



League of Women Voters® of Portland, Oregon

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DATE: January 29, 2026
TO: Chair and Commissioners of the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners
FROM: Audrey deCoursey, President, League of Women Voters of Portland
Debbie Aiona, Action Committee Chair, League of Women Voters of Portland
Melanie Billings-Yun, Board Member, League of Women Voters of Portland
Re: **2027-28 Multnomah County Charter Review**

The League of Women Voters of Portland (LWVPDX) supports a robust community engagement and voter education process for the upcoming Multnomah County charter review.

LWVPDX believes that government should be responsive to the will of the people, providing opportunities for them to help solve our shared economic and social problems. We further believe that a truly representative democracy requires diverse voices and perspectives.

We have evaluated the 2021-22 MCCRC process and final report, and compared that information with best practices used in other counties. We have also reviewed the recommendations for the 2027-28 Multnomah County Charter Review Committee (MCCRC) made by the Bull Run Center of the North Star Civic Foundation. Based on our review, we support the following recommendations:

- **Start community outreach during the MCCRC recruitment process**, with an emphasis on reaching out to East Portland and East Multnomah County, in order to attract a broadly representative pool of applicants.
- **Develop a community engagement plan** to be followed throughout the charter review process, using a variety of methods:
 - Town halls, listening sessions, focus groups, and surveys in each county district, with at least one each in East Portland and East County, to introduce the charter process, solicit ideas for potential charter changes, and get feedback on MCCRC recommendations.
 - Broad social media outreach to raise public awareness of charter reform across the county, especially among younger voters.
 - Partnering with one or more community-based organizations to help reach diverse communities, especially those who have been historically underrepresented.
- **Provide impartial and balanced voter education** on MCCRC-referred ballot measures and their impacts, through multiple channels.

We understand that these changes will come at increased cost. The Bull Run report estimates a charter reform budget of \$900,000-\$1.5 million. While this is significantly higher than previous MCCRCs, it is in line with the budgets of other counties with comparable charter reform processes. More importantly, it will pave the way for shaping a democratic and inclusive charter that more effectively addresses the needs of all Multnomah County residents while building public support and trust.

LWVPDX therefore urges the County to authorize the necessary funds to implement these recommendations for robust community engagement throughout the charter review process.