



The Voter | June 2023

Welcome to **THE VOTER** newsletter for the League of Women Voters of Montana!

There are two sections to this **VOTER** (click links to jump to the section):

1. [Actions you can take now as a LWV Montana member](#)
 - Support the youth plaintiffs fighting to combat climate change in Montana
 - Join a state League working group
2. [Summary of the LWV MT 2023 state convention May 6-7](#)
 - Special speakers
 - Sharing of best practices from local Leagues
 - Convention business

Please note that many of the items below contain links that will take you to another document with more information on that topic. This allows **THE VOTER** to be shorter and easier to scan for what you are interested in.



ACTIONS YOU CAN TAKE NOW AS A LWV MONTANA MEMBER:

Support the Youth Plaintiffs fighting to combat climate change in Montana!

The Held v State of Montana case is being heard now in Helena District Court. Use this link for more information and ways to support:

- [LWV Talking Points on Held v. State of Montana](#)
- [Screen the trial live and find more information](#)

Sign up for a state League working group!

To take League action on state-level issues, League members work through the state League. All members of local Leagues are also members of LWVMT and LWVUS.

The experience of the past three years of Covid has upped our game in terms of working together remotely via Zoom. **Going forward, LWVMT offers the following working groups to carry the League to the next level of effectiveness.** These efforts need volunteers from all four Leagues to be the most successful!

How to sign up:

Click [HERE](#) to fill out a short online form to join one or more of the groups listed below. The Google form lists the following groups and also asks if you are willing to chair a working group. *(If you prefer, you can send an email to nancleifer@gmail.com and include the name of the group(s) you want to join.)*

State League Working Groups:

- **LWV MT Observer Corps to Monitor Legislature's Interim Committees:** Action from the Legislature continues between sessions. Learn more about the role of Interim Committees and help monitor Committee meetings. All Committees allow Zoom attendance and also are recorded, so you don't have to be in Helena to be part of this.

We will have a Wednesday Night of Action on June 21 via Zoom, to answer questions and give more information about how the Observer Corps will work. Here is the link:

Topic: Interim Leg. Committee Observer Corps Info Session

Time: Jun 21, 2023 07:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83392547724>

Meeting ID: 833 9254 7724

- **Local Government Review:** Montana's Constitution mandates that every 10 years, the voters in each county and incorporated city and town in the state consider their

form of local government and decide whether to have a study commission to review and propose potential changes. With the vote coming up in the spring of 2024, now is the time for local Leagues to study their local governments and provide public education on this amazing fundamental exercise of democracy! Share information and tools across local Leagues on educating ourselves and the public.

- **Voter Services:** Get all the latest on successful voter registration and education techniques, including Helena's Youth Vote high school classroom presentations, latest in registering former felons, ideas for National Voter Registration Day, etc. and share best practices with other Montana local Leagues.
- **VOTE411 Implementation:** All four Local Leagues are planning to implement VOTE411 in the 2023 local elections, in preparation for the general election coming up in 2024. Don't reinvent the wheel! Share with other Leagues what works, and what doesn't.
- **Voter Girl:** This is a 4-hour event currently scheduled for Saturday, October 28 from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm (including set-up and clean-up), with the Montana/Wyoming Girl Scout Council, to teach citizenship and voting to Brownie and Junior Girl Scouts. League volunteers are needed to lead the girls through the excellent curriculum already prepared. Volunteer training will be provided before the event. Those who helped with the Voter Girl in Bozeman in 2022 had a great time!
- **Climate Change:** Montana is taking the lead in climate action with the Held v State of Montana lawsuit. This working group will help the state League stay informed about this and other issues affecting climate and environment at the state level.
- **Review and Revise LWV MT Education position:** The Montana Legislature created charter schools and special purpose programs that siphon public funds away from quality public education. The Legislature also attempted to control content in schools in various ways. This working group will review Montana LWV current position on education, assemble study materials and discussion questions, and propose updated position language for local Leagues to study and discuss with potential approval in the 2025 LWV Montana state convention.
- **Review and Revise LWV MT Mental Health position:** The Montana Legislature considered bills to help address the mental health issues facing the state, especially for young people. The League's current position on mental health is closely tied to the criminal justice work we did several years ago. This working group will review Montana LWV current position, assemble study materials and discussion questions, and propose updated position language for local Leagues to study and discuss with potential approval in the 2025 LWV Montana state convention.
- **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – Next Steps:** This working group will plan the state League's actions to further DEI at both the state and local League level, including a training event for the upcoming year.

Remember, you can SIGN UP TO JOIN A WORKING GROUP! Click [HERE](#)

SUMMARY: 2023 STATE LEAGUE CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS!

LWV Montana held its 2023 state convention May 6-7 in Helena, hosted by the Helena League who did a great job and got high marks on the evaluation forms from attendees. Thank you to the Helena League organizing Committee!

Special speakers included:

- Welcome from Helen Mayor Wilmot Collins
- Presentation from LWV MT President Nancy Leifer ["Role of the League in Montana's Constitution and Where We Go from Here"](#)
- Presentation from Maylinn Smith, Presiding Officer of the 2020-2023 Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission, and Managing Attorney and Civil Prosecutor for the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes, ["The Challenge of Fair Redistricting."](#)
- Presentation from LWV MT Action Chair Robyn Morrison on the 2023 Legislative session ["Defending Democracy in the 2023 Legislative Session"](#)
- Presentation from Thomas Jodoin, Legal Counsel and Deputy Director, Montana League of Cities and Towns: ["Montana's Constitutionally mandated Local Government Review Process - Bringing Democracy Home to the Local Level."](#)
- Evening Presentation from Mike Jetty, humorist and Indian Education for All Specialist with the Montana Office of Public Instruction on Indian Education for All, a wonderful interweaving of humor and facts about tribal history and cultures in Montana
- Entertainment by Sapphire Ferguson Jetty who shared her fiddle playing expertise in a musical tour of fiddle pieces from her French, Celtic and Native American heritage.

Sharing of Best Practices from Local Leagues:

In addition to sharing what each local League has done over the past two years, League members shared best practices in three areas critical to the future of the League: The Helena League shared the slide show about their new partnership with the New Jersey League to provide civic education in high schools. The Missoula League shared a Local

Government Study Guide to prepare for the upcoming Local Government Review. The Billings League shared their experiences with implementing VOTE411. More info:

- Helena Youth Vote and Civic Education: [History of Suffrage in US slide show](#)
- [Local Government Study Guide](#)

Convention Business of the League

- [Report on state League accomplishments over the past two years.](#)
- Action Team Report on 2023 Legislative Session:
 - [Statistical report/overview of League Actions in 2023 Session](#)
 - [Spreadsheet of all Senate Bills tracked by the League](#)
 - [Spreadsheet of all House Bills tracked by the League](#)
- Unanimous Approval of the one-year Program for April 2023-March 2024: [Copy of Adopted Program](#)
- Unanimous Approval of the two-year Budget for April 2023-March 2024: [Copy of Adopted Budget](#)
- Unanimous Election of Officers for the state board:

President: Nancy Leifer (Missoula)
Vice President: Rosanne Nash (Bozeman)
Secretary: Becky Piske (Helena)
Treasurer: Patricia Borneman (Helena)

Pictured (left to right): Becky, Rosanne, Nancy, and Patricia



- Draft Minutes of the Convention ([link to PDF of Minutes](#))

Thank you for reading the Voter! We'll see you soon. Last, enjoy more Convention photos.

Written by Nancy Leifer. Edited and prepared by Natalya DeRobertis-Theye with special thanks to Tom Cherry.



