

Land Acknowledgment

June 2, 2022

In owning our past and charting our future, we, the League of Women Voters of Dane County, recognize the Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live, while struggling to learn more about the current and ongoing context of colonialism. League formation began more than a century ago, in 1920, with women's suffrage, but nearly two centuries ago, even prior to the 1848 creation of the State of Wisconsin, an 1832 treaty forced the Ho-Chunk to cede their territory of Teejop (Four Lakes). Both the federal and state governments repeatedly but unsuccessfully sought to forcibly remove Ho-Chunk from Wisconsin.

Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope of a better life, some have lived on this land for more generations than can be counted. Truth and acknowledgement are critical to building mutual respect and connections across all barriers of heritage and difference. We begin this effort to acknowledge what has been buried by honoring the truth. In Dane County we are all standing on the stolen ancestral lands of the Ho-Chunk People. We recognize that here they built their villages, dropped their fishing nets, and built mounds to honor their ancestors. We pay respect to their elders past, present and future. Please take a moment to consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that brings us together today.

A working group is being formed within LWV Dane County to acknowledge past trauma, while nurturing present and future commitment to action working together to understand the histories and priorities of Indigenous communities. Our Annual Meeting is an opportunity to focus this coming year's Program and Advocacy on progress in our relationship to the land and water and each other. LWVDC is grateful for the past, present and future guidance of Wisconsin's Native Nations.