

VOTER

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LWVJC | P. O. Box 5452 |
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April 2024

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy

Springtime

Spring has officially arrived with renewed vitality for Mother Earth and our Leagues. Many events are planned for the next few months.

The final forum of this legislative session is 9:30 Saturday morning, March 30. The topic, a new one from our Voter Services committee, will be Public Safety. All are welcome, questions for legislators may be on any topic.

On April 10, drop in for Casual Coffee at Poindexter, Graduate Hotel in downtown Iowa City.

If you plan to attend the Annual LWVIA Defending Democracy fundraising event, April 11 at the Jasper Winery in Des Moines and are interested in ride-sharing, please email us: jclwvoters@gmail.com

Thank you to our Education committee for organizing Connie Mutel's presentation, *Iowa, the Beautiful Land? Envisioning an Action Agenda for Nature and Agriculture* at the Iowa City Public Library, April 17, 6:30-8pm. Free and open to the public.

Every year we hold our Annual Membership and Business meeting in the Spring. Join us this year, May 16, 5-7pm for dinner and for Becca Eastwood, ACLU of Iowa, presenting *The Freedom to Decide: How to Protect Reproductive Freedom in Iowa*. You will receive an invitation via email later in April.

To round out the season, June 8 the LWVIA Council Meeting will be held in Grinnell. Please email us at jclwvoters@gmail.com if you would like to attend and learn more about the work of League of Women Voters.

LWVUS has declared 2024 *The Year of the First-Time Voter*. Email Jennifer L. Patel, Voter Registration chair, if you are interested in registering voters for this important election year at patel.jenniferl@gmail.com

Paula Vaughan and Miriam Timmer-Hackert
co-presidents

The *Voter* is issued the last Friday of the month to provide members advance notice of activities.
The May Voter deadline is April 22.



Advocacy Update

The legislative season continues to march forward, and so do we. In theory, it will conclude in April, and we'll get a break. Unfortunately, the Iowa legislature has not been good about adjourning on time, and with the House and Senate working so out of sync, it seems unlikely that this year will end in a timely fashion.

March did see the end of numerous bad idea bills, and unfortunately also some good ones. One such that LWVJC advocates had supported was legislation to get Iowa into the federal summer food aid program for kids. Advocacy committee members and volunteers have also been active on issues including:

- AEA's: LWVJC advocates wrote legislators and made comments in the bill's public hearing arguing against it. At the time of this writing, different bills have passed both chambers. The House version is less bad, but definitely still bad. We will continue to raise awareness of this bill and urge lawmakers to listen to teachers and parents.
- Police Review Boards: Local advocates acted upon an alert sent by LWVIA about a bill banning cities from having local citizen review boards for police.
- Arming teachers: Advocates contacted lawmakers and made public comments opposing the bill that would prevent insurance companies from covering lawsuits resulting from armed teachers.
- Elections: There is another bill that makes voting harder and bans ranked choice voting. We will continue to oppose this bill.

While most of what we hear from the statehouse is unquestionably bad news, we console ourselves that Iowa's K-12 schools appear to be on track to partially recover their cut funding from the last several years and also that, even if there is a lot of damaging legislation still in play, public pressure

has made a clear and real difference in how damaging some of these bills could be.

Shannon Patrick
Advocacy Chair



The *She Speaks* event on March 10, added a new member and a voter registration was updated. Thank you to Mandi Remington, Kathy Hotsenpille, Miriam Timmer-Hackert and Vicki Aden for all of their help with this event.

Possible upcoming events are Iowa Arts Festival (June 7-9, 2024) and Iowa City Jazz Festival (July 5-7, 2024). With both of these events happening on multiple days, many hands will be needed to staff these events. Other events from 2023 such as Juneteenth Celebration, US Naturalization Ceremony at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library, CCAN-Con (Corridor-Community Action Network) and National Voter Registration Day may be reappearing on the 2024 schedule. Keep an eye out and help us register voters!

Jennifer Patel
Voter Registration Coordinator



Education Committee

On April 17, Connie Mutel will round out the League Lecture Series with *Iowa, the Beautiful Land? Envisioning an Action Agenda for Nature and Agriculture*. Connie is the author or editor of several books on Iowa's natural history, ecology, and environmental challenges, including *Fragile Giants: A Natural History of the Loess Hills* (1990),

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The Emerald Horizon: The History of Nature in Iowa (2008), *A Watershed Year: Anatomy of the Iowa Floods of 2008* (2010), *A Sugar Creek Chronicle: Observing Climate Change from a Midwestern Woodland* (2016) and *Tending Iowa's Land: Pathways to a Sustainable Future* (2022).

In her presentation, she will summarize the complex evolution of Iowa's environmental problems and address available solutions. Always the optimist, Connie aspires to encourage the confidence needed to generate a more hope-filled future. See the announcement in the Upcoming Events section in this issue for program details.

Education Committee

Rebecca Conard, Patty McCarthy, Susan Enzle



Membership

Current active membership in LWVJC is 160 members. Join me in welcoming the following people who joined in February and March: Renee Sueppel, Carralee Sueppel, Sheri Weitzenkamp, Mary Gregg, Elisabeth Leach, Nan Dietz, Sally Hartman, Mark Ruggeberg, Bob Brooks, Ginalie Swaim, Liz Bertell and Amy Dohnal. We welcome our new members and look forward to working with them! This is many more new members than we generally see in a month. Thanks so much to those of you recruiting new members! Thank you to our co-presidents who are writing personal welcome notes to every new member.

New and existing members, please consider attending the Casual Coffees which are on the second Wednesday of each month at 10 a.m. at Poindexter's Coffee. It's a great opportunity to get to know members in an informal setting.

Jeanne Bancroft
Membership Chair

FilmScene Community Collaboration

On Monday, March 25 at the FilmScene Chauncey theater, approximately 50 community members, League members, and local high school students gathered for the Midwest premier of the screening of the documentary film, *I, Too*. This event was part of the Community Collaboration program at FilmScene and co-sponsored by the LWVJC, the League of Women Voters of Iowa, the Bertelsman Foundation and FilmScene.

The documentary film *I, Too*, featured Dr. Carol Anderson, New York Times bestseller author and Chair of African American Studies at Emory University. *I, Too* explores the connection between America's history (through the lens of little-known episodes from the past), and the current challenges to American democracy. It examines the question "Who could believe this could happen here?" regarding the January 6, 2021, insurrection and reminds the viewers that such violence has happened in our country before and knowing our history is critical to preventing future violence.

The screening was followed by a thought provoking facilitated discussion exploring the impact of history and accountability in strengthening democracy. The discussion was led by Laura Gray, Iowa City Community School District's Executive Director of Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness. Panel members were Ashley Howard, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in University of Iowa's African American Studies, and the League's own Bea Hicks, LWVJC Board member.

Community Collaboration is an ongoing series of engaging cinematic events in partnership with nonprofits, advocacy groups, passionate individuals, and community organizations to generate conversation and action inspired by film.

Jeanne Bancroft



Fundraising

Thanks to everyone who donated so generously to the LWVJC fundraising campaign. The LWVJC has met its 2023-24 fundraising goal of \$8,000! Your contributions will make possible the work of the League in the election coming year, from sponsoring legislative forums on critical

issues like education and healthcare to hosting speakers on topics ranging from Iowa's environment to transparency in government.

If you have not yet made a donation, please consider doing so today. Donations may be made by mail or online. Checks made payable to the LWVJC can be mailed to: LWVJC, P.O. Box 5452, Coralville, IA 52241

Online donations may be made at:

<https://lwwjc.org/donate/>

*Kathleen Kamerick
Fundraising Chair*



New Member Spotlight

Welcome to an added feature in your newsletter! We will be spotlighting a newer member each month so we can learn a little about the unfamiliar faces in our midst.

This month, we are featuring new member **Nancy Dietz**. Nancy shares some information about herself and why she has joined the League.

“While waiting for my Mini Cooper to be serviced at a Des Moines dealership in 2016, I struck up a conversation with another woman. We covered cars, adult daughters, and Hillary Clinton's campaign for the presidency. She asked if I was a member of the League of Women Voters. I was not. "Why not?" she responded. I likely answered the usual excuses about time, but the bold question stuck with me.

My husband and I met while working in the newsroom of the Milwaukee Sentinel, lived for a time in the Chicago area, moved to central Iowa in the mid-1990s to raise our two children, and recently have retired to rural Johnson County near Solon. I believe strongly in a free press for both its role in shining a spotlight on government actions and in educating citizens. As the news media struggle to remain viable, organizations such as LWV become even more important. I'm ready to give my support and my time.”

Welcome Nancy!



Like LWVJCIA on Facebook!

***** UPCOMING EVENTS *****



JOIN US FOR THE MARCH LEGISLATIVE FORUM



SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024

9:30 - 11:30 AM

FOCUS ON PUBLIC SAFETY

IOWA CITY SENIOR CENTER ASSEMBLY ROOM
28 S. LINN ST., IOWA CITY



In-person and live streamed to LWVJC Facebook page





**IOWA THE BEAUTIFUL LAND?
ENVISIONING AN ACTION AGENDA
FOR NATURE AND AGRICULTURE**

CONNIE MUTEL

THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2024

6:30 – 8:00 P.M.

DRAWING FOR A COPY OF *TENDING IOWA'S LAND* AT 7:55 P.M.

IOWA CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY

MEETING ROOM A





Please Join Us for
Our May Membership Meeting

May 16. 2024
Unitarian Universalist Society
2355 Oakdale Rd, Coralville, IA 52241
5:00-7:00pm

GUEST SPEAKER
BECCA EASTWOOD, ACLU IA
'THE FREEDOM TO DECIDE'



LWV

League of Women Voters of Johnson County

Casual Coffee

Wednesday, Apr 10, 10 a.m.

*Poindexter Coffee
The Graduate Hotel
210 S. Dubuque St., Iowa City*

JOIN LEAGUE MEMBERS FOR A
RELAXED COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

★ VOTING

Promote equal access to voting and ensure all votes are counted. Adopt automatic voter registration. Enact ranked choice voting. Pass a constitutional amendment allowing Iowans with felony convictions to vote after time served.

🏛️ TRANSPARENCY & CITIZENSHIP

Demand government accountability and transparency by requiring all amendments and bills discussed in committee to be available to the public prior to a vote. Demand timely processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Encourage direct citizen participation by continuing virtual committee and subcommittee meetings. Preserve gender balance requirements for state boards and commissions.

🎓 EDUCATION

Increase oversight and track public funds being used for non-public schools. Require any non-public school receiving public funds to meet the same standards as public schools. Fully fund public schools. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare and four-year-old preschool.

👩‍⚕️ REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Make contraception available without prescription. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Support new moms with 12 months of postpartum Medicaid coverage. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

👤 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Prevent human trafficking in all of its forms, support its victims, and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect human trafficking survivors from criminal prosecution.

💧 ENVIRONMENT

Increase funding for environment and water quality initiatives, including REAP, and develop state climate change strategies.

🔫 GUN SAFETY

Enact comprehensive common sense gun safety legislation to address increasing gun violence in the state. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal "stand your ground" law, and resist efforts that expand carrying in public spaces and schools.



Photo Gallery



Above Left: L to R, Anthony Silberfield, Bertelsman Foundation; Ashley Howard, UI African American Studies; Laura Gray, Executive Director of Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness for ICCSD; Bea Hicks, LWVJC Board; Polly Horton, LWVJC, at the screening of the *I, Too* film at FilmScene on March 25.

Below: Scenes from the February Legislative Forum with state legislators Zach Wahls, Janice Weiner, Dave Jacoby, Amy Nielsen, Elinor Levin, and Adam Zabner. LWVJC member Karin Franklin was the moderator and LWVJC member Siri Felker was the timekeeper for the event.



Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Saturday, March 30	9:30-11:30 a.m.	Senior Center Assembly Room, Iowa City	Legislative Forum: Public Safety
Wednesday, April 10	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee, Graduate Hotel, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Thursday, April 11	4 - 7 p.m.	Jasper Winery, Des Moines	Annual LWVIA Defending Democracy event.
Wednesday, April 17	6:30 - 8 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	Connie Mutel: <i>Iowa, the Beautiful Land? Envisioning an Action Agenda for Nature and Agriculture</i>
Thursday, May 16	5 - 7 p.m.	Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Rd, Coralville	Annual Membership Meeting
Saturday, June 8		Grinnell	LWVIA State Council Meeting
June 27-30		Washington DC + online	2024 LWVUS National Convention

League of Women Voters of Johnson County

OUR MISSION: *Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*

OUR VISION: We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

OUR VALUE: We believe in the power of women and men to create a more perfect democracy.

Show Your Colors!



Logowear from the League of Women Voters is now available in a variety of colors and styles!

- Affordably priced
- Easy care, comfortable to wear
- Produced & sold in Iowa
- Makes a great gift
- Convenient, secure online ordering





Shop now! Visit our online store at:

stores.inksoft.com/league_of_women_voters







LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

All net proceeds from sales go to the League of Women Voters of Iowa







