

VOTER

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LWVJC | P. O. Box 5452 |
Coralville, IA 52241

March 2024

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy

Iowa Legislative Bills

The first funnel date of this year’s Iowa Legislative session was February 16. Some notable bills of interest to LWVJC passed through committees to meet the funnel deadline and keep them alive and on their way to becoming law. The bills highlighted here are not fully explained - the real meaning is in the detailed words of the legislation.

***Education:** Encouraging schools to arm teachers who pass firearm instruction, hiring school resource officers, or onsite private security personnel; and requiring schools to show fetal development videos to students.

***Healthcare:** Making birth control pills available through a pharmacy without prescription for 27 months, expanding post-partum Medicaid coverage for mothers and infants from the current 60 days to one year, reorganizing the state’s behavioral health system, increasing the penalty for nonconsensual termination of a pregnancy, and changing wording from termination of a ‘human pregnancy’ to ‘death of an unborn person’.

***Election law:** Allowing federal candidates convicted of felonies to be on the ballot, changing deadlines for absentee ballot returns to the day before the election, banning ballot drop boxes and ranked choice voting, and mandating that residents prove citizenship before registering to vote.

The next funnel deadline is March 15, so we hope a few of these bills survive but many of them die. Join us at the February 24 and March 30 Legislative Forums for news and Q&A directly with Legislators.

*Paula Vaughan and Miriam Timmer-Hackert
co-presidents*

The *Voter* is issued the last Friday of the month to provide members advance notice of activities.
The April Voter deadline is March 25.



Fundraising

We are aiming for the end of our Fundraising Campaign! Thanks to all who have already contributed so generously. We have reached 88% of our ambitious goal of \$8,000. If you have not yet contributed, please consider doing so today. Any amount is welcome and will move us towards our goal.

The LWVJC’s annual fundraising campaign supports its multiple ongoing actions: voter registration, workshops, legislative forums, candidate forums, issues advocacy, and voter education. These local activities in Johnson County contribute to grassroots democracy. The LWVJC’s nonpartisan work for democratic government at local and state levels is needed more than ever. Your donation makes this work possible, and contributions to the Operations Fund are especially appreciated.

The LWVJC operates frugally, spending every dollar with care. Membership fees in the League go primarily to state and national operations, so for important work at the local level, the LWVJC relies on your donations to the fundraising campaign.

Thank you to everyone who has already contributed so generously. Without your help, the LWVJC could not continue its critical activities of advocating for fair and transparent government, promoting voter rights and education, and making democracy work in Johnson County.

Donations made by check can be mailed to: LWVJC, P. O. Box 5452, Coralville, IA, 52241
Donations can also be made online at the LWVJC web site: <https://lwvjc.org/donate/>

*Kathleen Kamerick
Fundraising Chair*



Voter Registration

The first voter registration event of 2024 will take place at She Speaks. This occasion is designed to be a showcase of local female-owned businesses, community leaders, and groups. Please join us at the Robert A Lee Community Recreation Center on Sunday, March 3rd from 1 – 4 p.m. If you are interested in helping at this event, you can sign up here: [She Speaks Event](#)

This year should be a busy time for registering voters. So, keep an eye on this space for upcoming events.

*Jennifer Patel
Voter Registration Coordinator*



Voter Services Committee

The League held its first winter legislative forum focusing on education on Saturday, January 27. The following legislators participated: Zach Wahls, Janice Weiner, Dave Jacoby, Amy Nielsen, Elinor Levin and Adam Zabner. Dawn Driscoll, Brad Sherman, and Heather Hora did not attend.

We had a great crowd of around 60 people in person. The questions were excellent and, of course, the legislators were well prepared. All members are encouraged to attend these events and help us connect with our legislators and community.

Our next forum will be held on Saturday, February 24 from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. at the Iowa City Senior Center. Our focus topic is Healthcare and we have invited 11 partners to spread the word to their constituents and identify a person to ask a question on behalf of their group.

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The final legislative forum for this year will be on March 30 and will focus on public safety.

Jeanne Bancroft
Voter Services Chair



Advocacy Update

The legislative session continues to move forward at a frantic pace and is keeping the committee and our advocacy volunteers more than busy.

Each legislative session begins with hundreds of bills, many of which never go anywhere. In mid-February, most bills that haven't passed through a committee are considered "dead" for the year. This is both good and bad news for the League's advocacy priorities. For example, the annual bill to bring back the death penalty is "dead." Unfortunately, so are the bills that LWVJC Advocates supported to get Iowa into a federal food assistance program for kids. And, while a number of non-controversial bills are still alive and moving, so are a lot of bills that deserve the media coverage they are getting.

One bad bill is the governor's proposal to cut back and defund the state's Area Education Agencies (AEAs). AEAs provide a wide range of support to schools from substitute teacher authorization to disability services. The Advocacy group contributed to the waves of blowback that this bill received by putting out alerts, commenting on the bills, contacting legislators, attending the LWVIA issue briefing on the topic, and making comments for its public hearing. Legislators reported receiving thousands of emails on this topic, almost unanimously opposing the changes. An amended version of this bill nonetheless advanced in the Iowa Senate, but the House voted down the original proposal, and we are hopeful that continued public outcry will keep it or the House's new, limited proposal from advancing further.

We are tracking and will likely act on a number of other live bills. These range from one on AI and elections that might be good, to another voter restriction bill that is definitely bad, to different proposals for reorganizing the state's boards and commissions, to a bill that would further strip power from the State Auditor. In short, there will be plenty for us to do in the coming months!

Shannon Patrick
Advocacy Chair

FilmScene Community Collaboration

Who Could Believe This Could Happen Here?

The League of Women Voters Johnson County will co-host a documentary screening of *I, Too* followed by a facilitated discussion as part of the Film Scene Community Collaboration Series on March 25, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. The LWVJC, LWVIA, and the Bertelsmann Foundation are partnering with Film Scene for this Midwest premier of *I, Too*.

The screening will be followed by a facilitated discussion event exploring the impact of history and accountability in strengthening democracy. The discussion will be led by Laura Gray, Iowa City Community School District's Executive Director of Diversity and Cultural Responsiveness. Panel members are Ashley Howard, Ph.D., Assistant Professor in University of Iowa's African American Studies, and Bea Hicks, League of Women Voters Johnson County Board Member. Dr. Howard's research interests include African Americans in the Midwest; the intersection between race, class, and gender; and the global history of racial violence. Ms. Hicks serves on the Steering Committee of the Johnson County Interfaith Coalition and is a facilitator for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Workshops in the community.

The documentary film *I, Too*, features Dr. Carol Anderson, New York Times bestseller author and Chair of African American Studies at Emory

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University. *I, Too* explores the connection between America's history (through the lens of little-known episodes from the past), and the current challenges to American democracy. It examines the question "Who could believe this could happen here?" regarding the January 6, 2021, insurrection.

The *I, Too* screening will be at Film Scene at the Hotel Chauncey, 404 E College Street. There is an attached parking ramp at The Chauncey which is

free after 6:00 pm. This event is open to the public. Admission is free, although a "pay what you will" donation is appreciated, with a \$10 contribution suggested.

Community Collaborations is an ongoing series of engaging cinematic events in partnership with nonprofits, advocacy groups, passionate individuals, and community organizations to generate conversation and action inspired by film.

Jeanne Bancroft

In Memoriam

We mourn the loss of Dr. Deborah Ann Turner, LWVUS President and fellow Iowan, who passed away suddenly on January 28. LWVUS has a memorial page for Dr. Turner here: [Memorial Page](#). The page includes links to her obituary and a link to a recording of the funeral service, as well as tributes to Dr. Turner.

The League of Women Voters of Iowa is setting up a memorial fund in her honor. This fund will be used to promote leadership among League members. If you wish to contribute, please [give online](#) or mail a check to the LWVIA treasurer, Shannon Patrick, at 652 Sandusky Dr., Iowa City, Iowa, 52240. Please indicate "Memorial Fund" along with your gift. These gifts will be tax deductible.

Dr. Turner will be greatly missed. We will "Keep on keeping on."



*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
JOIN US FOR THE FEBRUARY LEGISLATIVE FORUM



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2024

9:30 - 11:30 AM

FOCUS ON HEALTHCARE

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

In-person and live streamed to LWVJC Facebook page

Community Collaborations Series



March 25, 2024 at 7:00 pm

Filmscene, Chauncey

Facilitated Post Viewing Panel Discussion

Sponsored By



★ 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.

🏛️ 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. Preserve gender balance requirements for state boards and commissions.

🎓 EDUCATION

Increase 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. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare and four-year-old preschool.

👩‍⚕️ REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Make contraception available without prescription. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Support new moms with 12 months of postpartum Medicaid coverage. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

👤 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Prevent human trafficking in all of its forms, support its victims, and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect human trafficking survivors from criminal prosecution.

💧 ENVIRONMENT

Increase funding for environment and water quality initiatives, including REAP, and develop state climate change strategies.

🔫 GUN SAFETY

Enact comprehensive common sense gun safety legislation to address increasing gun violence in the state. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal "stand your ground" law, and resist efforts that expand carrying in public spaces and 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.



Like LWWJCIA on Facebook!

Photo Gallery



Above Left: L to R, Johnson County legislators Zach Wahls, Janice Weiner, Dave Jacoby, Elinor Levin, Amy Nielsen, and Adam Zabner at the LWVJC Legislative forum on January 27. Above Right: Johnson County legislators listen to a question from the moderator at the far right, League member Bonnie Boothroy.

Below Left: L to R, Cathy Eisenhofer, Gaylen Wobeter, Laure Wess Peters, and Linda Schreiber at the Making Connections event on February 15. Below Right: L to R, Paula Vaughn, Vicki Aden, and Mandi Remington listen to Jeanne Bancroft during the Making Connections event.



Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Saturday, February 24	9:30-11:30 a.m.	Senior Center Assembly Room, Iowa City	Legislative Forum: Healthcare
Sunday, March 3	1 – 4 p.m.	Robert A. Lee Recreation Center, 220 S. Gilbert St., Iowa City	Voter Registration at She Speaks event
Wednesday, March 13	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee, Graduate Hotel, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Monday, March 25	7-9 p.m.	FilmScene at the Chauncey, 404 E. College St., Iowa City	<i>I, Too</i> film screening with discussion following
Saturday, March 30	9:30-11:30 a.m.	Senior Center Assembly Room, Iowa City	Legislative Forum: Public Safety
Wednesday, April 10	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee, Graduate Hotel, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Thursday, April 11	4 - 7 p.m.	Jasper Winery, Des Moines	Annual LWVIA Defending Democracy event. Save the Date - Details soon
Wednesday, April 17	6:30 - 8 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library	Connie Mutel: <i>Iowa, the Beautiful Land: Envisioning an Action Agenda for Nature and Agriculture</i>
Thursday, May 16	5 - 7 p.m.	Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Rd, Coralville	Annual Membership Meeting
Saturday, June 8		Grinnell	LWVIA State Council Meeting
June 27-30		Washington DC + online	2024 LWVUS National Convention

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stores.inksoft.com/league_of_women_voters





All net proceeds from sales go to the League of Women Voters of Iowa





