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News You Can Use

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

January 2022

As a friend recently pointed out, no matter your feelings about resolutions at this time of year "the turning of the year holds a lot of symbolism and has its own powerful tilt and it's a good thing to harness."

Our League of Women Voters mission has endured, and will endure, for centuries, by harnessing the energy and renewal of starting points.

At this starting point of 2022, I urge all of us to renew our energy and focus. Look back long enough to remember how far we've come, how we've adapted to "unprecedented times" and the lessons we have learned. Each challenge met is an education, an achievement, and a starting point for the next challenge. Look forward and know that this is how we will travel long distances, conquer the now unseen challenges and ultimately achieve our most lofty goals.

And so 2022 has begun. Let's get started.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allyson E. Haut".

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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

The logo for January 6 Remembrance & Action. It features a white flame icon on the left. To the right, the text "JANUARY 6" is in a large, bold, white font, with "remembrance" in a smaller font below it, and "& ACTION" in a large, bold, white font at the bottom.

JANUARY 6
remembrance
& **ACTION**

As we remember the horrific January 6, 2021 attack on the Capitol, we move forward with this in mind: voting is not partisan. The freedom to vote, and the freedom to continue our lives peacefully when the results of an election result in a transfer of power, is foundational to our democracy.

"Here's the truth: The election of 2020 was the greatest demonstration of democracy in the history of this country." President Biden, January 6, 2022

In 2020 voters turned out in historic numbers. In the year after the election, states began to put in place laws restricting the power of people to vote. In 19 states, new laws make it harder for some people to vote and put the counting and verification of votes in the hands of a political party, rather than in the hands of the people. If we lose our voices—if we lose our votes—we lose our democracy.

"Here in America, the people rule through the ballot, and their will prevails." President Biden, January 6, 2022

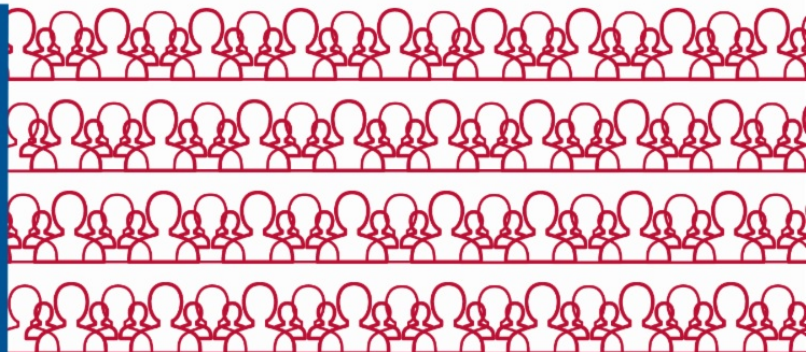
It is incumbent on each of us to remember, and to act. In order to defend our democracy we must use our voices, both in and out of the ballot box. We must contact our legislators, because they represent us, they do not rule us. We must hold them accountable to defend the democratic system that puts them in office.

"They want to rule or they will ruin — ruin what our country fought for at Lexington and Concord; at Gettysburg; at Omaha Beach; Seneca Falls; Selma, Alabama. And what we were fighting for: the right to vote, the right to govern ourselves, the right to determine our own destiny." President Biden, January 6, 2022

Hold the president to his powerful words. Call the White House. Tell the President you want the filibuster removed so that national voting rights can be protected, enshrined into law that no state can remove.

Read the full text of the [President's January 6, 2022 speech](#).

VOTING
RIGHTS
FOR THE
PEOPLE



Defend Democracy NOW!

"The progress of the world will call for the best that all of us have to give. " It is time to heed these words by Mary McLeod Bethune. We the people must give our best to protect the freedom to vote.

Make these calls TODAY. Ask our lawmakers to:

- FIX or NIX the filibuster
- PASS the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Call the White House!

202-456-1111

Tuesday through Thursday, 10:00 am–2:00 pm CST

When you call, you will hear a recording before being connected to the White House line. Need some help with what to say?

Hello, my name is xxx, from Illinois. I believe that our democracy depends on protecting everyone's freedom to vote. We all know that voting rights protections and reforms will make our democracy stronger! Thank you for supporting filibuster reform for Voting Rights Legislation. Please continue to use your power to protect our freedom to vote!

Contact our Senators!

They **need to know** how many of us support changes to the filibuster so that voting rights legislation can pass! Make the call - or send an email.

Senator Durbin: 202-224-2152

durbin.senate.gov/contact/email

Senator Duckworth: 202-224-2854

duckworth.senate.gov/connect/email-tammy

Hello, my name is xxx, and I am an Illinois constituent. The Senate MUST waive the filibuster to protect our voting rights! Please support fixing or nixing the filibuster in order to pass the Freedom to Vote Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act.

Covid Affecting Legislators' Hours

The increase in remote work due to Covid cases might affect the staffing of legislators' phones. Make sure your voice is heard—send emails in addition to making phone calls.

In Illinois: The Illinois General Assembly (ILGA), already facing a shorter session than usual, was shortened further due to the alarming spike in Covid cases attributed to the Omicron variant. The first week of January was shortened from three days to one. Lawmakers have announced that it is likely that all in-person meetings will be cancelled in the second week.

This year's session was set to adjourn April 8 instead of May 31 in order to allow time for campaigning before the June 28 primary election. The primaries are three months later than usual due to pandemic-related delays to the 2020 Census.

The last time a Covid spike overwhelmed Illinois hospitals to this degree was November 2020, when legislators cancelled the entire fall veto session.

In Washington, DC: Congressional offices, committees and agencies are being advised to work remotely, reducing in-person meetings and in-office activities. This advice comes after 13% of the members of Congress tested positive for Covid over a 7-day period ending January 3, compared to 1% in late November.



Illinois Legislative Update

New laws supported by LWVIL advocacy

Hundreds of new laws went into effect on January 1, after a very productive year for the Illinois General Assembly (ILGA). LWVIL advocacy efforts supported a number of these laws throughout the 2021 legislative process.

Budget: The budget closed some corporate tax loopholes and restored \$350 million for evidence-based funding of education to redress current inequities in the state's educational funding system.

Climate: The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act sets Illinois on a course to 100% clean energy while addressing green energy job creation and environmental justice. With this legislation, Illinois is leading the nation in its efforts to switch to clean and renewable energy.

Criminal Justice: The Medical Release Act provides that the Prisoner Review Board may grant a person committed to the Department of Corrections early release for medical incapacity or terminal illness.

Election Policy: HB1871 provides funding for secure collection sites for postage free vote by mail ballots, allows for curbside voting, and allows for the acceptance of vote by mail ballots that lack postage.

Healthcare: Legislation created a prescription drug repository, making it possible for unused prescribed medication sealed in a tamper-evident packaging to be donated to people who are indigent.

Healthcare and Education: The Keeping Youth Safe and Healthy Act provides resources to deliver comprehensive personal health and safety education in grades K-5 and comprehensive sexual health education in grades 6-12.

Immigration: The Illinois Way Forward Act holds law enforcement accountable to protect our communities from potential abuses of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Mental Health: The Community Emergency Services and Supports Act provides that 911 dispatch can request appropriate non-police support for people in mental or behavioral health crises.

Reproductive Health: The Youth Health and Safety Act repealed the Parental Notification of Abortion Act, making Illinois one of the most progressive states in the

nation for reproductive healthcare. Pregnant minors no longer need permission from an adult family member in order to obtain abortion care.

Redistricting

On December 30, 2021, a federal court panel upheld a redrawing of Illinois' legislative district boundaries for maps passed by the ILGA in September. State legislative candidates may begin circulating petitions starting January 13 to gain the required signatures to earn a spot on the June 28 primary ballot.



The Illinois Primary Election is June 28th!

Make Your Plan to Vote

Go to [IllinoisVoterGuide.org](https://www.illinoisvoterguide.org) to find all the nonpartisan information you need to be an informed voter. The first step in your plan is to make sure you are registered. The second is to know where and when to vote. Check out the calendar below or [print your own](#). Questions? Contact voterservice@lwvil.org

March 30: First day to apply for vote by mail ballot.

May 19: First day for early voting at the office of the election authority.

May 19: First day for the election authority to mail an official ballot to a registered voter within the United States.

June 1–June 28: Grace period registration and voting at election authority and polling sites.

June 12: Last day for voters to register to vote online. Grace period registration is available at election authority and early voting sites.

June 13: First day of early voting at permanent polling places other than the office of the election authority.

June 23: Last day for election authority to receive an application to vote by mail.

June 28: General Primary Election Polls open 6:00 am–7:00 pm

Everyone Can Empower Voters

As election season gets underway, voters can use the League's nonpartisan tools to help inform and empower their personal networks. Using LWVIL's publications, social

media posts and the [Illinois Voter Guide](#), everyone can help educate voters and increase voter turnout.

Local League Educational Events

Local Leagues regularly host virtual events related to both voter education and action on issues. Events are open to the public. [See the LWVIL website events calendar.](#)

Stay up to date!

Follow the League of Women Voters of Illinois on social media. Share the message.



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

[Donate Now!](#)

