

Member Bulletin

July 2023

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Welcome from new LWVIL President Becky Simon


As I promised you at the state convention, I have already begun hitting the road to make an in-person visit to every local League. It is my responsibility to get to know each Illinois local League so we can better work together to further the League's mission. So you may see me soon, over coffee or at lunch!

This is a time of tremendous change for the League of Women Voters as we continue to transform our historic organization to keep it relevant and impactful today. *Change is essential for the League to be strong.*

Secondly, this is a time of unprecedented threats to American democracy. The League needs to be at the forefront, defending democracy and fighting against disinformation. **There is no other organization like League—our work is essential.**

The vision: To unabashedly reclaim the League of Women Voters of Illinois' role in the Illinois election process! We cannot risk the consequences of a diminished role of the League in the election process today.

We have an amazing new board of directors and thousands of local League members across the state. I have complete confidence in LWVIL's next biennium! Together, we will work to further the League's Transformation Journey, which centers our mission and empowers our League community at every level, facilitating the real work of democracy.



[Becky Simon](#)

Past President's Farewell

Dear Fellow League Members,

How quickly the 60th Biennium has come to an end! It seems such a short time ago you elected me president. Two years of monthly letters to you. My last letter is a thank you—to our League.

Thank you for entrusting me with the responsibility to serve and lead. Five years ago, I joined the LWVIL Board as co-chair of the Issues and Advocacy Committee, appointed to fill a vacancy. For the following four years, it was my honor to accept your call to serve as president of the Board.

Thank you for your partnership and support. Collaboration was the key. Together we fostered equity and inclusivity, creativity and compassion. We created a community based on shared values and trust. We grew our networks, established supportive relationships and connected with like-minded nonpartisan partners to achieve our mission goals.

Whether paying dues, sharing social media, stepping up for a specific project, serving on a local League or state board committee—your leadership, for we are all leaders, generated a multitude of mission achievements and made the League what it is today.

Our organization prospered because of your commitment and the professional leadership experience and talent of our Board this biennium. My colleagues brought the highest ethical standards and selflessly committed to their roles, guiding and nurturing LWVIL to the operational efficiency and excellent financial health that powered our expanded mission work on all levels.

Please make time to read the Biennium Report to fully appreciate the accomplishments of the League of Women Voters of Illinois over the past two years. The fruits of our labors are apparent and the results are phenomenal. Our collaboration has grown LWVIL into the powerful organization it is today.

Thank you to all who came before, to all who served this past biennium, to all who serve today. We stand on broad shoulders as we continue to grow the power and impact of the League and our mission.

My gratitude and best wishes to all.



[Allyson E. Haut, Ph.D.](#)

Immediate Past President
League of Women Voters of Illinois



JUNE 10-11 CONVENTION 2023

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF ILLINOIS

LWVIL's 61st biennium Convention was held on June 10–11, welcoming delegates from 36 of the 42 local Leagues in Illinois.

During Convention, delegates voted to adopt the [proposed budget](#) for 2023–2025, to adopt three new [pillars for action](#), and to re-adopt all current positions as published in [Where We Stand](#). Delegates also voted to undertake a study of gun violence prevention with the intent to update LWVIL's Gun Violence Prevention position.

Delegates had opportunities to gather and learn prior to Convention at three virtual meetings, including Convention Connections facilitated by LWVUS Midwest Regional Organizer Jessica Rohloff. Recordings of the [DC Statehood](#) and [Anchorage Youth Vote](#) educational programs are now available to all members on our website's [Convention Center](#).

Meet the New Board

Welcome to LWVIL's new Board of Directors, elected on Sunday, June 11.

- President: [Becky Simon](#) (LWV of Naperville)
- Treasurer: [Maria Pasquesi](#) (LWV of Lake Forest/Lake Bluff)
- Secretary: [Michelle Thorsell](#) (LWV of Glen Ellyn)
- Vice President, Communications: [Sara Kurensky](#) (LWV of Wilmette)
- Vice President, Governance: [Linh Nguyen](#) (LWV of DeKalb County)
- Vice President, Voter Service: [Jennifer Lee O'Neil](#) (LWV of Evanston)
- Director: [Roberta Borrino](#) (LWV of Roselle-Bloomington)
- Director: [Letina Brady-Pettis](#) (LWV of Chicago)
- Director: [Kathy Cortez](#) (LWV of Palatine)
- Director: [Diane Hodges](#) (LWV of Park Forest)
- Director: [Theresa Lyons Flanders](#) (LWV of St. Clair County)
- Director: [Jennifer Manning](#) (LWV of Wilmette)

Thank you to the following board members of the 60th biennium for their years of dedicated League service:

- [Allyson Haut](#), President (LWV of Wilmette)
- [Cate Williams](#), Secretary (LWVIL, Member Around the State)
- [Rosemary Heilemann](#), Vice President, Issues and Advocacy Co-Chair (LWV of Deerfield/Lincolnshire)
- [Kathy Kenny](#), Vice President, Voter Service Co-Chair (LWV of Naperville)
- [Melissa Lieb](#), Director, Voter Service Co-Chair (LWV of LaGrange)
- [Jean Pierce](#), Director, Issues and Advocacy Co-Chair (LWV of Oregon)



Biennium Report

Let's recap and celebrate the last two years! Read some of the highlights below, and learn more from the full [Biennium Report](#).

Leadership

LWVIL leadership focused on promoting inclusivity and equity by building relationships, reducing the administrative burden on local League leaders by providing training opportunities and making materials available 24/7 on website, and fostering collaboration among local League leadership through monthly virtual meetings and twice a month updates in the *Leader's Edge*.

Communications

Our Communications team increased use of cohesive graphics and messaging on all LWVIL materials to solidify LWVIL identity and increase visibility. They designed promotions for the Illinois Voter Guide, and graphics and templates for initiatives like the Get Out the Vote Toolbox and Lobby Day 2023, providing local Leagues and partner organizations with access to the tools needed to amplify LWVIL advocacy and defend democracy.

Finance

By moving LWVIL accounting to a financial services company, the Finance Committee gained expertise and saved money, moving our organization toward sustainability. Eliminating additional unnecessary expenses meant being able to present a balanced budget for the 2023-25 biennium.

Human Resources

The HR Committee hired staff, implemented a new payroll system, and updated the employee handbook, working with pro-bono lawyers from Katten, Muchin, Rosenbaum to ensure compliance with all city and state regulations.

Issues & Advocacy

Issues & Advocacy maximized the knowledge of all 17 Issues Specialists to inform the public about advocacy

and lobbying for legislation. Two annual Issues Briefing programs served a total of 385 registrants. The League provided tools for action, and more than 400 people responded to LWVIL 2023 virtual Lobby Day and hundreds more responded to 35 Action Alerts across the biennium.

Voter Service

Covering four elections in ten months, the Voter Service committee supported local Leagues, building community and connecting league Leadership through 27 trainings and ten roundtables. The Illinois Voter Guide provided information for voters in every Illinois zipcode, covering more than 12,000 candidates across the state, and local Leagues provided recordings of 228 candidate forums, both live and virtual.

Read the Biennium Report



Success! League-supported legislation passes

Thanks in part to the advocacy of League members, important legislation supported by LWVIL was passed by both chambers of the Illinois General Assembly this term.

These bills have now been sent to Governor J.B. Pritzker. The governor has 60 days to sign bills into law. Any vetoed legislation is returned to the General Assembly.

To advocate for the governor to sign these bills, call 217-782-6830 or 217-782-6731 (for hearing impaired: 888-340-1009).

Voting Rights

SB2123 Election Omnibus Bill (Sent to governor June 7)

- Young citizens will be able to pre-register to vote when they turn 16, with their registration held in abeyance until they reach voting age.
- Creates a task force to study ranked choice voting (we had hoped that the election system would be approved for municipalities with the appropriate equipment).

Reproductive Health

SB1909 Deceptive Practices Of Limited Services Pregnancy Centers Act (Sent to governor June 9)

- Limited Services Pregnancy Centers are prohibited from engaging in deceptive

acts or practices which mislead patients seeking abortions.

Environment

SB58 Polystyrene Reduction (Sent to governor June 16)

- State agencies and departments may not procure disposable food service containers that are composed in whole or in part from polystyrene foam (we had hoped the ban would extend to all retail establishments).

Education

HB2789 Right to Read (Signed into law June 12)

- Imposes fines for banning books.

SB90 Racism-Free Schools (Sent to governor June 22)

- Requires school districts to adopt and communicate a policy on harassment based on race, color, or national origin, in addition to the existing requirement for sexual harassment policies.

Criminal Justice

SB1886 Fair Probation Drug Testing (Sent to governor June 16)

- Eliminates drug testing fees.

HB1268 Fully Free Act (Sent to governor June 16)

- Individuals who have been released from prison can serve as executors of a relative's will. This eliminates a barrier to fully re-entering society after incarceration.

HB1496 Implementing the Ban on Prison Gerrymandering (Signed into law June 9)

- Ensures that Corrections records contain home addresses for people who are incarcerated so that they can vote in their home district.

ERA

HJR20 Affirm Equal Rights Amendment (Resolution adopted)

- This resolution affirms that the Illinois Legislature believes requirements have been met for passing the Equal Rights Amendment.

Budget

SB250 Budget for Fiscal Year 2024 (Signed into law June 7)

- Evidence-based funding for Education was increased by \$350 Million (we had hoped for more).
- Invest in Kids was NOT in the budget, so it is possible that program, which uses public tax dollars to fund private schools, will be allowed to sunset in 2024.

Members power the League! Thank you for your time and donations!



Support the League today!

[View as Webpage](#)