

# Member Bulletin



## A Note From the President, July 2021

As I look over this month's Member Bulletin, I realize how representative it is of why I so deeply appreciate the League and its members.

We have it *all* going on:

- A walk in a local forest preserve is no simple walk in the park for the League—we promote climate action as we underscore the interconnectedness of our natural systems and the importance of educating and activating for the preservation of natural biodiversity.
- We are active in a coalition that works to protect voters and decrease the racial divide by ensuring a 2017 law is properly implemented.
- We make sure that our long history is remembered by applying for markers on the National Votes for Women Trail.
- We promote the rising next generation of powerful advocates with college scholarships.
- And always, always, always, we advocate for the freedom to vote.

Right now, immediately, I hope each and every one of you feels the same urgency I feel to speak up and speak out, at every opportunity, with everyone you know, about the importance of the For the People Act.

In the past six months, our country has seen more than 400 voter suppression laws presented in 49 states, and many of those have passed. Voter suppression is real and it is dangerous, and national voting laws can help wipe it out.

If you do nothing else with your summer, do this: advocate in every way possible for passage of the For the People Act.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allyson". The signature is written in a cursive style and ends with a long horizontal flourish.

Allyson E. Haut, Ph.D.

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

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FOR THE  
PEOPLE



## For the People Act Needs Your Advocacy

National voting rights are critical—and central to the League's core mission. It is time for all Leaguers to advocate for national voting standards. This is how the League defends democracy, making sure every vote is a voice and every voice is heard.

### Five ways to make a difference

#### 1. Send emails to motivate friends and family.

Explain the importance of this vital legislation and provide information they need to contact their senators. Get started with the template below:

"Did you know that this year there have been 400 voter suppression laws introduced in 49 states? Let that sink in. We need national voter protection laws, which is why the Senate MUST pass the For the People Act. Our democracy depends on every voter being able to vote, no matter where they live.

You can help by contacting your Senators and insisting that they protect everyone's freedom to vote. The League of Women Voters makes this easy to do:

<https://bit.ly/LWVFTPA>. Better yet, call your Senators and tell them! Find your Senators' phone numbers here: <https://bit.ly/LWVContact>."

#### 2. Use social media to share information.

Follow LWVIL on whatever platform you use— [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#)—and share, share, share. This is powerful! A recent LWVIL Facebook post was shared so many times that it has reached 25,000 people.

#### 3. Be a resource in your community.

Do you know people with questions about what's in the For the People Act? Learn the key provisions and help provide answers. The Act is nearly 900 pages long, but the Brennan Center for Justice offers an [annotated look](#).

#### 4. Always encourage action.

When you talk to people, ask them to contact their legislators AND take the next step: to contact ten friends and ask them to do the same. Yes, ten. Is that so much to ask when our democracy is at stake?

#### 5. Contact Senators Durbin and Duckworth.

Already done that? Do it again. Let them know you expect them to continue to press the Senate to pass this act.

- [Contact Senator Durbin](#)
- [Contact Senator Duckworth](#)

Be on the alert and use every opportunity to make your position, as a League member and an American, very clear. Free, fair and accessible elections will result in increased voter turnout and elevate the voice of all Americans. Every eligible voter deserves the

freedom to vote, no matter what state they call home.



## Automatic Voter Registration Settlement

The nonpartisan Just Democracy Illinois coalition recently reached a settlement with Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White to force proper implementation of the Automatic Voter Registration Act in Illinois.

The 2017 law is intended to increase civic engagement and narrow racial gaps in voter registration. Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) is designed so that eligible voters who interact with the Department of Motor Vehicles are automatically registered at their current address, unless they opt out.

The lawsuit, filed in early 2020 by six groups that make up the steering committee of Just Democracy Illinois, was settled on June 29. By [addressing problems with AVR implementation](#) such as lack of adequate access for people with limited English skills and the failure to automatically update the rolls when voters move, the settlement will allow for greater numbers of eligible voters to register.

LWVIL is a member of the Just Democracy Illinois coalition.



## Forest Preserves Highlight Biodiversity

Illinois' invaluable system of forest preserves was begun more than 100 years ago for the "education, pleasure and recreation of the public." Today, the preserves serve as classrooms and laboratories for the long-term study of issues vital to the repair of our planet, such as the importance of biological diversity, plant resilience, and native species restoration.

A group of LWV Palatine members recently entered the "classroom" of Cook County's Deer Grove East forest preserve for a nature walk with forest preserve steward Mark Krivchenia. Stewards are passionate, knowledgeable volunteers who teach visitors about the importance of the preserves to the state's ecological system.

During a 90-minute walk, Krivchenia pointed out the wide variety of native plants and flowers, explaining that their deep roots hold water and help prevent flooding in local neighborhoods. The existence of these deep-rooted natives is no accident. Volunteers

have put in years of work to remove non-native plants and human impacts, such as farm drain tiles, and restore natural water flows, native plants and trees. Dedicated work teams continue to remove non-native plants and spread native plant seeds. The abundance of wildflowers, insects and bird activity in this area is the result of their restoration efforts.

The Cook County preserve district, established in 1914, is Illinois' oldest. More than 100 preserves dot the state, with teams of dedicated volunteers working to protect the native flora and fauna and helping [study ways to mitigate the effects](#) of our shifting climate.

The LWV of the Palatine Area environment interest group encourages everyone to visit a [nearby forest preserve](#) and learn how they can support Illinois' vital outdoor areas.

"Agriculture lands, cities, and the vast suburban tracts that surround them have replaced natural areas in so many places that not enough nature remains to generate the natural capital on which our lives depend."

—Douglas Tallamy

*Nature's Best Hope: A New Approach to Conservation That Starts in Your Yard*



## Protect the Mississippi River

It's time to give the people, land, water, and wildlife of our Mississippi River what it deserves. The Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative (MRRRI) Act will:

- Improve drinking water quality
- Promote community resilience to the climate crisis
- Reduce flood risk by restoring floodplains and wetlands
- Protect and restore wildlife habitat
- Prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species
- Dedicate funding for communities of color and economically disadvantaged communities who have experienced the highest costs of environmental degradation

Ask [your congressperson to support](#) the MRRRI Act today.

 <b>Stacey Abrams</b> Founder, Fair Fight	<b>Panelists</b>	 <b>Janice Mathis</b> Executive Director, National Council of Negro Women, Inc.	 <b>Sheila Katz</b> CEO, The National Council of Jewish Women	 <b>Ami Gandhi</b> Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights	<b>Honorees</b>	 <b>Darnella Frasier</b> Video recorded the murder of George Floyd
		 <b>Christian F. Nunes, MBA, MS, LCSWI</b> President, National Organization for Women	 <b>Allyson Haut</b> President, League of Women Voters of the Illinois	 <b>Phumzile Maziwuko</b> Council General, South Africa		 <b>Jaquie Algee</b> VP of External & Community Relations, SEU Healthcare L & INMK

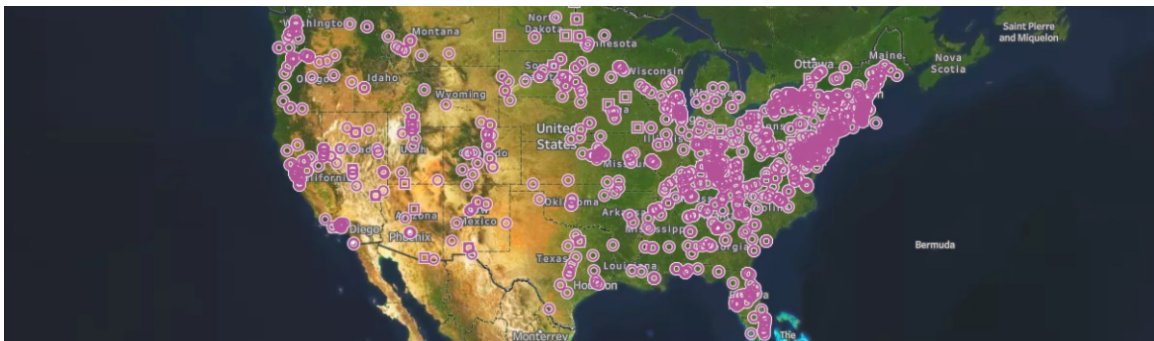
## Women's Roundtable: We Wear Many Hats

Tuesday, August 3, 11:30am to 1:00 pm (virtual)

Stacey Abrams, Founder, Fair Fight Action, will be the keynote speaker at the Women's Roundtable during the Rainbow Push Coalition's annual convention. The convention is being held virtually this year, from August 1-6. [Registration required.](#)

Following Abrams' speech, LWVIL President Allyson Haut will participate in a panel discussion about current challenges to democracy, racial and gender equity, and strategies for working together as allies.

Haut joins fellow panelists Sheila Katz, CEO, National Council of Jewish Women; Ami Gandhi, Senior Counsel, Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights; Christian F. Nunes, President, National Organization for Women; and Phumzile Mazibuko, Consul General, South Africa in Chicago. The panel will be moderated by Janice Mathis, Executive Director, National Council of Negro Women.



## Suffrage Trail: Trout Marker Dedication

Thursday, August 26, 1 pm

414 Forest Avenue, Oak Park, IL

Join members of the League, the Nineteenth Century Charitable Association, and The Historical Society of Oak Park-River Forest to celebrate the installation of a marker honoring suffragist Grace Wilbur Trout on the [National Votes for Women Trail](#).

LWVIL's 100th Anniversary committee was instrumental in making sure that the National Votes for Women Trail highlighted Illinois' role in the passage of the 19th Amendment. Thanks largely to their efforts, four women's suffrage sites in Illinois are now among the nation's 250 sites recognized with trail markers. The trail marker program is funded by the [William G. Pomeroy Foundation](#) and the federal [Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission](#).

Additional Illinois markers recognize Ellen Martin, the Lombard woman who first cast a ballot; Catharine Waugh McCulloch of Evanston, a primary architect of Illinois' effort to pass suffrage; and the Alpha Suffrage Club, established by Ida B. Wells-Barnett as the first African-American suffrage organization.

Grace Wilber Trout spearheaded the state's campaign for suffrage as the president of the Illinois Equal Suffrage Association (IESA) from 1912 to 1920. Once the Nineteenth Amendment was enacted, IESA was succeeded by the League of Women Voters of Illinois. Trout signed the Illinois League's incorporation documents.

The marker will be installed at the site of Trout's home in Oak Park. The dedication ceremony will be followed by a reception at the nearby Nineteenth Century Club building, one of many unmarked suffrage sites included in the online [National Votes for Women Trail](#). Oak Park is also home to the Scoville Institute and the homes of Dr. Julia Holmes Smith and Dr. Anna Blount—be sure to check them out!

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## Syvia Tillman Scholarships Awarded

A scholarship created by LWV Homewood-Flossmoor to honor beloved member Syvia Tillman was awarded to three area students this spring. The \$1000 scholarships were awarded to students intending to major in political science in college, as Tillman did.

Tillman worked tirelessly with the League to protect voters during the last 20 years of her life, serving as president of her local League and on the LWVIL board as vice president of membership and vice president of issues.

“With her passing on Election Day 2020, our community lost a tireless worker,” said LWV Homewood-Flossmoor President Barbara Hayes. “She leaves behind a legacy of her commitment to political advocacy, education and labor.”

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## LWVUS Launches New Initiative

Since the 2020 election, we have seen new barriers to voting and continued attacks on our democracy that require a renewed organizational investment. Women Power Democracy is a 4-pronged approach to tackle systemic challenges to voting rights through advocacy, litigation, and organizing.

<b>DEMOCRACY TRUTH PROJECT</b> Countering mis- and disinformation to build more trust in our elections.	<b>EXPAND THE FRANCHISE</b> Increasing voter participation through our VOTE411.org platform.
<b>DEMOCRACY DEFENSE FUND</b> Protecting voting rights through legal and grassroots action.	<b>PEOPLE POWERED FAIR MAPS™</b> Building electoral districts that fairly represent the people. 

These League-led programs will build more trust in our elections, grow our electorate with equity, create fairness for voter access, and ensure community districting truly reflects our population. [Learn more about this initiative.](#)



## Permanent Vote by Mail Status for Illinois Voters

A new election law signed by Governor Pritzker includes the following provisions:

- Allows an elector to be added to a list of permanent vote by mail status voters who receive an official vote by mail ballot for all subsequent elections.
- Provides that a voter whose application for permanent vote by mail status is

accepted by the election authority shall remain on the permanent vote by mail list until the voter requests to be removed from permanent vote by mail status, the voter provides notice to the election authority of a change in registration, or the election authority receives confirmation that the voter has subsequently registered to vote in another county.

- Provides the notice to be sent by election authorities to all qualified voters before a general election for the option to be placed on the list of permanent vote by mail status voters.
- Provides the application form for permanent vote by mail status. Allows an election authority to combine the applications for single election vote by mail and permanent vote by mail status on one form.

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## Observer Training

**Thursday, August 19, 10:00 am**

The League's trained Observer Corps are a respected part of the community— they work to keep local governments accountable and community members informed.

Attend this morning training session. [Registration required.](#)

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## Event Calendar

Connect with local Leagues across the state. Post and find virtual candidate forums and other educational events on the LWVIL website's [event calendar](#).

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



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