



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 11–3

October 2022

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President's Message

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

The thing on my mind these days is the altered world brought to LWVDC by more than two years in the Land of COVID-19. It seems amazing to me that only three years ago, all (or almost all) League meetings and events were held in person—whether business meetings, forums, or book discussions—basically every kind of interaction that was not handled through a one-on-one phone call or email. What a difference a deadly virus makes!

Monday, October 10

6:30–8 p.m.

LWVDC Virtual Forum

Protect Your Right to Vote: Proposed Election Laws

The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. Proposals to change election laws are being made at the state and federal levels. Existing laws are being challenged in state and federal courts.

Join us on **October 10** for an **online forum** on how these proposed changes and recent court decisions could affect people of color, those with disabilities, and other voters.

Panelists include **Barbara Beckert** (Disability Rights Wisconsin); **Barry Burden** (UW Elections Research Center); and **Greg Jones** (NAACP Dane County Branch). The Forum will be moderated by **Andrea Kaminski**, LWVDC member, member of the LWVWI Legislative Committee, and former LWVWI State League Executive Director.

**Registration details and study materials
available on [our website](#).**

This event is free and open to the public.

Every organization with access to online technology has the opportunity to be out in the world offering content to anyone who can access it. The benefits of this are enormous. Distance, disability, bad weather and lack of transportation or childcare are no longer barriers to participation in much of what LWVDC has to offer—and many other organizations as well. The equity benefits and the personal convenience offered by the shift to online venues are significant enough that I don't see a road back to where we were three years ago. And yet.

So often I have a conversation with someone that never would have happened in an online meeting. I know many of our members have forged friendships and connections at our in-person events that have enriched their lives. I wonder whether our bonds of solidarity and loyalty to our shared mission will be as sturdy when they are not anchored, to some degree, in having made those in-person connections. I don't have answers. Whether your thoughts on this topic are fully formed or barely developed, please send them to me at president@lwvdanecounty.org.

I would love to hear from you.

Members: You're Invited!

Before the weather turns colder and we all move indoors, join LWVDC for one of a series of informal "Pop-Up" gatherings for members! Catch up with old friends and meet new ones.

Next up:

The Biergarten at Olbrich Park
3527 Atwood Ave, Madison
Thursday, October 6
5–7 p.m.

No RSVP necessary; just look for an LWVDC table sign and folks wearing nametags.

Want to host your own "pop-up" event? Email Wendy Hathaway at wendy@lwvdanecounty.org to get started.

Leadership Development Fellow: A Peek Into My First Month

Kimberly Rooney (she/her), krooney@lwvdanecounty.org

In my first four weeks as Leadership Development Fellow, it's been my priority to get to know LWVDC and the people and systems that have made it a success over the past century. Executive Director Wendy Hathaway led me through two weeks of onboarding, where I learned the ins and outs of League governance, its domains, and how this League fulfills its mission to educate and empower voters. I've been working two days a week in the beautiful office space alongside Wendy and Kerry Helmer, Office Administrator, and greeting whoever stops by. I've met with different Board members to get a feel for individual and collective goals as well as envisioned challenges. I've been visiting other local League websites from around the country. I briefly observed Voter Outreach registering new students at UW-

Madison's Union South and I attended the excellent Reproductive Rights Program at Madison College. At the last Madison Night Market, I was thrilled to walk past the LWVDC table and see three people filling out registration forms.

One thing I've discovered in getting to know LWVDC is that our members and leaders offer an invaluable breadth of experience and expertise—lawyers, educators, mothers, grandmothers, writers, finance specialists, and more—with both natural talent and cultivated knowledge for organizing, leading, designing, and bolstering the League's mission to encourage informed and active participation in government. And while I'm sure that Leagues across the nation also bring diverse abilities to their table, I've had a hard time finding local Leagues that compare to Dane County's. What I've concluded about LWVDC, in my perspective as a humble newbie, is that our League is *impressive*.

So, what can a PhD candidate from Holmen, Wisconsin studying Francophone literature offer this well-established Dane County institution? The glory of studying a humanistic art is that my communication, research, and creative skills—mostly revolving around language—translate to many contexts. I am a teacher and a budding researcher, and it's these skills that I hope to contribute to developing a strong, inclusive membership engagement and leadership model at LWVDC. It's a challenge that inevitably crops up when an organization grows. In really knowing this League, I can find the right research to support us in our endeavors to sustain our established best practices, innovate for future stability, and utilize and recognize the wealth of wisdom, energy, and dedication of all members.

My language-focused ear has perked up at the instances when I use "us," "we," and "our" both in this article and in my work these first few weeks. While my presence at the League is still fresh, I see my instinct to immediately integrate into this organization as an indication of its contagious passion and considerable potential. I do not see myself as an external consultant but as an internal resource who will continue to get to know LWVDC and whose dedication to it will extend beyond this academic year.

League Help Needed!

- Events planners/event hosts
- Button-makers
- Spanish-speaking outreach volunteers
- Help with bookkeeping
- Help with tax preparation
- Zoom support
- Photographers
- Writers for resource materials
- Editor for Voting Volunteers weekly email
- Forum planners
- Advocacy Corps members

Visit www.lwvdaneconomy.org/volunteer for details and contact information. And be sure to share with your fellow members looking for ways to support the League.



Help Ensure Every Vote Counts

Fund Development Committee

We are at a critical moment for American democracy and the League of Women Voters of Dane County needs your support to empower voters and defend democracy.

This fall, we're challenging all 628 LWVDC members to make a donation and/or commit to donating their time in support of the League's work here in Dane County.

Joining forces, our donors and our volunteers together make LWVDC and our community stronger. Even \$5 or \$10 dollars, or a few hours now and again, can make a big difference.

Our fall fundraising campaign officially kicks off next week; watch your mailboxes and email inboxes for details. If you want to join the campaign early:

- Donate online at <https://www.lwvdanecounty.org/fall-campaign>.
- Mail a check to:
League of Women Voters of Dane County
720 Hill St, Ste 200
Madison, WI 53705-3539
- Check out current Volunteer Opportunities online at lwvdanecounty.org/volunteer.
- Contact Executive Director Wendy Hathaway at wendy@lwvdanecounty.org to talk about getting involved.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

The Invaluable *Candidates' Answers*

Brook Soltvedt (she/her), soltvedtbrook@gmail.com

Ask most folks in the community what they know about the League of Women Voters, and they will probably mention our nonpartisan voter guide, *Candidates' Answers*. Our League has produced *Candidates' Answers* for decades. It has come a long way from the days when candidates responded to our questions on paper through the mail and the response was carefully transcribed to a mimeograph stencil by typewriter, with small armies of proofreaders ensuring accuracy.



Today's *Candidates' Answers* still requires a large investment of volunteer and office administrator time, as well as partnerships with local clerks and school districts, LWVWI's voter education manager, the Vote411 team at LWVUS, a professional graphic artist, and local publishers.

In *Candidates' Answers*, we cover races in Dane County cities (not villages or towns) and school districts that draw primarily from Dane County. Planning

begins about six months before an election with determining what races will be on the next ballot, creating a production schedule, and writing questions for candidates. We use LWVUS guidelines to ensure that our questions are not biased, and we strive to use plain language. Immediately after the filing deadline for candidates (early January or early June), we get the names and email contacts of candidates from clerks and school districts. We check later about referenda.

We use [Vote411](#), the LWVUS voter education website, to invite candidates to respond to our questionnaire, send reminders, and receive their responses. LWVWI uses Vote411 to do the same for candidates at the state and federal level. When that information is published, voters can see the responses from candidates for races and referenda specific to their ballot.

After our response deadline, we copy and paste candidate information from Vote411 to our own [lwvdanecounty.org](#) website for primary races. Volunteers proofread those pages, verifying the accuracy of general voting information and ensuring we have all relevant races, candidates, responses, and referenda. They check that all the links work. After the primary, we rebuild our website with the information and candidates for the general election. When that has been proofread and published, we create a manuscript for a graphic artist, who lays out the information into the newspaper template for printing. This print edition also undergoes extensive proofreading by volunteers.

For years, *Candidates' Answers* was published as an insert in *Isthmus*, which was then a free weekly newspaper with widespread distribution in the Madison area. When *Isthmus* stopped print publication during the pandemic, we partnered with the *Wisconsin State Journal* and the *Capital City Hues* for distribution. For the November 2022 election we are adding distribution on *Cap Times* racks. We mail copies to candidates and LWVDC members (by request), and we distribute them to libraries in Dane County, senior living locations, and other sites.

[Candidates' Answers](#) is available on our website now, and the print edition will be distributed on October 19.

Throughout our work we maintain these key priorities: nonpartisanship, fairness to all candidates, accuracy of our information, and accessibility of the content to voters. LWV: empowering voters; defending democracy.

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF DANE COUNTY

Candidates' Answers

WHAT'S ON BALLOT – APRIL 6, 2022, Dane County, Spring Election
Candidates are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.
The number of offices being elected for municipal and school district races is listed in parentheses.

OFFICE / CANDIDATES	MUNICIPALITY(IES) INVOLVED

Wisconsin Elections Commission
Candidate Tracking by Office

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF DANE COUNTY
729 Hill Street, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53705-5529

Time-Sensitive! Candidate Questionnaire

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF DANE COUNTY
729 Hill Street, Suite 200
Madison, WI 53705-5529
Email: [lwg@lwvdanecounty.org](#) Website: [lwvdanecounty.org](#)

Candidates' Answers
Spring Election: Tuesday, April 7, 2020

DEMOCRACY IS THE ONLY THING WE HAVE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will not have a traditional in-person meeting. We will be holding a virtual meeting on Tuesday, April 7, 2020. The meeting will be held at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held at 7:00 PM. The meeting will be held at 7:00 PM.

The Advocacy Corps Invites Members to Join

Advocacy@lwvdanecounty.org

LWVDC is committed to empowering voters and defending democracy. The Advocacy Corps is crucial to this work. The Corps responds to critical activities and events by engaging members in timely, action-oriented campaigns on voter rights, reproductive freedom, judicial integrity, campaign finance reform, and climate and environmental justice.

The **Advocacy Corps** comprises several parts. There is an **Advocacy Corps Steering Committee**, which develops LWVDC's overall outreach campaigns. Other members are involved on an ad hoc basis and participate in our **Letter-Writing Campaigns** or one of five **Working Groups**.

Letter-Writing Campaigns are designed to keep the public abreast, in a timely manner, of all the pressing issues facing our democracy in Wisconsin. This part of the Advocacy Corps is an integral part of the campaigns of each of the Working Groups (discussed below). We provide assistance with research, links to articles, and editing on various issues.

The five **Working Groups** focus on timely issues crucial to our self-governing democracy and provide resources and expertise to LWVDC members who are interested in advocating within these issue areas.

- **The Voting Rights Working Group** has identified action steps for, and been involved with, Voter Service's voter outreach, has provided research and resource materials for the October Forum, "Protect Your Right to Vote," and provides expertise to Discussion Units.
- **The Climate and Environmental Justice Working Group** is focused on advocating for a response to the pressing climate issues facing our country. We will be working with LWVWI and will be focusing our attention on environmental issues in Dane County and Wisconsin, such as PFAS regulation and water quality.
- **The Judicial Integrity Working Group** is focused on the Wisconsin court system—politicization of the court, special interests and dark money in judicial races, ineffective recusal rules, and lack of diversity on the court—all of which call into question the legitimacy of our courts. Of special focus will be the Wisconsin Supreme Court election in April 2023.
- **The Campaign Finance Reform Working Group** is focused on dark money in Wisconsin elections. Informing the public of hidden-money campaigns used by corporations and front groups is paramount for understanding how special interests and undisclosed dark money infiltrates our courts and elections.
- **The Reproductive Freedom Working Group** is focused on the numerous health crises attributed to the *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* decision, which affects not only patients and families, but health care institutions, individual providers, and associated professionals, all of whom must now consider the new legal ramifications of their professional duties and responsibilities.

We welcome you to join us as an advocate for any issue about which you are passionate. You can join the **Advocacy Corps Steering Committee**, which meets once a month, or you can participate in one of the **Working Groups**. Time commitments are flexible. For more information about the Advocacy Corps Steering Committee or Working Groups, please contact Lili Crane, Advocacy Director, at

Advocacy@lwvdanecounty.org.

Review: “Why Vote? Reproductive and Civil Rights” Forum

Amanda Hingst (she/her), ajhingst@gmail.com

On Sept. 13, 2022, the League held a panel discussion called “Why Vote? Reproductive and Civil Rights” with the following panelists:

- Cynthia Lin, WMF Wisconsin and the National Network of Abortion Funds
- Katrina Morrison, The Foundation for Black Women’s Wellness
- Nicole Safar, Law Forward
- Amy Williamson, UW Collaborative for Reproductive Equity

Joy Cardin, League member and former Wisconsin Public Radio host, moderated.



Lin noted that, even before the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, many people already lived in areas where abortion was severely restricted. All panelists agreed that the legal right to abortion means nothing if people don’t also have access to safe, convenient, and affordable reproductive health care.

Williamson pointed to research showing that lack of abortion access has a measurably negative impact on pregnant people and their families. People denied abortions have a lower income, are less likely to achieve their educational goals and are more likely to stay in abusive relationships.

This access to reproductive health care is critical for the human rights of people who might become pregnant. Morrison explained that the reproductive justice movement, pioneered and sustained by Black women, advocates for this personal bodily autonomy, including the right to have children, the right to not have children and the right to raise children in safe and sustainable environments.

Black women have more at stake in the fight for reproductive rights because they have historically been denied control over their own bodies and have significantly worse outcomes in maternal and infant mortality than white women. Black women have also been targeted by the criminalization of adverse pregnancy outcomes such as miscarriages, a risk that will now be greater for everyone, because of increased criminalization of any pregnancy loss from both a legal and a cultural standpoint.

While legal challenges to the implementation of Wisconsin’s 1849 statute banning abortion are currently working their way through the courts, Safar noted that these challenges are not a solution to safeguard access to reproductive health care in the state. The legal challenges are simply a tool to mitigate current

harm. All panelists agree that policy change will only matter if we have a cultural change to promote a society that values the bodily autonomy and reproductive rights of all people.

To effect this change, you can speak to your friends and family about why reproductive and civil rights matter to you. You can also educate yourself about candidates' positions on reproductive rights and structures, like gerrymandering and the Senate filibuster, that allow minority opinions to prevail over the rights of the majority. It's critical to offer time and resources to organizations like WMFWisconsin, The Foundation for Black Women's Wellness, and Planned Parenthood that are committed to ensuring that people in Wisconsin can access reproductive health care.

*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.*

The League in the News

- [Voter Service Co-chair Beth Fultz delivers a National Voter Registration Day message on NBC15](#)
- [Executive Director Wendy Hathaway speaks to WKOW-27 from a voter registration event at Madison College South](#)

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

New Members

We welcome these new members who joined us in August 2022. An [updated member directory](#) is available on our website. NOTE: The password for the directory page was changed on April 26, 2022. If you need the new password, contact the webmaster for help.

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

Susan Aldene
Sarah Antos
Tyrell Bates
Mary Eberle
Robert Enloe
Debra Gordon-Thom
Amanda Hingst

Carol Hollar-Zwick
Linda Knox
Barbara Kumara
Ann Lacy
Ellen Langrehr
Mary Carol McCartney
Terry Ross

Pamela Stangl
Debra Shapiro
Ashley Warren
Barb Wolfe
Sally Zeinemann

Contributions

Our work is supported by financial contributions beyond membership dues. Thank you to these supporters who donated in August 2022.

General Donations

Connie Bakker
Sybil Better
Joan Burns
Robin Chapman
James Cory
Susan Fadness
Emy Gartzke
Jeannette & Kenneth Golden
Irene Golembiewski

Eileen Hanneman & Larry
Sromovsky
Helen Horn & Ralph Petersen
Gundega Korsts
Ellen Langrehr
Lyn Mussallem
Anne Niedermeier & Donald
Chambers
Anne Perrote

Catherine Rotter
Luke Sackash
Joan Schuette
Joan Schwarz
Wendy Weber
Julia Weiser
Dorothy Wheeler
Barb Wolfe



Discussion Units

Many League members meet in one of five units to discuss the topic of each forum, using the resource/study materials provided by the program planners to guide the conversation. The discussion concludes with recommendations for further study or action. Units meet regularly at different times and locations, including via Zoom. All in-person meetings occur in Madison unless otherwise noted. Find a unit meeting that's convenient for you and participate! Details below.

Currently, each discussion unit decides whether to meet virtually or in person. If you are planning to attend a meeting for the first time, please contact the unit leader ahead of time. [Consult the calendar](#) for the most up-to-date information about specific meetings.

Unit: Prairie Ridge (*For Prairie Ridge residents only*)

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

Location: Virtual

Leaders: [Dot Whiting](#)

Unit: West / Middleton

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

Location: Lussier Community Center
55 S. Gammon Rd.

Leader: [Ralph Petersen](#), [Helen Horn](#) (608) 231-1807

New Unit for Members outside of Madison

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

Location: Virtual, Via Zoom

Leader: [Karen Michael](#)

Unit: Central West

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

Location: Virtual, via Zoom

Leader: [Kathy Johnson](#) (608) 238-1785

Unit: Northeast Side

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

Location: TBD; contact Karen to learn more

Leaders: [Karen Gunderson](#) (608) 729-4351

Unit: Downtown Dinner

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

Location: Virtual, via Zoom

Leader: [Ingrid Rothe](#) (608) 556-3174

Upcoming Events

Oct. 4	Advocacy Corps Meeting, 6 p.m.
Oct. 6	Member Pop-Up Event: Biergarten at Olbrich Park, 5 p.m.
Oct. 10	Voter Service Steering Committee, 3 p.m.
Oct. 10	LWVDC Forum: Protect Your Right to Vote, 6:30 p.m.
Oct. 11	Program/Advocacy Committee Meeting, 6 p.m.
Oct. 12	LWVDC Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Oct. 17	Membership Committee Meeting, 12 p.m.
Oct. 22	October Book Discussion, 10 a.m.
Oct. 27	October Book Discussion, 7 p.m.

2022 Elections

Nov. 8	Fall General Election
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