



Federal Way school levies narrowly passing in special election

By OLIVIA SULLIVAN  
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The Federal Way Public Schools (FWPS) Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) and Technology levies are narrowly passing, according to the King County election results on Tuesday night. The Technology levy, Proposition No. 1, is passing with 55% voting yes so far, or about 8,216 votes. On Tuesday night, the EP&O levy was ahead by just two votes. According to the Feb. 9 election results update, the EP&O levy

is passing with 50.7% or 7,551 people voting yes. "I'm grateful for the continued support of the Federal Way community," said Superintendent Dr. Dani Pfeiffer. "While these early results are still close to call, I remain optimistic that our community's long-standing support of this critical funding for essential staff and programs will continue." The EP&O levy is asking for \$174 million over four years between 2023-2026. The technology levy asks for \$28 million over six years

between 2023-2028. As of Wednesday, 14,943 ballots had been counted so far, which is about 18.5% of the registered voters in Federal Way. "We appreciate the continued support of our community," said Shannon McCann, president of the Federal Way Education Association. "We are optimistic and will keep watching the results. These levies are critical for our students' well-being, education and opportunity." The EP&O replacement levy funds essential staff such as

nurses, counselors, social workers, para-educators, college and career specialists, custodians, security, bus drivers and transportation services. The levy also funds special education, English Language Learner services, and music education programs, along with athletics and after-school programs. Renewal of the tech levy allows continued equitable access to technology, digital tools and resources, and essential learning experiences. It will also provide student and teacher devices and

support; instructional technology training and integration; and a reliable technology infrastructure to include critical equipment and systems maintenance and upgrades. Superintendent Pfeiffer added the district will continue to monitor the King County Elections results daily updates. "Thank you again to all who continue to support our schools and who took the time to cast their ballot as we seek to renew this critical funding for schools," she said.

FW Councilmember Erica Norton slams the vaccinated on social media

About 3 out of 4 Federal Way residents are vaccinated, according to King County Public Health.

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*Editor's note: This story includes screenshots that contain explicit language.*

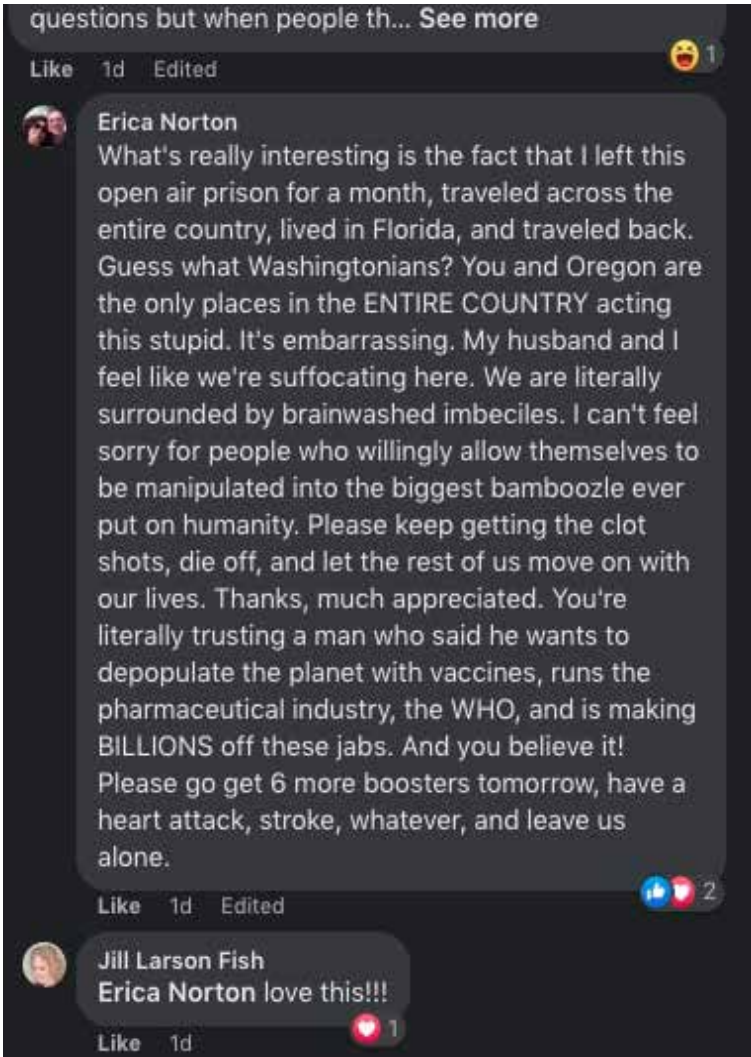
A Federal Way City Council member recently made disparaging comments on social media about people who have received their COVID-19 vaccines, encouraging them to "keep getting the clot shots, die off, and let the rest of us move on with our lives." Erica Norton, Position 2, was elected to the Federal Way City Council in November 2021. The comments were made Jan. 30 on a discussion thread related to the removal of Neil Young's music from Spotify. Her public Facebook page previously listed her job title as holding Position 2 of the Federal Way City Council. Norton removed the council affiliation on her social media page after the Mirror's request for comment on Jan. 31. Norton has not responded to several requests for comment. Her social media comments have since been deleted. In screenshots of the comments, Norton states Washington is an "open air prison" and that she feels

she is living around "brainwashed imbeciles." In one Facebook comment, Norton wrote in part: "Please go get 6 more boosters tomorrow, have a heart attack, stroke, whatever, and leave us alone." In a different comment, she wrote: "Just think. 3 years from now all the believers will be dead or permanently disabled. Hopefully they'll all shut the hell up and leave the rest of us alone to live our lives. I don't feel sorry for any of them anymore, we need to clean up the gene pool and they're volunteering to take themselves out." There are no scientific studies that conclude people who have been vaccinated will die or become permanently disabled in three years. COVID-19 vaccines were made available beginning in December 2020. Over 500 million COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in the United States, with an excellent track record of vaccine safety and of preventing serious COVID-19 infections, hospitalizations and deaths, said Kate Cole, a spokesperson for Public Health - Seattle & King County. "In just the first year of the U.S. COVID-19 vaccination program, vaccination prevented over 1 million deaths and over 10 million hospitalizations," she said, adding that serious adverse effects are rare. "It's the single most effective thing you can do to protect yourself from serious COVID-19,

hospitalization and death," Cole said.

**Public vs. private**

When it comes to privacy, an elected official is a public person, meaning their privacy is not the same as what an everyday citizen is entitled to. "Anything someone posts on Facebook is public; it's not a private form of communication," said Mike Fancher, former executive editor of The Seattle Times. After his retirement in 2008, Fancher focused on journalism ethics in the digital age through research, writing and teaching. "Some might think it's free speech and unimportant to their voting decision," Fancher said of Norton's comments. "Others might feel the comments should disqualify the person from public office." Politicians, like Norton, are public employees and do still have privacy when it comes to private affairs, such as spousal issues or other concerns that do not impact the community they represent nor qualify as something the public needs to know, Fancher said. Federal Way's population is just over 100,000 residents. According to King County Public Health, 76.9% of residents in the city's 98023 ZIP code and 77.9% of residents in the 98003 ZIP code are fully vaccinated. As of the first week of February, See **NORTON**, Page 2



SCREENSHOT OF FACEBOOK TAKEN BY THE MIRROR  
Councilmember Erica Norton took to social media on Jan. 30, urging people who have received their COVID-19 vaccines to "Please keep getting the clot shots, die off ..." Her comments have since been deleted.

Falling in love in Federal Way: Stories from local residents

By MIRROR STAFF

To get in the mood for Valentine's Day, the Mirror asked Federal Way residents for their local love stories. Get your loved one, cozy up and enjoy these chronicles of crushin' and flirty flashbacks.

- "My daughter and son-in-law met at Angle Lake then Skate King when they were 13 and 15. Both attended the same high school. They became a couple at 17 and 19, married in 1988, at 19 and 21, and moved into their first house in Alderbrook, Federal Way. They had their first child at age 21 and 23, and two and a half years later, another son. In 1998, they moved to Twin Lakes, Federal Way. They will be married 34 years in June. As a mother to a beautiful daughter, I have the best son-in-law and I watched their love story since they first met as young teenagers." — Patricia Law

- "My wife and I just got married this past summer. We moved in together in 2019 with her 10-year-old daughter not knowing we would be getting a toddler at the beginning of the pandemic or quarantine together in a tiny townhome. Although we have outgrown our townhome, our love has blossomed through a pandemic, a teenager and a toddler." — Jen McLaughlin
- "I met my husband when I was 7 years old in Sunday School at what previously was Steel Lake Church in Federal Way. We became friends right away, and then dated sophomore year of high school, then broke up, dated again senior year of high school and part way through Highline College freshman year and broke up. Then after time we became friends again. Then one year after graduating college my husband sent me a text (with some liquid courage)

that essentially he had feelings for me and couldn't just be friends. I realized I still loved him and we've been back together ever since! That was 12 years ago, we've been married for 11 years, and have two kids, a dog, and live here in Federal Way." — Grace Hansmeier

- "I met my husband when we were 13 in Federal Way. We met at Goods ATA Taekwondo school, we were friends for 3 years and started dating at 16 and have been together ever since. This year will be 12 years together." — Kierren Garcia
- "Who in the world would have even imagine to meet a 'Love Mate' over the Internet? Well — probably everyone! I was fortunate enough to be one of the blessed ones, but not as one may think! Our connection was eBay! Seven years ago, I posted an item for sale! I only received one offer from a woman who replied 'from the Beach'...

Curious we began a conversation and she has become more than just a love interest ... She became my intricate companion in life! She will be flying into Seattle for the fifth time since then to celebrate my birthday on Feb. 4! Who would have thought? Certainly not me — but here we are! Loving it and especially loving her..." — David, Mirror Lake

- "My Valentine and I met at a concert in Seattle, but on our third date, we were talking about our teenage years both spent in Federal Way (him: a Decatur grad, me: TJ grad). I mentioned a garage band I was in with my best girlfriends called Rhymes With Orange, and he asked 'You were in Rhymes With Orange??? Did you play a gig called Rock For Food at Steel Lake Presbyterian Church in 1998?' I was astounded that he had heard of our band; turns out that Rock For Food was a benefit

show he organized for Northwest Harvest in order to earn his Eagle Scout Award. We had actually met back then when we were 16! We have now been married 11 years, still live in Federal Way, and still know how to rock. Happy Valentines Day, Joel Krug!" — Christine Krug

- "My brother and I grew up in Federal Way and we both married women named Rachel who each lived in Federal Way when we met them. We each have three sons. Our first-born sons were born on the same day, 10 years apart. Our 2nd and 3rd sons are twins. They were born when we were each 40 years old. That's our story." — Tad Doviak



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# FW councilmember responds to controversial social media comments

Erica Norton said her posts were directed at people who were threatening her for being unvaccinated.

By OLIVIA SULLIVAN  
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Federal Way City Council member Erica Norton said her recent social media comments — calling Washington residents “brainwashed imbeciles” and for people to “Please keep getting the clot shots, die off, and let the rest of us move on with our lives” — were made as a result of her trauma response to online bullying.

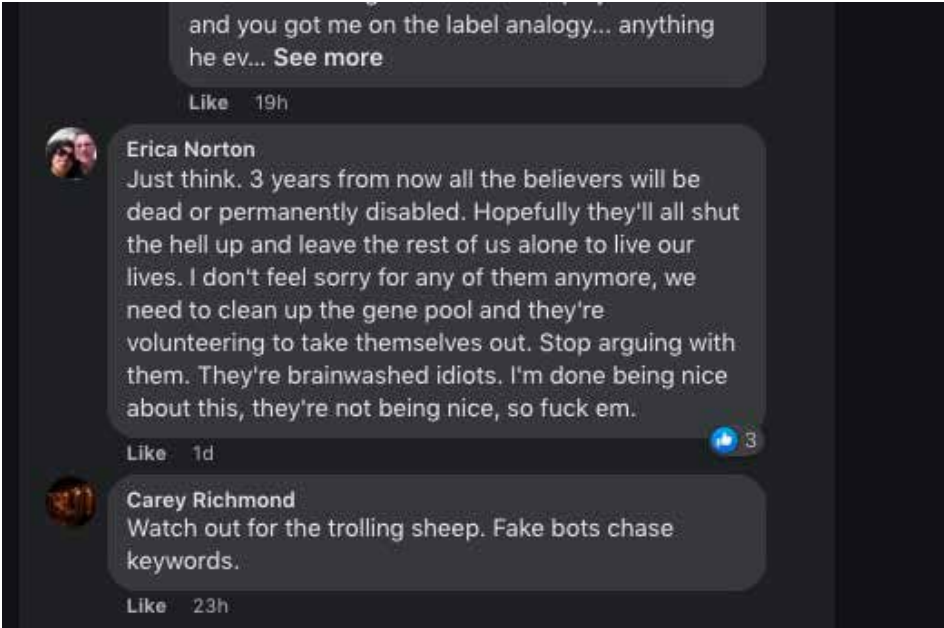
On a Jan. 30 Facebook discussion thread related to the removal of Neil Young’s music from Spotify, Norton contributed to the conversation thread with two comments, which have since been deleted.

In her comments, Norton encouraged people to “Please go get 6 more boosters tomorrow, have a heart attack, stroke, whatever, and leave us alone.” She also wrote in part, “3 years from now all the believers will be dead or permanently disabled. Hopefully they’ll all shut the hell up and leave the rest of us alone to live our lives.”

Norton claims these comments were made in response to other people online who were threatening her.

“This was me reacting out of being threatened, it’s not the way I normally talk or act,” Norton told the Mirror during an in-person interview on Feb. 9. “When something triggers me, like my life being threatened, I get triggered and I’m working on it. It’s just part of being in recovery and having the kind of past I have.”

“Everyone I love the most in this world — which is my family and most of my friends — are vaccinated,”



SCREENSHOT OF FACEBOOK TAKEN BY THE MIRROR

Councilmember Erica Norton took to social media on Jan. 30, stating people who have received their COVID-19 vaccines are “brainwashed idiots.” Her comments have since been deleted.

she said. “People were bullying and threatening unvaccinated people in a really long thread on Facebook and that response was directed at people who told me I deserved to die because I was unvaccinated.”

In the Facebook discussion, still available online as of Feb. 9, there are no comments making any threats against the councilmember or calling her out by name. Norton said this is because half of the comments, specifically the ones pertaining to her, were deleted by an unknown source.

Norton said she deleted her own social media comments because she was told to, but did not say who told her to delete them.

Her public Facebook page previously listed her job title as holding Position 2 of the Federal Way City Council. Norton removed the council affiliation on her social media page after the Mirror’s first request for comment on Jan. 31.

Norton requested an interview earlier this week with the Mirror after ignoring

the newspaper’s previous requests. Norton said she is responding to the Mirror at the request of Mayor Jim Ferrell.

Norton did not answer when asked if she believes her comments were appropriate for a councilmember to make.

“Like I said before, I was reacting from a trauma-based place, so I really don’t have anything else to say other than if you’ve been through the kind of things I’ve been through, when people direct threats and aggression toward you, it triggers people to do things that are out of their character,” she said.

Norton said she experienced “severe childhood sexual and physical abuse throughout most of my childhood.” In a written statement released after the interview, Norton said: “As a survivor of childhood abuse, both physical and emotional, and as a recovering alcoholic, I was triggered by threatening posts on social media. I made an emotional response based on that threat. I understand

much of the language was inappropriate for a public forum. I welcome any opportunity to speak to my constituents about both my lived experience and the perceived intent of my comments.”

Norton told the Mirror it is a religious choice for her not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Norton claims she had COVID-19 “in the beginning” of the pandemic and that her husband almost died from the virus.

“I just don’t want to get vaccinated,” she said. “I think that people who’ve had it [COVID-19] have a right to not have to do it. And I think anybody who wants to get vaccinated should get vaccinated.”

When asked who she was talking about in her Facebook comments, Norton said her comments were directed at people who were bullying unvaccinated people online, not members of the general public who are vaccinated.

“I think it’s kind of obvious,” she said.

When Norton wrote “... we need to clean up the gene pool and they’re

volunteering to take themselves out,” Norton claims she was talking about “the bullies who were bullying people,” she said.

Norton did not apologize for her comments.

“I don’t have any excuses for what I did; it’s a trauma-based reaction,” she said.

When asked if she is remorseful that she made these comments, Norton said: “The thing that concerns me the most is that it might negatively affect the mayor and the city council and the people who work here and the citizens of Federal Way.”

In response to the Mirror’s Feb. 4 story about Norton’s online comments, some voters said they regret voting for her. Others wondered if a recall to remove her from city council is necessary.

“That’s up to them,” Norton said. “They can do as they want to, it’s a free country.”

When repeatedly asked if she thinks she is fit for office, Norton said: “I’m working on myself, I’m a human being.”

Pressed on if she believes she is fit to represent all of the citizens of Federal Way, Norton responded: “Yes, of course, I am.”

Asked if she has anything to say to the community members, Norton said:

“I’ll try to do my best to respond more kindly the next time someone threatens my life because of my vaccination status,” she said.

Norton said she did not respond to the Mirror’s previous requests for comment because she said she blocked this reporter’s email address for “aggressive” and “threatening” messages. Norton said “because when people threaten me and are aggressive toward me, it’s best for me to not interact with them.”

According to the city, Federal Way City Council members do not have the ability to block email addresses on their official

email accounts.

*If you or someone you know has experienced sexual assault, support is available 24/7 by calling the National Sexual Assault Hotline at 800-656-HOPE (800-656-4673). Survivors in King County can also contact the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center Resource Line at 888-99-VOICE or visit [www.kcsarc.org/gethelp](http://www.kcsarc.org/gethelp).*

*Resources*  
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*For Alcoholics Anonymous: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)*  
*For survivors and victims of trauma: [www.traumainformed.org/hotlines-for-survivors-of-violence-and-trauma](http://www.traumainformed.org/hotlines-for-survivors-of-violence-and-trauma)*

## Norton

From Page 1

177 Federal Way residents have died from COVID-19.

Federal Way’s top leaders said Norton was using her public Facebook page to express her personal opinion.

“It appears as if Erica Norton is speaking in her personal capacity and not in her official capacity as a city councilmember,” said Mayor Jim Ferrell in a Jan. 31 email. “Her remarks do not reflect the position of the City of Federal Way or my administration.”

Federal Way City Council President Linda Kochmar said a council member is free to speak their opinions, as long as they don’t do so in their official capacity.

“It’s her prerogative to respond how she wants,” Kochmar said on a Jan. 31 phone call. “She’s entirely welcome to her opinion.”

Ferrell and Kochmar both said they are vaccinated.



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