

## League of Women Voters of Tacoma-Pierce County Observer Corps

Name of Agency: Tacoma Joint City Council and Public Utility Board Study Session Date: 3/5/19  
Observer Reporting: Ann Williams Length of Meeting: 2 hours  
Members Present/Absent: All Council members and Mayor present  
Others Present (i.e., media, public): Multiple members of the public and print media (I think), multiple members of the Public Utility Board

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**Content (What is being discussed):** i.e., *Did they approve some **action**? Does anything **relate to League priorities or positions**? If so, **do you recommend** local league action? Was **access** to materials for certain agenda items limited or excluded from you? Was background material available to the public?*

Most of this study session was taken up by a presentation by Joanne Hovis, a contracted analyst of public broadband issues. She has been charged with researching possible private partners for the Click! Network and refining a recommendation. This process started in 2018, first with the establishment of 12 goals of such a partnership, including equitable access, affordability and net neutrality, to name a few. Her presentation walked the council through the process by which she has arrived at the recommendation that the Click! Network enter into a long-term contract with Rainier Connect.

The Council portion of the Study Session centered on two letters drafted by the mayor and presented to Council. The first concerns the Northwest Detention Center, expressing the Mayor/Council's concern that detainees be treated properly and that the broken immigration system be fixed. A copy of the draft is enclosed and is also available on the City of Tacoma Website.

The second letter is directed to Sea-Tac Airport management and concerns their rebranding effort, which at one time, but apparently no longer, included a possible name change. The letter strongly supports maintenance of the current name.

**Public Meetings of interest to League** – i.e., *Were there any public meetings announced that you think League members may be interested in attending and/or becoming involved with the issue?*

No

**Process & Protocol (Observations about participants, conduct, and procedures of the meeting, and appropriate accommodations for disabled in sight hearing and physical):**

*i.e., Did the members appear to have done their "homework"? Were members courteous to each other and the public? How does the group respond to your presence?*

Members of the Public Utility Board were informative and Board members and Council members were uniformly courteous.

The Study Session was videotaped and is available now of the city's website.

Dear Congressman,

Among my colleagues and I, we continue to hear concerns daily about the Northwest Detention Center. Through reports from citizens and community leaders, and our own firsthand tours, we are knowledgeable of the breaches of health, safety, civil rights and human dignity in the detention center. The immigration incarceration system endangers 38,153 men, women and children every single day – 1,575 adults at this center in our city. As long as this facility is in our city, we will seek every means possible to ensure the rights, dignity, health and safety of the detainees are protected. We can do better for these 1,575 individuals who have been brought into our community. We call on you to be partner with us in making that commitment.

The City of Tacoma may have limited regulatory authority over this facility, but that does not render us impotent from helping to design and mobilize strategies with others who have authority. As members of Congress, you have authority. We applaud the leadership of Representatives Adam Smith (WA-9) and Pramila Jayapal (WA-7) in introducing in the last Congress the *Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act*. We urge and support re-introduction of legislation such as this that proposed critical reforms to the detention system such as eliminating the profit motive to detain people; restoring due process to custody decisions; increasing oversight, accountability, and transparency; and establishing real alternatives to detention.

Ours is not the only city that has called on Congress to reform the nation's broken immigration system. Time and time again the nation's mayors have come together to declare the calculable value of immigrants to their communities.

We respect that reforming the immigration system is no quick or easy task, but that does not excuse us to simply observe detention practices that continue compromise health, safety, civil rights and dignity. We hear the enormous public concern for ensuring the humane treatment of detainees. We think it important that local independent oversight of this facility be established to increase transparency and credibility with respect to verifying the treatment of detainees.

We will continue to work with our entire Congressional delegation to look for a suite of options to address the practices by which individuals are detained when brought into our community. The treatment of immigrants and those seeking asylum or other sanctuary in our country is one of the critical issues of our time. We are committed to ensuring fair and just practices that respect the dignity of every immigrant and refugee that seeks shelter within our borders.

Sincerely

Mayor

Councilmember(s)