



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

TONIGHT!

Monday, April 28 - 6:00 pm

Lewis & Clark Library

Our Public Schools: Levies, Laws & Local Impact

May 2025 Calendar

(read on for details)

- **May 3-4** - Montana LWV Convention - Bozeman (*registration closed 4/18*)
- **Tuesday, May 6** - Helena School Board and Levy Election - mail-in ballot only

- **Tuesday, May 20** - Monthly Member Meeting - Civics Education presentations: League's Suffrage Timeline and Nitty Gritty of Voting and Upper Seven Law's Constitutional Roadshow.
- **Thursday, May 22** - LWVMT - Empowering Presenters with News Literacy Knowledge
- **Thursday, May 29** - Book Club

LWV Helena Area - Our President's Note



With May begins a new calendar year for our League! We will miss our esteemed co-president, Sharon Haugen, moderator par excellence, expert on local government, and talented leader. As past President Becky Piske noted, "The LWVHA feels really LUCKY that you [Sharon] chose to step into our organization shortly after your retirement. Since the day you first marched with us at the Pride Parade, you have jumped into our committee and leadership roles, both feet in." Fortunately, Sharon will continue on the board as past president.

We're grateful to have Celeste Jazwinski join our board as Vice President. Celeste brings a wealth of organizational skills as well as a warm welcome to everyone she meets.

As we noted during our Member Meeting in April, our usual standing committee work continues, but we also plan to focus on these three topics: Health Care in Helena, Local Government, and Young Voters. ALL of our committees welcome (and need!) new members. You'll find basic information on each committee's activities as part of the slide presentation shown at the meeting, that you can [download the pdf file here](#). If you're interested in joining a committee or just have questions about the League, email me at lww.helena@gmail.com.

And if you would like to help LWVUS with our goal of eradicating the Electoral College, I have a very large book they sent that I'd be happy to give you!

I hope you're reading *The Voter* each month. It gives you in-depth information about upcoming meetings and events. Weekly reminders will include pop-up events such as rallies that are often organized after the monthly *Voter* newsletter goes out. We hope you can include our activities on your calendar and join us!

We're grateful to all of our members for your participation and support! Thanks for being a part of LWVHA!

Cherri Jones, President
League of Women Voters of the Helena Area

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS: *Levies, Laws and Local Impact*

Rex Weltz, Superintendent, Helena Public Schools
Rob Watson, Executive Director, School Administrators of Montana
Gary Myers, Director of Educational Technology, Helena Public Schools
Siobahn Hathhorn & Kay Satre, Trustees, Helena School Board

Monday, April 28 - 6:00 pm
Lewis & Clark Library



Our Public Schools: Levies, Laws and Local Impact

On **Monday, April 28 at 6:00 pm**, join your Helena neighbors at Lewis & Clark Library to learn about the upcoming Helena School District levies on the May 6th ballot, the Montana Legislature's education bills, and how recent federal actions may impact local public education.

Rex Weltz, superintendent, Helena Public Schools, will open the meeting with a brief overview of how Helena funds its schools, and explain the general fund levy and why it is needed. He will also address upcoming tech levies on the ballot for the elementary and high schools.

Rob Watson, executive director, School Administrators of Montana, will speak about major education bills coming out of the Montana Legislature and the Ten-Year Education Review. And he will explain the local impacts of recent federal actions to shut down the U.S. Department of Education.

Gary Myers, Helena School District education technology director, is also on the panel. **Siobahn Hathhorn**, Helena School Board chair and **Kay Satre**, Helena School Board trustee will be present to help answer questions.

*This forum is sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area and Lewis & Clark Library. A recording will be available on **Helena Civic TV**.*

Visit **VOTE411** to read about the levies and the school board candidates on the May 6th special election ballot.



Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, 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.](#)

Strong Turnout and Interest for Helena School Board Candidate Forum



Undecided about how to vote on the May 6 Special Election ballot? Missing the education forums on April 23 and 28? We have you covered!

The April 23rd School Board candidate forum, recorded by HCTV, is streaming [here](#).

Visit VOTE411.org for background on the candidates and issues and watch the excellent Helena Civic TV recordings of these forums.

Tis' the Season for Rallies, Signs and Speeches



Standing left to right: Bob Jones, Wendy Wheeler, Celeste Jazwinski, and Mary Johnson at the April 19 Rally that gave our League the opportunity to gather opposition to the SAVE Act and send 61 powerful messages from constituents at the rally directly to Senator Daines and Senator Sheehy. The vote could come as early as April 29th. **See below for Nancy Leifer's links to taking action on the SAVE Act.**

MAY DAY RALLY

- Protect workers' rights
- Protect veterans' benefits
- Protect Medicaid & Medicare
- Protect Social Security
- Protect public lands
- Protect our farms & ranches
- Protect public education
- Protect due process

Thursday, May 1st

Missoula - 3pm

110 W Front St, Missoula, MT 59801

Billings - Noon

217 N 27th St, Billings, MT 59101

Dillon - Noon

551 N Montana St, Dillon, MT 59725

Havre - 5pm

1st St W & 1st Ave W, Havre, MT 59501

Great Falls - 5:30pm

125 Central Ave W, Great Falls, MT 59404

Butte - 6pm

1340 Harrison Ave Butte,

Saturday, May 3rd

State Capitol - Noon

1301 E 6th Ave, Helena, MT 59601

SCAN HERE



TO FIND YOUR CITY



Voter Registration Reboot

*Come to the meeting to brainstorm the future
of Voter Services in the Helena Area*

Monday, May 5, 2025 - 6:30 pm
Lewis & Clark Library, Helena

Rebecca Johnson has led the voter registration recruitment and training of dozens of volunteers over the past few years. Last year, her VR team--a mix of LWVHA members and VR volunteers--registered more than one thousand voters. They have done some amazing work! Rebecca is now ready to hand the VR torch to another person or a team of coordinators to keep up the momentum of this important work.

If you're interested in learning more and to help come up with ideas, please attend this brainstorming session on **Monday, May 5, 6:30 pm**, in the Sarah McCabe Power Community Room at Lewis & Clark Library.

Or you can send Rebecca an email or call her with your ideas!

Rebecca Johnson
406-223-4300
rebeccainmt@gmail.com

A different flavor of civic action . . .

Now that the school election is almost past and the legislature is soon out of session, plan to join our May LWVHA Membership meeting for a different flavor of civic action.

We/LWV have come to recognize that education about our government, our voting rights, and our constitution can be very important for helping voters and future voters step into the voting booth with confidence about issues and the process.

May Member Meeting **Active Learning! Civics Education for All**

Tuesday, May 20, 2025
5:30 – 7:00 pm
In-person at Lewis & Clark Library

Bring a friend!

Participate in three brief introduction presentations about civics education programs we/LWVHA and Upper Seven Law are offering in classrooms, book clubs, service organizations, post incarceration programs and more.

- **Suffrage Timeline – presented by Becky Piske, League member**

Presentation detailing the history of U.S. voting rights from the Revolutionary War to present day, including slides specific to Montana's history of voting rights.

- **Nitty Gritty of Voting – presented by Rebecca Johnson, League member**

Presentation showing who can vote, why students should vote, what voters can vote for, and a description of the different elections and when they are held.

- **Constitutional Roadshow – presented by Audrey McCue, Upper Seven Law**

The presentation features unique provisions of the Montana Constitution and the interplay between the state's three branches of government. There will also be a "creative thinking" opportunity for writing and sharing haiku, limericks and poems.



Letter from LWV Montana President Nancy Leifer

IT IS TIME TO RALLY IN DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACY!

You may be wondering, what good does it do to rally here in Montana, when our Congressional delegation appears to be strongly committed to supporting the current administration. Here is proof that our presence makes a difference!

Watch this 11-minute clip from the national PBS News Hour on April 18, Brooks and Capeheart, quoting the LWVUS as the first to declare that we are in a constitutional crisis, and (hang in to the very end) citing the turnout for Bernie Sanders in Montana as a cause for hope!

On April 17, LWVUS declared that we are now in a constitutional crisis. Read our press release [here](#). It is time for massive protests.

Here is the [link to the LWVUS website](#) on safety when protesting.

I encourage all League members who are able to rally where and as often as you can. Make and bring a sign with what concerns you most. And stay safe.

And, TAKE ACTION on the SAVE ACT, dangerous anti-voter legislation that would create more barriers to voter registration for more people. Here is a [link to LWVUS statement on the SAVE ACT](#).

The SAVE ACT passed the U.S. House of Representatives already, with Montana's U.S. House representatives voting for it. The SAVE ACT will be up for a vote in the U.S. Senate soon.

Here are links to the LWVUS action sites:

- **Take Action:** Tell Your Senators to Oppose the SAVE Act
- **Take Action:** Respond to Your House Member's Vote on the SAVE Act

MONTANA LEAGUE NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

STATE CONVENTION MAY 3-4, BOZEMAN

Look for a report on the Convention and next steps for the state League later in May and early June. Thank you in advance to all League members who are participating!

2025 MONTANA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2025 session of the Montana Legislature will likely adjourn sometime the week of April 28-May 2. Watch for final Action Alerts to contact the Governor to sign or veto the last round of bills.

And join LWVMT for a session wrap-up! The final “This Week at the Legislature” meeting will be **Wednesday, April 30 at 7:00 pm**.

Join on Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84000431932>
Meeting ID: 840 0043 1932

SAVE THE DATE! THURSDAY MAY 22, 2025 for “Empowering Presenters with News Literacy Knowledge” - 6:00 pm in-person at Lewis & Clark Library or on Zoom

You are invited to attend a presentation by Alee Quick, Director of Community Engagement with The News Literacy Project. Alee will be presenting the fundamentals of news literacy to any interested League member who wants to advance their knowledge on this subject and/or is interested in becoming part of the League's civic education presenter teams. This presentation will focus on identifying different types of information and understanding the standards of quality journalism. Alee will also introduce us to the resources available to us as educators to help us develop a news literacy civics education presentation in our efforts to combat mis- and disinformation.

Empowering Presenters with News Literacy
Join on Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82642044122>

Brought to you by the LWVMT Civics Education Working Group

HELP NEEDED: STORIES TO SAVE DEMOCRACY

Stories Needed: How do you win hearts and minds? With personal stories that convey human connection. Here is your chance to help capture the human impact of Montana's unique democracy, forged in the 1972 Constitutional Convention and affecting Montanans' lives ever since. Do you have suggestions for people to interview who have poignant stories that illustrate why democracy in Montana is special? Let us know! Send an email with suggested interviewees and their contact info, and include “Story” in the subject line to: nancleifer@gmail.com.

Volunteers Needed: LWV Montana received a grant of \$25,000 to purchase video recording equipment, learn how to use it, and produce a series of interviews with individuals telling stories of how Montana's democracy has affected their lives. The project will begin in June and run for a minimum of three years. No experience needed to volunteer! Volunteers will be trained to run cameras and recording equipment, conduct interviews, edit recordings, and manage social media sites. To volunteer, send an email with “Video Project” in the subject line to: nancleifer@gmail.com.

Local Government Committee Update

Draft Land Use Plan: The Local Government Committee has formed a subcommittee to study and make recommendations to LWVHA for the Forward Helena draft 20-year Land Use plan for the City of Helena. The plan will be finalized sometime in the fall of 2025 and LWVHA will hold public meetings to review the draft plan and the subcommittee's findings, with League member Max Milton leading the meetings.

The subcommittee will invite experts from within the Helena community to provide their recommendations on the important 11-chapter, 105-page document. Both League members and the public will be invited to join the committee and/or attend the meetings.

The times, dates, and place will be announced in upcoming League emails.

City of Helena 2026 Budget Meetings: Several Local Government committee members and City Observer Corps members Bob Jones and Clare Kearns are attending the Helena City Commission Administrative 2026 budget meetings. Helena city department heads are presenting their strategic plans and department budget requests at these meetings. The committee will prepare a strategic plan and budget summary document for the League when the department presentations are completed.

The final department budget presentations will occur at the May 28th Administrative meeting, and the preliminary budget for 2026 will be adopted at the June 16 Commission public meeting.

Mary "Mickey" Harlow, Chair, Local Government Committee

LWVHA Book Club

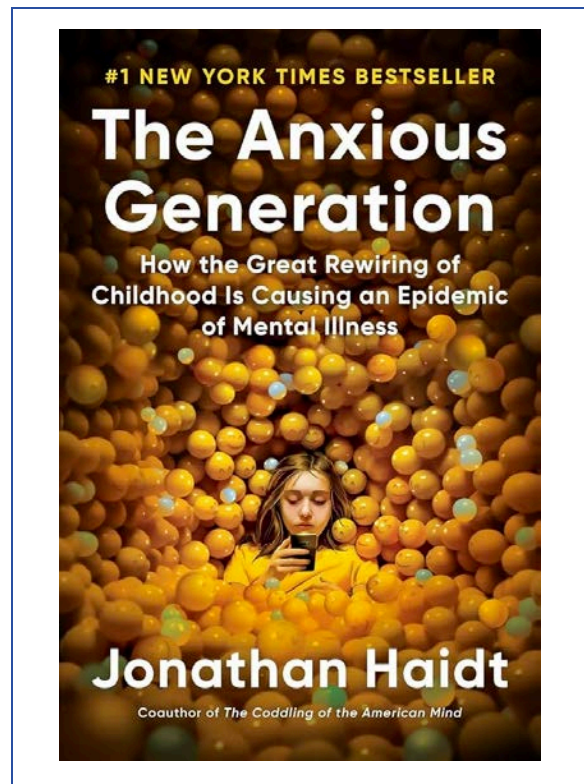
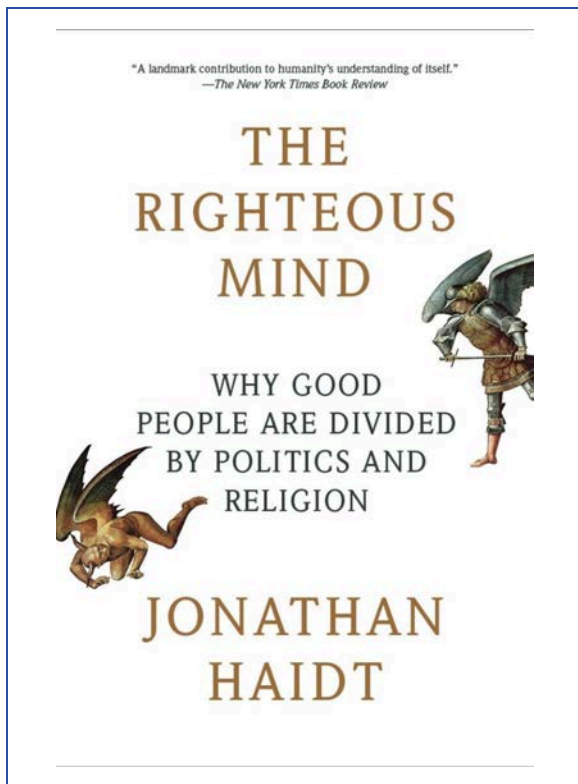
All members welcome!

**Thursday, May 29 & June 26
6:00-7:00 pm on Zoom**

For May and June, the LWVHA Book Club is focusing on two books by **Jonathan David Haidt**, a social psychologist and Professor of Ethical Leadership at New York University. His research focuses on the intuitive basis of morality and how it varies across cultures and politics.

He's also a bestselling author who writes about the impact of technology and culture on mental health. We will read and discuss two of his books, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People are Divided by Politics and Religion* and *The Anxious Generation*. Our group decided to read part of one of the books per month and/or watch Mr. Haidt's presentations on YouTube (**see link to Haidt's website below**).

Kathy McNeill, Chair, Book Club



Visit [Jonathan Haidt's website](#) for book reviews, videos, interviews, discussion.

[Click here to log into Zoom on May 29 and June 26](#)

New Members Joining or Renewing in April!



Janet Childress
 Laura Gorman
 Debra Hanneman
 Marsha Hinch
 Sue Jackson
 Kristina Jordan
 Franz McLaren
 Mary Ann McLaren
 Kelly Flaherty-Settle

2025-26 Board Officers

President: Cherri Jones

Vice-President: Celeste Jazwinski

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

Treasurer: Connie Griffith
Secretary: Denise Pengeroth

Past-president: Sharon Haugen

Board Directors

Ann Gilkey
Lynn Hinch
Julie Huntington

- June Member Meeting
- Celebrating our Work
- LWV Montana News
- Committee Updates
- Book Club
- Volunteer Training

Committee Chairs

Book Club: Kathy McNeill
Civics Education: Rebecca Johnson
Communications: Patti Borneman
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!
Young Voters: Katherine Anderson
The Voter Editor: Patti Borneman



**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!