

LWV[®] Bulletin

November 2023

League of Women Voters of Dane County

720 Hill Street, Ste 200, Madison, WI 53705 (608) 232-9447

Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

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LWVDC Forum

Why Voting Matters: Consequences for Childcare Funding and Diversity in Education

Tuesday, November 7, 6–7:30 p.m.

A public issues forum by Urban League of Greater Madison and League of Women Voters of Dane County.

This forum illustrates the importance of civic engagement with two examples. **Laura Dresser**, Associate Director of [COWS](#), a national think-and-do tank based on Madison, will discuss how elected officials affect the availability of childcare in our community. **Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings**, [Professor Emerita at the UW–Madison School of Education](#) and critically acclaimed author, will discuss how elected officials affect the promotion of equity in our schools and universities.

Doors at the Urban League, 2222 S. Park St., will open at 5:30 p.m. for socializing and light refreshments. Or join online via Zoom.

Registration details for Zoom and resource materials are available on [our website](#).

This event is free and open to the public.



President's Message

Barb Feeney, president@lvvdanecounty.org

I hope you have the opportunity to watch Ken Burns's PBS documentary *The American Buffalo* created by Ken Burns, which can be streamed on the PBS website [here](#). The documentary tells the story of a majestic buffalo and the Native American peoples who lived in harmony with it while also being reliant on it for sustenance. To those peoples, the possibility of extinction of this animal that once numbered in the millions and dominated the landscape would have been unthinkable. And yet the buffalo was hunted to near extinction, part and parcel of the assault on the Native American peoples who were viewed to be interfering with American ambitions. And still, the buffalo came back due to the efforts of a small number of people who worked tirelessly to avoid the tragedy of extinction.

If we once believed our democracy was as solid and powerful as the millions of buffalo that once dominated the American landscape, we now know it is, in fact, quite fragile. It is likely that you joined the League of Women Voters because you have a deep commitment to this crazy, complicated thing we call democracy. We welcome you to the cause, regardless of how you choose to be involved. Your membership alone is an act of commitment.

If you choose to be more involved, there are dozens of opportunities over the course of a year available to you.

The weekly Enews that lands in your email every Tuesday is a quick way to stay up to date on the opportunities to get connected, as well as this monthly *Bulletin*. If you're not receiving the news, [go here to subscribe](#).

“Empowering voters, defending democracy”. The beat goes on.





LWV's Moonshot—and Stops Along the Way

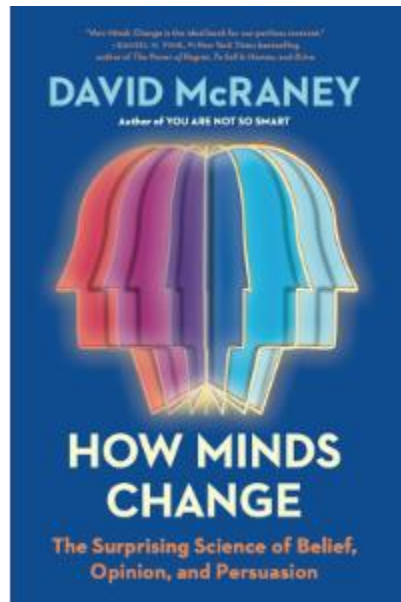
Barb Feeney, president@lwvdanecounty.org

The potential for the wishes of the people as expressed in their votes to be undermined by the Electoral College is a worry in every presidential election. The details of the electoral system that can result in election of a president who has not won the popular vote can be found [here](#). The League of Women Voters of the United States has a "moonshot" goal of elimination of the electoral college. Since this requires a change to the U.S. Constitution, it might seem a near-hopeless goal at this point. Fortunately, an interim step offers hope.

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact initiative will guarantee the presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The Compact will go into effect when enacted by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes—that is, enough to elect a President (270 of 538). At that time, every voter in the country will acquire a direct vote for a group of at least 270 presidential electors supporting their choice for President. All of this group of 270+ presidential electors will be supporters of the candidate who received the most popular votes in all 50 states and DC, thus making that candidate President.

The National Popular Vote bill has been enacted by 17 jurisdictions possessing 205 electoral votes. Therefore, the compact will take effect when enacted by states with 65 more electoral votes.

Where is Wisconsin in this process? NPV bills have been introduced in the Legislature this session and for the past few sessions. Unfortunately, they get referred to committee and die without any public hearing. Barbara Paterick is chair of the LWVWI NPV committee, serves on the LWVUS NPV Task Force, and participates on grass root volunteer calls with the nonprofit group, nationalpopularvote.com. She welcomes new members to help amplify the education and advocacy for NPV. At their next Zoom call, the group will be formulating plans for next steps. If being part of a big democracy challenge is your thing, please contact Barb Feeney at president@lwvdanecounty.org to learn more.



November Book Discussion

Our book for November is the [2023 Go Big Read book](#) *How Minds Change: The Surprising Science of Belief, Opinion, and Persuasion* by David McRaney. In our current polarized environment, conversations among people who do not agree can be challenging and disheartening. *How Minds Change* explores the elements of human belief and why facts and logical arguments are not the pillars of persuasion that we hope them to be. Listening, it turns out, is a key element.

[Contact Kerry to see if there are copies available in our office.](#)

Zoom Book Discussion Dates

Saturday, November 11, 10–11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, November 14, 10–11:30 a.m.

If you are interested, please email Books@lwvdanecounty.org and indicate on which date you would like to participate.

Adopt-a-Highway

Brook Soltvedt, soltvedtbrook@gmail.com



More than 30 years ago, the League of Women Voters of Dane County adopted a stretch of Highway 14 outside Middleton as part of the new Adopt-a-Highway program. Each May and October, Doug Johnson, our Adopt-a-Highway coordinator, contacts League members who have indicated an interest in this project on their member interest survey. He consults his schedule and the weather forecast, sets up a Doodle poll, and invites the interested members. When a date has been selected, he gets reflective vests, plastic bags, and road

signs from the Highway Department, and hopes the weather holds!

On the appointed date, volunteers gather in a parking lot along our stretch of the highway. We don gloves and the chartreuse vests and load up with plastic bags; some wield “grabbers.” In pairs or threes, we move to our assigned sections of the highway and get to work.



October 2023 Adopt-a-Highway crew, left to right: Kristin Schumacher, Doug Johnson (coordinator), Margaret Fuiguitt, Jan Van Vleck, Kate Remington, Joyce Knutson, Martha Stamper; shadow: Brook Soltvedt, very amateur photographer.

October 2 was a gorgeous early-fall day. The grass had been recently mowed, and our eager volunteers completed the task in less than two hours. We collected many bags of trash and recyclable materials. Plus, we found a \$5 bill for the League!

Sometimes we are less lucky. The weather may be raw or steamy hot, the grass may be long and wet. An accident may have left a large field of shattered debris to clean up. And if we don't have a good turnout of volunteers, we are exhausted by the time we finish the job.

We really need more volunteers to help us keep our commitment to this small effort to keep Dane County beautiful. Indicating an interest in this project on your member interest survey does not oblige you to participate. But you will be invited, each spring and fall, and if your schedule allows, you will have a chance to get to know another member by spending a few hours working side-by-side.

Volunteer Profile: Patty Winspur

LWVDC proudly wears its identity as a grassroots and volunteer-led organization. Our ability to carry out our mission of “empowering voters and defending democracy” rests on the willingness of our members to take on tasks and carry them out, often without notice or fanfare. We are happy to use this space to introduce you to one of our volunteers.

You might have seen me at the Westside Community farmers market on Saturday mornings this summer, along with Marjorie Schuett, answering questions about voting and registration. Currently, I'm helping out in the League office about twice a month. I replenish and tidy the kits containing voter information supplies, which our volunteers use for events where the League has a table or booth.



I grew up in Palo Alto, CA, got married in Scotland, and then my husband's studies and work took us to New York City; France; Raleigh, N.C.; and Hackensack, N.J. It was a relief for my family to finally put down roots in Madison in 1989. I've worked as support staff in the U.S. Attorney's Office in Brooklyn, N.Y., the City of Madison Mayor's office, and the U.W.-Madison Philosophy Department.

My mom was a member of the LWV in California in the 1950s, and I always looked up to those women. But I didn't join the League myself until about 5 years ago. I joined because I realized that I was burnt out on partisan volunteering for individual candidates. With campaigns, you work for months and months and hope that on election night, you reach your goal. With the League, you reach your goal every time you encourage or empower a voter (no matter their politics). It's a win every day.

My motivation is my granddaughters, Brynn and Paige. I want a better world for them.

Aside from the LWV, I have a volunteer position with the Madison Police Department. I assist the Burglary Crime Unit, making follow-up calls to burglary victims. Sometimes during a call, I find out new information that's useful to the detectives. I've learned a lot about human nature through this work. People want to be heard and taken seriously; they don't want to be lectured to or dismissed. Most people that I call want sympathy. A few want to help us catch the guy!

In my spare time, I watch football, A LOT of football. It's what you do in Wisconsin, right? I mean, is there a better way to spend your time, I can't think of one.

New Communication Manager

Barb Feeney (she/they), president@lwvdanecounty.org

We are pleased to announce that the League of Women Voters of Dane County has hired a Communications Manager, effective November 1, 2023. Michelle Phillips comes to us with a rich and varied background in the world of communications. For the past several years she has served as the editor of the *Middleton Times-Tribune* based in Middleton, Wisconsin. Before that she worked as a social media editor and coordinator in Iowa, and spent several years as the editor of the *Anamosa Journal-Eureka* in Anamosa, Iowa. Her work has included interviewing presidential candidates and covering political issues, which has acquainted her with the nonpartisan work of the League of Women Voters.

In her position with LWVDC, Michelle will oversee all aspects of our communications. We feel fortunate to be bringing Michelle on board to support and enhance the outstanding program and voter outreach work already being carried out by our dedicated volunteers.

Discussion Units

Aileen Nettleton, Discussion Unit Coordinator

Do you have questions or opinions about topics raised in our monthly Forums? Would you like a chance to dig deeper into a topic? Joining one of our Discussion Units is the way members can engage in small group discussions of topics important to all of us. Discussion Units meet a week or two after each of our forums to explore our responses to the forums and plan actions we can take. This year, three of our groups will meet in person for the fall, then move to Zoom during winter months, while one group, Virtual Dane County, will meet virtually via Zoom all year. Oakwood Village Prairie Ridge on the far east side, with a new leader, Alan Zuckerman, is now open to all League members and will meet in person regularly.

Please review the schedules, locations and formats for our five Discussion Unit Groups and consider joining one. Contact the Unit Leader for more information.

Unit: Oakwood Village Prairie Ridge

Time: 3:30 p.m., third Monday of the month

Location: Perennial Learning Center, Oakwood Village Prairie Ridge, 5565 Tancho Dr.

Leader: [Alan Zuckerman](#)

Unit: West / Middleton

Time: 6:30 p.m., third Monday of the month

Location: Meadowridge Library, 5726 Raymond Rd., Madison, in September, October, November; Virtual via Zoom in December, January, February

Leaders: [Helen Horn](#) and [Ralph Petersen](#)

Unit: Central West

Time: 12:45 p.m., third Tuesday of the month

Location: LWVDC office, 720 Hill St. in Madison in September, October, November;

Virtual via Zoom in December, January, February

Leader: [Kathy Johnson](#)

Unit: Virtual Dane County (Formerly Northeast Side)

Time: 4:00 p.m., third Wednesday of the month

Location: Virtual, via Zoom

Leader: [Karen Gunderson](#)

Unit: Downtown

Time: 5:30 p.m., third Wednesday of the month

Location: Premiere room at Capitol Lakes, 333 West Main St., Madison, in September, October, November; Virtual via Zoom in December, January, February

Leaders: [Aileen Nettleton](#) and [Ingrid Rothe](#)

There is a lot going on with LWVDC these days!

Want to stay on top of the most current happenings?

Look for our weekly Enews in your email every Tuesday,
or [subscribe here](#) if you don't receive it.

League News & Updates

Shoutout!

The following League members called more than 200 members with reminders to renew their LWVDC membership.

Barb Feeney
Margaret Fuguitt
Jan Fullenwider
Sally Gleason
Cindy Haro
Mary Ellen Schmit
Patti Schubert
Kathy Shurts

Contributions

General Donations

Dan Walker

Sustaining Donations

Zachary Levin
Amy Moran

Additional Gift with Membership Renewal

Julie Andersen
Kathy Annen
Carlene Bechen
Laura Chern
Jane Collins
Catherine Copp
Angela Deutsch
Peggy Garties
Marcia Griskavich
Katie Gunaratne
Ellen Hadidian
Arlan Kay

Karyn Knaak
Judith Landsman
Kathryn Leide
Debbie & Ric Lloyd
Sue Lutter
Ann Niedermeier & Donald Chambers
Kathleen Remington
Ingrid Rothe & Melissa Keyes
Debra Shapiro
Victoria Topp
Deborah & Patrick Turski

New Members

We welcome these new members who joined us recently. An [updated member directory](#) is available on our website.

Do you want to join the League? [Sign up for a membership online](#)

Janice Golay
Ric Lloyd
Kristin Schumacher
Debbie Lloyd
Victoria Topp
Chris Kehler
Kathy Annen
Gigi Voegeli
Catherine Copp
Mary Scheide
Talia Sheehan

Upcoming Events

November 7: Advocacy Corps, 5:30 p.m.
November 11: Book Discussion, 10 a.m.
November 14: Book Discussion, 10 a.m.
November 15: Virtual Dane County Discussion Unit, 4:00 p.m.
November 15: Downtown Discussion Unit, 5:30 p.m.
November 16: Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
November 20: Membership Team, 12 noon
November 20: Oakwood Village Prairie Ridge Discussion Unit, 3:30 p.m.
November 20: West/Middleton Discussion Unit, 6:30 p.m.
November 21: Central West Discussion Unit, 12:45 p.m.

League in the News

[School of Education faculty to speak on 'Preserving Public Education'](#),
University of Wisconsin - Madison School of Education, September 29, 2023

Laine Bottemiller, [How Student Organizing Led To Historic Student Turnout For A Local Election](#), *Forbes*, October 3, 2023

Executive Committee

Barb Feeney, President
Lili Crane, Vice President-Governance
Jill Jokela, Fund Development Director
Sue Jennik, Program Director

Bulletin Staff

Amanda Hingst, Editor
Brook Soltvedt, Webmaster
Andy Rubsam, Copyeditor

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