

Member Bulletin



A note from the President, November 2020

Now that our focus on election work has diminished, we need to turn our attention inward as we look ahead to our State Convention. In June 2021 we will gather, as we do every two years, to begin our next Biennium.

Covid has affected our choices about Convention, as it has so many other aspects of our lives. Out of necessity we will be online and will shrink the focus to address only the business prescribed our bylaws - approving a budget, changes to the bylaws, a slate of officers and directors, and a program of action.

I encourage you to see this different convention experience as an opportunity for our League not to shrink, but to expand. Online, equity of access becomes a reality, as those who want to help shape LWVIL's future do not face barriers of distance, finance and time. With the click of a button, delegates can connect across the state.

Education, training and networking activities typical of convention will be available to all members in online settings throughout the coming months. There will be buttons for all of us to click.

We all need to consider contributing to the success of our League in new ways. Think about what you want to see for our next Biennium, and then take action. Become a delegate, take part in program planning, apply to serve on the board of directors, or serve on convention planning and other related committees.

In the coming weeks you will see new opportunities to connect with Leaguers statewide, new people to meet and interact with. How will you help LWVIL enter the next Biennium? What button will you click?

Allyson E. Haut, Ph.D.

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois



Join us for a virtual group tour of the [Illinois Holocaust Museum](#) exhibit, *Notorious RBG: The Life and Times of Ruth Bader Ginsburg*.

Presented by the museum's Chief Curator of Collections and Exhibitions Arielle Weinger, the tour includes a discussion the life of RBG and the history of the exhibition, using audio, video, and photographs of artifacts from the exhibit. The tour is followed by a live Q&A.

Choose from two virtual tour opportunities:

- Tuesday, December 8, Noon–1:00 pm
- Thursday, December 10, 6:00 pm–7:00 pm

Space is limited and open to League members only. Tickets are \$5.00. Attendees will receive access information prior to the event.

[Get tickets!](#)



Commemorating 100 Years of League Work

After completing numerous wonderful projects over the past four years, the LWVIL Board's 100th Anniversary Celebration Committee was officially dissolved in October 2020. Many thanks to Chair Mary Kubasak and each committee member for all they accomplished in recognition and observance of the Centennial of the League and the 19th Amendment.

The pandemic interrupted many of the committee's plans, as countless in-person events were cancelled, including gatherings at Ravinia, Grant Park and the Palmer House. Undaunted, they continued their collaboration with the Chicago History Museum, which led to the beginning of an online exhibit.

In an effort to secure permanent recognition of five Illinois suffragist sites, the committee applied for Pomeroy Foundation Suffrage Markers on the National Votes for Women Trail. Thanks to their dedication, three of the markers have been approved and two are pending:

- Catherine McCullough in Evanston
- Grace Wilbur Trout in Oak Park
- Eleanor Martin in Lombard
- Alpha Suffrage Club in Chicago (IIT Campus), still in progress
- Michigan Avenue in Chicago (as the site of many suffrage marches), still in progress

The committee also worked in support of national legislation to honor women on the quarter coin in every state. The bill has passed in the US House and is awaiting Senate approval.

The committee created a template to help local Leagues advocate for a resolution commemorating the centennial of the 19th amendment, resulting in close to 30 municipal proclamations around the state.

As a lasting gift, the committee completed [a comprehensive, decade-by-decade history](#) of the League's past 100 years, accompanied by historical photos. They also developed resources for local Leagues, including lists of speakers, books and movies.



This 100th anniversary yellow rose, designed by committee member Mary Graitmins, was used on the City of Deerfield auto registration sticker. Mary has [made the artwork available](#) for League members.



From our Specialists: Issues Updates

Environment, *Bill Koehl, Laura Davis, and Sara Bury*

Climate change, water, plastics and pollution - many environmental issues impact local legislation. If you are interested in exploring our positions on these issues,

please email issues@lwvil.org to join the Environmental Google Group.

Gun Violence Prevention, *Jim McGrath*

LWVIL issued a [Time for Action](#) in mid-October asking members to contact local school boards in support of an Illinois Association of School Boards Resolution making it unlawful for a gun owner to leave a firearm unsecured when anyone under the age of 18 might have access to the gun. In Rock Island County, residents voted 85 percent in favor of a ballot proposition that asked, “Should the Illinois General Assembly protect a citizen’s right to keep and bear arms as defined by the second amendment of the United States Constitution?” President elect Joe Biden’s written plan for gun violence prevention includes several items that were passed by the House but never considered by the Senate. If you are interested in receiving gun violence prevention updates, please email to issues@lwvil.org to join the GVP Google Group.

Money in Politics, *Donna Limper*

We are starting a Money in Politics Google Group to work on campaign finance and ethics issues at both the state and national level. One of our initiatives will focus on developing a presentation to educate citizens on the *For The People Act*, which is supported by LWVUS. We will bring the League's nonpartisan lens to the task. Please email issues@lwvil.org to join the Money in Politics Google Group.

Redistricting, *Paula Lawson*

When US Census data is released in 2021, it will be used to draw the district boundaries for many federal, state and local legislative bodies. It is important for community groups to define their community and protect against gerrymandering by playing an active role in 2021 redistricting.

We are working with CHANGE Illinois and [Representable](#) to protect community representation with their *We Draw the Lines* Community Mapping Tool. This mapping tool makes it possible for communities to present legislators with a precise definition and map of their community.

We encourage local Leagues to get involved in community mapping. We'll offer a training session for *We Draw the Lines* early in 2021 and cover the topic during the Issues Briefing. Email issues@lwvil.org if you would like to participate.

ISSUES BRIEFING

Save the Dates

Our annual Issues Briefing is designed to give a preview of legislation and issues anticipated during the spring General Assembly session. Issues Briefing 2021 will be entirely online, extending over two Saturdays—February 20 and February 27. Each Saturday will feature one plenary and two breakout sessions. Stay tuned for more details!

Fair Tax Amendment: Nextsteps

The Fair Tax Amendment failed to pass, in spite of support led by a massive grassroots voter education and engagement effort statewide.

Working alongside 400 state organizations, we played a large role in supporting the initiative, thanks to the following efforts of local Leagues:

- Sponsored more than 60 programs
- Shared more than 120 social media posts
- Published more than 40 Letters to the Editor or Op Eds,
- Participated in 5 press conferences
- Distributed more than 1300 yard signs
- Handed out more than 1000 palm cards in English and Spanish
- Made more than 400 calls
- Secured dozens of endorsements

More than 2.3 million voters supported the Fair Tax, recognizing the need to promote economic and racial justice through a progressive tax. Building on this groundwork, we will support state revenue sources for the equitable funding of items such as education and healthcare. “Next steps” will be addressed in an Issues Briefing session on February 20.



High Voter Turnout for Secure Election

Although tested by COVID-19 and a USPS crisis, our democratic voting systems prevailed this November. Armed with an expanded voting law from the Illinois General Assembly and a cadre of dedicated election workers across the state, Illinois Election Authorities were able to accommodate more voters than ever before. All votes will be counted.

The [national turnout is projected to be 66.7%](#) of eligible voters, the highest rate since 1900, when it reached 73.7%, and women and minorities couldn't vote. This compares to a 60.1% turnout in 2016.

“The November 3rd election was the most secure in American history,” [according to a joint statement](#) from the Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council and the Election Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Executive Committee. “All of the states with close results in the 2020 presidential race have paper records of each vote, allowing the ability to go back and count each ballot if necessary...There is no evidence that any voting system deleted or lost votes, changed votes, or was in any way compromised.”

Coming Soon - Program Planning

State program planning is the primary means for shaping our public policy program, culminating with the adoption of the 2021-23 LWVIL program at the state Convention in June.

Input from our members helps establish a viable and exciting program that provides the tools to actively engage in public policy change at local and state levels. Program planning materials will be sent to local League leaders at the beginning of December and posted on our website.

Don't forget to follow, like and share with us on social media!



The League of Women Voters Illinois Education Fund (LWVILEF) encourages the informed and active participation in government by providing civic education and voter services. [Make a difference today](#) for you and your community with a tax-deductible gift to support our work to defend democracy and empower voters.

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