



The Anchorage VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ANCHORAGE
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February 2021

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Hi League Members:

February is here and soon it will be March.
Does that mean spring is soon to be here???
Let's hope so.



NEWS UPDATE

Election Cycle: We are again in an election cycle. The Anchorage Municipal election is Tuesday, April 6th. This newsletter contains pertinent information for voters.

Alaska Legislature: The Alaska Legislature is also in session and there are several election bills that have been introduced as well other important legislation asking for changes to current practice. The League will be commenting on several pieces of legislation. Check the newsletter for updates.

POINT OF INFORMATION

- ⇒ In the United States, individual states decide how and when to register voters, which has often led to confusion. Just 13 states allow voter registration on Election Day. Alaska is NOT one of them!
- ⇒ Oregon is the first and only state in the United States to use automatic voter registration.
- ⇒ Some countries, such as India, Greece, Ukraine, and Colombia, have a "None of the Above" option on their election ballots. In the United States, only Nevada offers a "None of These Candidates" option.
- ⇒ Up until 2012, it was illegal in South Carolina to buy alcohol on Election Day.
- ⇒ It wasn't until the 1890s that secret ballots became commonly used in America.
- ⇒ The United States trails most developed nations in voter participation.
- ⇒ Approximately 64% of the United States' voting-age population is registered to vote, compared to 91% in Canada and the United Kingdom, 96% in Sweden, and nearly 99% in Japan.

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.

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE (MOA) ELECTION INFORMATION

Tuesday, April 6, 2021

IMPORTANT DATES

Last to Register to Vote	Sun, March 7
<u>Ballot Review</u> pamphlet mailed to all MOA households	Wed, March 10
Ballot Packages mailed to registered voters	Mon, March 15
MOA Election Day	Tues, April 6
Last acceptable postmark date for mailed ballots	
Last date for accepting mailed ballots for counting	Fri, April 16

- ◆ Check MOA election website [Elections \(muni.org\)](http://Elections(muni.org)) for additional election information.
- ◆ Check your voter registration status Alaska My Voter Information

ELECTION CENTER TOURS

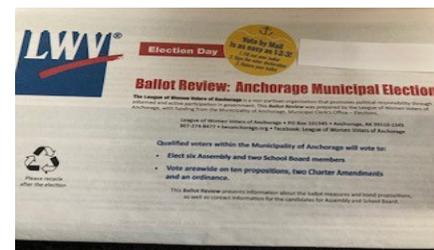
Tours of the MOA Election Center are being offered. Each tour is limited to six people to allow for social distancing. Registration is required. Face masks must be worn properly at all times during the tour. Please call 243-VOTE (8683) to sign up!

Tuesday, March 2	5:30 p.m.	Tuesday, March 9	5:30 p.m.
Thursday, March 4	5:30 p.m.	Thursday, March 11	5:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 6	10:30 a.m.	Saturday, March 13	10:30 a.m.

- ◆ Please Note: There is also a virtual four-minute tour available on Facebook at: [\(4\) Watch | Facebook](#)

Ballot Review Voter Guide **Virtual Presentation**

Tuesday, March 16th, at 6:30 p.m.



Learn about candidates, ballot issues, pertinent voting information and general election information.

This is a first time endeavor for us. Your comments are welcomed.

Registration information will be sent the week of March 8th.

The **Ballot Review** is published each year (with funding from the MOA, Municipal Clerk's Office Elections) as an informational pamphlet for the Anchorage Municipal Election. The pamphlet is prepared by LWV Anchorage members.

*This is the fourth year Anchorage will conduct municipal elections **By Mail.***

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Alaska Legislature is currently in session and has finally organized. One of the benefits of being a League member is Caren Robinson's weekly "Capitol Currents" with information about the organization of the legislature, scheduled hearings of particular interest to League members, highlights of the previous week, the Governor's Corner, and general items of interest. If you are not receiving the update, please contact Carol at caroldickson@gci.net

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY: The LWVAK will be testifying on many of the pending pieces of legislation. Please consider being our "eyes and ears" for a piece of legislation by following and reporting on the status and testimony. If you are interested in this opportunity, please contact LWVAK President Judy Andree at jagster42@gmail.com or 907-321-1559 for more info.

LEGISLATION - VOTING AND ELECTIONS **Your Input Needed**

SB 39, [Alaska State Legislature \(akleg.gov\)](http://akleg.gov) sponsored by Senator Mike Shower, would undo the automatic voter registration via the PFD application. The bill would require the applicant to "op in" to be a registered voter versus the "op out" option currently in place. We should do all we can to make sure eligible citizens are registered to vote. The League's main mission is to advance all options available for citizens to register to vote. HB 23, sponsored by Representative George Rauscher, also contains this language.

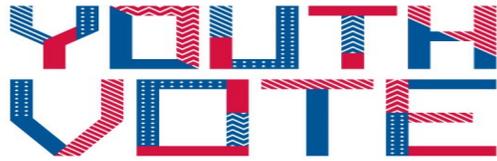
SB 39 takes away the right of municipalities to conduct an election by mail "unless the voter affirmatively requests to vote by mail in that election." The Municipality of Anchorage along with numerous other municipalities already conduct their elections by mail. There has been a significant monetary outlay for voting equipment and other election supplies. The most important result of voting by mail has been an increase in voter participation in each municipality. Active participation in government is an essential element to an informed citizenry.

SB 39 does have some good points - creating a system of tracking and accounting for ballots; establishing an election offense hot line; designating as a class A misdemeanor the collection of ballots from other voters; designating as a class C felony the intentional opening or tampering with a sealed ballot, certificate, or package of ballots without authorization from the director of elections.

SB 14, [Alaska State Legislature \(akleg.gov\)](http://akleg.gov) sponsored by Senator Mike Shower, would change the selection and retention of judicial officers for the court of appeals and the district court and of magistrates. The legislation would allow the governor to appoint judges and magistrates with the legislature confirming the appointments. Currently judges are vetted by the Judicial Council and the Governor selects from a list of two or more nominees. Magistrates serve at the discretion of the Chief Justice. This process has been heralded by other states as the best nonpartisan way to select judges. The League has long been a strong supporter of the current system because it is merit-based, transparent and representative of and responsive to the public. View the State of Alaska position on Judicial Appointment. [Position 18 Alaska Judiciary \(1\).pdf](#)

NOTE: When you write your elected state officials, you should write as an individual. Remember to clearly state your reasons for support or opposition to the legislation, whether it be the entire bill or only certain sections.

- ◆ ***The LWVAK responds to state legislation expressing the League's view on state issues.***
- ◆ ***The LWV Anchorage will be responding to SB 39 in relation to municipal elections conducted by mail.***



Youth Vote has been busy

The LWVAK has commissioned YV to create a 30-60 second video focusing on the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment) and the VRAA (Voter Rights Advancement Act). The script was approved by the LWVAK, graphics have been created and voice over recording is complete. ATMI (Alaska Teen Media Institute) has the project and a draft is anticipated soon.

YV received a \$5,000 Youth Matter Grant from the Anchorage Youth Development coalition for "Youth Voter Education" - the project will focus on amplifying youth voice in events leading up to the municipal election, producing information to assist young voters in the municipal election, education on gerrymandering and the importance of fair maps for voting districts, and a video project that explains how we conduct free and fair elections in our state.

Municipal Election Involvement

- ◆ YV and several other youth serving organizations are planning Youth Ask! A Youth-Led School Board Candidate Forum which will stream live on Thursday, March 18th at 7:00 p.m. More information about the viewing platform and candidate participation to follow in the March newsletter.
- ◆ YV has submitted questions for two Mayoral Forums and will read their questions live for the Alaska Children's Trust Mayoral Forum on Thursday, February 25th at 7pm. The event will stream live on Facebook from the Alaska Children's Trust Facebook page.
- ◆ YV members created videos sharing their views on the importance of Anchorage's outdoor spaces.

The IBPA (International Bullying Prevention Association) sent a \$1000 "honorarium" for YV's work on the IBPA webinar and a "Bullying Prevention Tip Sheet." WHAT AN HONOR!!

YouthLINK. February is "Connection" month and will focus on ways young people can connect locally to youth-serving organizations and opportunities. YV has been asked to give a presentation to AYDC (Anchorage Youth Development coalition) about Youth LINK at their March 8th meeting.

Anchorage Youth Vote - In their own words

From Spirit of Youth News, Winter 2021, by Bethany

"It was wonderful to be part of all the activities Youth Vote did this election season. We sent in questions to the candidates from youth in our community, created a mock election, and then made this information available to everyone. The process of going through and sending the questions from youth in our community was interesting, as it demonstrated how much youth care and want to know about candidates.

From my perspective, going through this for the first time, I found that all of Youth Vote was dedicated to ensuring that input from youth was incorporated in some way. The mock election showed the eagerness youth have to be a part of the election.

Personally, I appreciate YouthLINK because I know the information you find on Facebook and Instagram is chosen specifically for the benefit of youth, and by those who care about the well-being of youth. Through YouthLINK we hope to provide a place where youth can go to find information that will lead to success."



What can we do to reduce emissions, save money and the planet?

SERIES EXPLORING LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO THE CLIMATE CRISIS

This four-part virtual series discusses sectors found in the Muni’s Climate Action Plan and how we can work together to reach the goals for reducing emissions.

Registration and additional resources, including confirmed panelists, please visit: [Alaska Common Ground \(akcommonground.org\)](http://Alaska Common Ground (akcommonground.org)) and [Alaska Common Ground | Facebook](#)

Second discussion in the series is:



Thursday, February 25th from 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on **Land Use and Transportation**. Transportation systems and land-use practice are synergistically connected. The four-person panel will discuss electric vehicles and charging stations, biking and walkability in neighborhoods, public transit, land use and tax incentives.

Co-sponsored and partnered by: The Alaska Center, Alaska Conservation Foundation, Clean Waste/Healthy Salmon Initiator, Municipality of Anchorage Solid Waste Services, Renewable Independent Power Producers, LWV Anchorage, REAP, UAA/APU Books of the Year and Anchorage Public Library.



Website Input Needed

We are in the process of updating our website. If you have ideas about content or format, please contact Shirley 727-9549. Our goal is to have a one-stop shopping site for League information on the local, state and national level. We thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Assembly Watch/Observers Needed

There are important things happening in our Municipality every day. Our Anchorage Assembly is discussing important ideas and potential changes that could have a real impact on our lives in our community. We need **YOU** – our members – to help us know what is going on in our community. Sign up to do Assembly Watch! Be our “eyes and ears” by attending Assembly meetings either in-person or virtually. A short recap of the current issues/suggested changes discussed at the Assembly meeting would be the next step. This can be accomplished by contacting a board member or providing a short recap at one of our monthly board meetings.

If you are interested, contact Shirley at 727-9549 or email at spittz@gci.net for more information.

Are You Interested in Serving on the LWV Anchorage Board

We need **YOU!** Consider adding your name to the slate of officers for FY 2021-2022. Your input and expertise will add to the vitality of our League in addition to generating lively discussions at board meetings. If you are interested serving on the board and would like more information, please contact Joyce Anderson, at 360-7674 or send an email to joycejimalaska@gci.net. Our annual meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 4th.

Serving on the LWV Board is a good opportunity to learn more about League and become more involved in your community!