



Bulletin

League of Women Voters® of Dane County, Inc.

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Office hours: Monday–Thursday, 8–1

October 2021

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President's Message

Christine Clements,
president@lwvdanecounty.org

The word resilience has been used a lot lately, often regarding climate change. Resilience in this sense is about developing our adaptive capacity to maintain basic functions and bounce back when we are faced with external stressors from the environment, such as heavy rains, hurricanes, tornadoes, fires, polluted water, etc. LWVDC's focus on the climate crisis in our programs and in our advocacy educates us and our representatives about how we can take action to reduce environmental degradation and develop resilience.

Tuesday, November 9

7 p.m.

Kicking Carbon to the Curb: *Ordinary People Doing Ordinary Things*

LWVDC VIRTUAL FORUM

If you, like many of us, feel that nagging climate anxiety, then it is time to act with the solutions already in our grasp. Topping the list? Changing how we get where we want to go. Join the League of Women Voters of Dane County on Nov. 9, as we learn how to use and trust our continually improving public transit options, bike paths, and sidewalks.

Planners with the City of Madison and the **Metropolitan Planning Organization** (MPO) are promoting rideshare, bike routes, walking paths, and bus routes—all are designed to help us leave our cars behind. The more we use them, the more accessible, affordable, comfortable, and secure these alternate transportation options will become.

Our speakers will lead the way. Our climate team will introduce a way to drive change in our own households with an invitation to join our *Transportation Options Challenge*. This is citizen science at its best—try the alternatives, share your experiences, recommend the improvements that really matter. We're not going back to the horse and buggy; instead we are ordinary people taking ordinary steps to create an extraordinary energy future!

Study materials will be available at
www.lwvdanecounty.org.

Forums are free and open to the public.

LWVDC also dedicates itself to maintaining a resilient democracy; one that allows corrective action when we are concerned about the direction of government. We do so by fighting for voter rights and fair maps and against voter suppression and gerrymandering, by registering as many possible voters as we can and by getting voters to the polls with the Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign. Observers of local government agencies' agendas and initiatives help us assure that responsible governance is occurring. We also support opportunities for better understanding the issues and the candidates with our Candidates' Answers publication and educational programs.

Because of the crucial work being done by the League during a time of so many threats to our democracy, resilience of our Dane County League is also critically important. Endless opportunities for corrective action can be exhausting work without the broad engagement of our members. Leaders, volunteers, financial resources - all are essential components for sustaining these efforts. Members allow us to grow our impact by supporting activities and events, and by sharing their skills and expertise. Engagement and leadership provide the adaptive capacity to take on continuously emerging challenges and opportunities. This fall, LWVDC will continue to build sustainability and resilience by hiring a new executive director, filling our leadership slate with candidates for the 2022-2023 board of directors, engaging as many members as possible in League work and undertaking a fall funding drive. The League provides us the agency to make a difference in a challenging world. I hope you will consider supporting the Dane County League in these efforts. Please let me know if you have questions about how you can get involved in empowering voters and defending democracy. I look forward to hearing from you.



Search for a New Executive Director

The search is on for our new executive director. The job was posted on September 1 to five different job posting sites, including Idealist.org, JobsThatHelp.org, and the Wisconsin Nonprofit Career Center. In addition to posting the job to multiple sites, we also directly sent out the job to more than 25 contacts at various local community organizations throughout Dane County and greater Wisconsin.

We are excited to move on to the next phase of the search. By the time you are reading this, we will be reviewing candidates and setting up interviews. Our interviews will be focused on identifying candidates who excel at collaboration, who understand the member-driven nature of our organization, and who will strive to further empower our dedicated members and League leaders. Stay tuned for future updates.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

Fall Student Voter Registration tops 500

Beth Fultz, bwf0@yahoo.com

Nothing says fall like registering student voters as they stream back to UW–Madison for a new school year. Last month, after nearly a year and a half without in-person voter outreach events, 36 LWVDC volunteers were delighted to have that unique autumn experience.

From August 30 to September 10, 36 volunteers staffed registration tables on campus, helping first-time Wisconsin voters as well as those who needed to re-register with a new address.



*Fall at UW–Madison
(Photo credit: Jeff Miller and Bryce Richter)*

Because of COVID-19, things looked a bit different this year. Unlike recent years, when we were co-located indoors at student bus pass distribution sites, our tables were outdoors on East Campus Mall and at Union South. Although the COVID restrictions meant a scaled-back presence with fewer days on campus, fewer tables, and shorter hours, we complete a total of 528 registrations and offered voter information to an additional 180 students.

LWVDC collaborated with [BadgersVote](#), the sponsoring organization for this year's events. The league provided trained volunteers and registration expertise. [Zachery Holder](#), who is just completing his first year as UW Voter Engagement and Civic Learning Coordinator, served as UW point person, handling logistics and providing some very popular BadgersVote swag. We look forward to partnering with BadgersVote and Zachery in the future.

Staff from the Madison City Clerk's Office joined us at our tables. Because we were outdoors without Wi-Fi, we handled all registrations on paper, and clerk staff were equipped to efficiently process those registrations. BadgersVote interns also pitched in, including those funded by LWVDC. Student-to-student outreach added a wonderful dimension to our operation.

Special thanks to Sue Fulks, who hosted Zoom training sessions in August. After so much time with little registration activity, the trainings helped immensely not only to educate first-time volunteers, but also to bring veterans back up to speed.

Huge thanks also to all of the following LWV volunteers:

Joanne Anderson
Maria Barlow
Vicki Berenson
Gail Bliss
Joann Boushon

Kristin Clausen
Jack Connelly
Terri Cronk
Leah Dudley
Barb Feeney

Kathy Fullin
Beth Fultz
Patricia Giesfeldt
Laura Gottlieb
Peter Gottlieb

Shirley Haidinger
Wendy Hathaway
Barb Henke
Carol Hermann
Susan Hoffenberg

Ashley Holt
Alan Kanne
Elizabeth Kanne
Joanne Lenburg

Justine Malinski
Angela Maloney
Judy Munger
Janet Murphy

Mitch Nussbaum
Kate Parsons
Marjorie Schuett
Greg Smith

Brook Soltvedt
Mary Strait
Wendy Vandercook
Jim Youngerman

Our next big push at UW-Madison will be in January at the beginning of the spring semester. Exactly how that effort unfolds will depend in part on where things stand with COVID-19. The drive will be significant as four elections will be held in 2022 — nonpartisan primary and general contests in the spring, followed by partisan senatorial and gubernatorial primary and general elections in August and November respectively.



Our hope is to have an expanded presence in January, and as always we will welcome new and seasoned volunteers!

Legal Update on Redistricting

Joan I. Schwarz, schwarz.joan111@gmail.com

Attorney, Advocacy Director for the LWVDC, Member of the Dane County Redistricting Commission and Madison Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee

More litigation has begun since the publication of the September Bulletin. Initially, in the United States District Court for the Western District of Wisconsin, a lawsuit had been filed by Democratic plaintiffs (*Hunter, et al v. Bostelmann, et al*) in which Governor Evers and Attorney General Josh Kaul filed to intervene in the lawsuit. Another federal lawsuit was then filed by the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, Black Leaders Organizing for Communities, and Voces De La Frontiera (*BLOC, et al v. Spindell, et al—WEC officials*). In response, the Wisconsin Legislature filed to request that the federal court dismiss the lawsuits. Instead of doing so, the federal district court consolidated them and set a trial date for January 2022, with March 2022 as the deadline for redistricting.



Another lawsuit was filed in the Wisconsin Supreme Court (*Johnson, et al v. Wisconsin Elections Commission, et al*) by the Wisconsin Institute of Law and Liberty (WILL). The state supreme court accepted this lawsuit as an original action, which means there will be no lower court evidentiary trial. Last year, WILL petitioned the Wisconsin Supreme Court for a statutory rule change in an original action, so that all redistricting now and in the future would be decided by this Court. Approximately two thousand Wisconsinites objected to the WILL petition. The Wisconsin Supreme Court did deny the petition at that time, with the caveat that it might grant an original action in the future — which it did this time when WILL petitioned the Court again.

Because the federal district court denied the Wisconsin Legislature's request to dismiss the consolidated federal lawsuits, it petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court on September 24 to dismiss the lawsuits. The Legislature posited that the U.S. Supreme Court is the only Court that can provide relief against what it characterizes as "basic federalism and separation-of-powers principles." Despite the historical record that the federal courts have handled redistricting conflicts in Wisconsin for the past several decades when Wisconsin has had divided government, the Legislature alleges that the federal district does not have constitutional standing and thus must defer to Wisconsin's "sovereign power to reapportion" in the first instance.

The Legislature also alleges that the consolidated federal case must be dismissed because there is not a "case or controversy," since without the Legislature's maps and the Governor's veto, there is no legislative impasse at this time. The Legislature concludes that if the federal district lawsuits are allowed to proceed, any relief provided will be "purely advisory" and should now be dismissed.

If the Legislature prevails at the U.S. Supreme Court, the Wisconsin Supreme Court will draft Wisconsin's maps in its original action without the benefit of an intensive fact-finding trial where the Legislature's and public's maps would be litigated. Since the Joint Resolutions of September 23 (AJR 80, SJR 63) posit that it "retain as much as possible the core of existing districts," there is concern that without a trial, the Legislature's gerrymandered maps will prevail. Stay tuned for the U.S. Supreme Court's decision about the future of Wisconsin's maps.

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Opportunity to join the League of Women Voters of Greenwich, CT for their Fifth Annual Community Case Discussion

Wednesday, November 10 at 7 p.m. (EST)

The Greenwich League is thrilled to welcome Harvard Business School Professor David Moss, who will discuss the Madison case with us. This case centers on a key debate at the constitutional convention of 1787:

Should the federal government have veto power over state laws? How much power—and what kind of power—should the federal government have over states?

The LWVDC is welcome to join! Please register [here](#). The case reading will be sent automatically upon registration.

New Members

We welcome these new members who joined us in August. An [updated member directory](#) is available on our website. If you have forgotten the password, there is a link to contact the webmaster for help.

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

Kelly Smithback

Noelle Van Straten

Lorna Will



Contributions

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

General Donations

Sybil Better
Harriette Burkhalter
Christine Clements
Kia Conrad
James Cory
Lili Crane
Susan Dottl

Barbara Feeney
Lydie Hudson
Jean Jacobson
Abigail Lowery
Candace & Mark Moody
Lorain Olsen
Karen Peterson

Mary & Steve Ploeser
Rebecca Romine
Joan Schwarz
Shirley Smith
Brook Soltvedt & David Nelson
Carol Weiss

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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 are 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 (*This group is open only to Prairie Ridge residents at this time.*)
Time: 3:30 p.m., third Monday of the month
Location: Perennial Learning Center, Oakwood Village Prairie Ridge, 5565 Tancho Dr.
Leaders: [Dorothy Wheeler](#) (608-630-5163)

Unit: West / Middleton
Time: 6:30 p.m., third Monday of the month
Location: Virtual, via Zoom
Leader: [Ralph Petersen](#) (608-831-3267), [Helen Horn](#), and [Gloria Meyer](#) (608-288-8160)

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: Virtual, via Zoom
Leaders: [Karen Gunderson](#) (608-729-4351)

Unit: Downtown Dinner
Time: 5:15 p.m., third Wednesday of the month
Location: Virtual, via Zoom
Leader: [Ingrid Rothe](#) (608-556-3174)

Upcoming Events

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| Oct. 11 | Voter Service Steering Committee, 4 p.m. |
| Oct. 13 | LWVDC Board Meeting, 5:30 p.m. |
| Oct. 18 | Membership Committee Meeting, 12 p.m. |
| Oct. 23 | National Vote Early Day |
| Oct. 30 | League of Women Voters of Wisconsin 2001 Issues Briefing |

