

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 **February Voter deadline is January 24.**

January 2025

Our Work Continues

Happy New Year Leaguers! I hope you are enjoying the holidays and recharging your League batteries for our work to empower voters and defend democracy in 2025. Every year is an election year, and this year there are city and school board elections in November, and also a special election in March to fill the Iowa City city council District C seat. We also have forums and education programs coming up over the next few months and, of course, opportunities to advocate for League priorities as the Legislative session starts in Des Moines.

The Iowa Legislature convenes on January 13. The Governor gives her Condition of the State address on January 14 at 6 p.m. – tune in to hear what priorities the Governor has for legislators to address. Our Advocacy committee will follow the Legislative session closely to understand pending legislation related to our state policy priorities. If you would like to join them or sign up to receive action alerts, contact our Advocacy chair Kathy Wandro.

The Voter Services committee hosts the Legislative forums during the legislative session to give you a chance to hear from and question our Johnson County state legislators. The first forum is scheduled for Saturday, January 25 at 9:30 a.m. at the Iowa City Senior Center and will focus on Education. The forum February 22 will focus on the Environment and Water Quality, while the forum on March 29 will focus on Immigration and Citizenship. All forums are at the Iowa City Senior Center and begin at 9:30 a.m. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

LWVIA co-president Terese Grant will be speaking at a forum in Cedar Rapids on January 3 sponsored by the Interfaith Alliance of Iowa titled *Bridging the Gap: Political Advocacy from Afar*. The forum offers both in-person and virtual attendance. More information is at <https://www.interfaithallianceiowa.org/get-involved/intersections>. Consider attending to hear how to hone your advocacy skills in preparation for the upcoming Iowa legislative session.

Our yearly fundraising drive continues. A sincere thank you to those who have already contributed. Your donation to LWVJC allows us to continue our important work through the year.

Vicki Aden
 LWVJC President



MEMBERSHIP

Our League currently has 167 active members. I would like to welcome our new League members Shirley Barker, Kate Durda and Lori Wood. 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 get 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

As you are probably aware, **ChapterSpot**, the new membership platform where members from across the country will join, renew online, pay dues, and update their own personal information such as phone, email and mailing address when needed is coming in February, 2025

Changes: All members will need to create a **ChapterSpot** account. Therefore, the first week in February all members will receive an email from The League of Women Voters US inviting them to log-in and set up a **ChapterSpot** account. A member will create an account using a valid email, i.e., the email our League currently has on file for you. Members will enter their email and receive a code which is then entered 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.

There will also be a short questionnaire to complete.

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 rate 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.

Automatic Dues Renewal

There will be an option to renew dues automatically. 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). As a reminder to renew, members will receive a dues renewal reminder 60 days and 30 days before a person's membership expires. Another reminder will be emailed if a member has not renewed by the member expiration date. Members will still be able to renew with a check.

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%.

If you have questions regarding your membership, please email me at lwjcmembership@gmail.com.

*Diane Duncan-Goldsmith
Membership Chair*





EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Affordable housing, reproductive justice, and the challenges immigrants face in obtaining legal and medical services are all on the program schedule for Winter/Spring 2025. Please mark your calendars for these educational programs and check the events calendar for time and place.

Affordable housing has emerged as a major issue in Johnson County as it has across the country. On **February 13, 2025, Affordable Housing: Searching for Solutions** will bring together Jessica Andino, Executive Director of the Johnson County Affordable Housing Coalition, Rachel Carr from Johnson County Social Services, and Christine Hays from Shelter House to discuss the extent of 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.

Locating Reproductive Justice, a two-day symposium on March 27 - 28, 2025, will bring leading thinkers, activists and artists to the University of Iowa to discuss regional and global shifts in the realm of reproductive justice. LWVJC is one of several co-sponsors joining the Reproductive Justice and Maternal Politics Obermann Group to support a series of events, including two public evening programs at the Iowa City Public Library. Look for more information in the February **Voter**.

While politicians and media relentlessly focus on undocumented immigrants crossing the U.S. - Mexico border, we will delve into **Legal and Medical Issues Facing Immigrants in Johnson County on April 3, 2025**. Bram Elias of the University of Iowa Immigration Clinic and Jennie Schmidt of the Free Medical Clinic will enlighten us on some very real challenges immigrants face locally and how these two public services are helping them.

*Rebecca Conard,
Susan Enzle,
Kathleen Kamerick &
Laure Wess Peters*



FUNDRAISING

As the holiday season nears an end, if you have not participated in our fundraising campaign, please consider a donation to either our tax-deductible Education Fund or our Operations Fund which supports our basic programming and administrative costs.

This first update reflects \$3750 received through the first weeks of December -- \$2750 for Operations and \$1000 for the Education Fund. Our goal this year is \$8000 and we're almost half-way there! Please help us make our goal as well as increase our membership participation percentage this year. No amount is too small and all contributions help us develop new and more expansive communications vehicles to keep our public informed. Can we count on you?

*Bea Hicks
Fundraising Chair*

VOTER SERVICES

The Voter Services Team is working to plan the 2025 Winter Legislative Forums. These forums offer opportunities for the community to ask questions of our legislators and hear them update us on the happenings in the Iowa Legislature as the session proceeds. The League will moderate the forum and pose the first question, after which organizations and advocacy groups representing the topic of that forum will ask questions of particular interest to their organization. The public may also ask questions as time allows. The event will be recorded and live streamed on the LWVJC Facebook page.

All forums will be held in the Assembly Room at the Iowa City Area senior Center from 9:30 -- 11:30 a.m.

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The dates and focus topics for the 2025 forums are:

- Saturday, Jan 25 – Education
- Saturday, Feb 22 – Environment & Water Quality
- Saturday, Mar 29 – Immigration & Citizenship

All Johnson County legislators are invited, and we look forward to hearing from them. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

*Jeanne Bancroft, Chair
Voters Services Committee*

CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT BOOK GROUP

ATTENTION PLEASE: The January meeting continues to be scheduled for Monday, January 20, 2025. However, the Coralville Public Library is no longer available for the meeting. The new location for the meeting Oaknoll West in the 4th floor meeting room in the Spring Building. Parking is available in the George St visitor lot.

Additional meetings are scheduled for Monday, February 17 and Monday, March 24, 2025.

Jeanne Bancroft & Deanne Mirr

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



League of Women Voters of Johnson County

Casual Coffee

Wednesday, January 8, 10 a.m.

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

JOIN LEAGUE MEMBERS FOR A
RELAXED COFFEE AND CONVERSATION

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
JOIN US FOR THE JANUARY LEGISLATIVE FORUM



SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2025

9:30 - 11:30 AM

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

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

In-person and live streamed to LWVJC Facebook page



2025 LEGISLATIVE FORUMS



SAVE THE DATES
2025 LEGISLATIVE FORUMS

JANUARY 25, FOCUS ON EDUCATION
FEB 22, FOCUS: ENVIRONMENT & WATER QUALITY
MAR 29, FOCUS ON IMMIGRATION & CITIZENSHIP
ALL FORUMS 9:30 - 11:30 AM
IOWA CITY SENIOR CENTER ASSEMBLY ROOM

Forums will be in-person and live streamed to the LWVJC Facebook page,
and recorded to the LWVJC and City Channel 4 websites



★ 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.



Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Wednesday, January 8	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee, Graduate Hotel, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Monday, January 13	6:30 p.m.	Zoom	LWVJC Board Meeting
Monday, January 20	5:30 p.m.	Oaknoll West, 4 th floor meeting room in the Spring Building	Carrie Chapman Catt Book Group
Saturday, January 25	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Iowa City Senior Center 28 S. Linn St., Iowa City	Legislative Forum - Focus on Education
Thursday, February 13	6:30 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A	Education Program - Affordable Housing in Johnson County
Saturday, February 22	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Iowa City Senior Center 28 S. Linn St. Iowa City	Legislative Forum - Focus on Environment & Water Quality
Saturday, March 29	9:30 - 11:30 a.m.	Iowa City Senior Center 28 S. Linn St., Iowa City	Legislative Forum - Focus on Immigration & Citizenship
Thursday, April 17	5:00 - 7:00 p.m.	Jasper Winery, Des Moines	LWVIA Defending Democracy Award Banquet

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.