

# The Anchorage VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ANCHORAGE  
PO Box 101345  
Anchorage, AK 99510-1345  
907-274-8477

August 2017

Joyce Anderson, President

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Joyce Anderson
Vice-President	Cari Zawodny
Secretary	Margaret McDonagh
Treasurer	Tina DeLapp
Directors	
	Keri Clark
	Carol Dickason
	Diane Mathisen
	Beth Nordlund
	Shirley Pittz
	Pat Redmond
	Schawna Toma

Email:

[league@lwvanchorage.org](mailto:league@lwvanchorage.org)

Visit us at:

[www.lwvanchorage.org](http://www.lwvanchorage.org)

For Alaska information:

[www.lwvalaska.org](http://www.lwvalaska.org)

For National information:

[www.lwv.org](http://www.lwv.org)

## NEW AND EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS

The Anchorage board has been working on several projects:

- ◆ Updating Position Responsibilities and Procedures
- ◆ Preparing a Yearly Calendar
- ◆ Creating a New Website
- ◆ Allowing for On-line Payment of Dues and Contributions
- ◆ Archiving of Records
- ◆ Adding a Program Committee (develop a long-term plan for activities/projects)
- ◆ Expanding the Membership Committee

Hi League Members:

As we have indicated in previous mailings, no League activities are planned for the summer months.

I hope you are enjoying a variety of outdoor activities with family, friends and visitors. Our weather has been somewhat accommodating with both sun and some rain. I have had several first-time visitors this summer and they are awed at the vastness of our state and its beauty.

The theme of this newsletter is **BE INFORMED.**

**Become active and be involved!**

Joyce Anderson, President



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

If you are interested in serving on the newly formed Program Committee or the Membership Committee, give Shirley Pittz a call at 727-9549.

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Any person 16 years of age and older, male or female, may become a League member.



# **Alaska Elections – Review of Current Voting System**

The State of Alaska Division of Elections is responsible for all core election related services:

- ♦ Voter registration activities for the State of Alaska;
- ♦ Administration and oversight of statewide and federal elections;
- ♦ Oversight and administration of the petition process for initiative, recall, and referendum petitions for questions placed on state ballots.

Alaska's voting equipment and ballot tabulation system is almost 20 years old. Preliminary estimates of replacement is over \$6 million. 2017, a non-election year, is a year the State will have an opportunity to focus on the challenges in the administration of elections. Lt. Governor Byron Mallott therefore created the Election Policy Work Group.

The Work Group will review current election fiscal and policy challenges, create dialogue on topics that include voting technology, administration of elections, help identify potential cost savings measures, and make recommendations on fiscal and policy related issues.

Josie Bahnke, Elections Division Director, will facilitate the group. Joining the group is Executive Director of the Center for Innovation and Research, David Becker, and Electronic Information Registration Center Executive Director John Lindbeck. Twenty-two additional members were asked to join including city/borough Clerks, former Lt. Governor's, First Alaskans Institute, Get Out the Native Vote, AFN, ANCSA, Alaska AFL-CIO, DCRA Language Preservation Council, League of Women Voters, Tanana Chiefs, US Civil Rights Commission, an Alaska Senator, an Alaska Representative, and the Attorney General's Office. (Joyce Anderson, President LWV Anchorage, is representing the Anchorage League.)

Four meetings have been held. Discussions have been informative and educational, as well as insightful and focused, on all aspects of the election process and alternate voting methods. Additional meetings are to be scheduled. Strategies for securing funding and changes to statutory language will also be explored.

The Division of Elections has prepared two documents:

2017 Fiscal & Policy Challenges – Decide Alaska's Future

<http://www.elections.alaska.gov/doc/info/Fiscal%20Challenges.pdf>

Exploring Alternative Voting Methods

<http://www.elections.alaska.gov/doc/info/Exploring%20Alternative%20Voting%20Methods.pdf>

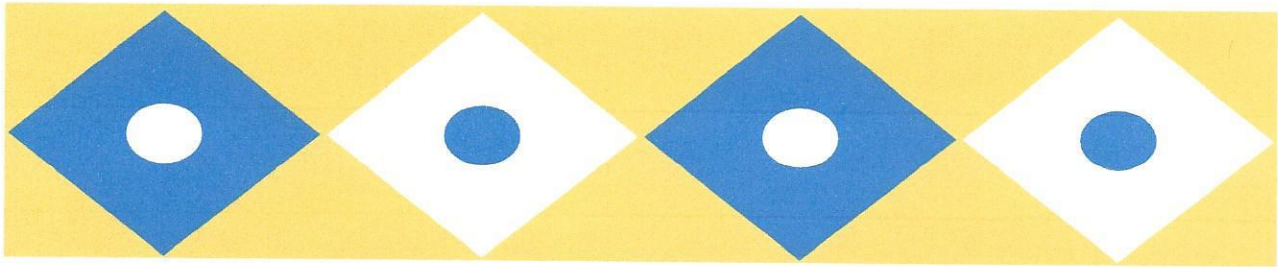
These documents will provide information on current voting practices/methods as well as possible alternate voting methods. Please take a few minutes to look over the material.

The State's long-term goal is to have an alternate voting system in place for the 2020 state/federal elections. Due to the unique challenges presented by Alaska's geography and population that are not present in other states, an alternative voting system may involve a hybrid of several systems. Currently, the group is reviewing other states that have moved to a Vote-By-Mail voting system. The group will also be closely observing the April 2018 Municipality of Anchorage election which is scheduled to be conducted by mail.

If you have any comments, questions, concerns, give Joyce Anderson a call at 907-360-7674. Or, you may directly contact Josie Bahnke, State Division of Elections Director, at 907-465-4611.

***Remember: Your input is important.***





## **JOHNSON AMENDMENT—501(c)(3) Status and Campaigning**

On April 5, the National League of Women Voters, along with 85 national organizations, sent letters to President Trump and Congress supporting the preservation of the Johnson Amendment which is a ban on political campaign intervention by 501(c)(3) organizations. The Johnson Amendment has been in place for more than 60 years. The ban has helped maintain the integrity and autonomy of our religious and charitable sectors and preserved the boundary separating church and state. The ban has guaranteed that Americans' charitable giving will not be channeled into political campaigns but used for universally valued purposes addressing basic human and social needs.

The League opposes recent proposals — H.R. 172, H.R. 781, and S. 264 – that would politicize the charitable nonprofit and philanthropic community by repealing or weakening current federal tax law protections that prohibit 501(c)(3) organizations from endorsing, opposing, or contributing to political candidates. See link for additional information: <https://lwv.org/content/league-urges-preservation-johnson-amendment>

*If you feel strongly about this issue, please contact U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski (202) 224-6665, U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan (202) 224-3004 or U.S. Representative Don Young (202) 225-5765 and voice your opposition to repeal or weaken the Johnson amendment.*



## **2018 Municipality of Anchorage Vote-By-Mail Election**

## **Update**



The goals of a Vote-By-Mail election, supplemented by accessible voting centers, are to increase voter turnout, maximize voter protection, and centralize and streamline election administration. To accomplish this goal, Anchorage has purchased:

- ◆ Signature Verification equipment which can compare voter signatures to an official voter signature on file to capture fraud attempts;
- ◆ Election Management System which creates the different ballot styles required for each area, allows voters to track the status of their ballots at identified points throughout the verification process, and also records other phases of the election;
- ◆ Centralized Ballot Tabulation System which protects the secrecy of the ballot, tabulates ballots in a timely and efficient manner, and provides an audit trail;
- ◆ Ballot Mailing and Sorting machine which modernizes the mailing process.





## Election Integrity Commission Request for Voter Records

UPDATE

**Register**

★★★to★★★

**VOTE**

On July 24, 2017, Washington-based U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly issued a decision stating the Election Integrity Commission (EIC) may request voter roll data from U.S. states. The ruling indicated there was no grounds for an injunction in part because the collection of data by the EIC was not technically an action by a government agency so was not bound by laws that govern what such entities can do. The ruling also pointed out that the EIC was an advisory body and therefore does not have legal authority to compel states to hand over the data. The decision has been appealed.

The lawsuit was filed by the Electronic Privacy Information Center (EPIC) which subsequently stated the EIC's efforts should not escape judicial review and adding they will be closely watching the EIC's next step.

EIC officials have said 30 states have agreed to share at least some data, publicly available data. Some states leaders expressed objections saying the effort could reveal personal information, suppress voter participation and encroach on states' oversight of voting laws. Chris Carson, LWVUS president, was advised thousands of voters have cancelled their registration because they do not want their personal information released. Data requested by the EIC of more than 150 million registered voters included names, the last four digits of social security numbers, addresses, birth dates, political affiliation, active/inactive status, cancelled status, military status, overseas citizen information, information regarding voter registration in another state, felony convictions and voting histories. The State of Alaska is permitted by statute to only provide the following information: name, address, party affiliation and last ten years of voting history.

U.S. District Judge Royce C. Lamberth of the District of Columbia later denied an emergency motion by Common Cause. The group alleged the request for voting history and political party affiliation violates a Watergate-era law that prohibits the government from gathering information about how Americans exercise their First Amendment rights. Common Cause argued the EIC's request is substantively unlawful not merely procedurally flawed.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a separate lawsuit to ensure open government laws are followed. Six other lawsuits have been filed as well. The League joined a lawsuit in Indiana objecting to the release of personal voter information.

\*\*\*\*\*



## 2020 Census Concerns

Census Begins April 1, 2020

The Decennial Census is one of the most important statistical tools available to Americans. It provides a snapshot of our present and helps us plan our future. The census is also used for congressional reapportionment and redistricting along with determining how tens of thousands of dollars in federal aid are divided up.

The Government Accountability Office put the 2020 census on its list of high-risk projects earlier this year, due to uncertainty about its budget and technology, and Americans' increasing distrust of government data collection (See article on the Election Integrity Commission and voter data.). Congress' mandate for the 2020 Census to cost no more than the 2010 one is unrealistic.

The census count usually requires a massive ramp-up in spending in the years immediately preceding it, which involves extensive testing, hiring and publicity. The Census Bureau said, in preliminary budget estimates for FY 2018, they would need an additional \$300+ million to fund an extensive End-to-End field test of 700,000 targeted households in rural West Virginia, Urban Providence, Rhode Island, and suburban Washington state. The field test was intended to test a new IT-focused census and to test internal census-counting techniques for the first time in an extensive setting. Now, because of budget cuts, the Census Bureau is dropping the West Virginia and Washington state test sites.

**Watch for Action Alerts with updates on these very important issues.**