

Member Bulletin



A Note From the President, March 2021

The fragility of women's rights is on my mind today, halfway through Women's History Month. This week I watched the progress of both the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) through Congress. The existence of one underscores the importance of the other. Without a constitutional guarantee of equality, women's rights are only protected by a patchwork of individual statutes and case law--protections which are always susceptible to being ignored, weakened or completely undone.

VAWA was put in place by Congress in 1994, federal legislation that strengthens domestic violence protections for women. VAWA has been reauthorized multiple times, each time strengthening it, but at the same time, every advance is vulnerable to the next change. Or worse. VAWA has not been reauthorized since 2019.

The Equal Pay Act, Title VII and Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, Supreme Court decisions based on the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause -- are all part of a legal patchwork, created and recreated, issue by issue, to protect women against specific inequalities. These protections are helpful but flimsy, not truly preventing discrimination, merely providing recourse. And they are always at risk. Laws are not permanent.

Amendments to the constitution have staying power that laws do not. The Equal Rights Amendment will protect women.

We cannot take freedom, protections and rights for granted. The way to make history is to ensure that next women's history month we are able to look back and say -- that was the year. That was the year we stopped relying on a mercurial patchwork of laws. That was the year that our elected representatives guaranteed that women are protected by the constitution.

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

"THERE CAN BE NO LIBERTY IN
THE FACE OF RACIST AND
XENOPHOBIC VIOLENCE."



The League of Women Voters grieves the murders of the eight individuals who were killed on Tuesday, March 16th, and the countless other AAPI lives that have been tragically taken as a result of racially motivated violence.

We call on law enforcement officials to seek justice for those whose lives were taken and urge Attorney General Garland and FBI Director Wray to prioritize the investigation of anti-AAPI hate crimes. [Read the full statement.](#)

For the People Act Moves to the Senate

LWVIL met with Senator Durbin's staff and the Declaration for American Democracy Coalition to reinforce League support for the For the People Act (S1) as it moves to the Senate.

S1 will provide national protection against voter suppression. Currently, voter suppression laws are being considered in 43 states. Be sure to [contact Senators Duckworth and Durbin](#) to let them know of your support. Ask others in your community to do the same. Then take the time to [thank your Representatives](#) for passing HR1.

Bring Your Talent to the State Level

The LWVIL Board is looking for voices from outside the Chicago area. **Leaders are needed from every corner of the state.**

No travel required; the Board meets by Zoom. **Pull up a square and claim your seat at the virtual table.** [Fill out an application right away.](#) Questions? Contact Nominating committee chair [Hilary Denk](#).

VOTE

IllinoisVoterGuide.org

Illinois Voter Guide

IllinoisVoterGuide.org, LWVIL's one-stop election resource, is now full of information for all of the races on ballots statewide, including townships and special districts.

More 200 candidate forums and video statements will be added to IVG this election thanks to the dedication of local Leagues. New forums are being added as they take place.

The voter guide also features candidate responses to questions from local Leagues. These are supplemented with information from candidate websites and facebook pages, where available.

Voters can use IVG to register to vote, apply to vote by mail, check their registration, find their polling place, research candidates and make a plan to vote. Due to difficulty applying the GIS (Geographic Information Service) data for townships and special districts, voters may see additional districts on their sample ballot.

501(c)(3) TRANSITION

What does it mean for LWVIL?

When is three greater than four?

When it makes LWVIL stronger by becoming one instead of two!

It's no riddle. LWVIL is making the transition from two separate businesses, the 501(c)(4) LWVIL and the 501(c)(3) LWVILEF, to one 501(c)(3) entity. Moving from two to one will lead to a more powerful LWVIL.

Becoming a single organization opens up resources so that LWVIL can focus more time and money on providing services to amplify the mission work of local Leagues. A stronger LWVIL makes for more powerful League activity across the state.

Buoyed by the success of 175 Leagues (14 state and 161 local) that have made the transition in the past decade, LWVIL's 501c3 Transition committee has been working steadily since the initiative was first introduced at the 2017 convention.

Thanks to the committee's diligence, everything is ready for the next step, which is to approve the required amendments to the LWVIL bylaws and articles of incorporation at convention this spring. After that, paperwork will be filed with the IRS. Once the IRS approves and the transition completed, all local Leagues will reap the benefit of having one LWVIL.

Will any of this change how local Leagues function? No. Local Leagues interact with LWVIL as individual entities and can continue with business as usual. However, it might make sense for a local League to make the transition themselves. LWVIL has assisted numerous local Leagues that are looking into becoming a 501(c)(3). Of those, three have completed the transition and another five are well on the way.

Learn more—[find FAQs and other information](#) about becoming one 501(c)(3) organization on our website. Have questions? Send them to the Transition committee at 501c3@lwwil.org.



Upcoming Events

Observer Corps Training

Saturday, March 20, 9–11 am

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.

[Registration required.](#) *You will receive a confirmation email and Zoom link.*

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.

Ranked Choice Voting

Monday, April 5, 5–6 pm

Learn more about this election system, endorsed as an option by League membership during 2020 convention. Rob Richie, President and CEO of FairVote, will provide an overview of the different types of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) and discuss their pros and cons. [Registration required.](#) *The event link will be sent a day in advance.*

Forum Moderator Training

Saturday, April 17, 10 am–noon

Well-moderated candidate forums are a League hallmark thanks to well-trained moderators! Learn how to facilitate a fair, informative, respectful, and inclusive forum. [Registration required.](#) *The event link will be sent a day in advance.*

Legislative Hour

Monday, April 19, 5–6 pm

Join state legislators for a discussion of the latest developments in bills advancing through the General Assembly. [Registration required.](#) *The event link will be sent a day in advance.*

Lobby Day

Monday, April 26, 10–11 am

Mark your calendars for LWVIL Lobby Day! Plan to let your legislators know the League's position on specific legislation. This year's focus will be on bills targeting environmental protection, gun violence prevention, and the budget. Begin the day with an overview from legislators of the bills being sponsored. [Registration required.](#) *The event link and fact sheets will be sent in advance.*



CONVENTION 2021

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF ILLINOIS

Convention Goes Virtual June 12-13

When will convention be in session?

There will be two sessions on Saturday—morning and afternoon—and one session on Sunday morning. There will be Q&A sessions for delegates in the evenings, Wednesday through Saturday.

Can members who are not delegates watch the convention?

Plans are being made so that members can register to watch plenary sessions.

What is the registration fee?

Prior to May 9, registration is \$20 per delegate. After that, the price goes up to \$25.

Where are convention materials?

As materials become available they will be posted on [the convention page](#) in the For Members section of our website.

Are volunteers needed?

Yes! This is a great way to get involved and meet Leaguers from all corners of the state. Non-delegate members who are familiar with Zoom will be needed at all sessions. Interested? Contact Convention committee chair [Cheryl Budzinski](#).

Event Calendar

Connect with local Leagues across the state. Post and find virtual candidate forums and other educational events on our website's [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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