



# VOTER

## LWVSJ Happenings

**Necia Quast presents**  
**An Update on COP30 and Climate Change**  
*Friday Harbor Library & via Zoom*  
**Monthly Meeting – Monday, January 12th**  
**12pm – 2pm – FH Library**



Necia Quast is back from Belem, Brazil where she attended the second week of COP30 as an observer for the **League of Women Voters** of the US. COP 30 was the 30th United Nations Climate Change Conference, which took place last month in Brazil. As the [Conference of the Parties](#) to the [UN Framework Convention on Climate Change](#), it brought together governments, experts, and civil society to negotiate and agree on policies to address climate change and its impacts. A key focus was advancing progress on the [Paris Agreement](#) goals, reviewing new climate action plans, and discussing issues like climate finance, energy, and deforestation. Necia has organized her dispatches from the convention into a slideshow and her insights can be found at [www.lwwa.org/San-Juan](http://www.lwwa.org/San-Juan).

*An interview that Necia gave with **SanJuans Today** is also available on our site.*

Here is the Link to the first of these dispatches:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1JMVoHVCUA/>.

**This will be a hybrid meeting. To join via Zoom:**  
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83364651803?pwd=OUhtWHJJK0FQQduYU5aS3BUTONwUT09>

## President's Message – *from Susan Martin*

Space for Susan's message

### Our Observer Corps is at Risk – You Can Help

- *Ever Wonder What Really Happens at Public Meetings?*
- *We're Missing Observers – Could You Be One?*



Our League's Observer Corps has been one of our most popular and appreciated programs for island voters, providing essential information about the proceedings of public meetings and activities of our local elected officials. Sadly, we have no volunteers to report on County Council meetings, and accordingly we will no longer be able to offer Council reports to the community. Local voters will no longer have information on County Council activities and actions on critical issues.

The Observer Corps has been an essential program for carrying out the League mission of informing and educating voters. However, without additional volunteers we will only have a limited offering of public meeting reports with nothing available on the County Council.

If you are interested in saving this part of our program, contact Susan Martin at [martinsf@georgetown.edu/](mailto:martinsf@georgetown.edu/) 202-617-1496 or Barbara Sharp [b\\_gsharp@hotmail.com/360-472-0148](mailto:b_gsharp@hotmail.com/360-472-0148). The work can be done remotely, as all meetings are recorded and reports are submitted online via email.

**From Necia: A piece of our history:** When we discussed possible local advocacy, we learned that in the past we advocated for the creation of the Family Resource Center. I found a copy of "Children, Families and Government: A Report for San Juan County by LWVSJ" dated December 1999, done by a committee of four. The report references a 1995 report called Children at Risk. I'll bring it to the Board Meeting. We might want to have a blurb in the Voter, and/or do an article for the newspaper on this bit of LWVSJ history.

#### Next Nationwide Demonstration: Scheduled for Tuesday January 20<sup>th</sup> – 2pm

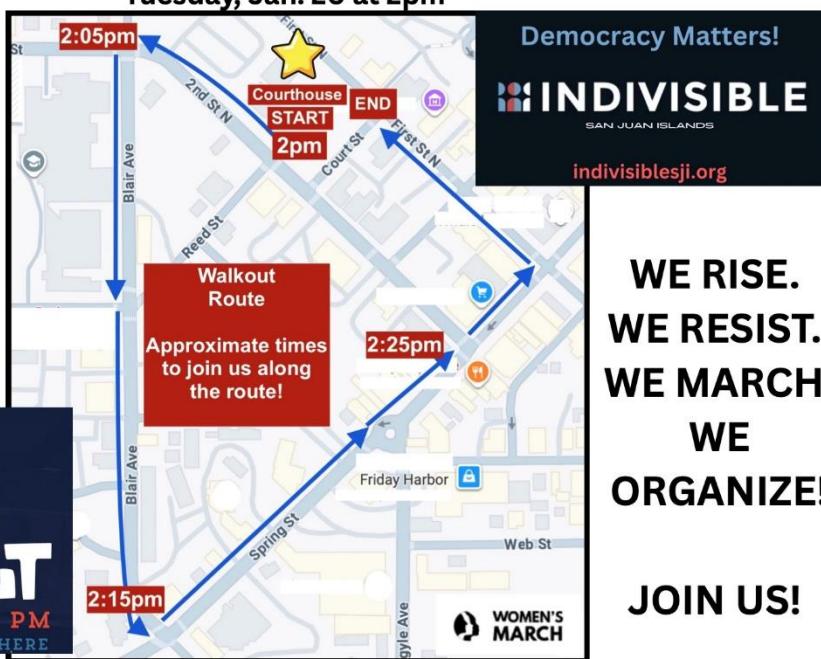
Join us on **January 20** for the **Free America Walkout**—a peaceful, visible moment to stand up for democracy, freedom, and the rule of law.

Even a brief pause in your day sends a powerful message: **we are paying attention, and democracy matters.**



*The date symbolizes the peaceful transfer of power and the strength of our democratic system. Holding a walkout on this day highlights the importance of civic engagement and reminds our leaders—and one another—that democracy depends on an informed, active public.*

Make  
some  
NOISE!



WE RISE.  
WE RESIST.  
WE MARCH.  
WE  
ORGANIZE!

JOIN US!

#### Make Your Voice Visible

Take part in the **Free America Walkout** with the League on **Jan 20**.

### Around the League – State and National Issues

#### LWVUS Submits Comments to EPA Opposing Changing Definition of “Waters of the United States”

The LWV of the United States submitted comments to the Environmental Protection Agency opposing their proposal to change the definition of “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS)

<https://www.lwv.org/environment/lwvus-submits-comments-epa-opposing-changing-definition-waters-united-states>

#### LWVUS Urges Senate to Ensure Health Care Affordability

The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) sent a memo to the Senate about the set-to-expire Affordable Care Act (ACA) subsidies and urging senators to ensure health care affordability in the new year.

<https://www.lwv.org/health-care-reform/lwvus-urges-senate-ensure-health-care-affordability>

## New Developments in Local News

### Local News is Essential for Democracy

A new partnership would mean expansion of Murrow News Fellowship throughout the state

League members studying the loss of local news four years ago were told by Washington State University journalism department chair Ben Shors what the decline has led us to. “It’s not a journalism crisis,” Shors told the League members with unflinching clarity. “It’s a democracy crisis.”

Since then, in addition to the LWWA’s “The Decline of Local News and Its Impact on Democracy,” mountains of research have proven that message to be true. Shors and colleagues now have an opportunity to change that reality in Washington state at least a few degrees.

A new partnership forged between the WSU Edward R. Murrow College of Communication and a national nonprofit would replace and expand on the News Fellowship program that was a casualty of the 2025 Washington state legislative session.

That fellowship placed 16 journalists in 22 newsrooms across the state, producing nearly 2,700 news stories and providing much-needed civic affairs coverage to League members and hundreds of thousands of other Washingtonians.

Under the new partnership, described as the first-of-its-kind in the nation, each of Washington’s 39 counties would be assigned a fellow to provide coverage of local news and developments. Modeled after Washington State University County Extension program, the expanded News Fellowship would ensure remote rural areas as well as populated urban areas would have news coverage. News deserts in Washington tend to be in eastern and central areas of the state, although not exclusively.

Shors said the state would contribute \$1 million annually over the next two years but the bulk of the cost of ensuring coverage for all 39 counties would come from funders from whom the partnership has commitments.

The state investment would allow the program to operate under the auspices of the university as well as demonstrate a solid commitment to funders. Under the plan, the new fellowship would launch in January 2027, with an inaugural cohort of 13 journalists covering key civic issues and addressing gap in local reporting. New cohort would be added every year for three years.

The League will be following developments and call for support of the partnership when the Legislature reconvenes next month.

## DOJ Sues WA Secretary of State Hobbs

Claiming that the federal government has “sweeping power” under the Civil Rights Act to obtain such information, the Department of Justice (D)J requested data from the Washington State Secretary of State’s voter registration records that would have given them personal information on every voter. This includes information not normally publicly available,

such as social security numbers, birthdates and driver's license numbers.

DOJ asserts that the unredacted records are needed "to assess Washington's compliance" with federal election laws, including requirements that states take "a reasonable effort" to ensure ineligible voters—such as dead people—are removed from voter rolls.

Based on state law, Secretary Hobbs declined to send all of the requested data, as did several other states that are also being sued by DOJ.

The League's positions on this issue support Secretary of State Hobbs' refusal to share private data. LWVVA positions:

- EL-2: Voting procedures should serve the voter with a maximum of convenience, simplicity and efficiency *while ensuring that the requirements of secrecy, accuracy and impartiality are maintained.* [emphasis added]
- EL-3: Permanent, personal registration should be continued. Lists of voters should be accurate and current. Registration should be simple and convenient for voters while ensuring accuracy. *The Voter Registration State Database (VRSD) should not be used to deny people the right to vote. No proof of citizenship other than the sworn signature on the registration form should be required for Voter Registration.* Random audits of all ballots, with the percentage of ballots audited to be determined by a statistician. The mail-in ballot postmark deadline should be Election Day.
- Provision should be made for absentee registration when registration is otherwise impossible.[emphasis added]

There is no evidence that Washington State is out of compliance with federal election laws or allowing dead people to remain on the rolls. Additionally, these DOJ requests are not being made to every state and appear to be directed only at selected states based on politics rather than actual experience.

#### Take Action

- Send a message to Secretary Hobbs at [secretaryofstate@sos.wa.gov](mailto:secretaryofstate@sos.wa.gov) in support of his position defending the privacy of voters.
- Send a message to your members of Congress to let them know that DOJ should be investigated and stopped for this discriminatory behavior.
- Local Leagues who have not yet signed on to the national letter to Department of Homeland Security, objecting to these requests should do so [HERE](#). Get additional information from LWVUS [HERE](#).



## Upcoming Events

### Support Democracy in WA State with your advocacy at the Legislature LOBBY WEEK 2026 – JANUARY 26-29

What is Lobby Week? It's an opportunity to learn – during the evenings – about the status of League issues at the Legislature and to meet during the day with your local lawmakers to discuss those issues – and more.

Attend all of the week's events, or just those you choose:

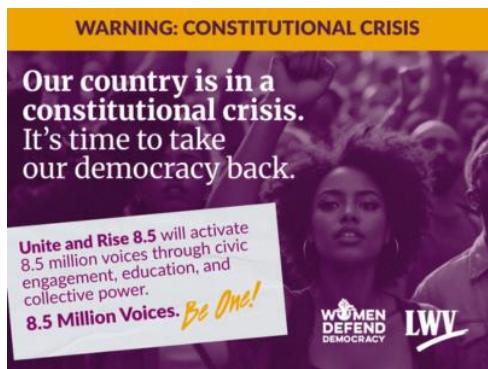
Evening Sessions – 6.30 – 8.30pm

- Monday Jan 26: Getting Started
- Tuesday Jan 27: Funding Crises
- Wednesday Jan 28: Other Crises
- Thursday Jan 29: Other Critical Issues

[Register Now](#)

## Other Resources

- [Daily Democracy Practices](#) for League members.
- Take a look at the [Unite and Rise Power Playbook 3](#), which covers November 2025-January 2026. In particular, scroll down in the playbook to the calendars for daily actions by month. Find the Unite and Rise 8.5 Toolkit [HERE](#) and an overview of the initiative on the public landing page [HERE](#).
- Video Explaining Constitutional Crisis: See [this video](#) by LWVUS, “Are We Really in a Constitutional Crisis?” It’s great for public presentations.



## Unite and Rise 8.5

Unite and Rise aims to build a movement of 8.5 million individuals to fight back against the anti-democratic actions of the current administration. According to research, 8.5 million people taking non-violent action are all we need to make meaningful change in this critical time.

Join us as we defend democracy, from the courts to the streets and beyond!

<https://www.lvv.org/uniteandrise>

# 5 Calls

Make your voice heard!

5 Calls is the easiest and most effective way for U.S. constituents to make a political impact. Calling your congressperson is the most effective way to influence policy. Make calls in support of progressive issues. We update the list regularly as legislation develops and remove topics as soon as they're no longer relevant.

[Learn more about why calling works.](#)

[Read our guide to getting started.](#)

Visit 5calls.org – input your location (Friday Harbor) and select what is important to you.

<https://5calls.org/>

## Dues Payment and Processing System

As you may know by now, The League of Women Voters has switched to a new member portal, ChapterSpot, for all Leagues across the country. By now, all members should have received an email to log in to the portal. If you haven't received an email, you can use this link to renew: <https://portal.lwv.org/membership>.

Dues are 'pay what you can' with a recommended level of \$75 annually.

### What DOES the State League Do With Our Membership Dues?

Your dues are distributed in this way:

**The portion to local Leagues remains steady at 20%.** Our state League split has *increased* to 47% - with the difference carved from the national percentage.

Understandably, members have questions related to this change, including one that surfaced at the 2025 Convention in June. Through the resolution process, members requested "the LWWA board establish a planning process, in consultation with local Leagues, for increased revenue which provides increased support to local Leagues and/or increased support for grassroots advocacy as intended by the LWVUS Transformation Process."

**The state League has taken this request to heart in several ways.**

At its July retreat the 2025-27 WA state Board of Directors created this list of priorities for the biennium:

- **Strengthen Operational Infrastructure**

*Review staffing and technology needs. Commit to adding capacity to grow League impact statewide.*

- **Grow Financial Resources**

*New financial resources must be generated to support both LWWA infrastructure and services to local Leagues.*

- **Focus on Membership and Leadership Development**

*Create effective tools to recruit, engage and retain new League members. Build future League leaders at all levels.*

- **Enhance Internal and External Communications**

*Tell a clear, powerful, ongoing story of effective civic education, engagement, and advocacy to League members and residents across Washington state.*

- **Increase Statewide Community Outreach and Engagement**

*Build deep, true, sustainable partnerships with democracy allies across Washington state.*

## Meeting Dates 2026

Our full calendar will appear in the January Voter. Please note that our board meetings (open to all) are usually scheduled on the first Monday of the month and Membership

Meetings are on the second Monday of the month.

<b>Board Meetings</b>	<b>Monthly Meetings</b>
January 5	January 12
February 2	February 9
March 2	March 9
April 6	April 13
May 4	May 11 (Annual Meeting)
June 1	June 8
July 6	July 13

*All members are welcome to attend our board meetings –  
in person or via our zoom link*

### **Board Members of the League of Women Voters of the San Juan's**

<b>Officers</b>			
Susan Martin	Co-President	360-370-5205	<a href="mailto:martinsf@georgetown.edu">martinsf@georgetown.edu</a>
Barbara Sharp	Co-President	360-472-0148	<a href="mailto:b_gsharp@hotmail.com">b_gsharp@hotmail.com</a>
Michael Martin	Treasurer	360-370-5205	<a href="mailto:martinml@ieee.org">martinml@ieee.org</a>
Stephanie Butler	Voter Services	907-209-5885	<a href="mailto:sjbutlerak@gmail.com">sjbutlerak@gmail.com</a>
Steve Bowman	Voter Services	360-370-5814	<a href="mailto:steve.bowman52@gmail.com">steve.bowman52@gmail.com</a>
Necia Quast	Observer Corps	360-370-5502	<a href="mailto:collquas@aim.com">collquas@aim.com</a>
Robbie Lawson	Roster/Membership	360-378-5513	<a href="mailto:robbie@rockisland.com">robbie@rockisland.com</a>
XXXX	Secretary		
<b>Members-at-Large</b>			
Audra Adelberger		360-378-6322	<a href="mailto:audraaeaba@gmail.com">audraaeaba@gmail.com</a>
Mary Campanella	Nominating Committee	360-298-2823	<a href="mailto:marycampanella@icloud.com">marycampanella@icloud.com</a>
Susan Eberhard		360-378-3608	<a href="mailto:eberhard@rockisland.com">eberhard@rockisland.com</a>
Lenore Bayuk		360-378-3636	<a href="mailto:bayukll@rockisland.com">bayukll@rockisland.com</a>
Pati Otley		360-378-5632	<a href="mailto:pdotley@comcast.net">pdotley@comcast.net</a>
Jill Belcovson	The Voter/Observer Corps	805-689-2260	<a href="mailto:jbelcovson@gmail.com">jbelcovson@gmail.com</a>
Chita Miller		360-378-2153	<a href="mailto:chita.miller@gmail.com">chita.miller@gmail.com</a>

*Nominating Committee: Clare Kelm, Mary Campanella, Sarah Crosby*

LWVSJ welcomes new members who are concerned about the state of democracy today and what can be done to protect it. Please go to <https://portal.lwv.org/membership> join the League. When you join the League, your dues go to three different places: to National League to help support voting rights advocacy efforts, to State League for voter education as well as advocacy for state issues that League supports; and then there are a few dollars left to support our local forums and programs.

*Let us know of any changes that need to be made to your contact information. Thank you for continuing to support the important work that we do.*

I would like to make a tax-deductible donation to the League of Women Voters San Juans Education Fund and have enclosed a separate check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

**PLEASE RETURN TO:** League of Women Voters of the San Juans  
PO Box 784  
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

*Voter Editor: Jill Belcovson – 805-689-2260 – [jbelcovson@gmail.com](mailto:jbelcovson@gmail.com)*