

Member Bulletin



A Note From the President, January 2022

There are 100 senators in the United States Senate. 100 senators. And 48 of those 100 found it important to protect and preserve the freedom to vote for the people of our democracy. Sadly, the remaining 52 senators voted against democracy. And so, we do not have federal legislation to protect equal access to the ballot.

Here in Illinois, we are grateful for the leadership of our Illinois US Senators Durbin and Duckworth, and their dedication to the foundational freedom to vote for all citizens in every state in the country. Only when all voices are heard will our own voices be heard.

Protecting access to the ballot is protecting democracy itself. One voice, one vote. My voice, your voice, the voices of our neighbors, our communities, our country. Our votes.

Our constitution gives all of us the right to vote, but with new restrictive voting laws in 19 states, there is no longer equal opportunity for all of us to vote. No longer is there equal opportunity for all votes to be cast, for all voices to be heard and counted.

The League of Women Voters cannot and will not stand for anything less than equal access to the ballot.

Turning this around starts right now, right here at home. We have an election coming up on June 28. Let's make sure all of Illinois shows up at the polls. We need to activate the most voters ever.

LWVIL and our Voter Service chairs are working overtime to support and grow local League voter activation efforts across Illinois.

Call your local Voter Service team and ask how you can help out. Whether you have 10 minutes or 10 hours—whatever you do will make a difference.

It is going to take every one of us.

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

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



Freedom to Vote in Illinois: Election Law Improves 2022 Voter Access

Just a reminder that in June 2021, many changes were made to election law to make Illinois elections more fair and accessible, protecting the freedom to vote for all Illinois voters.

House Bill 1871

- Allows election authorities to let a citizen who is temporarily or permanently disabled vote from their car on election day, monitored by two election judges.
- Provides funding for secure collection sites (drop boxes) for postage-free vote by mail ballots.
- Allows for the acceptance of vote by mail ballots that lack postage.

Senate Bill 825

- Declares Election Day, November 8, 2022 to be a state and school holiday.
- Allows voters to apply for permanent vote by mail status, eliminating the need to apply for a ballot every election. The election authority must notify qualified voters no less than 45 days before the election of the option for permanent vote by mail status.
- Requires each election authority to open a vote center on election day at either the election authority site or in their largest municipality; voters can use either the vote center or their precinct polling site to vote. (Expires 1/1/2023)
- Requires election authorities to implement cybersecurity measures, including biennial risk assessments and monthly vulnerability scans.
- Requires high schools to provide voter registration information to students.
- Requires high schools to allow nonpartisan voter registration activities on site.
- Allows sheriffs to establish temporary polling places in county jails so those who have not been convicted of a crime can vote based upon their residence address.
- Allows those who have been banned from running for office due to conviction for certain crimes to petition the governor for restoration of that right.
- Prevents a local government from requiring that a member of the General Assembly resign from office before running for a local office.

Download Our Illinois General Primary Election Calendar

Check out LWVIL's printable copy of the General Primary Election Calendar, complete



Illinois Budget Must Address Education Inequity

Governor Pritzker will present his proposed budget on February 2 for fiscal year 2023, which begins July 1, 2022. It is important that the budget include at least \$350 million in new funds for Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) for education.

EBF targets new funding to the state's most underfunded school districts, bolstering schools where inequities have been most severely exacerbated by the COVID pandemic. In Illinois, more than 300 school districts, serving 973,000 of the state's students, receive under 70% of the funding needed to provide an adequate education. Black and Latinx students are disproportionately represented in these districts. Equitable education is a key step in addressing systemic inequities throughout the state.

Contact the Governor today and ask for continued commitment to public school students in the form of budget allocation of at least \$350 million for EBF for education.

[Voice your opinion through the Governor's website.](#)

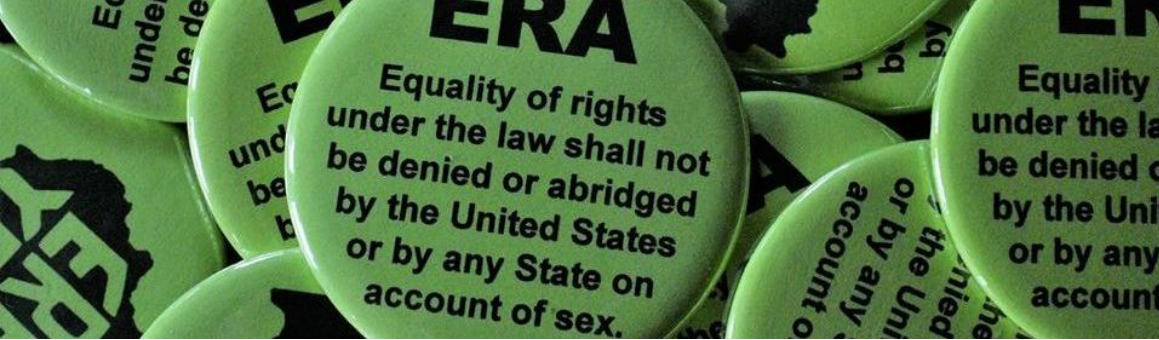
Send a letter or postcard to:
Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Call the Governor's office at 217-782-0244.

Use this script to get started:

I encourage Governor Pritzker to continue delivering on Illinois' commitment to public school students by committing to invest at least \$350 million in additional state funds through the Evidence Based Formula in FY23.

The COVID-19 pandemic has both highlighted and exacerbated inequities deeply rooted in our state's education system. Considering that the EBF formula targets new funding to the state's most underfunded districts and students, increasing EBF funding by at least \$350 million in FY23 is the best way for the state to work to not only bolster our recovery efforts but to continue making progress toward adequate funding for our schools and students, addressing one of the main root causes of systemic inequities.



100 Year Battle for ERA: Update

Think about it: the two people next in line to the President of the United States, Vice President Kamala Harris and Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, do not have equal legal protection under the US Constitution.

LWVIL is among those working to make sure that 2022 is the year that changes—with the certification of the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th amendment to the US Constitution.

Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul, along with attorneys general from Nevada and Virginia, filed a brief on Jan 3, 2022 with the US Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. The brief appeals the decision of a lower court judge last March to dismiss their lawsuit to compel certification of the ERA.

On January 10, LWVIL joined more than 20 organizations from Illinois, Nevada and Virginia in a supporting amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief in support of the case. Eleven other supporting briefs were filed the same day, representing more than one hundred [corporations, constitutional scholars, and coalitions](#).

To review briefly, the Equal Rights Amendment was first drafted in 1923 by suffragist Alice Paul. In 1972, the language used today was sent to the states for ratification, after being approved by overwhelming majorities in both the US House (354-24) and Senate (84-8).

Illinois ratified the ERA in 2018, shortly after Nevada in 2017. In 2020, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify, thereby meeting the constitutionally required 3/4 state threshold to become a Constitutional amendment. However, in light of questions about the amount of time lapsed between the original proposal and final state ratification, the Archivist of the US refused to record and certify Virginia's ratification and publish the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the US Constitution. Shortly thereafter, Illinois, Nevada and Virginia filed suit to compel the US Archivist to certify and publish the ERA.

Raise
your
voice.

20
22

ISSUES
BRIEFING
March 5-11

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF ILLINOIS

Save the Dates!

This annual LWVIL event brings together specialists on a wide variety of current issues, providing attendees with the information they need to be effective advocates for legislation being considered in the Illinois General Assembly.

This year, a full week of programming will provide many opportunities for participation. The Zoom format makes it possible for people all over the state to participate. Be sure to encourage non-League members to save the dates and attend!

Issues Briefing 2022 opens at 9:00 am on Saturday, March 5 with three plenaries:

- How to Make Your Voice Heard
- How to Combat Election Misinformation
- Making Plans to Anticipate and Minimize Disruptions at Public Events

Daily one-hour sessions will be held Monday, March 7 through Friday, March 11, at noon and 5:30 pm to address the following issues:

- LWVIL Illinois Voter Guide
- Culturally Relevant Instruction
- Barriers faced by People with Arrest or Criminal Records
- Regulating the Safe Disposal of Nuclear Waste
- Ranked Choice Voting in Illinois
- Mental Health –Using 988 for Crisis Calls
- Immigration
- Electoral College
- Gun Violence Prevention

Registration opens soon—keep an eye on your inbox for your invitation!

LWVIL Board Update

LWVIL Treasurer Jenny Grochowski has stepped down from the board as of January 14 due to an unexpected increase in demands of her job. The LWVIL benefited greatly from Jenny's extraordinary talent and dedication to efforts for the League at the state level.

From the day she joined the board in 2018, Jenny brought professionalism, passion, and her deep commitment to the mission to her role. She graciously shared her broad experience to help position LWVIL for a sustainable future. We will miss Jenny and are extremely grateful for her service.

The Board Nominations and Governance committees are engaged in a search for a new treasurer. In the interim, financial operations will continue to be handled by our executive director, Azisti Dembowski, with Board oversight by the Finance committee.

Upcoming Opportunities

Moderator Training

Thursday, January 27, 10:00–11:00 am

Well-moderated candidate forums are a League hallmark thanks to well-trained

moderators! Constituents and candidates rely on the professionalism and neutrality of our LWV trained moderators. Learn how to facilitate a fair, informative, respectful, and inclusive forum.

[Registration required.](#) Members only. Registration closes 24 hours prior to the event. *The event link will be sent a day in advance and one hour before the event.*

Observer Training

Thursday, February 3, 7:00–8:00 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.

[Registration required.](#) Members only. Registration closes 24 hours prior to the event. *The event link will be sent a day in advance and one hour before the event.*

LWV Upper Mississippi River Region Workshop

Monday, February 7, 6:30 pm

Climate activist Jackie Armstrong will lead a program on the En-ROADS simulation model for exploring key technology and policy solutions to address global warming.

[Join the workshop via Zoom.](#)

Moderator Training

Thursday, February 17, 7:00–8:00 pm

Well-moderated candidate forums are a League hallmark thanks to well-trained moderators! Constituents and candidates rely on the professionalism and neutrality of our LWV trained moderators. Learn how to facilitate a fair, informative, respectful, and inclusive forum.

[Registration required.](#) Members only. Registration closes 24 hours prior to the event. *The event link will be sent a day in advance and one hour before the event.*

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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