

VOTERS' VOICE



LWVRV

League of Women Voters of the Rogue Valley

Volume 86 Number 3

April 2021

## April General Meeting for LWV Rogue Valley

Thursday, April 8, 2021 -- 11:30 AM

### League & Important Issues – How YOU Can Take Part

Nationwide, groups of the League of Women Voters have always been interested in education and advocacy on important local, state and national issues. The LWV Rogue Valley is no different. Based on positions that we develop through study, members with passions often lead the way or help others in following or advocating on issues.

At our March LWVRV meeting you learned a great deal about how to do this in Oregon (even if it is just for yourself). If you missed it, you can see the recording [here](#) on the LWVRV.org website. **Rick Bennett** spoke of general advocacy procedures, **Shirley Weathers** took us on a tour of OLIS (Oregon Legislative Information System) in real time and Bill Walsh showed us around the resources available on the LWVOR website that we can use to stay informed, follow legislation the state Action Team is working on, and take action.

This month we will concentrate on a few select issues and show League involvement with them. **Barbara Klein** will explain how we use League positions for solid grounding for our Action. Oh! So that's why we do studies and hold consensus meetings! She'll also give an overview of her current legislative work on electoral reform as a member of the LWVOR Action Team.

**Bill Walsh** will provide a similar overview of his work on health care and **Shirley Weathers** will do the same for climate change. **Kathleen Donham** will talk about HR 1, currently a League priority in Congress, as well as give us a peek at a convenient tool for voters to track various levels of Oregon maps as redistricting discussions proceed.

Please join us, and let us know if you too have a special passion, or major interest. There is a good deal of "Oral Tradition" in the League. By attending general meetings (or special meetings) you get more acquainted with the League process AND where you fit in. No matter how little – OR MUCH – you want to do, you're welcomed here.

**The Jackie Clary Challenge.** Last month our former President, Jackie Clary, suggested that members attempt to follow a bill currently in the Oregon Legislature, or watch a hearing online. You still have time. If you would like to report back at our April meeting on what you did, or what you learned, please alert Barbara Klein (at [action@lwvroguevalley.org](mailto:action@lwvroguevalley.org) )

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## President's Pen

I hope you all got a chance to either attend last month's meeting or watch the Zoom recording. If not, you can find it on our website under 'Advocacy Informed – March 11 2021', in the right column. Rick Bennett, Shirley Weathers, and Bill Walsh gave us great tools to keep track of our legislators and Oregon bills moving through our state legislature. We are looking forward to April's meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> which will give us even more tools for taking action from League positions. Look for a Zoom invitation sent to you on Monday April 5th and on the morning of the meeting.

Jackie Clary and I had a call from Stephan Gagne, the Chair of the Ashland Wildfire Safety Commission. He has advice for Ashland residents on how to prepare and make homes fire safe. Even though many of you live in other communities in the Rogue Valley, his information will be useful to us all. For further information go to: [Fire Adapted Ashland](#). We are planning to post his flyers and links on our Facebook page, website and to all our members.

**Save the date** for May 20th @ 11:30. We will begin our Annual Meeting with a speaker from the Secretary of State's office, Kathy Wai, who has been appointed by Secretary Fagan to be her representative for redistricting. Kathy Wai will bring us up-to-date on all current issues surrounding redistricting in Oregon. (If the Secretary of State's schedule allows, she may also join us.) Afterwards, we can have a short social lunch break and then proceed with our annual business: approving the budget, electing positions presented by the nominating committee, etc. An important meeting—see you all there!

Speaking of May, the LWVOR has scheduled the biennial State Convention, so here's a heads-up, save-the-dates notice. In tune with the times, everything will be done via Zoom with events spread for a few hours a day over May 10 through 16. Caucuses will be held early in the week; other events are still being scheduled. Bookmark [here](#) to learn more as the agenda solidifies.

I want to hear that you've all received your vaccinations or have scheduled appointments and are following CDC guidelines so that we can have the pleasure of meeting again in person.

Margie Peterson, President LWVRV

The League of Women Voters Rogue Valley welcomes submissions to the newsletter, *The Voters' Voice*. Editor Jim Buck can be reached at 541-830-0602 and [newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org](mailto:newsletter@lwvroguevalley.org)

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## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Our Ongoing Challenge.

--- By Joyce Puccini Chapman, for now.

Recently my friend Kokayi Nosakhere thanked me profusely for writing an email to the Ashland City Council encouraging them to create a Racial and Social Justice Commission. I asked him why he thought that small thing was such a big deal. His answer: Because very few white people will follow through and actually do something.

How can I/we contribute to making our LWVRV an organization that Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) people want to join? Adopting the DEI Policy mandated by the LWVUS and discussed in the February Voters' Voice column [Feb VV pp.3-5](#) is a step we need to take, but that is only a beginning. What can we do as the LWVRV and as individuals to make our chapter a place that the BIPOC community would consider joining? Consider why you joined. What drew you to this group? Why do you stay? What about our group would catch the attention and interest of our local BIPOC community? There are no easy answers. A part of this effort is for us to do things that show we center BIPOC perspectives. Here are a few things members of our League have done and suggestions for more things to do:

- \* Members of our Action Teams noticed that there were bills going through the legislature related to racial justice and decided to make sure that the LWVOR registered comments. Due to their awareness and work, [HB 2337](#) and [SCR 17](#) are among several that were supported and testimony is on record by the LWVOR.
- \* Our President sent me an article well-worth the read, [The Emancipator](#). Perhaps you might want to support this new news organization when it is in full production.
- \* Members of LWVRV challenged me and then encouraged me and continue to encourage me to write this column.
- \* LWVRV has had presentations by local BIPOC groups.
- \* A white friend tells me that as he goes about his daily activities, he tries to imagine how a black person would be treated in the same situation. He does this several times a week and writes it in a diary. One example was doing a rolling stop and moving through an intersection only to notice a police car. He was not stopped.
- \* Friends in and out of the LWVRV joined together to form a discussion group on race. It is a small group of friends who trust each other enough to have difficult conversations about race. Perhaps you'd like to form a similar small group.
- \* Self-education takes many forms. Don Lemon's new book "This Is The Fire" discusses his personal conversations and experiences around race. Diversifying our reading and sources of news and perspective are good things to do. Watching Black opinion hosts is something you might try and I recom-

mend Don Lemon, CNN, Joy Reid, The Reid Out, MSNBC, Fareed Zakaria GPS, CNN, or Rev. Al Sharpton, Politics Nation, MSNBC.

\* Are you comfortable speaking up when you see a racist situation, policy or system? How can we speak up more often? Call and write to your state and federal Senators and Representatives, write to city councils and county boards of commissioners. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Make your voice heard about injustice because people will notice.

\* Read [Kroger's Allyship Guide: From Awareness to Advocacy](#) and select a few things to do.

None of these things will result in instantaneous change. Raising awareness and changing perspectives and eliminating systemic racism – root and branch – will take time and work. Thank you to all who have started along the anti-racist path. Let's continue to help each other grow.

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## Health Care Action Update by Bill Walsh

### Universal Health Care Task Force March Meeting

The Task Force keeps drilling down on the difficult issues it's been charged to address on the path to universal coverage through a Single Payer system. The Technical Advisory Groups (TAGs) are being directed to come up with preliminary proposals which will be voted on.

The Eligibility, Benefits, and Accountability (EBA) TAG, with its Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) input, was the first to report, offering its recommendations for Eligibility and Enrollment (automatic and seamless enrollment of all Oregon residents). The Eligibility and Accountability proposals were adopted. The Benefits proposal was sent back for more work, mainly to deal with people who live out-of-state but work here.

The Finance and Revenue TAG recommended changing its work from coming up with a precise price tag to prioritizing sources of revenue being spent in Oregon now, e.g., Medicaid, Medicare, Tricare, Public Employees and Teachers, ERISA self-insured, insurance premiums, co-pays, co-insurance, business deductions, and potential taxes: sales, payroll, income and corporate. The main problem in terms of actual amounts is lack of spending transparency with insurance companies and even with state and federal funding. By unfortunate design, the TAG has not been assisted by the Legislative Finance Office, rather staffing is in the budget for the Legislative Research Office. Consequently, the TAG is seeking independent expertise in problem areas and will prioritize actual and proposed sources of funding being spent now (as in the status quo).

In coming months and meetings, we will hear from the Provider Reimbursement TAG, Financing and Revenue TAG, Governance TAG, and Long-Term Care Advisory Group. Everyone involved is working hard and in good spirits, and realizes they will have to make difficult decisions before taking their preliminary product out for public, business, and provider comment.

### Meanwhile, at the Oregon State Legislature . . .

The House Rules Committee held a public hearing on [HB 2337](#), declaring racism a public health crisis and outlining steps among solutions, including data collection, on March 23. LWVOR submitted [testimony](#) in support.

You can follow the ongoing work of the House and Senate Health Care Committees via the weekly [LWVOR Legislative Report](#).

## Natural Resources Issue—Illegal Radioactive Waste Dumping

by Shirley Weathers

*The following is a brief overview of one of the many issues currently under consideration by the Oregon Legislature this session. I've been working on this for over a year under the Radioactive Waste Portfolio within the LWVOR Natural Resources section. It is timely now as [SB 246A](#), *Radioactive Waste Disposal—Definitions and Enforcement*, is making its way through the process—so far with unanimous bipartisan support!*

In February 2020, Oregon's Department of Energy (ODOE) issued a [Notice of Violation](#) to Chemical Waste Management (CWM) for accepting at the Arlington Hazardous Waste Landfill between 2016-19 a total of 2.5 million tons of illegal radioactive waste from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota. A "tip" from a ND resident led to discovery. The type of waste involved is a byproduct of hydraulic fracturing (fracking), a process that produces massive quantities of such waste. Fracking involves pumping of enormous quantities of chemical-laced water far below ground to facilitate extraction of oil and release of natural gas. When the water returns to the surface, it carries with it what's known as technologically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive material (TENORM). Subsequent processing of the water and pipes must be disposed of somewhere, but due to the [substantial threat](#) to the environment and public health and safety, the legal options are limited. Oregon is not one of them, but was being targeted for that purpose, nonetheless.

ODOE's investigation leading up to the issuance of the violation revealed that pertinent statutes and regulations protecting the state against such action were outdated, in a number of ways exposing the state to future occurrences of this type of activity and limiting the state's ability to respond. Both legislative and agency action was needed to rectify the deficiencies. The agency mounted and is diligently pursuing a plan to address this:

- The 2020 Session was ongoing at the time, so a bill was prepared to address the statutory deficiencies (in ORS 469.300 and 469.525). It was poised to pass, but the walkout brought that effort to a halt.
- ODOE turned to the regulatory changes that could be made in the meantime. A [Radioactive Materials Waste Enforcement Rulemaking Advisory Committee \(RAC\)](#) (on which I served for the LWVOR) met several times over the interim to draft revisions to OAR 435.029, the body of rules providing for the enforcement of laws and rules governing the transport and disposal of radioactive materials and waste in the state. The revisions were adopted last month. LWVOR supports the changes.
- In January 2021, ODOE initiated its second attempt to make necessary statutory changes via SB 246. The bill (now SB 246A due to one minor amendment) has been moving through the process with full support of both parties, both in Senate committee and on the Floor, where it passed unanimously. It is now in the House, awaiting scheduling for a public hearing in the House Energy and Environment Committee. If it passes and is signed into law, no doubt another RAC will be convened to work through implementing rulemaking. The LWVOR [supports](#) SB 246A and it is one of the many bills the LWVOR Action Team includes in its weekly [Legislative Report](#).

As for the 2.5 million tons of waste that started all of this buried in the Arlington Landfill? ODOE has [concluded](#) that it would be far more dangerous to the public and landfill employees to force CWM to dig it up and relocate it. LWVOR reluctantly agrees, all things considered, despite acknowledging the harm and aggravation retention means for the innocent communities in the vicinity. But all of this demonstrates that passage of SB 246A and subsequent regulatory work are crucial to make sure this never happens again.



## New Members

**Welcome to all of our newest members!**

We look forward to seeing you at our next Zoom meeting!

Again, welcome to our new recruits!

Jackie Clary

Membership Chair

Contact membership committee persons at [membership@lwvroquevalley.org](mailto:membership@lwvroquevalley.org).

### **Membership Application**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Single membership — \$65.00 Spouse/student—\$32.50

May we publish your information in the LWVRV Directory? Y N

Send check /application to P.O. Box 8555 Medford OR 97501

Would you like a phone call reminder about meetings? Yes No

#### Areas of Interest:

- ◇ Campaign finance ◇ Local Government
- ◇ Education ◇ Newsletter
- ◇ Election Issues ◇ Climate Change
- ◇ Redistricting ◇ National Issues
- ◇ Observer Corps ◇ Voter Services
- ◇ Healthcare Issues
- ◇ Environment

## LWVRV Calendar

### April

- Thursday 8 Monthly members Zoom meeting, 11:30 AM, **League and Important Issues**
- Thursday 15 Board Meeting, 10:30 AM
- Friday 19 Special Election voter pamphlets mailed
- Tuesday 27 Newsletter submissions due
- Tuesday 27 Voter registration deadline
- Friday 30 Special Election ballots mailed

### May

- Mon-Sun 10-16 LWVOR Biennial Convention (via Zoom) will include events over Monday, May 10 through Sunday, May 16.
- Tuesday 18 Special Election
- Thursday 20 Annual Meeting (Zoom), 11:30 AM: Board meeting to follow

If you are reading this newsletter on-line, maybe you don't need a mailed paper copy. Call the newsletter editor at 541-830-0602 if you would prefer *not* to get the newsletter by U.S. Mail, or leave a note at [newsletter@lwwroguevalley.org](mailto:newsletter@lwwroguevalley.org).

You should also be receiving newsletters by email from State and National. For membership application, go to <http://lwwroguevalley.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MembershipApplication501c3AsOf20190725.pdf>

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