



# The Anchorage VOTER

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

**August 2020**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	Vacant
Vice-President	Cari Zawodny
Secretary	Carol Dickason
Treasurer	Tina DeLapp
<b>Directors</b>	
Editor	Joyce Anderson
Program Com	Jasmine Carter
	Keri Clark
	Margaret McDonagh
Program Com	Beth Nordlund
Program Com	Shirley Pittz
	Pat Redmond
Program Com	Schawna Thoma

Email:

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

Visit us at:

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

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/LWVAnchorage](https://www.facebook.com/LWVAnchorage)

For Alaska information:

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

For National information:

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

Hi League Members:

**Take care of yourselves. Stay safe, stay healthy, wear masks, and VOTE.**

The Primary Election turnout was only 22.70%; 133,569 voted out of 588,341 registered. This was an increase compared to previous Primary Elections but it is still a dismal turnout.

Let's encourage family, friends, and neighbors to **VOTE** in the **General Election**. You have three options:

1. Vote by mail by requesting an Absentee Ballot;
2. Vote at an Accessible Early Voting Site during the two weeks prior to Election Day, or;
3. Vote In-Person on Tuesday, November 3, at your Polling Place.

The Division of Elections web site provides the information necessary to vote by any of the options listed above. Visit: <http://www.elections.alaska.gov>

Fall is here! The leaves are falling and of course we have the rain and dropping temperatures.

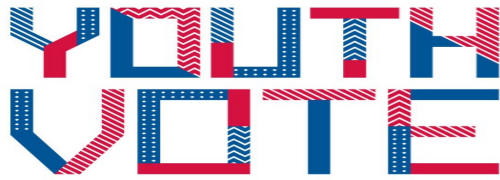


## LWVUS Statement

We continue to see voter suppression 100 years after the passage of the 19th Amendment – not in the form of poll taxes or literacy tests, but with misinformation campaigns, discouraging rhetoric that casts doubt on our great democracy or questions our country's election integrity. We must rise above this, continue our work, and motivate others to action. The League is fighting in the courts to protect voting access at the ballot box and the mailbox, and we have won voting rights victories that expand access in nine states so far. We also filed a lawsuit against the Postmaster General and the U.S. Postal Service asserting that recent changes to postal service procedures and equipment presents an undue burden on the fundamental right to vote.

And we are countering the misinformation by making sure millions of voters can access our nonpartisan voter guides and confirm election information on our award-winning election website, [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org).

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.



## **YOUTH VOTE MEMBERSHIP UPDATE**

Youth Vote welcomed four new members this month - here is what some of these enthusiastic young people have to say:

“When I joined Youth Vote I wasn't sure what to expect, but after the first meeting I realized that so much work is being done to make sure youth voices are heard by help from the members and leader. And now I know that through the diligence of all involved in youth vote, the work put in will really make a difference for the better of our community.”

- *Bethany, Bartlett High School and UAA Middle College*

“Another thing that was super cool was how amazing the youth members in Youth Vote are! I love how everyone knows each other and are super nice. A lot of groups I've joined don't really seem to want to include every single person and I feel like the people at Youth Vote truly care about each other.”

- *Lillian, West High School*

“I'd worked with Youth Vote and made friends with a lot of the members for close to two years before joining, I don't know why I waited that long! Everyone in Youth Vote is so passionate about what they do, and I'm super excited to start being a part of it!”

-*Taylor, Dimond High School*

---

## **Friday, September 11, and Saturday, September 12, 2020 Virtual Service Summit The Youth Needs, Your Action!**

**SAVE THE DATES—MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW**

In honor of 9/11 Day of Service, Americans across the country are called to volunteer in their local communities. You can support our community through this virtual service experience. Register to get the complete list of youth-led service projects, workshops, keynote presentations and even provide entertainment..

This event is for youth & adults, Please save the date - there may be a session or two that will speak to you, Youth Vote members will be hosting at least 5 sessions - one workshop and 4 (or more) service projects.

The Youth Needs, Your Action! Virtual Service Summit is designed to connect people and improve our communities safely and conveniently - from your home. Virtual events will take place the evening of 9/11 and from 11am - 4pm (AK Time) on 9/12. Sessions range from 30 minutes to an hour. Please plan to register and attend at least one session. (*Contact information to follow.*)

LWV members from across the state, as well as their friends, are welcome to participate. Feel free to forward. Thank you.

# 3<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL UAA DEMOCRACY & CIVIC ACTION WEEK



For the third consecutive year, the Anchorage LWV is providing prizes for the High School and College Division winners of the Essay Contest.

Entrants have been asked to speak to the following questions in their essays: 1) What are the vital signs of a healthy democracy? And 2) How can citizens support a system that grants people the power to shape their own futures?

Included on the Community Panel of Judges is Cari Zawodny, VP of the Anchorage League. Winners will receive their prizes at the Awards Ceremony at 6 pm on September 18 via ZOOM. The winning essays will be published in an upcoming issue of the *Anchorage Voter*.

Students in the Municipality of Anchorage who are enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private or home study programs are eligible to participate as are UAA students enrolled in a minimum of 6 credits. If you know an eligible potential essayist, additional information is available from Jackie Cason @ [jecason@alaska.edu](mailto:jecason@alaska.edu); the submission deadline is September 10, 2020.

## VOTER REGISTRATION ACTIVITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC



COVID 19 has derailed many of the usual voter registration activities of the Anchorage LWV. Naturalization ceremonies over much of the spring and all of the summer were cancelled; presumably, none will be held this fall. Visits to local high schools to register age-eligible students are unlikely given limits imposed by the ongoing pandemic-related precautions.

In an effort to ensure that high school students have current information about how to get registered to vote and how to exercise their voting rights this fall, a Voter Information Guide, suitable for posting, is being prepared for distribution to high school government teachers. In addition, students will be provided with information about how to maintain their eligibility to vote in future Alaska elections as well as for the PFD should they attend college out of Alaska!

As the pandemic gradually resolves, we look forward to resuming our traditional Voter Registration activities in local high schools and at Naturalization ceremonies.



Thursday, September 17, 2020
Zoom Meeting, 7:00 p.m.
Judicial Appointment and Retention Overview

SAVE THE DATE—MORE INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

Judge Bud Carpenetti and Susanne DePietro (staff to the Judicial Commission) will provide an overview of Judicial Appointments and Retention. LWV members from across the state, as well as their friends, are welcome to participate. Zoom arrangements are being made.

ALASKA SECURITY IN THE AGE OF CODID-19
Free On-Line Program, Thursday, September 3rd
Election Cybersecurity Initiative

League of Women Voters members are invited to join a free online program on Alaska election security in the age of Covid-19 on Thursday morning, September 3rd, at 10:30 a.m. your time.

Details are at https://uscAlaska.eventbrite.com - RSVP to this email address and Zoom Login Information will be Provided.

- 10:30 am Opening Remarks
10:40 am Session One: Cybersafety
11:15 am Session Two: Disinformation and Misinformation
11:45 am Thought Leadership Panel
12:10 pm Session Three: Crisis Communication
12:45 pm Adjourn

You may have heard already from our state media partner, public radio KTOO, and our national media partner the Associated Press. Speakers from around Alaska and from USC in Los Angeles will be featured. LWV leaders and members have participated in our workshops this year in many states, and we hope the League will be well represented in Alaska.

You may have seen us on CBS News (see https://cbsn.ws/2XUMPWf), and you can see more about us in the Washington Post, most recently at https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/powerpost/paloma/the-cybersecurity-202/2020/05/08/the-cybersecurity-202-coronavirus-has-upended-election-security-training-with-just-months-before-november/5eb463a1602ff11bb1177587/

Adam Clayton Powell III, Executive Director, Election Cybersecurity Initiative
USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy, University of Southern CA

\*\*\*\*\*

Have You Completed Your 2020 U. S. Census?



LWV Anchorage Youth Vote has created a Census PSA. The PSA is informational and at the same time entertaining. Click on the link: https://vimeo.com/453455144

Encourage your Family, Neighbors and Friends to COMPLETE their Census and view the PSA. Accurate Census information is crucial for the next ten years in relation to planning and distribution of funds as well as congressional redistricting. Contact 844-330-2020 if you have questions or need help completing your census. Say YES to Census!

# The League of Women Voters of Alaska has been busy:

## Outreach:

LWVUS grants have funded radio spots started running about July 20 and included mention of [votingrightsalaska.org](http://votingrightsalaska.org) where information of the ERA and John Lewis VRA (VRAA) can be found.

We are investigating the production of bumper stickers for at least the ERA and car signs for those who don't like bumper stickers.

We also posted the results of the LWVAK Voter's Guide for the primary election on the [lwvalaska.org](http://lwvalaska.org) site. In addition, we posted the Voter's Guide message on FB and received 5600 reaches and a good number of shares.

We are planning a Voter's Guide for the general election in which we will ask each candidate who responded to the first Guide if they would like to add to or change their initial responses as well as re-invite those who did not respond initially if they would like to do so now if they happen to win the primary.

We continue to work with Pat Race on social media material which is nearing completion.

**Alaskans for Better Elections:** No position taken yet. We have a Zoom meeting with a representative from Sightline, a non-partisan policy organization that happens to strongly support Ballot Measure #2. We do need to determine soon whether we want to support this or not.

We have joined an **ACLU lawsuit against the Division of Elections** on the issue of requiring a witness signature on Absentee Ballots (to be filed).

#####

## Don't forget to check out:

### Alaska State Museum on-line exhibit, ALASKA'S SUFFRAGE STAR

The effort by Alaskan women to obtain the Right to Vote during the 1910-1920 era.

Click on this link: <https://lam.alaska.gov/suffrage-star>

#####



We would like to thank our Program Committee and Youth Vote Coordinator for all their effort in planning various events and creating resources this year for the 100th Anniversary of Women receiving the Right to Vote, the U.S. Census and of course activities relating to a State/Presidential Election Year. The year has been unique considering the COVID-19 pandemic which has created a variety of considerations and issues for holding the events and planning meetings. We have all learned how to use Zoom!! Additionally, thank you to the LWV Anchorage board members for their assistance in these endeavors.

#### Program Committee Members;

Shirley Pittz, Schawna Thoma, Beth Nordlund, Jasmine Carter

Youth Vote Coordinator: Cari Zawodny



# ALASKA COMMON GROUND

## ALASKA'S FISCAL FUTURE: Goal, Problem, and Options

**THE GOAL:** We want Alaska to be a place where all people have an opportunity to thrive, our children will choose to live, existing businesses will flourish, new enterprises are started, poverty is reduced, and the environment is protected. To achieve this, we need quality services provided by the State of Alaska, including decent education, transportation, public safety, justice, and more.

**THE PROBLEM:** In the spring of 2021, amidst the severe economic downturn caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Alaska Legislature will face the biggest budget crisis in the state's history.

***Reserves Depleted***—Although the State of Alaska's spending has fallen by 43 percent in the past eight years, years of deficit spending have drained reserves used to cover budget shortfalls. The State of Alaska depleted its remaining emergency reserve—the Constitutional Budget Reserve (CBR)—to such a low level that the Alaska Legislative Finance Division has predicted it is unlikely that the CBR will have sufficient cash to cover appropriations beyond Fiscal Year 2021, the current fiscal year.

***Unsustainable Deficits***—Even with the traditional budget kept flat and without paying a Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD), next spring's Legislature faces a budget deficit of about \$270 million for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2021. This figure is likely to increase due to lower revenues and higher expenditures caused by the pandemic. If PFDs were paid based on the original formula adopted in the 1980s, the State would have a budget deficit of over \$2 billion each year forward. With or without a PFD, balancing the State's budget will require either a new source of revenue or budget cuts far surpassing those that were initially proposed last year by the Governor.

**POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:** The size of the State of Alaska's budget deficit and the lack of reserves means that some combination of the following will be needed.

***Continued spending from the Permanent Fund Earnings Reserve Account (Earnings Reserve)***. The Earnings Reserve is the portion of the Permanent Fund that receives earnings from the Fund. For the last three fiscal years the Earnings Reserve has been used to pay for the State of Alaska's outlays—including the PFD—and is providing more than 70 percent of the revenues for the budget this year. The PFD has been the State's largest program except for K-12 education. State budget experts agree that continued spending from the Earnings Reserve within the limits of current state law is sustainable. However, overdrawing from the Earnings Reserve beyond the limit set out in current law would significantly reduce the State's ability to use the Earnings Reserve to help balance the budget and pay Dividends in the future.

***Raising oil taxes***. Oil was the primary source of state government revenue from the mid-1970s until the past few years, but the peak of Alaska's oil production has passed while the price of oil has dropped well below previous highs. The oil tax initiative by itself, if approved, would not raise enough money to cover the current level of government services, but it would help. Regardless of the initiative, the Legislature could also address changes to oil taxes.

***Instituting broad-based taxes such as an income or sales tax***. Alaska is the only state in the country that has no form of broad-based tax. An income or sales tax adopted in 2021 would not generate revenue until 2022 at the earliest.

A ***state income tax*** financed much of the State's budget (Unrestricted General Fund - UGF) before the arrival of revenues from the North Slope. For most of that time, the state's income tax was based on a percentage of the federal income tax. If the same system were reinstated, those who pay no federal tax would pay no state tax, and those who do pay federal taxes would pay state taxes on a sliding scale. Those who earn money in Alaska but live elsewhere would also pay taxes on Alaska-earned income. In 2017 the House of Representatives passed an income tax proposal that was estimated to yield \$700 million per year when fully implemented, but the proposal failed to pass the Senate.

A **statewide sales tax** could be structured to raise as much as an income tax. To many this seems preferable to an income tax because individuals control their spending. But sales taxes hit those with the least income the hardest. In incorporated areas that currently have a sales tax, a statewide tax would impose a second layer of taxation of sales.

***Drastically cutting spending on services provided by the State of Alaska.*** As stated in the problem summary above, even a zero-PFD budget that keeps spending on traditional services flat leaves a deficit of about \$270 million for the next fiscal year alone. With savings in the reserves gone and revenues expected to grow slowly, the deficits are expected to get larger over time. Closing that deficit by relying on budget reductions would have significant negative impacts on schools, the University of Alaska, public safety, highways, ferries, the courts, health care, social services, and more. Alaska would become a less attractive place to live and do business, and people would leave, severely hurting the state economy.

***Diversify and expand the state's economy.*** This is a long-term proposition. Economic growth and diversification require an educated and trained workforce, and for that a strong University of Alaska is particularly important. The lack of a broad-based source of tax revenue cripples Alaska's ability to provide the additional schools, transportation, public safety, and other services from the State that are required by population increases that accompany new development. New resource development (including mining) does not generate anywhere near the amount of revenue as oil, which has a very different set of economic factors.

***Obtaining more federal grant funding.*** Federal grants related to COVID-19 relief would likely be one-time funding and thus a short-term fix for Alaska's fiscal crisis. Depending on the amount and allowed uses of federal COVID-19 relief funding, this could provide a partial fix short term. Federal grants are for specific purposes and probably would not cover most of Alaska's operating costs. Most federal grants require a matching share from the state.

***Borrowing from the federal government, banks, or other lenders.*** Borrowing is traditionally used for capital improvements such as transportation facilities, school buildings, and other structural development or repair. Alaska has a backlog of capital projects and often such spending stimulates a lagging economy. Borrowing for operating expenses, however, is merely making future generations pay for services we receive today and adds to the State's long-term debt. Without measures that improve the State's credit rating, any borrowing would be costly.

***Using money from the Permanent Fund principal.*** The Permanent Fund was meant to turn Alaska's depletable short-term oil wealth into a legacy for future generations. Spending from the Permanent Fund principal defeats that purpose. The principal of the Permanent Fund cannot be spent without an amendment to the Alaska Constitution, which would require a majority of Alaskans voting "Yes."

## **Alaska Common Ground** **Alaska's Fiscal Future Presentations**

*Mark the Dates – More Information in the next Newsletter*  
*LWV Anchorage is co-sponsoring these presentations.*

*Tuesday, October 6*  
*7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.*

***Ballot Proposition #1–Alaska's Oil Tax***

*Wednesday, October 14*  
*7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.*

***Ballot Proposition #2–Better Elections***