

# Member Bulletin

## A Note From the President, July 2022

On the morning of July Fourth, we were all devastated by the mass shooting in Highland Park.

This horrific event came on the heels of the incredibly disappointing decision of the US Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v Casey*.

We are angry and **want to DO something**.

The events of recent days are overwhelming and we must demand change. We, as the League, need to be key players in protecting our democracy. We must educate, advocate and activate. We will empower voters all the way to the ballot box.

What can we **DO right now**?

In this Member Bulletin, find out how to be an ally. Learn how to advocate for gun violence prevention and reproductive justice. Finally, get a quick overview of the results of LWVUS' 55th Biennial Convention.

In the coming months, LWVIL will be working to bring you educational opportunities about these and other important issues.

Remember this is a marathon, not a sprint.



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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

**How do we advocate for change?**

LWVIL is a statewide organization with more than 3,500 members, able to organize and mobilize at the grassroots level.

**The League of Women Voters of Illinois is powerful.**

When we advocate for state-level change, it is vital that we all recognize and reinforce the power that comes from our cohesion as a group.

**When we speak with ONE VOICE our advocacy is clear and LOUD.**

First, we determine if our positions allow us to advocate. Second, we look for the organizations dedicated to working on specific issues and we approach them as allies.

**What is an ally?**

The League is dedicated to citizen education, empowerment, and activation, and we are very good at it.

**In a word, an ally is a supporter.**

This is our power.

As allies, we use our power in support of the organizations advocating for positions we hold.

On a state level, LWVIL is represented in multiple coalitions. As coalition members, we are able to inform our entire membership about issue-related legislation and actions.

As allies, LWVIL is ready to offer advocacy support by activating our powerful local League network, fulfilling our mission to educate and empower voters.

**What does being an ally look like?**

**As allies, we support issue advocacy** by activating members in various ways: Action Alerts, “contact your legislators” reminders, announcements about rallies and marches, letters to the editor, social media posts for sharing, educational events, legislative hours, and more. In turn, members use this information to activate their fellow constituents.

**Our power as allies lies in our ability to amplify a single message across Illinois.**



In the land of the free, every community must be free from the reality of gun violence.

Preventing gun violence is nonpartisan.

## Gun Violence Prevention Allyship

Our hearts are with our fellow Leaguers and Illinoisans suffering from the trauma and grief of the tragedy on the Fourth of July. [Read LWWIL's statement.](#)

In America today, it is painfully clear that every one of us could become the next random victim of gun violence. We are not free to gather, go to school, grocery shop, worship or walk down the street without fear. Every one of us must demand our right to be free from the reality of gun violence.

### What can we do as allies?

#### Be vocal about stronger gun laws.

Contact your legislators at every level of government and tell them you want stronger gun laws in your state and in your country. [Find your legislators.](#)

#### Ban assault weapons in Illinois and the US.

Tell your Illinois State Legislators you want them to support Illinois HB 5522, which would ban assault weapons as well as high-capacity magazines.

Contact your US legislators and let them know that you want a federal ban on assault weapons.

#### Strengthen FOID card regulations in Illinois.

Illinois residents must have a Firearms Owner Identification (FOID) card in order to legally possess a firearm, ammunition, stun or laser gun. These cards cost \$10 and are valid for ten years.

There is no age limit for a FOID card, although applicants under 21 must be sponsored by a parent or guardian. Minors applying for FOID cards must be able to sign the application. If they are unable to sign, then a copy of their birth certificate must be provided.

Contact your Illinois state representative and tell them you want strengthened FOID card regulations, including stronger background checks for FOID applicants.

#### Increase public awareness of the Illinois Red Flag law.

What is commonly referred to as the Red Flag law, is the Illinois Firearm Restraining Order (FRO) law, enacted in 2019.

An FRO can temporarily prohibit ownership of guns by someone who is in danger of harming themselves or others. For people whose loved ones are a potential threat, an



FRO might be lifesaving. No criminal charges are involved, and a crime doesn't need to be committed for an FRO to be issued.

Help increase public awareness of this important law. Find information to share on the [Speak for Safety](#) website.

## Find gun violence prevention organizations to support.

Follow gun violence prevention organizations such as [Moms Demand Action](#), [Everytown for Gun Safety](#), [Giffords Law Center](#), and [March For Our Lives](#) (the organization started by the student survivors of the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida).

Some gun violence prevention organizations are deeply involved in eradicating the root causes of violence. They advocate for things like community investment, violence intervention, and youth mentor programs. Follow the work of organizations like [Institute for Nonviolence Chicago](#), [Chicago CRED](#), and [Communities Partnering 4 Peace](#).

## Get out the vote.

This is where the League shines! Election day is four months away. Help voters find the information they need to vote their values.



## Reproductive Justice Allyship

With the repeal of *Roe v Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v Casey*, Illinois became one of the only states in the midwest where abortion is safe and legal.

However, Governor Pritzker and the Illinois General Assembly Leadership recently decided to “convene a special session in the coming months.” This will give them the summer to assess needs and possible responses, so that Illinois can “play an even more vital role in standing up for reproductive freedom.”

LWVIL has long advocated in coalition with organizations working in this space: [Planned Parenthood of Illinois](#), [ACLU of Illinois](#), [Illinois NOW](#), [Midwest Access Coalition](#), [Chicago Abortion Fund](#) and others. Together, our advocacy helped make Illinois an abortion and reproductive healthcare leader. As coalition members, we are positioned to help advocate for and protect the rights we have, as soon as our support is needed.

# What can we DO as allies?

## Step back and breathe.

Our federal right to reproductive healthcare will not be won back overnight. The reproductive justice landscape is shifting rapidly, and we need to let those who are leading this work have time to adjust and plan.

## Be vocal about reproductive justice.

This can not be overstated. Contact your legislators on every level of government and tell them you want the strongest reproductive justice protections possible. [Find your legislators.](#)

Talk about reproductive justice with everyone you know and ask them to speak up as well. Attend local marches and rallies.

## Find organizations to support.

Follow organizations such as [Midwest Access Coalition](#), [Chicago Abortion Fund](#), [I Need An A](#) on social media or learn about them through their websites.

These organizations have systems (and some funds) in place to help people in other states find care. They have a network of vetted counselors, caregivers and drivers trained to work with people in need of reproductive healthcare.

If you contact an organization working on reproductive justice to offer your support, remember that they are probably inundated with calls and might take awhile to respond. Right now, their primary concern is to provide continuous reproductive healthcare for those in need.

## Watch for pending legislation.

We expect that Illinois lawmakers will move to expand licensing provisions as a way to increase service capacity (allowing physicians assistants and other providers to be licensed); strengthen licensing protections against claims from other states; and strengthen extradition and privacy protections for care-seekers.

## Get out the vote.

This is where the League shines! Election day is four months away. Help voters find the information they need to vote their values.

Reproductive rights are safe in Illinois, but only as long as our elected officials safeguard them.

**Voting rights and abortion rights are essential to a democracy where all people can participate equally.** [Brennan Center for Justice](#)

# 2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION

## Women Power Democracy

Our 55th Convention was destined to be memorable as our first hybrid convention, but it became even more memorable when the US Supreme Court delivered the devastating decision that overturned *Roe v Wade*.

On that same day, Friday, June 24, Dr. Turner called the League to action with her [opening remarks](#):

*"We hold the power to create a more perfect democracy. Women's rights are human rights, and we will continue to fight until the right to abortion is restored," she stated. "This is the work that the League of Women Voters does...We fight for our freedom. And that's why we are here today at Convention."*

Delegates closed the day's plenary with the adoption of the following resolution: "Be it resolved that the LWWUS supports the rights of women and those who can become pregnant to self-determination related to, and including, but not limited to bodily autonomy, privacy, reproductive health, and lifestyle choice."

Shortly after that, nearly 500 delegates in Denver marched through the streets to join a rally at the state Capitol.

## Convention Business Highlights

### Abolishment of Electoral College is Elevated to the Campaign for Making Democracy Work

The [Campaign for Making Democracy Work](#) was adopted for the new biennium, with an amendment to include "election of the president by popular vote." This includes both the National Vote Interstate Compact and Abolishment of the Electoral College by Constitutional Amendment. Congratulations to all of the Illinois League members whose dedicated years of advocacy helped elevate this issue!

### ERA Added to LWWUS Program

By voting to add the Equal Rights Amendment to the LWWUS program, delegates moved that "resources and focus be used to accomplish its passage and further our mission." The League continues work already being done to ensure publication of the ERA by the US Archivist.

### New and Updated Policy Positions

All current positions were retained. Two new positions, Digital Equity and Criminal Justice, were added by concurrence. Healthcare was updated by concurrence.

### Bylaws Amendments

Of the four bylaws amendments that were passed, Amendment One was related to



the [Structure Transformation Plan](#), which will be implemented over coming months and years.

Adoption of amendments one and two allow for work to begin on a unified membership system across all Leagues, at all levels. This exciting new system will

- eliminate financial barriers to participation, promoting DEI
- simplify and accelerate membership growth
- eliminate the Per Member Payment system
- provide more funding for local Leagues

Development and implementation of a technology platform for the unified membership system will take place over the biennium. Local League input will be solicited during the process.

## Election of Board of Directors

Dr. Deborah Ann Turner was elected for another two year term as Board President. Check out the new [LWVUS Board of Directors](#).

For detailed convention information, see the [daily recap of Convention events](#).

The [2020-2022 Biennium Impact Report](#) details the accomplishments of the last two years.

## Event Calendar

Check out the [event calendar](#) on the LWVIL website and connect with other local Leagues. Go to the event calendar for information on how to submit your League's educational events for posting.

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



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