

Member Bulletin



A Note From the President, August 2021

Voting is not a partisan issue.
Period.

We have worked hard for more than 100 years to make sure that everyone is granted the right to vote by the US Constitution. This is the bedrock of our democracy and the foundation of our LWVIL mission.

Now, more than ever, we must give our mission everything we have. If we don't make our voices heard NOW, we will be driven back decades. Back to the days of extreme voter suppression, days of disenfranchisement based on race, gender, and belief system.

This is not acceptable.

This threat to our democracy is a threat to ALL of us, no matter where we live. It is a personal affront, and it is time for personal action. I have said this before and I will keep saying it—it is the responsibility of each one of us to contact everyone we know. Make sure that they understand what is at stake and what they can do.

I know people in at least 30 different states. And they know people in other states. We ALL need to contact our senators. Our reach is broad and powerful.

The time is now. Today.

Extreme voter suppression, disenfranchisement based on race, gender, and belief system—these are on the nation's doorstep. Do not wake up one day and wish you had done more.

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

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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

MARCH ON FOR VOTING RIGHTS

Join the Virtual March This Weekend

Saturday, August 28, 10 am

Mark the 58th anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s historic August 28th March on Washington by joining a nationwide network of rallies and marches in a call to protect our democracy.

You can attend the March On For Voting Rights from home! Join LWVIL and partner organizations for a virtual March On For Voting Rights. See livestream highlights from in-person Marches in Washington DC and other flagship cities. Hear from Governor Pritzker and Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton, along with a host of Illinois legislators.

The March will stream live on the [SEIU Facebook page](#). **Make a point to click in—every voice is needed and attendance numbers matter!**

Show the Senate that we intend to defend our democracy.

“We cannot afford to wait any longer. We need the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act and the For the People Act to restore and protect our freedom to vote.” – [Virginia Kase Solomón](#)

Advocate for Voting Rights

Voting rights legislation has taken on major significance in the face of the voter suppression laws that have been proposed in 49 states, [with 30 passed in 18 states](#). Two key pieces of voting rights legislation will face a partisan battle when the Senate returns from recess on September 13.

The [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) was passed on August 24 by the US House of Representatives by a 219-212 party-line vote. The bill will restore provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which were effectively stripped by two US Supreme Court decisions: [Shelby County v. Holder](#) (2013) and [Brnovich v. Democratic National Committee](#) (2021).

The [For The People Act](#), passed by the House on March 3, 2021, was stopped along party lines in the Senate earlier this summer. A compromise bill will be introduced when the Senate returns after recess.

In order to facilitate passage of both bills, the League supports changing the Senate's rules of filibuster, which LWV CEO Virginia Kase Solomón has called “a Jim Crow relic,

historically used to protect the South's dependence on slave labor and later to defend segregation and block civil rights legislation.”

The League has consistently advocated for [filibuster reform since 2011](#). Reforms supported by the League include prohibiting the minority party from blocking the opening debate of a bill, instituting a ‘talking filibuster,’ ending silent holds, and requiring fewer than 50 votes to bring a bill to a vote.

“Our nation deserves better. The American people are tired of seeing this archaic tool used and abused to delay progress. It is time to amend the filibuster for the health and safety of our democracy,” stated Solomón.

Take Action

Contact Senators [Durbin](#) and [Duckworth](#). Tell them you appreciate their support for Voting Rights legislation. Urge them to vote for filibuster reform.

Voting Rights Legislation in the Senate: Path and Prospects

Tuesday, September 14, 4 pm

Join LWVIL to hear from Senator Durbin’s spokesperson, Sonia Gill, who will provide updates on the prospects of voting rights legislation as the Senate returns from recess.

[Register to attend.](#)

National Voter Registration Day

It’s time to prepare for Voter Registration Day on September 28! Sign up and become a National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) Partner.

Begin by [watching a recording](#) or viewing the [slideshow](#) of the NVRD organization's planning tips webinar held on August 18.

Register for their [September 14 discussion](#) on how to have meaningful, non-partisan conversations with voters during registration. Post your NVRD events on their [calendar](#). Contact NVRD at info@nationalvoterregistrationday.org.



District Maps Need Adjusting

The Illinois General Assembly (ILGA) convenes on August 31, 2021 to approve new maps drawn with actual 2020 census figures. Previous maps were drawn using American Community Survey (ACS) data projections in order to meet the legally mandated Illinois state deadline of June 30.

Census figures released August 12 revealed disparities between ACS projections and actual figures, resulting in a need for adjusted maps.

Public hearings on the adjusted maps began August 26 and will be held through August 29. The League advocates a two-week public review period after maps are presented to allow for further public feedback. Revising the maps gives lawmakers the opportunity to fulfill their original promise of creating districts based on the needs and input of their constituents.

[Contact your legislators](#) now. Speaking on your own behalf, let them know you expect transparency in the map-drawing process.

Gun Violence Prevention

New Laws Designed to Prevent Gun Violence

Governor Pritzker signed two pieces of legislation this August designed to help stem the tide of gun violence in our state.

The first law, effective January 1, 2022, closes loopholes in policies regulating Firearm Owner Identification (FOID) cards. The law requires background checks for all gun sales, including private sales, and requires firearms are taken away from gun owners whose FOID card has been revoked.

In 2019, a gun owner with a revoked FOID card killed five people and injured six others at an Aurora, Illinois factory. The case drew attention to the loopholes in the system and prompted LWVIL and many other organizations to advocate for legislation to “fix the FOID.”

The second law, effective June 1, 2022, strengthens the existing Firearms Restraining Order Protection Act, passed in 2018. It expands the pool of those who may request the temporary removal of firearms from gun owners who pose a risk to themselves or others, and it includes the removal of ammunition. The legislation also includes provisions for law enforcement training about the use of the law along with public awareness campaigns.

Chief sponsor of the legislation, State Representative Denyse Stoneback, noted, “People who live in households where guns are available are at a much higher risk of gun homicides, gun-related domestic abuse cases, and gun-related suicides.”



New Illinois Election Law Promotes High School Voter Registration

Legislation signed into law by Governor Pritzker this summer provides support for young first-time voters. According to the new law, [SB 825](#):

“The State Board of Elections shall prepare a one-page document explaining the process to register to vote to be disseminated to high school age students. Every high school must provide students with that document, which may be disseminated electronically.

“No high school may prohibit nonpartisan voter registration activities on its premises. A high school may adopt reasonable regulations restricting nonpartisan voter registration activities.”

Keep in mind that local Leagues may have difficulty accessing high school students in their schools due to COVID-19 restrictions. As always, League voter registration events in a high school should be developed with the cooperation of the principal of the school.

You may need to confirm with your area high schools that the new law is being followed. This may include confirming when the required one-page voter registration document will be disseminated to the students.



Suffrage Trail: Trout Marker Dedication

Leaguers gathered on Thursday, August 26 to celebrate the installation of a marker honoring suffragist Grace Wilbur Trout on the [National Votes for Women Trail](#).

Trout spearheaded Illinois' campaign for suffrage as 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 was a signatory on LWVIL's incorporation documents.

The marker honoring Trout was installed at the site of her home in Oak Park. At the

dedication ceremony, congratulatory letters were read from the National Collaborative for Women's History Sites and from the Pomeroy Foundation, which funded the marker.

A reception after the unveiling was held down the street at the Nineteenth Century Charitable Association building, one of many unmarked suffrage sites included in the online 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.

Observer Training

Wednesday, October 6, 7 pm

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 evening training session via Zoom. [Registration required.](#)

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](#).

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



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