

Member Bulletin



A Note From the President, February 2021

Today it is snowing. Again. Blanketing the snow that is already there. Softening edges. Blurring imperfections. Falling on all equally. Snow doesn't choose sides.

However, when the snow blankets everyone equally, it exposes the inequities which surround us. Those who work from home can call it beautiful. Those who must shovel out cars, traverse unplowed sidewalks to buses and trains that are slow or cancelled, have other words for it. Those who do not have heat, power or water for days have other words.

As Leaguers we know we cannot approach inequity with broad, equal strokes, like a blanket of snow. We must see differences and be intentional in our work and commitment to equity. Equity of ballot access, equity of education, equity of healthcare, the list goes on.

As partners and allies we strive to listen, to learn, and to support changes that bring equitable solutions.

As people, we strive for awareness. Sometimes it comes with the snow.

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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

Reflecting on League History

February marks not only the League's birthday (happy 101 to us!) but Black History Month. A perfect confluence, as we renew our dedication to learning the truth of our history, acknowledging the inequity and racism with which we began.

Black women have been part of the League since the very beginning, and theirs is a story of persistence and dedication. Their contributions will positively influence the League's next century, according to Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, former LWVUS President and author of *The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters*.

"The League of Women Voters' unabridged history is complicated, messy, uncomfortable,

and sometimes unbelievable, on issues of race," [writes Dr. Jenkins](#). "But to be true to its principles, it is imperative that the organization's history...acknowledges this inequity. It is a story of strategic choices and recurrent themes of controversy, compromise and collaboration. It is a story of constant tension between practicality and principle."

Elected in 1994, Dr. Jenkins was LWVUS' 15th president, and the first Black woman to lead the organization. She is the author of two other books, *The Road to Black Suffrage*, and *One Man One Vote: The History of the African-American Vote in the United States*.

ISSUES BRIEFING

One Step at a Time: The Path to Real and Enduring Change

February 20 & 27, 8:45 am–12:45 pm

Register now for **Issues Briefing**, LWVIL's annual look at look at current issues and how to advocate for community progress on issues supported by LWVIL positions.

It's a virtual briefing! With six different sessions presented on two consecutive Saturdays you can Zoom in and learn about what is being done in the areas of ecojustice, affordable housing, immigration, redistricting, income inequality and funding alternatives for the state's social equity initiatives.

The public is welcome! Invite friends, colleagues and students—use this opportunity to engage and activate with people from all over Illinois!

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

[Issues Briefing Information and Registration](#)

Observer Corps Training

Saturday, March 20, 9:00–11:00 am

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

The Observer Program is structured to ensure that processes and decisions made by public entities are made in the open. Trained League observers attend meetings, note what happens and report back to their community.

Any League interested in setting up an Observer Corps is welcome to attend LWVIL's 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.



Illinois Voter Guide

On February 25, the [Illinois Voter Guide](#) (IVG) will have candidate information for the April 6 Consolidated Election for municipalities with populations greater than 10,000 and all school board elections.

Don't forget, the IVG is available 365 days a year to register to vote, apply to vote by mail, and check on your registration.

Much of the Illinois Voter Guide information comes directly from candidates' websites. Members should encourage candidates to build a website for themselves.

Candidate Questions

There is still time for local League leaders to add candidate questions to the IVG. Choose from standard questions or input unique questions. The deadline for adding candidate questions has been extended to February 25. Leagues that have created their own local voter guide and want their candidate Q&A included in the IVG should contact [Voter Service](#).

Candidate Forums

Place your forum videos in the IVG! Send the YouTube or Facebook link to [Voter Service](#). During the November election, the IVG featured 111 local League forum videos.

LWVIL has a Zoom webinar subscription that 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.

Forum Moderator Training

Well moderated candidate forums are a League hallmark thanks to well-trained moderators! Learn how to facilitate a fair, informative, respectful, and inclusive forum when you attend LWVIL moderator training. Zoom trainings will be scheduled after April 6.

Legislative Interviews

Local Leagues will soon begin scheduling annual legislative interviews with their Illinois senators and representatives. These interviews are a great way to strengthen communication and nurture relationships with your legislators. Get involved and let your League President know that you would like to help plan a legislative interview this spring. It is expected that most interviews will be held by Zoom this year; watch for more information.

LWVIL Needs YOU!

Join the state Board of Directors and help lay the foundation for LWVIL's second century. 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!

If not yourself, do you know someone whose skills and talents would make a great addition to the state Board? Ask them! Sometimes all it takes is a word of encouragement.

Interested? **Applications are due February 26.** Questions? Contact Nominating Committee Chair [Hilary Denk](#).



Call to Convention June 12-13

Represent your League at the LWVIL Convention 2021—ask to be a delegate! This year's Convention will be a virtual event for delegates only. Each local League is allotted a number of delegates based on official [Roster Membership counts](#).

Presidents will be asked to submit the names of their delegates in a few weeks, after which identified delegates will be contacted about registration and provided with important details.

NOTE: All delegates must have reliable internet access and a computer or tablet with Zoom downloaded. A phone will NOT be sufficient for convention business.

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers are needed for 2021 Convention! This is a great way to get involved and meet Leaguers from all corners of the state. Especially needed are those with the technical knowledge to serve as Zoom managers and assistants. For information, contact [Cheryl Budzinski](#).

Criminal Justice Study

Thanks to the input of 75% of Illinois' local Leagues, the LWWIL Criminal Justice position update committee is on solid footing to write a new position that will better reflect research and evidence not available in 1995, when LWWIL's position was last updated. The new position will be sent to the LWWIL Board for approval and presented for delegate vote during the 2021 Convention.

Request for Proposals to Amend Bylaws

Proposals for any Amendment to the [LWWIL 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 [Jan Dorner](#).

Event Calendar

Connect with local Leagues across the state. Post and find zoom candidate forums and other educational events on the [LWWIL Website Events Calendar](#)

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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