<b>Deadline for April Voter articles</b>
<b>February 12</b> 1:00 – 3:00 pm	<b>Tacoma Unit Meeting</b> State of WA Budget: Implications of the McCleary Decision	<b>April 8</b> 3:00—5:00 pm	<b>LWVT-PC Board Meeting</b> 702 Broadway, Tacoma
<b>February 13</b> 10:00 am – noon	<b>Lakewood &amp; Neighbors Unit Meeting</b> State of WA Budget: Implications of the McCleary Decision	<b>April 9</b> 1:00 – 3:00 pm	<b>Tacoma Unit Meeting</b> LWVT-PC Mental Health Study
<b>February 14</b> 10:00 am—Noon	<b>East Pierce Unit Meeting</b> State of WA Budget: Implications of the McCleary Decision	<b>April 10</b> 10:00 am – noon	<b>Lakewood &amp; Neighbors Unit Meeting</b> LWVT-PC Mental Health Study
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<b>February 21</b> 10:00 am—Noon	<b>Film: Pay to Play</b> Tacoma Public Library Main Branch 1102 Tacoma Avenue S., Tacoma	<b>April 20</b>	<b>Deadline for May Voter articles</b>
<b>March 7</b> 9:00 am—Noon	<b>Restore the American Dream</b> First United Methodist Church 621 Tacoma Ave. S., Tacoma	<b>May 8</b> 10:00 am – noon	<b>Lakewood &amp; Neighbors Unit Meeting</b> Citizens United Decision— LWVWA Tool Kit for Action
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		<b>May 14</b> 1:00 – 3:00 pm	<b>Tacoma Unit Meeting,</b> Citizens United Decision— LWVWA Tool Kit
		<b>June 20</b>	<b>Deadline for Summer Voter articles</b>

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 Tacoma, WA 98402



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## She's Beautiful When She's Angry

On January 27th at the Grand Cinema in Tacoma the film *She's Beautiful When She's Angry* was shown. This film tells the feminist history that was left out of your school textbooks. Mary Dore did a lot of research for this documentary of the women's movement from 1966 to 1973. Dore searched archives and interviews with scores of vibrant, passionate women active during those years. Dore was active herself in the Women's Liberation Movement during the mid 1970s, and through these experiences she makes this period come alive. Those who attended felt the film increased our passion and knowledge of this active struggle. To see more information on the film [click here](#). You can watch a trailer [here](#).



*Speakers: (L to R) Rosa Franklin, Bill Moss, Judie Fortier, Maralisse Hood Quan*

Following the showing of the film, which was sold out, a panel discussion was held with a panel consisting of Rose Franklin (former WA State Senator), Bill Moss (former director of Tacoma-Pierce County Planned Parenthood and former Tacoma City Council member), Judie Fortier (former Women's Rights Coordinator for the City of Tacoma and leader in WA and Tacoma National Organization for Women), and Maralisse Hood Quan (current director of the Pierce County Center for Dispute Resolution). Both Rosa Franklin and Maralisse Hood Quan are current members of the League of Women Voters. All were active during the women's liberation movement, Maralisse being active with her mother, who was a feminist activist during this time. These women gave us encouragement in doing whatever we could to keep the rights of women in the spotlight and to promote voters rights and campaign finance reform.