

# Member Bulletin



## A Note From the President, March 2022

There is so much happening these days close to home and on the world stage—and women are in the forefront:

- In war-torn Ukraine, a [group of mothers using their cellphones](#) to make sure the world knows of their daily horror;
- a composed and unflappable judge persevering through hours of biased and harassing questions;
- the loss of Madeleine Albright, a role model for all and a trailblazer for women.

And in the midst of everything, this popped up: "Ever wonder why men's sports are just called 'sports' but women's sports are called 'women's sports?'"

This is the straightforward question of a campaign from the YWCA Metro Vancouver Canada, "It's time to add the M." The campaign references the common practice of naming women's sports leagues by placing a 'W' in the name. Four of professional sports largest organizations—hockey, basketball, soccer and golf—each have men's and women's leagues, yet it is NHL and WNHL, NBA and WNBA.

Sports are not inherently male. Neither are war-time survival, seats on the US Supreme Court, or government cabinet positions. Gender must be a descriptor, not a default. The same is true for other descriptors, such as race and religion.

It is long past time to change these narratives, and it begins with each of us, every day. What do you see in front of you that maintains inequities, fosters exclusion, encourages divides? Where can you influence change?

It begins with you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allyson".

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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

***New Local League***

## Welcome LWV of DeKalb County

LWVIL is proud to announce that this very active and successful MAS unit has received official recognition from LWVUS as a local League! Having already established themselves as an important presence in their area, this League is positioned for tremendous growth and impact for the residents of their county. Congratulations!

## Leadership Changes

**Maria Pasquesi** joined the boards of LWVIL and LWVILEF as Treasurer this month. A Certified Public Accountant with extensive experience in both private and nonprofit accounting, Maria is a member of LWV Lake Forest/Lake Bluff. Our new treasurer's term will extend for the remainder of the 2021–23 Biennium.

Board member **Roberta Borrino** resigned from her position on the LWVIL and LWVILEF boards. We thank Roberta for her service as a board member and her continued dedication as president of LWV Roselle/Bloomingtondale.

## Executive Director Steps Down

Executive Director Azisti Dembowski tendered her resignation effective March 4, 2022. LWVIL is deeply appreciative of Azisti's constant dedication to the mission and her many accomplishments as our executive director. Her wisdom and guidance were invaluable in helping create a sustainable operations structure for LWVIL. We wish her all the best. Next steps are being put in place by the LWVIL board. For any administrative needs, please email [support@lwvil.org](mailto:support@lwvil.org).

## VOTER SERVICE



## It's Time for Candidate Forums

With primary election day on the horizon, June 28, local Leagues are hard at work planning candidate forums. Constituents and candidates rely on the professionalism and neutrality of League forums, and LWVIL is busy providing guidance to hundreds of dedicated local League forum organizers.

During an LWVIL moderator training held last month, attendees learned how to navigate their new districts, were connected with sibling leagues to coordinate forums, and were presented with GOTV ideas. Voter service roundtables being held in early April will provide voter service teams with information on how to collect, screen, and format forum questions as well as time to share advice for facilitating a fair, informative, respectful, and inclusive forum.

Candidate forums are a League hallmark and an excellent **opportunity for all League**

members to educate and engage voters in their community. Whether in-person or virtual, recordings of forums will be available in the Illinois Voter Guide for maximum accessibility.

**Help voters find out what candidates are saying—remind people about your local League’s candidate forums!** Watch the LWVIL website for a statewide forum calendar and promotional materials, which will be posted soon.

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## Empowering Voters

As a League, we are all Team Voter Engagement and Team Get Out the Vote during election season. We must all be prepared to help voters find out how to register, who is on their ballot, and where and when to vote. Sometimes, it is as easy as pointing them to the [Illinois Voter Guide](#).

Want to do more? The LWVIL Voter Service team has put together a [Get Out the Vote Idea Guide](#) and accompanying [toolbox](#) that were presented at Voter Service roundtables last month. These valuable resources are now posted on the LWVIL website’s member resources page. All members are encouraged to take a look and contact their local League voter service team to find out how to best join in.

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## Maintaining Nonpartisan Status During Election Season

While all Leagues continually strive to maintain nonpartisan status, election season requires extra diligence. This is especially true when elected officials appear at League events.

Please remember that any elected official who is running for re-election is a candidate. Any event appearance becomes a platform during election season. **No candidate should appear at any League event other than an official candidate forum or candidate Meet & Greet.** Both of these events require an invitation to all candidates for that race and participation from at least two candidates.

During election season, legislators who are not running for office can be included in League programs, but it is important to make every effort to ensure they do not campaign for others. Whenever possible, include elected officials from all parties.

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## High School Voter Registration Information

[High School Voter Registration \(SB825\)](#) requires the State Board of Elections to prepare a one-page document explaining voter registration, which must be distributed to students by every high school; distribution can be electronic.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) published a [notice](#) about this document in their *Weekly Message* on February 1, 2022. However, the notice was hard to find and did not mention that distribution of this document is mandatory election law. (Hint: the notice is the the IN BRIEF section under Student Opportunities.)

LWVIL is contacting the State Board of Elections as well as the Illinois State Board of Education to address this failure in communication. Local Leagues are encouraged to contact their school districts using this [email template](#). We must bring this critical voter education effort front and center for all schools.

## ISSUES & ADVOCACY



### Legislative Interviews and Lobbying

Legislative interview and advocacy materials can be found on the [LWVIL website's League Resources](#) page, under Issues and Advocacy.

The shortened Illinois General Assembly term, which ends April 8, does not leave time for a statewide lobby day. Instead, the Issues & Advocacy committee recommends that local Leagues use legislative interviews to either connect with their legislators around LWVIL priority questions, or to lobby for specific bills. Questions? contact [issues@lwvil.org](mailto:issues@lwvil.org).

## EVENT CALENDAR

Check out the [event calendar](#) on the LWVIL website and connect with other local Leagues. Go to the event calendar for information on how to submit your League's educational events for posting.

*Thank you for supporting our work to defend democracy and empower voters.*



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