

# LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

## 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 July Voter deadline is June 21.

## JUNE 2025

### The Year-End Wrap-Up

Fifty-two members joined us on Tuesday, May 20 at the Kirkwood Room to celebrate another successful year at our annual meeting. All four voting measures passed; our budget for FY26 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026), changes to the bylaws, slate of officers for the coming year, and the delegates to the state convention. Thank you!

As we begin the summer season, voter registration activities are beginning to ramp up. City and school board elections are scheduled for November 4, 2025, and our voter registration volunteers will be out in the community to ensure voters are ready. If you would like to help in this effort, please contact our Voter Registration coordinator Kathy Clark at [mkathyclark@gmail.com](mailto:mkathyclark@gmail.com).

On the subject of voter registration, please take action to contact Iowa Senators Grassley and Ernst to tell them to oppose the SAVE Act. This act passed the House in April and is awaiting action by the Senate. This act requires citizenship documentation to register to vote even though voters in every state already have to attest to their citizenship status when registering. Americans do not need more obstacles to vote! LWVUS makes it easy to contact them through this link:

<https://www.lww.org/take-action/tell-your-senators-oppose-save-act>

The new board assumes responsibilities on July 1, 2025. A special thank-you to board members Rebecca Conard, Jean Donham, Jennifer Patel, and Sally Stutsman as they wind up their terms on the board.

Thank you for your support and all the time and energy you have given during your time on the board!

Vicki Aden  
 LWVJC President

## MEMBERSHIP

Our League currently has 188 active members. I would like to welcome our newest members Catherine Schiele, Denise Connell, and William Hanes. Please welcome them when 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. Members meet at 10 a.m. at Poindexter's Coffee in the Graduate Hotel.

### ChapterSpot News

You can update your membership in ChapterSpot by going to our League website, <http://www.lwvlc.org/>. Click the link on the upper lefthand corner, LWV Member Portal. This will take you to your profile where you can verify and change any information as needed. You may also set up payments to automatically renew your membership.

### Renewal Date Information and Dues Payment

When you see your profile, you will see a button "Renew". For those of you who were members of the Johnson County League prior to August 1, 2024 your renewal date is June 30, 2025. You will be receiving reminders from the national league about renewing. For those who joined the League after August 1, your renewal date is one year from your join date. There are no dues for lifetime members, although you do have a member account.

### Dues Payment

Members can pay dues online using a credit/debit card. If renewing with a credit card you will see 3 separate dues charges,

one each for national, state, and local dues payments.

Members can renew by ACH (an electronic payment using the numbers on the bottom of a check). Using this method lowers fees for the League and more of your dues go directly to funding League work.

Please contact me with any questions [lwvlcmembership@gmail.com](mailto:lwvlcmembership@gmail.com).

Thanks –

*Diane Duncan-Goldsmith  
Membership Chair*



### CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT BOOK CLUB

It has been a great year of reading, thinking and discussing for the members of the Carrie Chapman Catt League Book group. Here are the books we read in case you want to add any of them to your summer reading list. They were all quite worth reading.

1. *Minority Rules: The Right-Wing Attack on the Will of the People* by Ari Berman
2. *Barons: Money, Power, and the Corruption of America's Food Industry* by Austin Frerick
3. *Attack From Within: How Disinformation is Sabotaging America* by Barbara McQuade
4. *Everyone Who is Gone is Here* by Jonathan Blitzer
5. *Shielded: How the Police Became Untouchable* by Joanna Schwarz
6. Banned Books

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The final book of this year's League Book group was *Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality* for All by Martha S. Jones. As we discussed "what, for us, was an eye-opening and inspirational" book, we'd especially like to highlight this one for all LWVJC members. It is so aligned with the work of the League of Women Voters and provides a compelling historical context.

Amazon says: "In *Vanguard*, acclaimed historian Martha S. Jones offers a new history of African American women's political lives in America. She recounts how they defied both racism and sexism to fight for the ballot, and how they wielded political power to secure the equality and dignity of all persons. From the earliest days of the republic to the passage of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and beyond, Jones excavates the lives and work of Black women—Maria Stewart, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, Fannie Lou Hamer, and more—who were the vanguard of women's rights, calling on America to realize its best ideals."

This book expands one's perspective on the role of Black women as activists throughout history. Enslaved women fought for their rights before they were freed and on through the era of seeking the right to vote, through the Civil Rights era up to today's renewed advocacy for civil rights. The author's great-great grandmother who was born into slavery learned that "without the vote, Black Americans had to build other routes to political power. "

We will take a break for the summer and start again in the Fall. We have decided to recognize an Iowa hero by renaming our group as Deborah Ann Turner Book Club. She served as the President of LWVUS from 2020-2024. She was a fearless advocate for voting and women's rights and devoted her life to empowering voters across the nation. She was born in Mason City, IA and served as co-president of the League of Women Voters of Iowa in 2015. We wish to honor her legacy by continuing to uphold our values to empower voters and

build a stronger, more inclusive democracy. Coming together as a community of learners and readers is a step toward that. We will be back in September. All members are welcome to participate whenever your schedule allows it. Happy reading!

Jeanne Bancroft  
Book Club Chair



Dr. Deborah Ann Turner



## LWVIA State Convention

"There's Still Work To Do" is the theme of this year's LWVIA biennial state convention being held June 20-21 in Mason City. The convention will be held at the iconic Historic Park Inn – the only remaining hotel designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. It is fitting that this year's convention is in Mason City, hometown of our own Dr. Deborah Turner.

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We will honor the hard work of Dr. Turner and the thousands of other League members who've gone before us as we plan for the work that lies ahead.

The 2025 theme, "There's Still Work to Do," calls us to gather not only in recognition of what has been accomplished - but also in recognition of the continued effort needed to ensure every voice is heard and every vote counts. As we convene in this historic space, we'll ask: What challenges lie ahead? What strengths do we carry forward? And how can we continue to grow as leaders, advocates, and changemakers in our communities? Let's come together to share ideas, renew our commitment, and set bold goals for the years ahead.

Would you like to be part of this energizing weekend of dialogue, learning, and planning?

Please email [iclwwoters@gmail.com](mailto:iclwwoters@gmail.com) if you would like to attend.

*Vicki Aden*



## VOTER REGISTRATION

The voter registration committee will hold registration events this summer at the Iowa Arts Festival June 6-8, and Jazz Fest, July 4-6. The Arts Fest is downtown on Clinton Street between Washington Street and Iowa Ave.

A SignUpGenius email request for volunteers to work at the Arts Fest has been sent to committee members. SignUpGenius Emails for Jazz Fest will be sent mid-June. There are still a few volunteer slots remaining for the Arts Fest so if you have time, we would appreciate the help. If you did not receive the email but would like to

work the event you can sign up at:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0B4DAFAE22A5FB6-56889547-arts>

We are still looking for people who are willing and physically able to set up and take down the tents and tables at the registration events. Ideally, we need 3 people, for about 30 minutes, at the start or finish of each event. This new group will receive special SignUpGenius invites just for set up and take down. If you are interested in helping in this way and haven't already contacted Kathy Clark, please do so at [mkathyclark@gmail.com](mailto:mkathyclark@gmail.com)

*Kathy Clark  
Voter Registration Chair*

THE LWV UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
REGION INTER LEAGUE ORGANIZATION

## ONEMISSISSIPPI

According to Mississippptoday.org the Mississippi River is the nation's most endangered river because of federal plans to cut flood relief programs while severe weather threats grow.

American Rivers, a nonprofit environmental advocacy organization for the last 40 years has issued an annual list of rivers in the U.S. it considers most at-risk. The Mississippi is at the top of the list this year. This comes as communities along the lower river flooded from torrential rain in early April, and as the Trump administration considers eliminating the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, which helps state and local governments respond to disasters. The list calls attention to the threats rivers face and prioritizes those for which the public can influence policies that affect their well-being, said Mike Sertle, senior director for American Rivers' Central Region. For the Mississippi River, he said, the

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organization's goal is to press the federal government to maintain a role in disaster relief, which is critical to safeguarding people in river communities.

LWV will continue to celebrate the Mississippi River which supplies drinking water to 20 million people, promotes economic growth, and provides amazing opportunities for recreation and connection with nature.

A National Day of Recognition is being planned for June 2. Join our Upper Mississippi River Region Interleague Organization (UMRRILO) for the Annual Meeting on June 3 via zoom. Go to [lwwumrr.org](http://lwwumrr.org) for the zoom link.

Look for an email the first week of June for plans to celebrate the river the week of June 9. LWVJC members will celebrate the Mississippi River with a walk and lunch along the banks of the Iowa River in City Park, Iowa City. Special speakers will be invited.

Thank you to LWVJC for supporting UMRRILO with annual dues of \$25.

*Nancy Porter  
UMRR Representative  
LWV Representative ONEMISSISSIPPI*

## **Spring Annual Meeting Summary**

Our LWVJC Spring annual meeting was held Tuesday, May 20. We had 52 members and 9 guests attend the event. We enjoyed delicious hors d'oeuvres from Catered by Charlotte at the Kirkwood Room in Iowa City. During the business portion of the meeting, members approved all four items up for vote: the budget for the coming year, changes to the bylaws, the slate of officers for the coming year, and delegates for the state convention.

The bylaws changes made were brought about by the change in the membership model that was implemented by LWVUS this year. Our membership chair, Diane Duncan-Goldsmith, also shared information with the group on paying dues under this new model since reminders are now sent automatically from LWVUS as the time to renew your membership approaches.

The delegates approved for the state convention are Vicki Aden, Jeanne Bancroft, Jean Donham, Bea Hicks, Jennifer Patel, Paula Vaughan, Gaylen Wobeter, Nancy Porter, Cathy Eisenhofer, Paula Sanan, and Joan Cook (since the meeting, Paula Sanan is now not able to attend). The state convention will be held June 20-21 in Mason City.

We welcome new board members Diane Culver, Joan Cook, Elizabeth Fosmark, and Gaylen Wobeter. We thank the current board members Jean Donham, Sally Stutsman, Jennifer Patel, and Rebecca Conard for their service as their terms end at the end of June.

Bea Hicks provided a report on our fundraising effort for the year. Thank you to all who contributed to allow us to meet our \$8000 fundraising goal!

Following the adjournment of the business meeting, the attendees heard an inspiring presentation from our guest speakers Dr. Peter Gerlach and Dr. Sunday Goshit, both with the UI International Studies Program, on Welcoming and Supporting Immigrants. They shared their immigration stories, and called us to action to advocate for and take action to support immigrants and refugees in our community.

Thank you to the planning committee: Diane Duncan-Goldsmith, Jean Donham, Jeanne Bancroft, Steph Leonard, and technical support from Susie Corbin-Muir and Kiran Patel!

*Vicki Aden*



## ADVOCACY

The 2025 Iowa legislative session finally concluded with the enactment of several significant laws affecting civil rights, education, healthcare, and economic development. While these laws address various policy areas, the session also *continued on page 6*

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highlighted the need for increased transparency and public engagement in the legislative process.

### Major Legislation Passed

#### 1. Removal of Gender Identity Protections

Iowa became the first state to remove gender identity as a protected class under its civil rights law. Senate File 418 redefines legal sex based on biological characteristics at birth, eliminates anti-discrimination protections for transgender individuals in employment, housing, education, and public accommodations, and prohibits instruction on gender identity in grades K–6. The law takes effect on July 1, 2025 .

#### 2. Eminent Domain Restrictions for Carbon Pipelines

In response to landowner concerns, the legislature passed a bill limiting the use of eminent domain by carbon capture pipeline companies. The law imposes a 25-year limit on pipeline permits, restricts renewals, and increases insurance requirements, affecting projects like Summit Carbon Solutions' proposed pipeline. At this date, Gov. Reynolds has not signed this bill into law; she reports to be meeting with stakeholders before making her final decision.

#### 3. Medicaid Work Requirements

A new mandate requires individuals enrolled in Iowa's expanded Medicaid program to work at least 80 hours per month. This policy aims to encourage workforce participation among Medicaid recipients.

#### 4. Education Reforms

- **Underfunding of public education (SF167)**  
The majority party approved a 2% increase for public schools. The House proposed an increase of 2.5% while the Democrats in the House proposed a 5% increase. Underfunding our public schools has become the norm for the majority party while continuing to provide unlimited funds for private schools through the voucher system.

- **Mandating human growth and development instruction. (SF175)** The legislation mandates instruction in human growth and development curriculum in grades 5-12 for public schools. The controversy over the bill is in regards to the medically inaccurate video used for instruction in the program.

- **Civics Test Requirement: (SF 369)**  
Starting in the 2026–27 school year, students must pass a civics test, based on the U.S. citizenship test, to graduate or earn a GED .

- **Work-Based Learning Expansion: (SF2411)** expanded definitions of work-based learning, included summer programs, and created a Workforce Opportunity Fund to support related costs.

- **Anti-bullying (HF865)** The bill removes the enumerated characteristics from the definition of bullying.

#### 5. Tax Policy Changes

The legislature approved a reduction in the flat income tax rate from 5.7% to 3.8%, effective January 1, 2025, aiming to stimulate economic growth .

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#### 6. Anti-Diversity-Equity-Inclusion (HF856)

This bill started off with restricting programs and offices related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in our state universities and community colleges. Legislators eventually added all of state government to the restrictions. This legislation removes the support to allow all Iowans the opportunity to succeed and further restricts our state's economic future.

Governor Reynolds has until June 14, 2025, to take action on remaining bills passed during the session.

During the 2025 Iowa legislative session, lawmakers introduced over 2,000 bills, marking one of the most active sessions in recent years. Specifically, as of early March 2025, more than 2,031 pieces of legislation had been introduced, surpassing the total from each of the previous five years individually (The Daily Iowan). This surge in legislative activity reflects a significant increase compared to prior sessions. For context, in 2024, there were 1,665 pieces of legislation introduced, and in 2023, there were 1,855 (The Gazette).

Despite the high number of bills proposed, not all advanced through the legislative process. The following bills died during this first year of a two-year cycle of the legislature:

Chaplains in public schools (HF884). The House passed the bill in late March. The Senate ran the bill through the committee process and even put it on the debate calendar... twice! It got removed from debate both times.

Limiting the people's access and free speech (SF297). The bill limits access to the statehouse for events and protests. It died when the Senate refused to concur with the House on an amendment. The bill states, "The rules shall prohibit a person from holding more than six events per calendar

year on the grounds outside the capitol building. The rules shall prohibit the person from holding an event unless the director receives a recommendation for the event by a statewide elected official or by both a member of the Iowa senate and a member of the Iowa house of representatives." This bill would limit the people's access to reserve the state capitol for events and centralizes power with elected officials.

Subjects of other proposed bills that died throughout the legislative process include:

- Anti-LGBTQ legislation, including limiting use of pronouns and chosen names in public schools, misdefining drag shows, policing bathroom use in public facilities.
- Mandating what must be taught in public schools, including patriotism and other ideologically driven ideas.
- Threatening our public higher education institutions primarily related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), LGBTQ issues, and Critical Race Theory (CRT).
- Targeting public libraries on DEI and other issues.
- Additional limits on accessing abortion (anti-abortion medication; "personhood") and promoting misinformation about reproductive care.
- Anti-immigrant, pro-gun, and death penalty legislation.

2025 was the first of two years for the 91st General Assembly. All bills filed in 2025 and not passed or withdrawn remain eligible for consideration in 2026. Bills do not start over in the process but can be taken up at the point at which they ended this year.

We expect these policy issues will require our continued attention and advocacy in the next legislative session.

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## Call for Enhanced Transparency and Accountability

While the session addressed various policy areas, the legislative process faced criticism for limited public engagement and transparency. Rapid advancement of controversial bills, such as SF 418, with minimal public hearings, raised concerns among constituents and advocacy groups.

Additionally, the consolidation of numerous state boards and commissions under SF 2385, (signed in 2022) while aimed at efficiency, reduced avenues for public input.

To strengthen the democratic process, it is imperative that future legislative sessions prioritize transparency by ensuring ample opportunities for public comment, thorough deliberation of bills, and clear communication of legislative actions. Engaging stakeholders and fostering open dialogue will enhance accountability and public trust in Iowa's legislative process. We must continue to assess the effects of this current legislative agenda to determine its value in improving the lives of all Iowans.

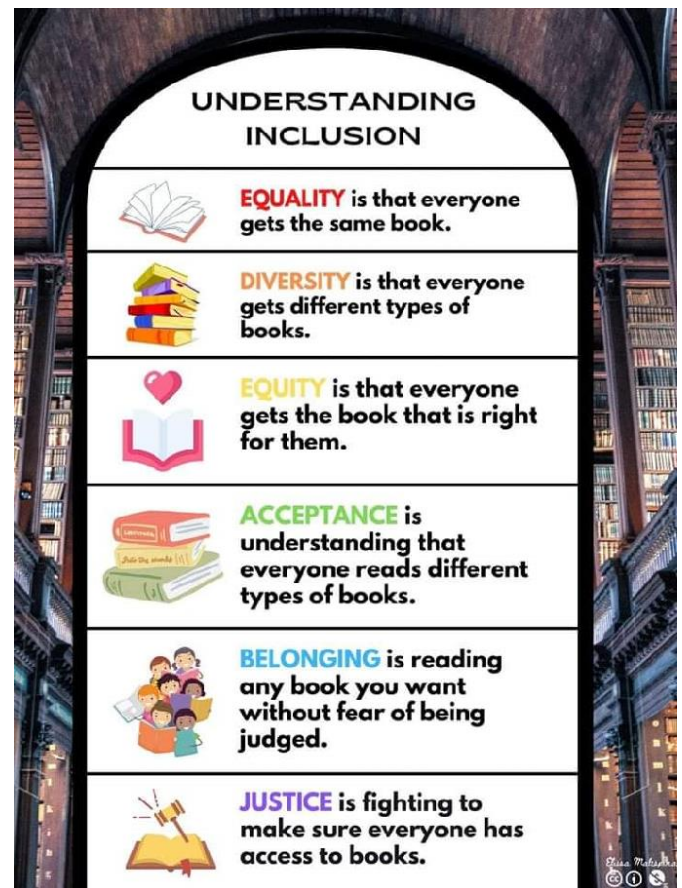
As we look ahead, we know the Iowa legislature will continue to demand our continuing vigilance and advocacy. The 2026 election in Iowa presents a pivotal opportunity to shape the state's future. With Governor Kim Reynolds choosing not to seek re-election, the gubernatorial race is wide open, inviting new leadership and fresh perspectives.

Additionally, the U.S. Senate seat held by Joni Ernst is being contested, and a proposed constitutional amendment requiring a supermajority to raise income taxes will appear on the ballot. These critical decisions underscore the importance of active civic engagement. Recent special elections have demonstrated the power of voter participation in driving change. By advocating for voter registration, educating

voters on key issues, and encouraging turnout, Iowans can ensure their voices are heard and can contribute to the more representative and responsive government we deserve in our democracy.

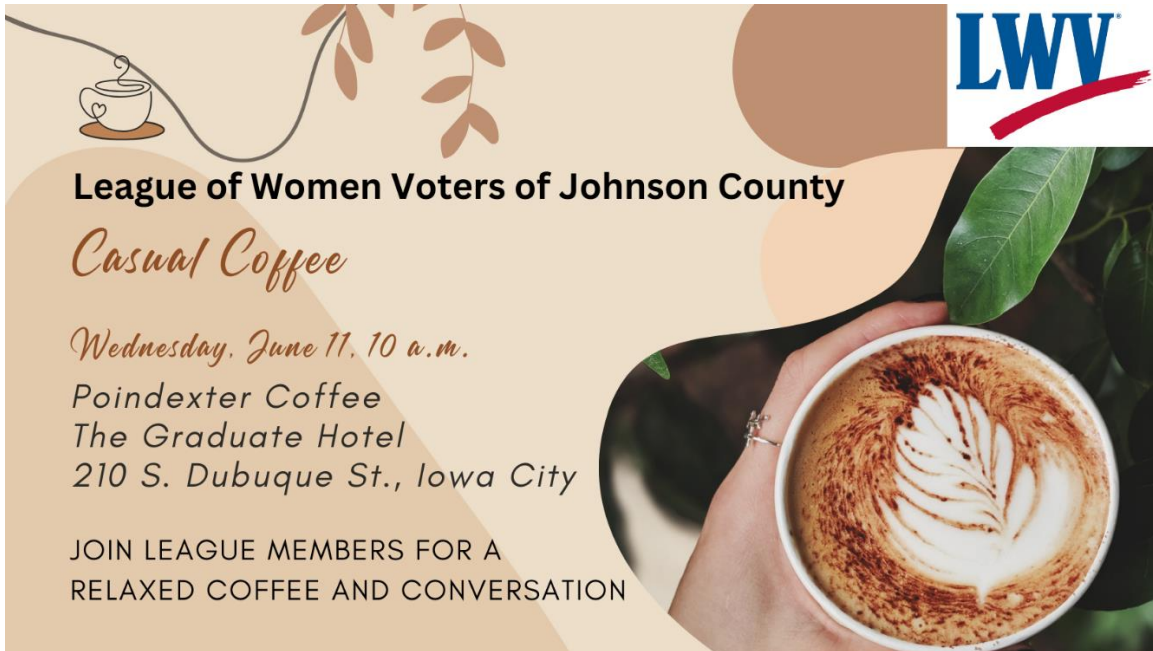
Let's use the summer to relax, enjoy family, nurture our gardens, celebrate the music, explore travel - and reenergize for the advocacy battles ahead.

*Kathy Wandro  
Advocacy chair*





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



The graphic features a light beige background with a stylized coffee cup and steam on the left, and a hand holding a latte with a heart design on the right. The LWV logo is in the top right corner.

**League of Women Voters of Johnson County**

*Casual Coffee*

*Wednesday, June 11, 10 a.m.*

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

JOIN LEAGUE MEMBERS FOR A  
RELAXED COFFEE AND CONVERSATION



The graphic has a white background with a blue border. On the left is a circular image of the Historic Park Inn at night. The LWV logo and 'LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF IOWA' are at the top right. The event title and dates are in the center.

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
OF IOWA

**CONVENTION 2025**

**Historic Park Inn | Mason City, Iowa**

June 20-21 2025

## 2025 Public Policy Priorities

### ★ 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.

## Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Friday, June 6 - Sunday, June 8	<a href="#">Arts Fest Sign-up</a>	Downtown Iowa City	Voter Registration at the Iowa Arts Festival
Monday, June 9	6:30 p.m.	To Be Determined	LWVJC Board Meeting
Wednesday, June 11	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee at the Graduate Hotel, 210 S Dubuque St, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
June 20 - 21		Mason City	LWVIA State Convention
Friday, July 4 - Sunday, July 6		Downtown Iowa City	Voter Registration at Iowa City Jazz Festival; sign-up will be sent out
Wednesday, July 9	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee at the Graduate Hotel, 210 S Dubuque St, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Monday, July 14	6:30 p.m.	Zoom	LWVJC Board Meeting