

President's Report  
League of Women Voters of Alaska  
April 23, 2022

During the last twelve months the League of Women Voters of Alaska continued its support of Making Democracy Work. This year brought the stresses involved in a continuing pandemic and just recently of, what some are calling, a proxy war with Russia. Many experts see a trend toward autocracy in many areas of the world, adding to our pledge to Make Democracy Work.

In defense of that League goal, the Central Kenai Peninsula League held an event that included the showing of the film Reunited followed by a discussion. The film concerned the current state of division apparent in our democracy, and LWVAK assisted the CKP League with some of the Voting Rights/Democracy grant money received from LWVUS.

We have become virtual event makers and found after the initial shock of the pandemic restrictions, that we could attend a wide variety of such events from reliable sources that joined us in our efforts to Make Democracy work. Over the year I attended approximately 8 State Leaders meetings, 12 Voting Rights Grants meetings with LWVUS staff and other League participants, one LWVUS restructuring meeting (which Leah Edward, LWVUS liaison, will bring you up-to-date on at Convention), one meeting on Diversity-Equality-Inclusion policy, and a Lobby Corps meeting or two. I also attended two virtual events on Ranked Choice Voting training, including info from FairVotes, a good source on RCV. I also discovered that other state Leagues were holding virtual events: I caught two—one from LWVPortland on Misleading News and another from LWVNYC on Critical Race Theory.

We worked on the LWVUS grant that supported the For the People Act (voting rights reforms) and Making Democracy Work. When the For the People Act was revised to the Freedom to Vote Act, we met with Senator Murkowski via ZOOM to discuss this bill. After this meeting, I read through the bill (812 pages) and pointed out in a six-page response how the bill supports many of the aspects of Alaska's current election processes. Unfortunately the bill has not been passed due to the belief (wrongly, I believe) that the bill attempts to federalize elections. My answer to that is that it is the federal government's responsibility to assure that all eligible citizens have the unencumbered right to vote. This is a bill that the League has heavily supported at all levels, and the fight will go on.

We had a request from an Alaskan League member (Carolyn Brown), who has been active in healthcare reform, to consider a concurrence vote on a resolution that would update the LWVUS position on healthcare. After discussing the concurrence statement, which allows the issue to be brought up at the LWVUS Convention in June, the LWVAK agreed to support this effort along with each of our local Leagues.

We addressed several bills that came up in the Alaska Legislature this fall. Three letters of concern or support were issued. The omnibus voting security bill, SB 167, was of concern as it generally made it more difficult to vote, canceled the automatic voter registration of the PFD,

and focused much on the notion that election fraud is rampant. Campaign finance was also a matter of concern given the Supreme Court's decision to strike down the current donation limits. We wrote a letter of support for the two bills that were in the House, one of which passed out of the House and is now in the Senate. We were asked to write a letter by Mom's Against Gun Violence in support for the bill concerning Safe Gun Storage ( ). Time will tell if these bills have a chance of passing.

I also attended a Brennan Center virtual event not related to the League. Here I learned a new work-anocracy: a system of government that is not fully democratic or autocratic, but rather has characteristics of both types. Some believe the United States falls into this category. This is a goal for the League to cherish in the work before them, the continuing effort to Make Democracy Work.