



IN LEAGUE REPORTER

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April 2020

PROTECTING VOTERS DURING COVID-19 OUTBREAK



The Missouri Voter Protection Coalition is working to protect voter rights in the 2020 elections. The coalition is challenging the March 11 deadline the Governor set to register to vote for municipal elections that he moved from April 7 to June 2.

Since Missouri law gives voters until the fourth Wednesday before the election to register, a March 20 letter to Governor Mike Parson stresses that the deadline should be May 6. "These circumstances require a swift and amicable resolution of this issue in order to ensure the smooth operations of elections and safeguard the constitutional rights of all Missouri voters."

The Governor's order moved the deadline to request an absentee ballot to May 20. Coalition leader Denise Lieberman says Missouri should allow no-excuse absentee voting and waive the notary requirement for absentee ballots in 2020 elections.

Missouri statute 115.277 waives the notary requirement on absentee ballots for people confined at home due to illness. Lieberman says Missouri should allow that option for anyone practicing social distancing or self-isolating due to the outbreak, regardless of whether they have symptoms.

The recent stimulus bill includes \$400 million that the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) must get to states by April 27 for election assistance. Experts say more funding will be necessary.

Advocacy groups such as the Brennan Center for Justice want at least two weeks of in-person

absentee voting. Advocates also want more in-person voting options with safe, secure and accessible polling places.

Lieberman is not recommending that ballots be mailed to all eligible voters in Missouri since that is more expensive, would leave out some vulnerable populations and couldn't be implemented quickly. Census Bureau data shows 5 percent of Missouri voters voted by mail in 2016. Opening it up to 4.2 million registered voters would be a huge increase with challenging logistics.

LWV of Missouri and Metro St. Louis signed on to the coalition letter to the Governor and Secretary of State with the following recommendations to protect voter rights in Missouri amid the COVID-19 crisis.

- ★ Expanding absentee voting by mail, including eliminating the excuse and notary requirements.
- ★ Expanding options for in-person absentee and early voting, allowing more citizens to vote over time rather than in a cluster on Election Day.
- ★ Expanding voter registration options, particularly online.
- ★ Polling place modifications to ensure public safety and to protect accessibility.
- ★ Robust voter education.

**Encourage Missouri officials to
make voting easier NOW**

A wise move... The April
municipal election moved
to June 2!



**Allow mail-in
ballots!**

Allow no-excuse absentee voting!



PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



St. Louis County Executive Sam Page proclaimed March 10th as League of Women Voters Day. Dr. Page is pictured with Nancy Miller and Louise Wilkerson.

We hope this finds you well and keeping yourselves occupied during this pandemic. As you know, the office is closed, voter registrations are cancelled, and forums and Speakers Bureau events are also cancelled for the next 30 days.

We appreciate your understanding of the cancellation of Trivia Night. Many thanks to those of you who donated your ticket purchase. We are hoping to schedule another Trivia Night this fall. Stay tuned!

Jean and Chantal are working from home to pay bills, answer mail, make deposits, return phone calls, and manage the ever-present highway of information from LWVUS and our partners. Our League work carries on via Zoom group teleconferences, audio calls and email.

Our Metro Board met on a Zoom call last week. Having 16 participants made it tricky to tell who was speaking at times, but we persevered. As part of our business, we decided to **postpone the Annual Meeting**. If necessary, the Board will approve a temporary budget so that we can keep paying bills. The membership will need to elect a slate of officers and Directors whose two-year terms are expiring, including 2nd Vice President, Treasurer and four Directors. If you would like to be considered or nominate someone, please contact Debby Howard, chair of the Nominating Committee at jackhowe@swbell.net.

Our by-laws require us to provide members with the proposed budget, slate and anything to be voted on two weeks before a meeting which we will do when we set a date for the meeting. We have several amendments to our by-laws that have been proposed. Our Budget Committee is also hard at work. During the past year, Treasurer Steve Smith and Office Assistant Chantal Hoffsten have worked diligently to update the format of our financials to adhere to current accounting standards.

LWVMetroStL and LWVMO have signed on to a letter with 30+ other members of the Missouri Voter Protection Coalition requesting Governor Mike Parson and Secretary of State John Ashcroft adopt a set of recommendations to protect voting during this time (listed on Page 1). So, the work continues.

If you have a question, request or suggestion, please email the office at league@lwvstl.org, as that is checked throughout the day.

Remember, stay calm and respect each other’s space.

— Nancy J. Miller & Louise T. Wilkerson ,co presidents

2020 LWVMSTL OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents: Nancy J. Miller, Louise T. Wilkerson
First Vice President: Angie Dunlap
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MEDICAID EXPANSION IS A GOOD DEAL FOR MISSOURI

Health care is an urgent concern for most people in Missouri and the United States. Missouri is one of 14 states that has not expanded Medicaid. More than 100,000 petition signatures have been gathered, qualifying to appear on the ballot in November. Some opponents claim Medicaid expansion will add additional cost for the state. They say taxes would need to be raised and funds diverted from other important needs to cover these additional costs for health care.

Last month the Missouri Budget Project ^a published a report titled “Medicaid Expansion: A Good Deal for the State Budget.”¹ From the experiences reported by states that have expanded Medicaid, it is clear that Medicaid Expansion will not be a cost but will provide savings for the state budget. The federal government under Medicaid expansion gave a 100% match for funds spent under Medicaid from 2014 through 2017, then 95% through 2019, and now 90% starting 2020 and continuing permanently. Even at the 90% rate, these states expect to continue savings rather than add costs. Some have been severely skeptical of the federal government commitment or ability to continue this match funding. However, it is noted that, since the inception of Medicaid, the federal match rate has never been reduced for a permanent match rate.^{1,2}

The League of Women Voters strongly supports Medicaid Expansion as consistent with its policy that all people should have high quality, affordable health care.

Medicaid Expansion, as a component of the Affordable Care Act, is in the fifth year of full

expansion. A track record of actual costs of those in expanded states is available. Results show a significant difference from initial projections. The Missouri Budget Project explains three specific ways the federal funding will provide savings for the Missouri budget by reducing costs with Medicaid expansion.¹

1) Joint state and federal government contributions to the funding of care: Services for some diagnostic groups now are covered by Medicaid at a 65% federal match rate and 35% state funded. The matching ratios will change with Medicaid expansion to 90% federal and 10% state rates with expansion for all covered under Medicaid. State savings could reach \$235 million per year. For example, one of the effected groups will be pregnant women now covered at the 65/35 rate, will go to 90/10 rate covering more than 20,000 pregnancies.

2) Services covered 100% by the state: Services for some designated groups such as people who are blind and persons who are incarcerated, now only the state covers. These groups will be covered for the 90/10% rate under expansion. State savings

would be over \$35 million per year.

3) New state tax revenue: Income generated by “over \$2.5 billion in new federal funding to support Medicaid expansion” goes directly into the health care industry. Additional state income and sales tax revenue generated through this funding could be in the amount of \$50 million.

The strong balance of objective evidence indicates Medicaid expansion has 1) a significantly positive effect on the health and financial stability for people of the state, 2) improved the financial stability of hospitals, and 3) made gains in state employment.¹

(continued on Page 4)



(Continued from Page 3)

States across the political spectrum do not regret their decisions to expand Medicaid.³ Previous estimates of costs to these states were severely overstated and inaccurate.



Examples of several states that have reported specific positive effects on their state budgets were included in the Missouri Budget Project Report.

Louisiana: \$199 million saved in 2017 from multiple factors including the federal match rate and overall state and local tax receipts.⁴

Virginia: estimated \$421 million in state budget savings were allocated to other budget priorities such as education.⁵

Montana: state costs for expansion were offset by savings expansion created and new revenue resulting from increased economic activity.⁶

Colorado: increased income, sales, and use taxes resulting from expansion totaled more than \$100 million in fiscal year 2016 and would exceed \$150 million by fiscal year 2025.⁷

NOTE AND REFERENCES

³The Missouri Budget Project is a nonprofit organization informing public policy decisions through objective research and analysis of state budget, tax and economic issues.

¹Missouri Budget Project, Medicaid Expansion: A Good Deal for the State Budget, January 2020. www.MOBUDGET.ORG

²Cuello, Leonardo, Why the Medical Expansion Is a Safe Choice for Your State. National Health Law Program, February 2013.

³Hall, Mark, Do States Regret Expanding Medicaid? The Leonard D. Schaeffer Initiative for Innovation in Health Policy, USC Schaeffer Center for Health Policy and Economics. March 18, 2018.

⁴Louisiana Department of Health, Medicaid Expansion 2016/17 (Baton Rouge, Louisiana Department of Health, June 2017).

⁵Adam Searing, "Actual State Budget Impacts in Five States that Expanded Medicaid," Georgetown University Health Policy Institute, Center for Children and Families, November 2, 2019.

⁶Ward, Bryce, Bridge, Brandon, The Economic Impact of Medicaid Expansion in Montana: Updated Findings. Bureau of Business and Economic Research, January 2019.

⁷The Colorado Health Foundation, Assessing the Economic and Budgetary Impact of Medicaid Expansion in Colorado, The Colorado Health Foundation, March 2016.

—Irma Ruebling, Health Care Committee

The State Legislature is making the budget its priority and plans to adjourn for the year on May 15. Despite new interest, no hearing has been scheduled on Senator Karla May's Early Voting bill, SB681.

This bill, along with the No Excuse Absentee Voting Bill (HB1761), is even more critical in light of the COVID-19 guidelines for assembly and interaction. The Missouri Clerks Association, the statewide group of election officials, officially endorsed SB681. LWVMO president Evelyn Maddox wrote an op-ed stressing that the League believes our public officials must uphold the rights of all voters during this crisis by immediately providing for no-excuse absentee voting in upcoming elections. She also pointed out that the League encourages elected officials to add this pandemic to the acceptable reasons to request an absentee ballot and to waive the notarized signature on the mailed ballots. This op-ed was printed in the *Springfield News Leader*, the *Kansas City Star* and the *St. Louis American*.

Meanwhile, Governor Parson issued an executive order in response to the pandemic to postpone the April 7 election until June 2 but made no changes to make it easier to vote in 2020 elections.

We ask everyone to call, write or text their State Representative and Senator and ask that they **SUPPORT EARLY VOTING.**

—Joan Hubbard, Chairman, Early Voting Committee
As of March 31, the Legislature stands adjourned. The House has posted a technical session on April 7th, The Senate has posted a reconvene date of April 3.

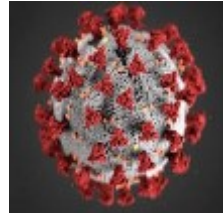


COVID-19 AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The world had been warned of the potential for pandemic, and now that it is here, we need to follow guidelines to reduce the impact and spread of the virus. As early as the George W. Bush administration, homeland security and health officials focused on big gaps in the American response to a biological attack and the growing risk of pandemics. The first test came in April 2009 with the contagious disease that would be called swine flu or H1N1. This was the first flu pandemic in 40 years. It was less lethal since flu treatments were available and a vaccine was quickly generated.

Climate change and air pollution contribute to deaths from COVID-19 particularly related to those with pre-existing asthma and other pulmonary diseases. All around the world, the extreme public health measures are resulting in decreases in air pollution and contributing to healthier environments. The economic disruption, reduced air travel, less industrial pollution, and millions of people working from home, have all resulted in significant declines in both carbon dioxide and nitrogen dioxide. Nitrogen dioxide is an air pollutant and powerful warming chemical that reduces immunity.

A 25% drop in energy use could lead to an overall fall of 1% in its carbon emissions. Both China and Northern Italy have also recorded significant falls in nitrogen dioxide which is related to reduced car journeys and industrial activity. The reduction in air pollution likely saved 20 times more lives in China than have currently been lost due to the infection from the virus. Venice saw with the lockdown across the city, and the decrease in tourist and boat traffic, that there was a clearing of the water in the canals and improved air quality. NASA satellite imagery confirms the environmental improvement



resulting from the measures to combat the spread of COVID-19.

However, there is little to celebrate since it is likely that the emissions decline driven by the economic crisis in the absence of the right policies and structural measures will not be sustainable. We could see increasing pollutants and carbon emissions in the second half of the year. Countries need to make smart choices as their governments decide to re-stimulate their economies once the pandemic eases. They need to put conditions of greenhouse gas emissions at the forefront of any financial aid deals and insist that bailouts of airlines be tied to more stringent reductions in aviation emissions. COVID-19 measures show that we can reduce carbon impacts and air pollution. Governments across the world need to take this opportunity to combat climate change.

References and additional information check out the articles on these sites: [Newshub](#) and [the BBC](#).



The 50th Anniversary of Earth Day is April 22. We had planned on participating in the Earth Day Lobby and Rally in Jefferson City to celebrate and highlight the need to work to combat pollution and climate change. This of course is now on hold. On Earth Day, ponder what steps you can take to combat climate change.

—Mickey Croyle, Environmental Quality Committee Chair

Environmental Tip of the Month: The COVID 19 mitigation is increasing plastic pollution with the ban on the use of reusable shopping bags. Keep the plastic bags and reuse or recycle after COVID-19. Request paper and use as weed barrier under your mulch as you prepare your gardens this spring or use the plastic bags lining trash receptacles at home. Some people also use them in craft projects, including weaving to make small rugs and mats.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REFLECTIONS

Unprecedented. That seems the best word to describe what’s going on in the world today. Like most St. Louis County residents, Chantal and I are working from home. But that doesn’t mean the League’s work is not essential or continuing while we adjust to COVID-19 restrictions.

With the April 7 municipal elections now set for June 2, VOTE411.org is available to give voters information about local candidates and ballot issues. In early March, Catherine Stenger and Barbara Harris made voter registration packets for the courts to share with newly-naturalized citizens, but now those ceremonies are on hold.

Executive Order 20-03 says high school students turning 18 before April 7 can vote, but it doesn’t indicate how they can register. We’re part of Missouri’s Voter Protection Coalition that is calling on Governor Mike Parson to change the deadline for voter registration from March 11 to May 6 to comply with state law and make other changes to

make voting easier in 2020 elections.

The League is also requesting a waiver on requiring an excuse or a notary for absentee ballots for 2020 elections. The Early Voting Committee chaired by Joan Hubbard has done a great job advocating for no-excuse absentee ballots and removal of the notary requirement. The Missouri Clerks Association, the statewide group of election officials, officially endorsed Senator Karla May’s early voting bill (SB681) even before concerns were raised about elections during a pandemic.



I completed my Census questionnaire. With area libraries closed, it will be a challenge to help households in under-counted areas, but we can try. It’s all part of our work to create a more perfect democracy.

— Jean Dugan

LEAGUE SUPPORTS WAKE UP TO POLITICS



Gabe Fleisher started getting up at the crack of dawn to send out a daily email newsletter called Wake Up to Politics when he was just 9 years old. Now that he’s a senior at John Burroughs High School

with a nationwide following, he’s partnered with St. Louis Public Radio to share his nonpartisan civic lessons and political insights on a podcast.

Starting in April, the League of Women Voters of Missouri

Education Fund is using grant money to sponsor his podcast.



To listen to his podcasts, go to <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/796243365/wake-up-to-politics>. You can subscribe to his newsletter by going to www.WakeUpToPolitics.com

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE UPDATE

Unfortunately, the NPV bill did not make it to a hearing this legislative session. The NPV committee is focused on education and preparing for the next opportunity for legislative action.

We will use e-mail to develop a strategic plan. New member Dorothy Fox has volunteered to facilitate. We will let you know how this goes.

—Sydell Sayer, NPV Committee Chair

ADVOCACY DAY

LWV of Metro St. Louis rented a van to take a delegation to Jefferson City on March 11, just before the General Assembly adjourned. While there, they shared our views on fair maps, voter ID, initiative petition rules and several pro-voter bills. Thanks to Senators Scott Sifton, Gina Walsh, Andrew Koenig and Jill Schupp and Reps. Deb Lavender, Ian Mackey, Peter Meredith, Judy Morgan and Alan Green.



Pictured are Laurie Velasquez, Dorothy Lockard, Margaret Gray, Angie Dunlap, Senator Sifton, Catherine Stenger, Louise Wilkerson, Nancy Pawol and Jean Dugan.



Above, Rep. Deb Lavender talks with Margaret Gray and Louise Wilkerson outside the House chamber.



League members pose with the bust of suffragist Virginia Minor in the Hall of Famous Missourians on the Capitol's third floor.

In 1867, Minor became the first president of the Woman Suffrage Association. After suing the state when she was not allowed to register to vote in St. Louis in 1872, her case went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.



APRIL IS LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL MONTH

Our League membership year runs April through March. Each April we send out the request for members to renew. Even though we realize the economic hardships of many during this pandemic, we will be sending out *email reminders* to members by mid-April to help our organization meet our on-going financial needs. If you defer renewal for a little while, we hope that you will not forget the League when the economic engine turns back on.

The League continues to do the good work of fighting for voters even while the world seems to be shutting down. We are pushing for Missouri’s wide use of no- excuse, no-notary absentee ballots. Questions about voter registration deadlines abound and the League is working to get those answers. We will fight to for Fair Maps and transparency in government if the MO General Assembly advances efforts to diminish these reforms when they return to Jefferson City. League-moderated candidate forums are expected to be rescheduled in May. The printed Voters Guide will still be delivered to those places that will accept them. The League continues to be a valuable source of information and education to voters.

We hope that you will renew your membership for the 2020-2021 year. Note, as the office is currently closed, we will not be sending out a paper renewal reminder until after the social distancing requirement is relaxed. Your membership can be renewed online at LWVSTL.org. Click “Join,” or send a check to the office. Yearly dues are \$75 for an individual and \$30 for each additional person in that household. Students are \$30/yr.

—Angie Dunlap, Membership Chair

COMING SOON!

LWVSTL WEBSITE WITH A NEW LOOK

In early April our League hopes to release our new League website for public use. It will have lots of helpful content like the current website, but with the capability for more bells and whistles, including a limited-access “members only” page.

ON-LINE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

With more than 550 members, our membership directory is getting unwieldy to print. With the new League website, we can save the member directory online as a pdf file with each member having access to the data with a personal password.

Putting the directory online will allow it to be updated several times per year, and as new people join the League, they will be listed quicker. While we will still print directories on request, the online directory should lower our printing costs.

Data to be included in the directory is: name, address, city, state, zip, email, and phone.

If you would like to opt out of having any of your contact info in the online directory, please contact Angie Dunlap, aok2bfast@hotmail.com, 636-368-6846.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Adele Carey St. Louis, MO 63117 adelecarey@sbcglobal.net	Bethany Dixon St. Louis, MO 63112 brdixon06@gmail.com
Courtney Starks Kirkwood, MO 63122 cmstarks@yahoo.com	Sherry Haskins St. Louis, MO 63126 sherryhaskins@gmail.com

Memorials

Two donations were recently made in honor of Georgia Archibald. (2/7/20)



UPCOMING EVENTS

Unit meetings are now on hold. The Budget Committee will hold a virtual meeting on April 7th. The board meets again on April 22 at 5:15 p.m.

Several other League events are being cancelled or rescheduled:

- ★ LWVMO moved its “Spring” Conference to Aug. 29.
- ★ The Press Club panel on the Fight for Women's Suffrage: Hard Lessons Learned with Louise Wilkerson and Margo McMillen, author of *The Golden Lane*, is tentatively set for Friday, Sept. 25.
- ★ The Missouri History Museum is hoping to open its *Beyond the Ballot* exhibit in May, with our event with Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins likely to be on Sept. 13. President of LWVUS from 1998 to 2002, she just completed *The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters*, now available on Amazon.com.



PROP D MOVES FORWARD

The St. Louis City Board of Elections has certified Proposition D for Democracy to ensure the candidate with the most support wins city elections for Mayor, Comptroller, President of the Board of Aldermen, and Alderman. League volunteers and other supporters gathered 20,026 signatures, more than double the 9,844 required.

At an April 1 news conference, St. Louis City Unit Leader Kathleen Farrell said, “Voters will participate more if they think their votes count. A non-partisan approval voting primary in March followed by a top-two runoff in April will give voters the ultimate say in deciding who leads our city.”

Joan Hubbard stressed that Prop D will increase voter turn-out. “Proposition D will strengthen our democracy by giving voters a greater voice.”

The Board of Alderman can adopt Prop D or put it on the August or November 2020 ballot.

VOLUNTEER CORNER

The League appreciates the many members who signed up to register voters, proof the voters guide, staff candidate forums or do other League work in March. Thanks go to Sue Allen, Marie Andel, Mary Archer, Julie Behrens, Renee Benage, Deborah Bloom, Michele Bowman, Pamela Carnell, James Carroll, Jan Castanis, Marsha Clark, Karen Cloyd, Lisa Collier, Marj Courtney, Nancy Craig, Cheri Crockett, Mickey Croyle, Don Crozier, Sue Dellbringge, Charlene Dumat, Angie Dunlap, Christine Eason, Janet Edwards, Kathleen Farrell, Cheryl Fellner, Susan Fluegel, Diane Friedman, Gloria Garidel, Eve Golden, Beverly Guterman, Linda Hanson, Denise Harrington, Barbara Harris, Kate Hatfield, Mary Hellwig, Debby Howard, Joan Hubbard, Pam Hughes, Juanita Jahn, Diane Kasten, Margaret Katranides, Yvette Kell, Kayla Kremer, Meredith Langlitz, Karen Leonard, Mary Leopold, Dorothy Lockard, Jennifer Lohman, Karen McClure, Susan McDonald, Kay Meyer, Nancy Miller, Barbara Mitchell, Cindy Mitchell, Carol Moakley, Gretchen Moser, Erin Northcutt, Joyce Patton, Sherri Pogue, Carol Portman, Nancy Price, Kathy Quinn, Libby Reimers, Sarah Riss, Peggy Robb, Ann Ross, Irma Ruebling, Jennifer Rushing, Anne Sappington, Cathy Satkowski, Sydel Shayer, Jessica Shepherd, Judith Smart, Steve Smith, Neva Sprung, Catherine Stenger, Carol Strawbridge, Penney Thomas, Nancy Thompson, Brenda Tremain, Ann Tucker, Susan Turk, Laurie Velasquez, Bill Vogel, Sharon Wells, K Wentzien, Renee Wickersham, Sue Williams, Louise Wilkerson, Katherine Witzig and Cindy Wunderlich.

Send an e-mail to league@lwvstl.org if we missed your name and we will thank you in the next newsletter.



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SUGGESTED READING

If you haven't read Elaine Weiss's book **THE WOMAN'S HOUR: THE GREAT FIGHT TO WIN THE VOTE**, now is the time. Extremely well researched, Weiss focuses on Tennessee as the final state needed to ratify the 19th Amendment. The first chapters gives a great overall history of the movement and the key participants. And the last several chapters are pretty exciting. What great women we follow!

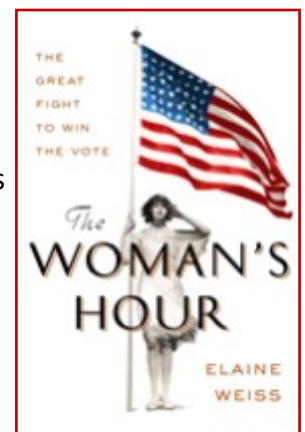
Here are some more women's rights related titles you might find interesting. They may be available as audio or ebooks from your library or ordered for curbside pickup from your local bookstore.

The Women's Suffrage Movement by Sally Roesch Wagner (Editor), 2019

Why They Marched: Untold Stories of the Women Who Fought for the Right to Vote by Susan Ware, 2019

History Of Woman Suffrage by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony (Editor), Matilda Joslyn Gage (Editor), 1911. (Available as a free PDF online.)

And if you want some books to read with your children/grandchildren, visit **A Mighty Girl** for a list of books for kids. <https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=11827>



—Sherri Pogue