

# VOTER

## LWVSJ Happenings

**Monthly Meeting – Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026**  
**12pm – 1.30pm**  
*Friday Harbor Library & via Zoom*

**Presidential Power Under the Constitution: History,  
Limits, and the Rule of Law.**  
*With Peter Cohen*



Peter Cohen is a retired litigator with significant expertise in US Supreme Court jurisprudence. He holds a BA in political science from State University New York Buffalo, and a JD from Washington College of Law at American University. He is the author of *In the Supreme Court's Own Words: First Principles for Checking Presidential Power and Preserving the Republic*. Since his retirement on January 1, 2025, Mr. Cohen has devoted himself to the research and writing of this book. It builds on four decades of legal authorship and commitment to the rule of law, civic education, and the enduring relevance of the Constitution in preserving a republic of laws – not of men.

During his career, Mr. Cohen studied and applied hundreds of Supreme Court decisions across a wide range of legal subjects and drafted more than a thousand briefs in court cases for district and appellate courts in both state and federal judiciary. He served as an adjunct professor of law at Antonin Scalia School of Law at George Mason University. His courses covered constitutional foundations, separation of powers, due process, the rule of law, judicial review, and pivotal cases addressing presidential authority.

Motivated by growing concerns over the erosion of democratic norms, Mr. Cohen directed his legal expertise toward an accessible work that examines the Supreme Court's historic role as a constitutional check on presidential power – at a moment when the stakes for American democracy could not be higher.

**This will be a hybrid meeting. To join via Zoom:**

**<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89426674996?pwd=raJanbV21arhNDJGwPMHtCYzaaeUTQ.1>**

Meeting ID: 894 2667 4996

Passcode: 531651



## Local Lowdown with the League

**Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup> – 7pm – Friday Harbor Library** Ever wonder what’s going on around town? Now you can stay informed and involved with the library’s new monthly presentation program, Local Lowdown! Local Lowdown aims to give community organizations and public agencies the opportunity to speak about their goals and initiatives in a forum for citizens to interact and engage. The co-presidents of our

League, Susan Martin and Barbara Sharp will be at the library to share what we do, why it matters, and how you can get involved. Learn about our work to empower voters, strengthen democracy, and serve our community—and bring your questions!

**March 25: Resisting Threats to Democracy Town Hall (League members only).** Virtual, 6:30-8 pm. Register [HERE](#).

**March 28: No Kings III rally.** A date has been set for the third No Kings rally. The League believes that to protect and defend democracy, **we must show up persistently—attending rallies and protests over and over again.** Get this event on your calendar now and watch for more details and plan ahead for a rally in your community. [LEARN MORE](#) or [FIND RESOURCES](#).

**May 11<sup>th</sup> – League Annual Meeting** – watch for more details.

Join the **League of Women Voters** this **June** as we honor the spirit and promise of the **United States Declaration of Independence**. Together, we’ll reflect on the enduring principles of liberty, equality, and civic responsibility that continue to guide our work today.



### Levy Lift Passes on San Juan Island

Despite a relatively low turnout in the February 10 special election — with fewer than half of registered voters casting ballots — the school district’s levy lift was approved by a strong 74% majority of those who did vote. This approval ensures continued local funding for essential educational programs and operations that the state does not fully cover, supporting services from classroom instruction to student support and enrichment. It’s a powerful example of community support for public education here on San Juan Island — even when overall participation in off-cycle elections tends to be modest. Hopefully as other initiatives and candidate races occur we will see more island participation.



The League of Women Voters of Washington, together with volunteers from Leagues across South Puget Sound will be holding the 2026 State Council meetings in beautiful Lacey, Washington. The 2026 LWVWA Biennial Council will be held on June 6 and 7 at the [South Puget Sound Community College's Lacey Campus](#), with optional activities on Friday, June 5.

Think of Council as an Innovation Lab—a place where members and leaders come together to learn, share, and shape the future of the League. The theme for this year's Council reflects the multiple layers of the League:

- Our power as individual members and leaders to influence change in our communities,
- Our power to innovate boldly, integrating new practices into our work to empower voters and defend democracy.
- Our power in unity, standing strong in coalition with the many partners who share our vision.

You can review details and schedules at <https://secure.ngpvan.com/gSgQth1teUaxC23u63RAKA2>

If you would like to be a delegate at the Council please contact Susan Martin - [martinsf@georgetown.edu](mailto:martinsf@georgetown.edu)

## Around the League – State and National Issues

Monday, March 2, was the 50th day of the 60-day legislative session, with 10 days left until the March 12 adjournment. This past week was the cut-off for bills to be considered in policy committees of the opposite chamber. March 2 is the cut-off for bills to pass the fiscal and transportation committees. Bills from the opposite chamber must be passed on the floor by Friday, March 6, and then the rest of the session will be devoted to action on the floors of the House and Senate to reconcile the differences in content of bills that passed both chambers—including the state budget. As these cut-offs occur, the number of total bills moving through the process is diminishing.

Work on the budgets continues as the House and Senate work to achieve a single package for final adoption by March 12. Read more about the budget process and revenue issues [HERE](#)

This year there are significant challenges posed by the downturn in estimated revenue compared to the levels of service that are needed—and the reduced federal funding. This makes the Legislature's job very tough, and it is exacerbated this year by differences of opinion with the Governor over whether, and if so, what, new revenues should be adopted to reduce cuts in services that would leave our most needy residents even more vulnerable.

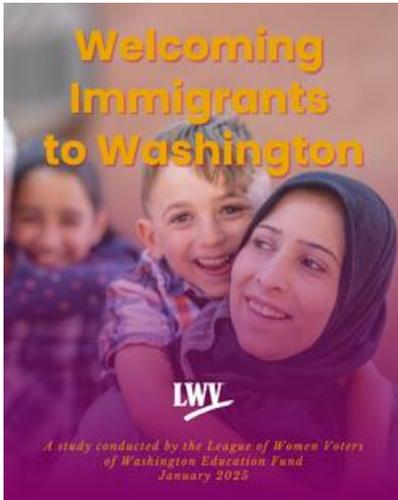
As these negotiations proceed, the Legislature will continue to process other bills, and you will continue to see requests for action in the various weekly updates. Please follow those issues of most interest to you using the issue links below. And thank you for all the times you've signed in on the legislation that League has been supporting.

### The SAVE America Act

In February, members of the House and Senate introduced new legislation with similar provisions of the SAVE Act. The most popular bill, which was immediately passed by the US House, is the [SAVE America Act or SAVE Act 2.0](#). The LWV has been actively urging Congress to **oppose the SAVE Act suite of bills**, including the SAVE Act and the **SAVE America Act**, because they would require voters to provide documentary proof of citizenship to register and/or vote — a step the League says is *unnecessary and burdensome*. The League takes a clear **anti-SAVE Act stance**, advocating against these bills and urging legislators to oppose them in order to protect and expand voter access.

The hot topic has been whether the Senate would take up the SAVE America Act and the conversation around how they would handle the filibuster around it. While the bill was not taken up last week, the majority leader did announce that it would come up. [Read this LWVUS blog post](#) to learn more.

## Protecting Immigrants: Seeking National Adoption of Washington's position



As violence escalates in Minneapolis and other parts of the country, ostensibly over the presence of immigrants in American society, the League of Women Voters of Washington is looking to empower its membership across the nation to protect the rights of all, legislatively and by way of programming.

In June, at the LWVUS 57th biennial convention in Columbus, Ohio, Washington state League leaders hope to secure national adoption of its own new policy position, "Protecting the Rights of Immigrants." If they succeed, Leagues throughout the country will have the same pathway as the Washington state League to advocate and create programs that, among other goals, seek to ensure access for immigrants to essential services, such as health and behavioral health care.

The push for national adoption of a policy position in the nonpartisan, nonprofit League takes place through a process called concurrence. Much like the run-up to a political campaign, that process involves soliciting support from other state Leagues to put the proposal in front of the full convention, which takes place June 26-28 this year. It's a labor-intensive effort for a collection of volunteers who are involved simultaneously in other advocacy and program work in their own states and communities.

Read more on this issue at

<https://lwvwa.org/The-Evergreen-Voter/13593677?nvep=&hmac=&emci=a6ade43c-2501-f111-832f-000d3a1f0e4c&emdi=ea000000-0000-0000-0000-000000000001&ceid=>



## LWVWA Op-Ed in Seattle Times Promotes People First Redistricting

"Redistricting in WA needs a redo" reads the headline atop a Seattle Times op-ed piece published Jan. 30, 2026.

Appearing under the bylines of state League President Karen Crowley and Seattle King League President Barbara Tengtio, the 400-word essay stems from testimony Crowley gave during a House State Government & Tribal Relations Committee hearing Jan. 21 on HJR 4209.

The bill, by Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon, West Seattle-D, would allow for mid-cycle redistricting in Washington. The League opposes mid-cycle districting, noting it "can all too easily be used to disenfranchise voters based on race or party affiliation."

Read the full op-ed [HERE](#).

# This Month in the Legislature

## Session Timing & Deadlines

- Lawmakers are in the final stretch of the 2026 legislative session — a compressed 60-day session that began January 12 and must end by March 12. Critical deadlines hit early March, including the “opposite-house cutoff” (last day to pass bills out of the chamber where they *didn't* originate) on March 6 at 5 p.m. After that, only budget, revenue, or session-closeout matters can move.

## Big Policy Proposals Still Active

- A **controversial income tax** on high earners (with a 9.9 % rate on income above \$1 million) is under intense negotiation. Gov. Bob Ferguson has suggested an agreement might slip into 2027 if consensus isn't reached by **March 12**.
- Action on a variety of bills — from public safety and law enforcement accountability to education funding and corrections oversight — is happening on the floor and in committee as deadlines loom.

As legislative deadlines arrive this week, **many bills are dying** in committee or failing to clear the opposite chamber, while others are being fast-tracked to try to meet cutoff dates. Floor action is intense as lawmakers try to get measures passed before the clock runs out.

With only days left in session, key decisions on major policy areas — like tax reform, supplemental budgets, law enforcement oversight, and other high-profile bills — are all being finalized. After **March 12**, the Legislature will adjourn and return to interim work and planning for potential special sessions or carry-over of unfinished business into the next year.



## Action Alerts!!

The **League of Women Voters of Washington** and the national League continue to issue important *action alerts* urging members and supporters to speak up on key democracy issues. Right now, alerts are prompting you to **contact your U.S. senators and representatives about federal voting rights legislation** — including urging opposition to bills that would add unnecessary barriers like documentary proof of citizenship — and to advocate for full representation for residents of the District of Columbia.

These alerts are a simple way to make your voice heard on issues that affect how we vote, how our elections are run, and how our democracy works. Visit the League's **Action Alerts** page to see the latest calls for advocacy and take part today! <https://lwvwa.org/action-alerts/>

## Priority actions include the following:

**SB6346 – the Millionaire’s Tax – ask your representative to vote YES.**

**Trust Land Transfer—Land conservation that wins for everyone!**

Tribes and local communities want to use the Trust Land Transfer program (TLT) to respond to the impacts of climate change and protect ecologically valuable places. The tool will reposition economically under-performing state trust land to be managed instead for its ecological and public benefits. The legislature must provide funding.

**Child Care: A Necessity for Low-Income Working Families with Young Children**

Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) is a necessity for low-income working families with young children. WCCC supports Washington’s economy by supporting economic stability for low-income working families while making it possible for parents to access safe, developmentally sound care for their children. The House budget proposal avoids capping WCCC and denying assistance to otherwise eligible working families while being more favorable to child care providers than either the Senate or Governor’s proposals.

**Budget Cut Would Wipe Out State Urban Forestry Program**

The House operating budget would zero out funding for the Washington State Urban and Community Forestry Program (UCF) in the state’s Department of Natural Resources. All programs will be eliminated with impacts rippling down to city and county governments that rely on state support to access federal dollars to maintain their urban canopy. It’s not a reduction. It’s an elimination of the program. Federal funds pass through to communities to support executed agreements, and cutting this program would call into question the future of those executed projects.

[See All Action Alerts](#)

**Meeting Dates 2026**

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
August 3 <i>Board Retreat</i>	Summer Break <i>San Juan County Fair</i>

*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>
	Observer Corps		
Robbie Lawson	Roster/Membership	360-378-5513	<a href="mailto:robbie@rockisland.com">robbie@rockisland.com</a>
XXXX	Secretary		

<b>Members-at-Large</b>			
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Jill Belcovson	The Voter/Observer Corps – Port of FH	805-689-2260	<a href="mailto:jbelcovson@gmail.com">jbelcovson@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)***