

Member Bulletin



A Note From the President, January 2021

Today, two weeks after the unconscionable attack on the seat of our government, on the very heart of our democracy, we should all take pause to celebrate its resilience in the face of an assault.

Today, we witness the peaceful transfer of power to a new president.

This is not a partisan issue, because no matter your vote, the winner is democracy. All over this country, we believe in the core of our democracy, believe that our vote is our voice and that every vote counts. Because of this, we came together to find solutions to voting during a pandemic.

We educated ourselves by interacting with candidates and each other over zoom, registered online, voted early, voted by mail, used drop boxes, wore masks and created socially distanced lines. We made it possible to vote and vote safely. And then the votes were counted. And challenged. And counted again.

When every vote counts, when people of all viewpoints cooperate and work diligently to ensure that every vote is counted, democracy is the winner.

When our capitol building was attacked and our congressional leaders were endangered by a violent mob, the LWVUS made a critical decision rooted in our 100 year history of defending democracy. The League called for the removal of the president for his role in the attempt to undermine and interfere with our democratic process.

Today we celebrate that democracy prevails. We respond to the call to action of the past two weeks. We own the work to make democracy there for everyone in our country, upholding our values of equity and inclusion for all.

The best way we can do that work is to first take good care of ourselves. After ten months of pandemic, plus two weeks of turmoil, our resources for coping are tested too. Make time to take care of yourself, reach out to someone else to offer a boost or ask for a moment of support.

Our democracy is resilient and so are we.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allyson'.

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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois



Lame Duck Session Update

The Lame Duck Session was a powerful display of the state's commitment to advancing racial equity, beginning with Representative Emanuel "Chris" Welch becoming the first Black Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives.

With the passage of HB3653, a Criminal Justice omnibus bill presented by the Legislative Black Caucus, Illinois became the first state in the nation to end money bail. HB3653 will result in major criminal justice reforms in police training and accountability, detainee and prisoner rights, and transparency in law enforcement.

The Legislative Black Caucus also led on the Education omnibus bill, HB2170 which is designed to lead to a statewide increase in educational access and opportunity for students of color and students from low-income households.

Time ran short and the House was forced to adjourn before completing work on:

- HB3469, providing for remote sessions and voting during times of pestilence or public danger
- HB3994, making funds available to election authorities for drop boxes
- SB1485, requiring consideration of the racial impact of bills

The League was also monitoring ethics reform legislation and an amendment to SB3071. The General Assembly adjourned before either chamber finished considering the bill. To learn more about ethics reform in Illinois, League members are urged to register for the [LWVIL Ethics Reform webinar](#) on January 27.

Upcoming Events

Ethics Reform: Restoring Faith in Illinois

January 27, 5–6:30 pm

This spring, legislators in the General Assembly will be proposing an ethics resolution. Learn about the fight against Corruption in Illinois government. [Register to attend.](#)

Observer Corps Training

January 30, 10 am–noon

[Register in advance here.](#) You will receive a confirmation email and Zoom link.

Any League interested in setting up an Observer Corps is welcome to attend LWVIL's next online Observer Training. Additional dates can be arranged for groups of ten or more, as well as training for Leaguers interested in observing in their current program. Contact [LWVIL Voter Service](#) to discuss possible dates.

ISSUES BRIEFING

One Step at a Time: The Path to Real and Enduring Change **February 20 & 27, 8:45 am - 12:45 pm**

Registration is now open for the LWVIL *Issues Briefing*. This annual event brings together specialists on various current issues, presenting attendees with the facts they need to effectively advocate for issues supported by LWVIL positions.

This year's Zoom format, with six different topics presented on two consecutive Saturdays, is an opportunity for people from all over the state to participate. In accordance with the League's mission of providing equitable access to information, registration is only \$10 for each Saturday, and scholarships are available by contacting issues@lwwil.org.

Participants will learn about local and state advocacy efforts around issues such as environmental ecojustice, non-tax revenue streams for Illinois, affordable housing, systemic racism and inequality, sanctuary cities and transparent redistricting. Get the information needed to be an active force for change in your community.

Encourage non-League members to attend, engage and activate!

For details about sessions, speakers and registration click the button below.

[Issues Briefing Information and Registration](#)

VOTE

IllinoisVoterGuide.org

Illinois Voter Guide

The [Illinois Voter Guide](#) (IVG) is a convenient place for voters to check their

registration, register, and apply to vote by mail. Candidate information for the April 6 Consolidated election will be added after the February 23 primary for candidates in municipalities with populations greater than 10,000 and all school board elections.

The LWVIL Voter Service committee will soon contact local Leagues for input regarding questions to ask candidates. Leagues should prepare for this by collecting candidates' email addresses now. Questions will be sent to candidates by the LWVIL Voter Service committee in February so their answers can be input into the IVG.

Our vendor populates much of the Illinois Voter Guide from candidates' websites, so encourage candidates to build a website for themselves.

Candidate Forums

LWVIL has a Zoom webinar subscription which local Leagues may use for candidate forums. Times can be reserved by local League Voter Service representatives.

Use the [Candidate Participation Policy](#) and other [candidate forum resources](#) when planning your forums. Contact [LWVIL Voter Service](#) for additional advice about how to set up a Zoom forum with moderators, timers and candidates. Moderator training can also be scheduled for groups of ten or more.

Video recordings of candidate forums can be added to the Illinois Voter Guide. Please send links to [LWVIL Voter Service](#) if you would like a forum added.

Criminal Justice Study

The Lame Duck Session passage of the Criminal Omnibus bill highlights the need for an updated Criminal Justice position. Lacking a position, the League was not able to weigh in on the passage of this bill.

Local Leagues are holding consensus meetings for the Criminal Justice Position Update. Leagues should email their [completed response form](#) to issues@lwwil.org by **January 31**.

Program Planning

It's time for Program Planning for the next biennium. Local League input makes for a vital state program! Find program planning materials on the [member league resources page](#) of the LWVIL website. Local League input is due **March 1**, and the process culminates with the adoption of the 2021-23 LWVIL program at the state convention in June.

Request for Proposals to Amend LWVIL Bylaws

Proposals for any Amendment to the [LWVIL Bylaws](#) must be submitted to the Board of Directors no later than **March 12**, three months prior to convention. Proposals can be submitted by any local League or member. Please forward any proposed changes to LWVIL Board member [Jan Dorner](#).

LWVIL Needs YOU!

Share your passion and drive for the LWVIL by [applying](#) to join the 2021-23 Board of Directors.

Work with others from around the state to help the LWVIL be the best resource possible for local Leagues and our communities. With virtual monthly meetings, it has never been easier!

Experience in any one of the following areas would be especially useful: Development and Fundraising; Communications; Community Outreach and Education; Human Resources; Finance or Accounting.

Interested? **Applications are due January 29.** Questions? Contact Nominating Committee Chair [Hilary Denk](#).

Follow, like and share with us on social media!



The League of Women Voters Illinois Education Fund (LWVILEF) encourages the informed and active participation in government by providing civic education and voter services. [Make a difference today](#) for you and your community with a tax-deductible gift to support our work to defend democracy and empower voters.

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