

## VOTER

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LWVJC | P. O. Box 5452  
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The *Voter* is issued the last Friday of the month to provide members advance notice of activities. **The March Voter deadline is February 22.**

### February 2025

Hello Leaguers! The new Iowa legislative session is underway and things are moving fast. I encourage you all to read the report in this *Voter* from our Advocacy chair, Kathy Wandro with some timely tips to help keep track of important issues. Also, the League of Women Voters of Iowa is holding a Capital Day in Des Moines on February 12 to meet with our state legislators and advocate for League priorities. Please put this on your calendar and look for more information in the coming days via email to coordinate our participation in this event.

Our Voter Services committee has been busy as well. The first Legislative forum of the session was held on January 25. If you were not able to attend in person, the video from the event is on our Facebook page and will be posted to our website as well (hopefully by the time you are reading this). The next Legislative forum is February 22 and will focus on the environment and water quality.

The committee is also hosting a candidate forum for the Iowa City Council District C special election. The forum was held on January 27 and the video should be available on our Facebook page and website as well. While only residents of District C can vote in the primary election on February 4, all residents of Iowa City can vote in the special election on March 4.

Our Education committee has been busy organizing their latest program in their League Lecture Series, *Affordable Housing: Searching for Solutions*, to be held February 13 at the Iowa City Public Library. This will be a great opportunity to learn more about this crisis and how it can be addressed.

Learning about and being informed on issues, advocating for our priorities, providing information on candidates, these are core activities in our mission to empower voters and defend democracy. I thank you all for joining me on this mission.

Vicki Aden  
 LWVJC President



## MEMBERSHIP

Our League currently has 171 active members. I would like to welcome our League's newest members Shelagh Hayreth, Kathy Patience and Seth and Wendy Zimmermann. Please welcome them into our League as you meet them at various League events throughout the coming year.

**Casual Coffee:** All members are always invited to attend our Casual Coffees on the second Wednesday of each month. It's a good way to enjoy a beverage and get to know other League members. We meet at 10 a.m. at Poindexter's Coffee in the Graduate Hotel.

### ChapterSpot News and Updates

As you are probably aware, ChapterSpot, the new membership online platform from LWV goes live in February. All members nationwide will join, renew, and pay dues on line, and be able to update personal information such as phone, email and mailing address when needed.

During the week of February 3, each member will receive an email from the national league with an invitation to log-in and set up a ChapterSpot account. Each member will create her/his own account using a valid email, i.e., the email our League currently has on file for you. After entering your email address, each member will receive a code to enter in order to create a ChapterSpot account. Any information already on file with the League, i.e., name, address and phone number will be pre-populated in the form. If you do not have an email listed with our league, please contact me and I will enter one for you.

There will be a short questionnaire to complete after setting up your account.

### Dues Changes

Rather than each League setting its own dues range, under the new system dues will be pay-what-you-can with a recommended member rate of \$75. The minimum dues rate will be \$20. There will no longer be either a student or household membership rate. However, a household may choose to continue to pay the previous \$105 household total amount membership between them; or the recommended amount of \$50 each; or pay any amount down to the minimum of \$20 each. As always, there are no dues for Lifetime members.

A major benefit of the new system is that local leagues will now receive a higher percentage of membership dues. Under the new system, the percentage received will be National, 33%; State, 47%; and Local, 20%.

### Automatic Dues Renewal

There will be an option to automatically renew dues. Members are encouraged to pay dues online using a credit/debit card or by ACH (an electronic payment using the numbers on the bottom of a check). Members will receive a dues renewal reminder from LWV 60 days and 30 days prior to her/his membership expiration date. Another reminder will be emailed if a member has not renewed by the expiration date. Members will still be able to renew with a check.

The member renewal date for any current member who joined the league after August 1, 2024 is one year from the date you joined. Those who were members before August 1, 2024 have a renewal date of June 30, 2025. Please contact me with any questions about your renewal date.

Any new information received from the national league regarding ChapterSpot will be shared with members as soon as it is available.

If you have any questions regarding your membership, please email me at [lwvjcmmembership@gmail.com](mailto:lwvjcmmembership@gmail.com).

*Diane Duncan-Goldsmith  
Membership Chair*



## VOTER SERVICES

The first of three legislative forums during the Iowa 91st Assembly was held on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at the Iowa City Senior Center. The following legislators participated: Senator Zach Wahls, Senator Janice Weiner, Representative Dave Jacoby, Representative Amy Nielsen, Representative Elinor Levin and Representative Adam Zabner. Senator Dawn Driscoll, Representative Heather Hora and Representative Judd Lawler did not attend.

The focus of this forum was on Education. Local educational organizations were invited to send someone on behalf of the organization. Representatives from the Iowa City Community School Board, Iowa City Education Agency, 4 C's and Grant Wood AEA posed questions.

Many questions also came from the large audience of around 60 people. Thank you to Joan Cook, who served as moderator and Gaylen Wobeter, who was our timekeeper. It was an informative session and was Facebook livestreamed and is available on the League's website.

A candidate forum was held on Monday, January 27. Two candidates are running for the Iowa City City Council District C seat: Ross Nusser and Oliver Weilein. The third candidate, Sharon DeGraw withdrew from the race this past weekend.

The Assembly Room at the Senior Center was packed with very interested citizens. It was a spirited, but respectful debate between these two candidates.

The primary election is on February 4, 2025 with early voting in process now. The city council election is a non-partisan election. All registered voters living in District C are eligible to vote in the primary. The two top vote getters will face off

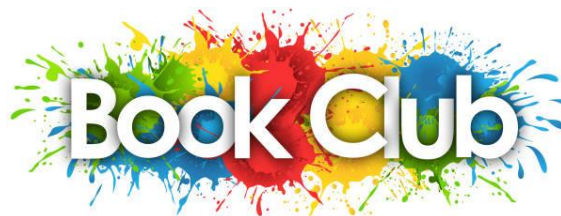
in the Special Election on March 4 when all Iowa City registered voters are eligible to participate.

Early voting for the special election starts on February 12. According to Julie Persons, Johnson County Auditor, the third candidate remains on the primary ballot and if she receives enough votes to be one of the top two vote getters on February 4, she could be on the special election ballot on March 4, 2025.

The next legislative forum is scheduled on Saturday, February 22 from 9:30-11:30a.m. at the Coralville City Council Chambers, 1512 7<sup>th</sup> St., Coralville. The focus issues of the February forum will be the environment and water quality. Mark your calendars and plan to join us.

Please contact Jeanne Bancroft (jnn.bancroft@gmail.com) if you are interested in becoming a moderator or timekeeper for future forums. Members of the committee are Jean Dohnam, Mary Gregg, and Polly Horton,

*Jeanne Bancroft  
Voter Services Chair*



## CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT BOOK CLUB

The group did not meet in January due to the extremely cold weather. The book "Everyone Who Is Gone Is Here" by Jonathan Blitzen will be our book for the February meeting. That meeting will be at Oaknoll West in the Spring Building meeting room starting at 5:30 on February 17.

*Jeanne Bancroft  
Book Club chair*



## Civics Education

### EDUCATION

Join us on February 13, 6:30-8:00, at the Iowa City Public Library for Affordable Housing: Searching for Solutions. Jessica Andino, Executive Director of the Johnson County Affordable Housing Coalition, Rachel Carr of Johnson County Social Services, and Erin Sullivan of Shelter House will discuss the affordable housing crisis locally, the people most affected by this shortage, current efforts to address the issue, and proposals to make housing more accessible.

Affordable housing has emerged as a major issue in Johnson County as it has across the country. Since 2000, the county's population has increased roughly 40 percent, while the supply of housing, especially affordable housing, has not kept up with demand. According to the 2023 Johnson County Affordable Housing Report, we have the highest percent of cost-burdened households in Iowa, those that spend more than 30 percent of their income for housing: 55 percent of renters and 17 percent of homeowners in Johnson County are cost-burdened. Many households spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing.

Our program cosponsors are Iowa Valley Habitat for Humanity, The Housing Fellowship, Housing Trust Fund of Johnson County, Domestic Violence Intervention Program, Johnson County Interfaith Coalition, TRAIL of

Johnson County, Houses Into Homes, and the Iowa City Public Library.

Can't make it in person? Live stream the program on ICPL's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/thelibrarychannel>.

*Rebecca Conard, chair  
Susan Enzle  
Kathleen Kamerick  
Laure Wes Peters*



The Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics will again be offering Ready to Run Iowa, a nonpartisan campaign training program that is part of a national network founded by the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, as a series of six workshops over three Fridays in February, March and April of 2025. Training is open to women and men. Information about the program and the 2025 schedule is posted at <https://cattcenter.iastate.edu/events/ready-to-run-iowa>





## ADVOCACY

“Liberty cannot be preserved without a general knowledge among the people, who have a right....and a desire to know.” *John Adams, 1765*

The 91st Iowa State Assembly has convened and has generated an eventful legislative session. While our Johnson County legislators have been working to promote bipartisan legislation of some issues like regulating cell phone use in the classroom and hands-free phone usage while driving, there are other issues that deserve scrutiny and more transparency like the state budget and education issues. We are also hoping for a report on last session’s AEA legislation and its impact on public schools’ services provided. We continue to advocate for and track such issues as access to the ballot box, reproductive health, immigration and environment.

The Advocacy Committee strives to keep you updated and involved! These websites are excellent resources to track legislative activity:

League of Women Voters Iowa Policy Blog  
<https://lwvia.org/news/>

Advocacy Cooperative Bill Tracker  
<https://www.ialobby.com/billtracker/lwvia>

The Iowa Legislature Bill Tracking Website  
<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislation>

We encourage you to take action to make a difference!

Thanks to UNI Professor Emeritus Deb Gallagher, a Letter Writing Website Kit is available to share your voice with the click of a button. The website is hands-on, easy to navigate, and comprehensive to inspire Letters to the Editors of local news media and timely e-mails to contact our elected officials. Thank you to 100 Grannies of Iowa City for sharing this valuable tool.

Letter Writing

Kit: <https://100grannies.org/2024/09/24/toolkit-offers-helpful-hint-for-writing-for-climate-justice/>

Remember when contacting legislators or writing for publication to speak from your personal point of view. Only the League presidents write on behalf of League of Women Voters.

Here’s a bill to track that deserves your attention:

Rep. Adam Zabner is cosponsoring a bill that would require Iowa to participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture Summer supplemental nutrition program called 2025 SUN Bucks. This follows the decision by Governor Reynolds to turn down \$28 million to feed Iowa’s kids.

If you want to receive a weekly e-mail update focusing on Iowa Legislative action and Johnson County Legislators on Record, contact Kathy Wandro at [kwandro@mac.com](mailto:kwandro@mac.com) to be added to The Advocacy Report e-mail list.

*Kathy Wandro  
Advocacy chair*

## \*\*\* UPCOMING EVENTS \*\*\*

**League of Women Voters of Johnson County**  
*Casual Coffee*

*Wednesday, February 12, 10 a.m.*  
Poindexter Coffee  
The Graduate Hotel  
210 S. Dubuque

JOIN LEAGUE FOR A  
RELAXED COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

**CANCELLED due to Lobby Day in Des Moines**

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF IOWA

**LOBBY DAY 2025**

LWV of Iowa will join the American Association of University Women (AAUW) in hosting Lobby Day on Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025, which includes training and visits to legislators at the Capitol to advocate for our priority issues. If you want to attend and/or carpool, send an email by February 10 to [jclwvoters@gmail.com](mailto:jclwvoters@gmail.com) to let President Vicki Aden know you are interested.

★ ★ ★ LEAGUE LECTURE SERIES ★ ★ ★

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS\*  
OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING:  
SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS**

**Jessica Andino, JC Affordable Housing  
Coalition; Rachel Carr, JC Social Services;  
Erin Sullivan, Shelter House**

**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2025  
6:30 – 8:00 P.M**

**IOWA CITY PUBLIC LIBRARY  
MEETING ROOM A**

**CO-SPONSORED BY IOWA VALLEY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY, HOUSING  
FELLOWSHIP, HOUSING TRUST FUND OF JC, DVIP , HOUSES INTO HOMES, JC  
INTERFAITH COALITION, TRAIL OF JC, ICPL, LWVJC**

**JOIN US FOR THE FEBRUARY LEGISLATIVE FORUM**

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS\*  
OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

**SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2025**

**9:30 - 11:30 AM**

**FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENT &  
WATER QUALITY**

**CORALVILLE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
1512 7TH ST., CORALVILLE**

**In-person and live streamed to LWVJC Facebook page**



★ 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. End electoral college.

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. Reinstate gender balance requirements for appointed boards and commissions.

EDUCATION

Provide 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 and reinstate all AEA functions. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare and free four-year-old preschool.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Repeal the six-week abortion ban. Make contraception available without prescription and promote programs that help prevent unplanned pregnancies. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Increase state funding for victim services; develop strategies to prevent human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault; and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect victims from criminal prosecution.

ENVIRONMENT

Recognize the need for and fund water quality initiatives. Fully fund REAP. Develop state climate change strategies.

GUN SAFETY

Enact comprehensive common sense gun safety legislation. Ban assault rifles and military-grade weapons. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal "stand your ground" law, and oppose legislation that allows the carrying of guns in schools.



**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.



## Photo Gallery



Casual Coffee, January 8: Johnson County Sheriff, Brad Kunkel drops in to visit with group. Members present: Vicki Aden, Polly Horton, Susie Corbin-Muir, Joan Cook, Mary Gregg, Cathy Eisenhofer, Justin Whitty, Gaylen Wobeter, Paula Vaughan, Donna Hirst, Eileen Beran.





The Legislative Forum, January 25, which focused on education was well attended by area residents. All 9 Johnson County state legislators were invited to the forum.

Shown above are those who participated (L-R): Senators Zach Wahls and Janice Weiner, Representatives Dave Jacoby, Elinor Levin, Amy Nielsen and Adam Zabner.

Below: Attendees enjoying visiting before the start of the forum.





## Calendar of Events

Friday, January 31	5:30 - 7 p.m.	Solon Public Library, 320 W Main St, Solon	Town Hall with Rep. Nielsen and Solon Mayor O'Neil
Monday February 10	6:30 p.m.	Zoom	LWVJC Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 12	Note: LWVJC Casual Coffee is cancelled this month		
Wednesday, February 12	9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	State Capitol, Des Moines	LWVIA Capitol Lobby Day; email jclwvoters@gmail.com to RSVP
Thursday, February 13	6:30 - 8 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A	LWVJC Education Program: Affordable Housing: Searching for Solutions
Saturday, February 15	9 - 10 a.m.	Dodge Street Coffeehouse, 947 US Hwy 6, Iowa City	Rep. Levin District 89 Check-In
Monday, February 17	5:30 p.m.	Oaknoll West, Spring Building, 4th floor meeting room	LWVJC Carrie Chapman Catt Book Club
Thursday, February 20	5:30 p.m.	City of Washington Council Chambers, 215 E Washington St, Washington, IA	Legislative Briefing with Sen. Driscoll and Rep. Hora hosted by Washington Chamber of Commerce
Saturday, February 22	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Coralville City Council Chambers, 1512 7th St, Coralville	LWVJC Legislative Forum - Focus on Environment & Water Quality
Monday, March 10	6:30 p.m.	Zoom	LWVJC Board Meeting
Wednesday, March 12	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee, 210 S Dubuque St., Iowa City	LWVJC Casual Coffee
March 27 - 28	Program information available at:	<a href="https://obermann.uiowa.edu/locating-reproductive-justice">https://obermann.uiowa.edu/locating-reproductive-justice</a>	Locating Reproductive Justice, a 2-day symposium
Saturday, March 29	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.	North Liberty City Council Chambers, 360 N. Main St., North Liberty	LWVJC Legislative Forum - Focus on Immigration & Citizenship
Thursday, April 3	6:30 - 8 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A	LWVJC Education Program: Legal and Medical Issue Facing Immigrants in Johnson County
Thursday, April 24, 2025	4 - 7 p.m.	Jasper Winery, Des Moines	LWVIA Defending Democracy Award Banquet