



The Voter

June 2025



Monthly Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area

Summer 2025 Calendar

(read on for details)

- **Saturday, June 7** - D-Day Anniversary Protest - State Capitol
- **Saturday, June 14** - No Kings Rally - State Capitol
- **Monday, June 23** - Members Get-together! Test your civics knowledge at Brothers Tapworks
- **No July meeting nor Voter** -- enjoy the dogdays of summer and relax and recharge!
- **Thursday, August 21** - Membership Meeting to focus on September School Bond Election - details to come!

LWV Helena Area - Our President's Note



May was an exceptionally busy month for League members, who attended over seven meetings or rallies, some sponsored by LWV and some that supported positions we hold. I urge you to continue to attend planned rallies--as past LWVMT president Nancy Leifer noted, "... our presence makes a difference!"

The League's efforts to engage the community on important local issues have been increasingly successful. **Mickey Harlow's** Local Government Committee and its Observer Corps member reports, **Max Milton's** working group on the city and county growth policies, **Mary Johnson** and **Ann Gilkey's** *ad hoc* (now busier than ever) Program Committee's work on the tech levy election forum, and **Sue Hoell's** work to bring all school board candidates together for a public forum are recent success stories. Thanks to all of the members who work on these! And as always, thank you to Membership Committee folks, led by **Wendy Wheeler**, who ensure that our meetings run smoothly.

A lot of behind-the-scenes work takes place in our League. A special shout-out to VOTE411 Committee members and co-chairs **Tracy Donaldson** and **Patrice Anderson**, who worked with the county elections offices to get complete and accurate information for the May 6th School and Special District elections in Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, and Jefferson counties. They designed questions and invited all candidates to respond, then submitted and continually updated this information to the National VOTE411 site for publication. This is a huge job, and we are grateful to have this local information available to voters.

Our state League working groups spent huge amounts of time studying legislative issues and writing Legislative Action Forms. From January through April **Nancy Leifer** and **Patti Borneman** (with help from **Robyn Morrison**) compiled this research into Action Alerts, emailing to a statewide list at least twice a week to encourage members to submit testimony on specific bills. Many LWVHA members participated in connecting these bills to our positions; they also gave testimony as individuals. This core work of the League is essential - thank you! And special thanks to **Sharon Haugen** for leading these efforts for LWVMT and testifying on behalf of the League.

We have a large cadre of members who regularly go out to register voters. Last year their total was 1,012 registrations! Recently they attended a Naturalization ceremony for new citizens. You'll see them in their green vests at the Farmers Market on Saturdays throughout the summer. Thanks to all who do this important work!

A huge thank you to Communications Committee co-chairs, **Patti Borneman** and **Becky Piske**. They are our go-to source for upcoming events, programs, and issues. Our monthly newsletter, *The Voter*, and weekly updates keep all of us informed in a timely manner.

Finally, thanks to all of you who have contacted your representatives, rallied in support of democracy, and supported LWVHA in so many ways. We are stronger together!

Cherri Jones, President

Our regular June membership meeting is a social get-together, with a special invitation to our new members!

Want to test your civics knowledge?

Monday, June 23, 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Brothers Tapworks (*on the Walking Mall*)

One of our League priorities is civics education for all. Test your civics knowledge in a team-based trivia game starting at 6:00 pm. Learn about our local, state, and national League priorities and actions as well as our LWVHA work in those areas.

Enjoy a tasty beverage and snacks provided by the LWVHA.

See you there!

LWV Montana Priorities 2025-2026

Want to know more about what LWV Montana is working on? At the annual LWVMT Convention in early May members reaffirmed our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policy and approved a list of priorities for this year. This is a great way to see what our sister Leagues across our state are planning to work on.

Download the two-page priorities document to learn more and see where you like to get involved.

Voter Registration News & Kudos!



Voter registration volunteers registered 17 new citizens to vote at the May 22nd Naturalization Ceremony in Helena.

***L-R:** Rebecca Johnson, Janice Frisch, Patti Delauter, and Lynn Hinch.*

***Not in photo:** Clare Kearns, VR volunteer and photographer!*

Volunteers are needed to register new citizens at the Naturalization Ceremony in Great Falls!

WHEN: Wednesday, June 18

TIME: There are two ceremonies, 11:00 and 1:30. We need to get there by 10:30. The second ceremony ends at 2:00 and we should be done registering new voters by 2:30, and hopefully back to Helena about 4:00 or so.

WHERE: U.S. District Court, [125 Central Ave. W., Great Falls, MT](#)

You will need your driver's license or some photo ID to enter the court house. VR forms and clipboards and green vests will be provided there.

The judge in Great Falls creates a very welcoming ceremony for the new citizens. It is heartwarming to register new citizens after witnessing their naturalization ceremony.

Email Clare Kearns at kearns.clare@gmail.com for more information and to volunteer.

LWVHA Book Club

The LWVHA Book Club is taking a summer break during June and July. We will meet again in August. The book selection will be announced. If you have further interest in *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* and *The Anxious Generation* here are two **YouTube** recommendations.

- Search for **Jonathan Haidt**
- The Hauenstein Center presentation is excellent on the "Righteous Mind"
- The AMA presentation on "The Anxious Generation" was excellent

You may be interested in the Harvard "Implicit Project" mentioned in *The Righteous Mind*. These are quick 10-minute tests on your views of lots of subjects, such as Christian vs. Muslim, tall vs. short, thin vs. fat. Then the tests give you scores on your biases. I used these in several of my communication workshops I gave at the State of Montana. It was very enlightening about the biases we hold, even if we don't recognize we have them.

- Search **Implicit Project** or visit <https://implicit.harvard.edu>.

Have a great summer!

Kathy McNeill, Chair, Book Club

May Membership Meeting Recap: *Civics Education for All*

Thirty-five people, including two state legislators, participated in an engaging session of Civics Education for All. Attendees heard abbreviated, introductory presentations of the Suffrage Timeline presented by Becky Piske of LWVHA, the Nitty Gritty of Voting presented by Rebecca Johnson of LWVHA, and the Montana Constitution Roadshow presented by Rylee Sommers-Flanagan of Upper Seven Law.

Everyone is encouraged to book one of these fine presentations for school groups, scout groups, or professional associations. They are offered free of charge and help all of us to understand our rights and responsibilities as members of a democratic society.

- To book a **Suffrage Timeline** or **Nitty Gritty of Voting** presentation, send an email to lwv.helena@lwv.org.
- To book a **Montana Constitution Roadshow** presentation by Upper Seven Law, visit their [Events webpage](#).

HAPPENING NOW WITH CIVICS ED AND AN INVITATION TO PRESENT

The Civics Education presenter team is teaching the Nitty Gritty of Voting Part 1 to students at PAL High School next week. If you want to help teach or build up our outreach to other high schools, please send an email to rebeccainmt@gmail.com.

Tell your senators to oppose the SAVE Act

From the LWV website, where you can send a message to Montana's U.S. senators: <https://www.lwv.org/take-action/tell-your-senators-oppose-save-act>

"The House of Representatives passed the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act for the second time in April 2025. The SAVE Act would require

citizenship documentation to register to vote even though voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering.

Now, the Senate must reject this bill to prevent it from becoming law."

Rallies in June

Listed here are the rallies coming up in Helena that focus on defending our democracy and empowering voters, our mission as League members. But, because we are dedicated to nonpartisanship and it is sometime difficult to distinguish between partisanship and nonpartisanship, we will not always endorse or have a table at these events.

We have determined that the local D-Day Anniversary Protest Rally, focusing on Veterans' Rights, is a nonpartisan rally in which we can participate. The national No Kings Rally, focused on the current president has a partisan slant, so is not being endorsed by the League of Women Voters.



D-Day Anniversary Protest

Saturday, June 7
Noon to 2:00 pm
Montana State Capitol

**The LWVHA will have a table at
this rally. Come find us!**

[Download flyer for details.](#)



No Kings Rally

Saturday, June 14
Noon to 1:30 pm
Montana State Capitol

*"Save America's Democracy from
the Billionaires"*

Co-hosted by
[Indivisible Helena](#)

Local Government Committee Update

The Local Government subcommittee has been working diligently outlining and discussing important information contained in the Helena Forward Land Use Plan. Community Development Director Brink has indicated that the final draft of the plan will be reviewed by the City Planning Commission on June 5, 2025. The public will have an opportunity to provide comments on the draft all summer. The Local Government Committee will provide their recommendations on the plan for review and finalization by the LWFVHA Board of Directors before September.

A lunch get together for Observer Corps members was held on May 7 at the Mediterranean Grill. Observers shared that they are learning so much about local government and are really enjoying the position. The League is so fortunate to have these dedicated League members who attend weekly, biweekly or monthly meetings, take notes, and provide reports. The Observers' work supports the League's mission to educate the public and ensure their right to know.

Helena City Commissioners, Lewis and Clark County Commissioners and the Helena School Board as well as the Citizens Council have provided positive feedback that they are happy to have LWFVHA Observers attend their meetings.

Mary "Mickey" Harlow, Chair, Local Government Committee

Visit [VOTE411](https://vote411.org) -- your one-stop online voter guide



Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, [VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org) is a "one-stop-shop" online voter guide. It provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific information on many aspects of the election process. [Read more about VOTE411.](#)

Remembering Claudette Morton

Claudette Morton, longtime and active member of the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area, passed away on May 6, 2025.

A native of Billings, Claudette had a distinguished career in education and civic engagement. From 2013 to 2015, she served as co-president of the Helena LWV along with Barb Harris.

A tireless advocate of public education, Claudette was an English and drama teacher at the high school and college levels, the English Language Arts Specialist in the Office of Public Instruction, and Executive Secretary of the Montana Board of Public Education. In that leadership role, Claudette guided the Board in fulfilling its responsibility for determining policy for K-12 education according to state law and the Montana Constitution. She also served as president of the American Association of University Women for Montana.



Claudette earned her doctorate of education from the University of Montana and continued her leadership as director of the Montana Rural Education Center where she staunchly supported Montana's smallest and most rural districts in meeting the needs of their students. She remained active in public life after retirement, running for the state office of Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2008, writing, and serving as treasurer of the Helena Democratic Club, representative on the State League of Women Voters, and she served on the League legislative action committee.

Claudette is an inspiring example of a person dedicated to the ideals of democracy.

Our thanks to Lynn Hinch, Cheri Bergeron and Barb Harris for this remembrance of Claudette Morton

New Member Joining in May! Welcome!

David Cooper



2025-26 Board Officers

President: Cherri Jones

Vice-President: Celeste Jazwinski

**Coming up in the August 2025
issue of the LWVHA Voter**

Treasurer: Connie Griffith
Secretary: Denise Pengeroth

Past-president: Sharon Haugen

Board Directors

Ann Gilkey
Lynn Hinch
Julie Huntington

Committee Chairs

Book Club: Kathy McNeill
Civics Education: Rebecca Johnson
Communications: Patti Borneman & Becky Piske
Health Care: Sue Hoell & Celeste Jazwinski
Local Government: Mary "Mickey" Harlow
Membership: Wendy Wheeler
Nominating: Sue Hoell
Program: Mary I. Johnson & Ann Gilkey
Student Essay Contest: Ann Gilkey & Sherry Meador
VOTE411: Patrice Anderson & Tracy Donaldson
Voter Services: Seeking chair and volunteers!
Young Voters Project: Seeking members!
The Voter Editor: Patti Borneman

- August Membership Meeting - Thursday, August 21
- Committee Updates
- September "Here We Go" Meeting

No July Voter, but we will send important and timely news in a Weekly Update to members.



**Read our statement about Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion**



Visit our Website

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

League of Women Voters of the Helena Area | PO Box 6534 | Helena, MT 59604 US



Try email marketing for free today!