



The Anchorage VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ANCHORAGE
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October 2021

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Dear League Members:



We hope everyone had a fantastic summer!! The weather sure was accommodating. Outdoor activities provided a respite from being indoors due to COVID and cold weather. However, fall is here to stay. Enjoy!!



Municipal Clerk's Office reminds Anchorage Assembly District 4 (Midtown) voters to get Vote Ready!

Approximately 36,209 ballot packages were mailed Monday, October 4, to qualified registered voters in Assembly District 4 for the October 26, 2021 Special Election called following the certification of the petition to recall Assembly Member Meg Zaletel.

Voters in District 4 can anticipate receiving their ballot package in the mail by Monday, October 11, 2021. **To confirm if a voter lives in District 4, visit the Assembly Districts map at www.muni.org/assemblymap** and type the residence address into the search field in the upper left corner of the map.

REMEMBER

- ◆ Elections impact every aspect of our lives, and we all need to weigh in.
- ◆ We are all equal at the ballot box, **but** only if we vote.

Why It Matters What We Are Doing

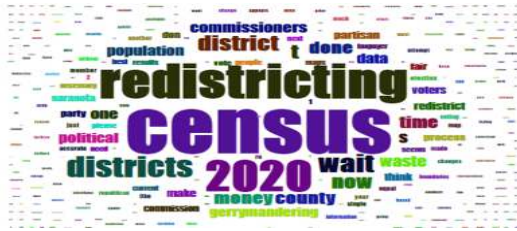
LWVUS: Our leaders and volunteers work on key issues that matter to American voters. We fight for an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive. We hold elected officials accountable for the decisions they make. Our activists mobilize to send tens of thousands of personal messages to political leaders nationwide that impact public policy for decades.

Sign up for the LWVUS Updates
[League of Women Voters \(lwv.org\)](http://League of Women Voters (lwv.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.

Alaska's Redistricting Process Underway

Blythe A. Campbell, LWV Anchorage Treasurer



Redistricting – the process of rebalancing election districts based on the latest Census data – is underway in Alaska. Alaska has just one congressional district, so the number of U.S. House members from Alaska will not change as is likely to happen in other states, but Alaska does draw state legislative districts after each census.

The Alaska Constitution sets a fast pace for this process, based on a constitutional amendment approved in 1998. The redistricting board must submit final maps on November 10, so the next few weeks are packed with public hearings so the public can weigh in on the alternative maps that have been drafted.

The League of Women Voters of the U.S. explains that states use different methods of redistricting, with some methods (for example, redistricting done by state legislators) providing more opportunity for political bias and both racial and political gerrymandering.

Alaska is one of 17 states that have a redistricting board. Alaska's constitution provides for five members – two appointed by the governor and one each appointed by the presiding officer of the state Senate, the presiding officer of the state House, and the chief justice of the Supreme Court.

Based on the census data, the redistricting board determined that the ideal Alaska house district should have 18,335 people. The board generated tables showing what has changed in each of Alaska's 40 house districts, and what the differences are between each district's 2010 population and the 2020 census ideal of 18,335. The constitution requires the final house districts to be as close as possible to the ideal population.

The Municipality of Anchorage includes a portion of House District 12 (Peters Creek) and all of house districts 13 through 28. Eleven districts have populations lower than the ideal, with JBER about 10% under the ideal. Five districts have populations higher than the ideal, with Huffman/O'Malley leading at about 4% over the ideal. (House District 12, which also includes Butte, is 10% over the ideal).

The constitution also requires each house district to be "formed of contiguous and compact territory containing as nearly as practicable a relative integrated socio-economic area." The provision discourages, but does not guarantee against, gerrymandering. Two house districts make up a senate district, which by law must be "composed as near as practicable of two contiguous house districts."

On September 20, the redistricting board adopted six different plans, two drafted by the board and four submitted by other organizations. Now the board is holding public hearings across the state to seek input on the draft maps. Anchorage's public hearing was held Monday, October 4 but there is still an opportunity for Anchorage residents to get involved and submit testimony to the board using the public map comment form at <https://www.akredistrict.org/map-comment/>. In the 2000 and 2010 redistricting cycles, the "final" maps were challenged in court, with the 2010 maps finally clearing legal challenges several years later.

**Your engagement and testimony before November 10
can make a difference.**

**Even after final maps are issued, testimony from these hearings
is often used as a basis for court challenges.**

(See Page 3 for links to various sites with additional information about redistricting in general, Alaska's redistricting and Anchorage's proposed districts for the next ten years.)

Links to Redistricting

Alaska's Redistricting Board
<https://www.akredistrict.org>

League of Women Voters of the U.S. People Powered Fair Maps™ information
<https://www.lwv.org/peoplepoweredfairmaps>

Anchorage Daily News "Explainer"
<https://www.adn.com/politics/2021/10/03/4-things-to-know-as-alaskas-redistricting-board-takes-public-testimony-monday-in-anchorage/>

Anchorage proposed maps - Please take a moment to review the maps for the entire State and those districts that encompass Anchorage:

https://www.akredistrict.org/files/7716/3338/7255/All_Anchorage_-_Regional.pdf



ALASKA COMMON GROUND MARKS 30 YEARS **Congratulations from the LWV Anchorage**

The LWV Anchorage has partnered with Alaska Common Ground over the years in co-hosting many of their seminars/public forums/presentations. We congratulate ACG in achieving 30 years of providing the public, especially the residents of Anchorage, with informative and thought provoking information.

ACG noted on their website: "Alaska has gone through a lot these past three decades, but the current public health and fiscal crises and divisive political climate we find ourselves in today surely tests our resolve. But ACG is more committed than ever to building a movement with you to advance a just society and a sustainable democracy for all Alaskans."

In Remembrance of JOHN HAVELOCK

ACG also gave tribute in their Fall 2021 newsletter to John Havelock who passed away August 31 at the age of 89. A founding board member of ACG and their legal counsel and a former Alaska Attorney General, he played an important role in some of Alaska's most important federal statutes including the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and the trans-Alaska pipeline bill. He also drafted the language for Alaska's constitutional amendment recognizing privacy rights.



JOHN LEWIS VOTING RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT ACT FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Judy Andree, President LWV Alaska

The League of Women Voters of Alaska strongly supports the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the For the People Act. Both of these bills focus on the rights of eligible citizens to vote with equal access to the voting process. These bills call for a basic voting process that is followed by all states.

The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act revises the earlier 1965 Voting Rights Act. The U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Shelby vs. Holder* (2013) removed the preclearance process. The preclearance process required the DOJ to review any new voting laws from a state with a history of voter suppression. Since the Shelby decision canceled preclearance, many states have tried to suppress the vote in a variety of ways. After the 2020 election, many states, according to the Brennan Center, have introduced 265 bills that would allow states to decide which groups should have an easier time voting than other groups.

The second voting rights bill is the For the People Act. It calls for several voting processes that are already available to Alaskans: automatic registration (available through the Permanent Fund dividend application), use of paper ballots counted by hand or optical scanner, counting votes cast out of assigned precincts, 15 days minimum of early voting, and equitable management of polling places to reduce long lines and wait times. One item that is included in this bill is the use of independent redistricting committees; this is a practice that Alaska does not follow, unfortunately, resulting in lawsuits challenging most of our redistricting efforts. In addition to these positive democracy positions, there are many other sections of this bill that increase the strength of voting rights for voters in all states.

Some who oppose this bill claim that the federal government is attempting to eliminate states' rights concerning elections. Article I, Section 4 of the U.S. Constitution says this: "The Times, Places and Manner of holding Elections for Senators and Representatives, shall be prescribed in each State by the Legislature thereof; but the Congress may at any time by Law make or alter such Regulations." With 265 bills pending to alter elections, this may be that time. In addition, the 15th Amendment states that "the right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude" and "The Congress shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation." These statements clearly prove that the federal government has the right to legislate in order to make the voting process equitable for all citizens.

Alaskans are lucky to have a strong election process, but other states do not. If we value our democracy, we should wish the same for all eligible citizens. Both bills are now in the Senate.

Please let your senators know how important these bills are.

Senator Lisa Murkowski: www.murkowski.senate.gov/contact/email

Senator Dan Sullivan: www.sullivan.senate.gov/contact/email

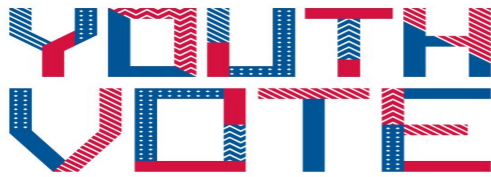
ADDITIONALLY

The LWVUS had endorsed the Freedom to Vote Act on September 14, which has many of the voting safeguards as the For the People Act.

[League Supports New Senate Voting Rights Bill, the Freedom to Vote Act | League of Women Voters \(lww.org\)](#)

A press release was issued by the LWVUS on October 6 congratulating the U.S. Senate for introducing the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

[LWV Applauds the Senate's Introduction of the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act | League of Women Voters](#)



First, the BIG news!

Youth Vote will present virtually on November 2nd at the World Anti-Bullying Forum.

This event is being held in Stockholm, Sweden with many presenters participating virtually. Youth Vote has teamed up with Alaska Teen Media Institute to create our presentation: "Not Decoration: Empowering Youth and Building Resilience Through Meaningful Youth Engagement".

*2019 World Anti-Bullying Forum Youth Vote Attendees
Ethan Zawodny, Jasmine Carter, Tuan Graziano, Olivia Tafs and Taylor Heckart*



We have also been celebrating one year of YouthLINK with greatest hits, and we will launch new content later this month. <https://www.facebook.com/ANCYouthLINK/>

Be on the lookout for "I am Youth Vote" a promotional and awareness campaign for social media.

TWO NEW MEMBERS

Youth Vote welcomed 2 new members this fall, Joshua Pak and Edison Wallace-Moyer.

ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

Finally, we've been updating the Fair Maps and Gerrymandering self-guided presentation we shared with secondary teachers last spring. We will share the updated version this month. We are looking forward to starting new projects soon.



Do you know a teen or youth group doing something positive in your community? Nominate them for Spirit of Youth recognition! All Alaskan youth ages 12-19 are eligible. You can nominate a youth here: <https://www.spiritofyouth.org/programs/positive-media-recognition-campaign/nomination-form/>