



<http://www.lwvutah.org>

The League of Women Voters
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March 2021

League Activism, Accomplishments Inspire



By Jeanine Kuhn-Coker, LWV-Salt Lake president
Once again, I am sitting here thinking about what an amazing organization the League of Women Voters is! When we read about all that the League is doing on a national level — lawsuits regarding redistricting, voter suppression, climate, DACA — and many more, it truly inspires. Along with efforts to protect voting rights during the pandemic, the League has continued to advocate for ERA ratification, immigrant rights, women's health, and D.C. voting rights.

We also must consider the robust, steadfast, hardworking group of Utah legislative observers who work year-round to report on legislation of import to the League. They spend hours listening to Zoom meetings, reporting to our ranks, and sending out action alerts for members to contact their representatives when a united effort is needed hopefully to influence a vote.

On a more local level, we have the very active and committed county observer corps who attentively listen to Zoom meetings of city and county councils around the valley. They report on issues of interest to the League and keep us informed on local politics.

As president, I have the duty and honor of calling all new members to welcome them to such a vibrant, committed, and well-informed group. I welcome them to a community of people empowering voters, defending democracy, and making a difference!

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Independent Redistricting Committee Has Been Chosen

By Gigi Brandt, Redistricting and Money in Politics Adviser

As I am writing this, the Census Bureau has announced that it will release the apportionment data for states so that the number of congressional districts for each state will be determined. There will be no change for Utah. The redistricting data will be released in September. Under S.B. 200, [Redistricting Amendments](#), a commission is to have its required seven public meetings by August 1, the final maps finished by August 21, and the Legislature's committee must hold its meeting by September 1.



The Census Bureau estimates Utah's population at 3,249,879. That means that each congressional district will have a population of 812,470, an increase of 121,499 from the 2011 districts so that district boundaries will be different. Complicating matters is that Salt Lake County's population is 1,183,930 — too large for a single congressional district. Where will the lines be drawn?

The redistricting commission membership is:

Rex Facer, Chair	Appointed by Gov. Spencer Cox
Rob Bishop	Appointed by Speaker of the House Brad Wilson
Lyle Hillyard	Appointed by Senate President Stuart Adams
Christine Durham	Appointed by Sen. Karen Mayne
Pat Jones	Appointed by Rep. Brian King
William Thorne	Appointed by Sen. Mayne and Rep. King
Jeffrey Baker	Appointed by Sen. Adams and Speaker Wilson

Chair Facer is a BYU professor of public management in the Romney Institute of Public Service and Ethics. In an interview with Channel 4, Dr. Facer pledged that the redistricting process would be transparent. Rob Bishop has served in the Utah House and as congressman for District 1; Lyle Hillyard and Pat Jones have served in the Utah Legislature. Christine Durham is a retired Utah Supreme Court Chief Justice and William Thorne is a retired Juvenile Justice and Appellate Court judge who is also Native American. Jeffrey Baker, a Geographic Information System (GIS) expert, is the only true lay person on the commission.

Yet to be announced are the staff and website.

Watch the League website for further updates on the process.

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100% GREEN INTERNET

COVID May Have Long-lasting Economic Effects

By Susan Skordos, Adjunct board member, LWV-Weberj

Economic and lifestyle changes have occurred as a result of the pandemic, Doris Geide-Stevenson, economics professor at Weber State University told the League as she presented information about the state of the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis began in early 2020 and has continued through the present.

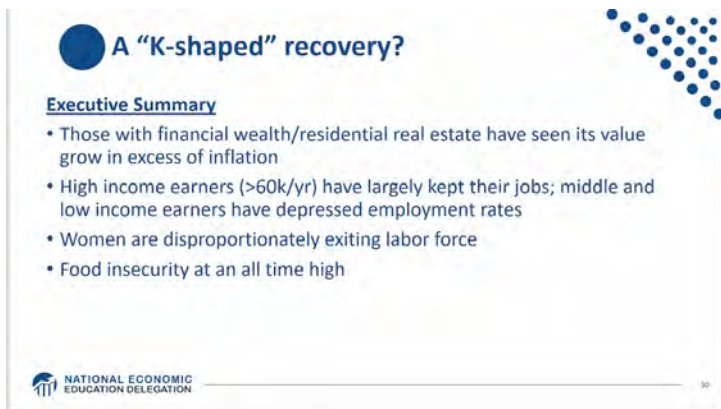


Telehealth has increased, as well as telecommuting by employees and businesses. These could be changes that could be long-term.

Consumer spending dropped substantially starting in early March 2020 as businesses were shut down. The GDP and economic output fell, as well.

To prevent economic collapse, the Federal Reserve dropped interest rates to near zero and lending to banks to offer credit to businesses and it was

freely encouraged to borrow. Stimulus funds and Paycheck Protections Plans were provided to businesses, however, targeting was not precise and some funds didn't get to those who needed them most. Some larger businesses that



received funds didn't provide evidence that they were impacted, while many smaller businesses were left struggling as PPP funds were exhausted. The unemployment rate among lower wage earners increased to 21 percent as businesses that mostly provided services were severely affected because of the increasing health fears.

A slight rebound in the economy occurred during the second quarter of 2020 as spending on tangible goods increased. Spending on services continued to lag. Many left the workforce. Women have been especially impacted, likely due to their needing to be home to educate children as many schools could not safely open and many daycares were closed.

Household savings have actually increased during the pandemic. Those with higher incomes are spending much less. Opportunities for spending

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on travel or entertainment have substantially decreased. Restaurant income has dropped by 28.7 percent, while entertainment spending has decreased by 58 percent. Transportation spending is down by 43.5 percent.

The stock market experienced rebounds but employment has not. Income inequality, which has existed for several years, has become even more obvious as many who lost jobs or business income have had difficulty paying rent or buying groceries. Many lost their health insurance. Twenty percent of households are unable to come up with \$400 for emergencies or unexpected expenses. Fewer lower income employees have access to sick leave, which creates more opportunities for the virus to spread.

The Legislature Is in Pandemic Mode

By Emily Walsh, Legislative Action Director LWVUT

Thank you for responding to Action Alerts regarding bills. We try to time these emails so your contact with your legislator has the most impact. You can find out more about all the bills we are tracking by checking out our bill tracker at lwwutah.org and signing up for the daily legislative newsletter at office@lwwutah.org.



We are still holding Legislative Lunches at 11:30 a.m. They are entirely virtual.

Everyone is welcome, Zoom Meeting ID:

847 8998 6344, Passcode: 090494. The Legislative Action Committee will be doing a statewide virtual Legislative Wrap-Up on March 11 at 7 p.m. Watch social media and your email for more information about accessing the meeting.

You may attend committees in person and watch floortime from the Senate Gallery. You must wear a mask and social distance while at the Capitol. The House Gallery and the areas outside the third floor doors are closed to the public. You can find everything you need to participate virtually during the session at le.utah.gov. You can find videos on how to navigate the legislature's website on our website, lwwutah.org/legislative-action-committee. There is also a link to listen to the sound cloud playlist of our "Three Quick Picks on the People's Business at the Utah Legislature" segment the League does for RadioACTIVE KRCL 90.9 FM.



Legislature keeps attacking a woman's right to choose

When is enough enough?

Since 1973, the Utah Legislature has presented 95 abortion bills, many of them redundant, unnecessary or simply cruel. Thirty-nine passed. In 2020, however, Utah lawmakers ramped up their efforts passing seven of 11 abortion bills.

Read Vickie Samuelson's op-ed here:

<https://www.sltrib.com/opinion/commentary/2021/02/26/vickie-samuelson-utah/>

Positions, Insights Affect How the League Lobbies

By Ann O'Connell, Natural Resources Chair, LWVSL

The Legislature is in session and members of the League Action Corps (LAC) are working for passage of the many bills we support and the defeat of the many we oppose. However, there are bills we can neither work for or against because there is no League position to support our action.

Our campaign to defeat [House Bill 60](#), Conceal Carry Firearms Amendments (Rep. Brooks) is easily rationalized. The LWV of Utah uses the LWV of the U.S. position on gun control to oppose allowing the carrying of a concealed firearm without a permit. That is simple and straightforward. [State Bill 130](#), Regulation of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) (Sen. Sandall) is more difficult for us to lobby against, but do-able. The LWV of Utah has a position supporting Utah agriculture. We want to eat food produced locally and we want to protect and perpetuate Utah agriculture and rural lifestyles and farms. So I can, with a clear conscience, argue that concentrated animal feeding operations are not in keeping with either "agriculture" or rural lifestyles and farms. Not a tight intellectual argument but, I hope, sufficient for the purpose of opposing CAFOs.

Billboard legislation in this case, electronic ones, is a conundrum for the League. [S.B. 61](#), Outdoor Advertising Amendments (Sen. Sandall), seeks to prevent local government from eliminating or restricting them. As far as I know no level of the League of Women Voters has a position on billboards or outdoor advertising, although other state or local leagues may. And, also, as far as I know, the League does not have a specific position on local versus state local government control of zoning matters.

For example, the LWV of Utah and Salt Lake positions tend to favor state and regional planning, not that of local governments. And we know that we rely on the Environmental Protection Agency (federal law) for environmental protection, very often in opposition to state, and even local, governments. On the other hand, the League frequently favors state laws that tell local governments what to do. Of course, our position depends upon the particulars. [H.B. 82](#), Single-family Housing Modifications (Rep. Ward), is an example of the State of Utah overriding local zoning in the matter of accessory dwelling units. The state wants to allow them, local residents often do not.

Catherine Weller, LWVUT co-president, reports that she has contributed to a discussion of the issue of local versus state control in a meeting of League state presidents. Here is some wording she sent me from a former LWVUS president:

Save the Date

Date: March 16

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Where: Virtual

Redistricting: How Citizens
Can Have a Voice

League Co-President
Catherine Weller will
conduct an online
conversation with David
Daley, author of [Ratf**ked:
Why Your Voice Doesn't
Count](#)

and

[Unrigged: How Americans
are Battling Back to Save
Democracy.](#)

Watch for more information.

“Going forward can we assemble various state positions on the relationship between state/local government which support reasonable local control?”

Who makes better policy, local or state governments? Should we do a study and be prepared to support an LWVUS position at the next convention? We did that with election reform.

Environmental Dashboard Evaluates Change



By Jan Striefel, LWV-SL president-elect
What is the Central Wasatch Commission's Environmental Dashboard? It's a tool to assess and evaluate the effects of change on the environment in the Wasatch Mountains.

The Environmental Dashboard is intended to assemble all available data on environmental conditions in the canyons in one centralized place, and make it accessible to anyone who is interested. The Dashboard will serve as a tool for policymakers, technical users, other stakeholders, and the public to test policy

and planning decisions, and to evaluate their potential impacts to the canyon environment. It is a way to ask “What if?” and test-out a range of ideas.

The five areas or “environmental indicators” included in the Dashboard are: (1) Air Quality and Climate, (2) Water, (3) Vegetation Community, (4) Wildlife, and (5) Geology and Soil. For example, someone might ask, “What would be the effect of roadway widening on water quality?” or “How will increased automobile traffic impact wildlife migration?” or “Will an expanded trail system in a specific location endanger sensitive vegetation?” Then they would have an opportunity to understand and evaluate consequences.

Much of the available information regarding these dashboard elements has been assembled. The team at the University of Utah is now developing an online platform that will allow anyone to access the information and use it to evaluate proposals and draw conclusions based on scientific data. Where information gaps are found, they will be filled and added to the dashboard, as will any updated and new information.

This tool will be helpful in evaluating the many actions that are proposed or being considered for the canyons, including transportation improvements — such as expanded roadways, gondolas, and rail access; the impact of snow sheds to protect the roadways from avalanche danger;

Ranked Choice Voting Sees Success in Alaska

The LWVUT is working to make *Ranked Choice Voting* a widespread voting system in Utah. Most members are beginning to understand how to select representatives through *Proportional Representation*. Will *Top Four (or Five) Primaries* be next? Read about the successful Alaska ballot measure for [Top Four Ranked Choice Primaries](#).

One RCV bill has been stalled in the Utah Legislature and is unlikely to pass:
<https://le.utah.gov/~2021/bills/static/HB0127.html>

Another is being heard in Senate committee:

https://le.utah.gov/~2021/bills/hbillint/HB0075S02_ComparedWith_HB0075S01.pdf

**-Ann O'Connell, LWV-SL
Natural Resources Chair**

expanded ski area proposals; modifications to the landscape required by such improvements; and any other activities and actions that would affect the environmental qualities that are valued by many along the Wasatch Front.

The Environmental Dashboard is expected to be complete late 2021. To learn more about the Dashboard, see this link: <https://cwc.utah.gov/environmental-dashboard/>.

Police Reform Series to Wrap Up

By Shauna Bona, Chair, LWVSL Local & County Government Committee

Join us on Monday, March 8 at 7 p.m. to assess how lawmakers handled criminal justice reform during the 2021 session of the Utah Legislature. In the last of a four-part series, “Coming Together on Police Reform: Legislative Wrap-Up,” panelists will review a scorecard of legislative hits and misses, discuss what happened on Capitol Hill and why, and then share ideas for further action.

This virtual event will be moderated by Emily Means, KUER reporter and co-host of the 45 Days podcast and will include four panelists:

- Lex Scott, Founder, Black Lives Matter Utah
- Steve Anjewierden, Retired Chief of Police Services at the Unified Police Department (Kearns/Magna)
- Todd Weiler, Utah State Senator (R-Woods Cross)
- Mark Archuleta Wheatley, Utah State Representative (D-Salt Lake City)

Click here to register for the [Zoom webinar](#), or follow the [event on Facebook](#) where it will also be broadcast live.

This months-long series of panel discussions has been sponsored by the League of Women Voters Salt Lake, Better Utah Institute, NAACP Salt Lake Branch, ACLU Utah, Utah Black Roundtable and Journey of Hope. More than 1,000 viewers have participated in the series so far, watching the panel discussions live or viewing recordings afterward on the [Salt Lake League's Facebook page](#) and the [Utah League's YouTube channel](#).

Join Us Virtually

The COVID pandemic has changed the way our events and meetings happen — and it has opened a new world of engagement for League members.

You are invited to join any of our Utah or local League events posted on our [website calendar](#). If you miss any, check out our [videos on YouTube](#).

If you would like your event on the League website, send to communications@lwwutah.org

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