

NEWS you can use

Democracy is not a spectator sport

February 2024

On Sunday, January 28, our LWVUS President Dr. Deborah Turner passed away after a brief illness. On a few occasions, I had the privilege to work with Dr. Turner, and I can tell you that she was everything she appeared to be. Dr. Turner was steady, smiling, a brilliant strategist, and relentlessly focused on the League mission.

Dr. Turner was an amazing leader, guiding the League through a time of organizational transformation and unprecedented challenges to American democracy. The work she began will strengthen and modernize the League of Women Voters so that we will be ready for the next century.



"Partisan politics are overshadowing American values —and the cornerstone of our democracy, the freedom to vote, is under threat. Let us be clear: voting rights are not a partisan issue; they are an American issue."

—Dr. Deborah Turner

[Read more inspirational words from Dr. Turner.](#)

Dr. Turner usually closed her conversations and speeches with her tagline, "Keep on keeping on!" And that is what we must do now. We owe it to Dr. Turner to keep moving the League's mission forward.

Becky Simon, president



Get Briefed on February 24

Join the League of Women Voters of Illinois for our annual look at current issues on **Saturday, February 24!** Nonpartisan experts will speak on a range of topics and prepare us to advocate for change in our communities.

This is a hybrid event—join us in person for idea-sharing, networking, and camaraderie (this year we'll gather at Northern Illinois University in Naperville!), or, if you can't make it, tune in from the comfort of home. Tickets are \$10 to attend online or \$20 to attend in person.

Each issue session will include updates about upcoming legislation and direct action you can take. Here's what's on our agenda:

Government Transparency and Accountability

How do we prevent corruption in government? Let's explore why enshrining government transparency and accountability into law are solutions that matter.

Meeting Basic Needs through Fiscal Policy

Learn how Illinois can rise to the challenge of meeting the basic needs of a growing low-income population while also ensuring the safety and well-being of new arrivals by leveraging fiscal policy.

Misinformation, Disinformation, and Freedom of Speech

While the constitution guarantees a right to free speech as a core tenet of democracy, mis- and disinformation pose an increasing threat to it. Navigating a balance between the two is critical to maintaining open elections and preserving democratic processes.

Gun Violence Prevention

Explore gun violence through the lens of domestic violence and the social and economic circumstances that often lead to it. Speakers will discuss two perspectives on reducing gun violence by addressing known risks.

Issues Briefing is open to everyone—invite friends and colleagues to learn, engage, and activate!

[Learn more and register to attend](#)



Illinois Primary Election

Illinois' 2024 [Primary Election](#) will be held on Tuesday, March 19. Get ready to vote!

Early voting begins as soon as Thursday, February 8 in many election jurisdictions—[check with your local election authority](#) for locations.

[Applications to vote by mail](#) are open now—sign up to vote from the comfort and convenience of home.

Meet with and learn more about the candidates running on your ballot at League [candidate forums](#). Candidate information will also be available at [IllinoisVoterGuide.org](#) beginning February 16.

Election Judges Needed

Illinois has faced a decline in election judges (aka poll workers) following the pandemic. Please consider stepping up to help our elections run smoothly! [Sign up to be an election judge](#). Training is provided and this (paid!) work is fun and fulfilling. You can sign up for Election Day only or for multiple days during early voting.



Our Vote is Our Voice. But is it being heard?

Recently, LWVIL has been asked to support an effort by local Leagues to ensure that binding referendums that passed in late 2022 be implemented as requested by the local voters. We have also been asked to support efforts to insist that election boards provide transparency about district boundaries (i.e. to make sure people know which ward they live in so they know who their candidates are).

In each of the cases we have been asked to support, the government agency in charge of implementing the solution has ignored the will of the people, and has so far failed to effectively take action. In some cases, any action they have taken is in direct opposition to what the voters have demanded they do.

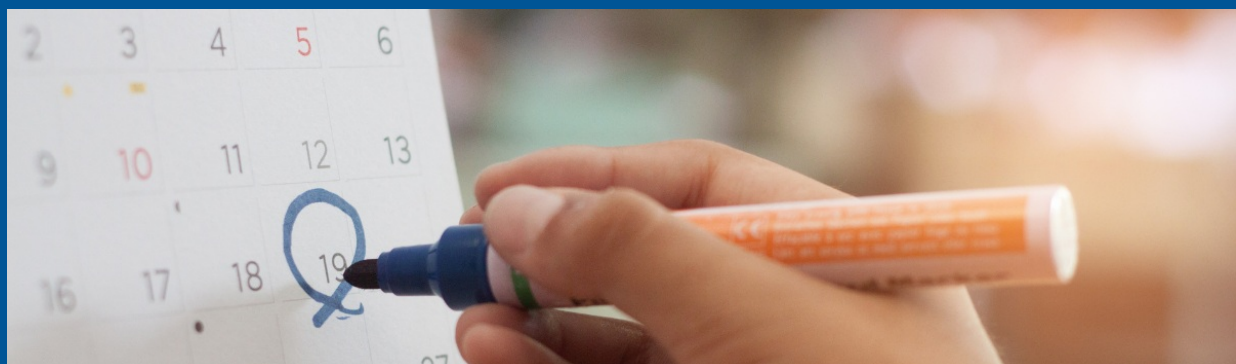
LWVIL stands firmly on its commitment to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy, and we stand with voters in demanding their voices be heard once the votes have been counted. Whether it is voting on a levy for mental health boards in Wheeling Township, or publishing ward maps in Danville, implementing ranked choice voting in Evanston, or respecting local school board referendums, the issue itself is not relevant. What is important is that our elected officials and their appointees are responsive to the will of the voters and transparent about possible challenges to implementing the will of the voters.

Whether out front or behind the scenes, we are proud to stand with our local Leagues and our grassroots members to fight for upholding democratic principles and educating and engaging our voters. You may contact issues@lwwil.org with questions or for issues with which you need assistance.

League in Action

Representing 3700 members across the state, the League teams up with other organizations so that all of our voices are amplified. Here's what we spoke out on in January:

- Endorsed SB2185, which includes legislation that removes barriers for ex-offenders to find housing, facilitating lawful reintegration into society.
- Signed onto a letter to Governor Pritzker requesting at least \$85 million in next year's state budget for the HOME Illinois plan to prevent and end homelessness.
- LWVIL President Becky Simon authored a letter to the editor in the *Chicago Tribune* advocating for humane treatment of immigrants and a coordinated effort across the state for addressing the increase in new arrivals of immigrants in Illinois.
- Endorsed a request by Illinois Network for Pretrial Justice asking the General Assembly to appropriate \$15 million to create a community-based network of care through which people awaiting trial can get access to voluntary services and support.



Get Informed at League Events

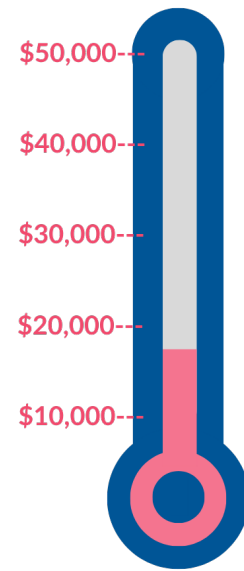
Leagues across the state regularly hold free educational events that are open to the public. Learn more about the issues you care about—[sign up to attend an upcoming event!](#)

Support Our Get Out the Vote Efforts in 2024

The goal of LWVIL's [Campaign to Safeguard Democracy](#) is to raise \$50,000 for our GOTV efforts, statewide online voter guide, candidate forums, and campaigns to fight misinformation and disinformation.

We're 35% of the way there! Thank you to the generous donors who have given over \$17,000 so far. [See participation by League.](#)

DONATE NOW



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



Join the League!

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