

## VOTER

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LWVJC | P. O. Box 5452 |  
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## May 2024

*Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy*

**LWW** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup>  
OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

Please Join Us for

### Our May Membership Meeting

May 16, 2024

Unitarian Universalist Society

2355 Oakdale Rd, Coralville, IA 52241

5:00-7:00pm

Please RSVP and Pay for the Meal by May 10th

GUEST SPEAKER

BECCA EASTWOOD, ACLU IA

'THE FREEDOM TO DECIDE'



### June 4 is Primary Election Day

Iowa holds a closed primary, meaning that a voter must declare party affiliation in order to vote in the primary. This year Iowa has three parties, Democrat, Republican, and Libertarian; however, no Libertarian candidates have petitioned to be on the ballot. Candidates for national, state and local races will be on the ballot.

Primary Timeline:

- May 15: early voting begins at the Auditor's office. It is also the first day that absentee ballots will be mailed out. In order to receive an absentee ballot via mail, print the form online and mail it in (no online requests) or go to the Auditor's office to pick one up and/or drop it off.
- May 20: deadline for mail in absentee ballot requests to be received. Mailed ballots must arrive in the Auditor's office by June 4, 8 p.m.
- June 3: last day of in person early voting at Auditor's office
- June 4: in-person voting at your precinct, 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

See the Auditor's website for candidates, voting locations and more details <https://www.johnsoncountyiowa.gov/auditor/elections>

*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 **June Voter deadline is May 27.**



## Membership

Current active membership is 161 members. Please plan to attend the May 16 annual member meeting. Annual membership is due on June 30, 2024. You will be able to renew your membership at the meeting. If you renew at the May meeting you will be renewed for the full year with your next renewal June 2025. Individual membership is \$70 and Household membership is \$105. We also have a \$20 student membership available. You can renew by check or credit card. Your dues help us with critical local programming and voter registration events. We appreciate your engagement!

*Jeanne Bancroft  
Membership Chair*



## Voter Registration

As the November election gets closer, voter registration events will increase. We will again attend the ICCSD High School graduation rehearsal on Friday May 31. June will focus on the Iowa Arts Festival, Pride and Juneteenth. The Iowa City Jazz Festival will be a great way to contact with voters around the Fourth of July celebration. Come to the Naturalization Ceremony at Hoover Library and help register new citizens to vote in September.

Our application for the Funzone for the Arts Festival (6/7 to 6/9) and Jazz Festival (7/5 to 7/7) has been approved. As part of being the Funzone we will offer an activity. We will be doing a trivia game focusing on women. A roll of a dice will determine what category the question comes from. Voting Law, the League of Women Voters, Suffragettes, Government, Firsts and Who Am I? are the six categories of questions to be chosen from. Help is needed to create questions, transfer them to notecards and laminate the cards. The beginning stage of this game will be demonstrated on your way into the Spring membership meeting. So come to play!

*Jennifer Patel  
Voter Registration Coordinator*



## Advocacy Update

April in an election year marks the end of the Iowa legislative season, and that has made the month a bittersweet time for LWVJC Advocacy in recent years. Sweet because the crush of the session is done with, we can relax a bit, and we know that many egregious ideas are not going to become law for at least another year. Bitter because Iowa's current politics do not favor League priorities, so we spend more effort trying to preserve past accomplishments than trying to expand them.

This month, we continued to oppose another voting bill, and I'm happy to say that bill stalled out in the Senate. We also advocated for the small, better-researched consolidation of boards and commissions that the House had passed. We were partially successful there, with a final bill that came out somewhere between what the two chambers initially passed.

The boards and commissions changes were a good example of the theme of our work making bad ideas less bad. More boards and commissions were cut than we can approve of, limiting public input and eliminating government work on specific problems. But significantly fewer were cut than were originally expected. Similarly, the legislature ultimately passed drastic changes to the Area Education Administration system (AEAs), but even those are scaled back than the original sweeping proposal, and the public outcry on the issue will keep it in the spotlight for future sessions. We may not be getting all we want, but we're making a difference. Thank you to the Advocacy Committee and all those who volunteered to receive and act upon alerts for making that happen.

*Shannon Patrick  
Advocacy Chair*



Like LWVJCIA on Facebook!



## Voter Services

The final legislative forum for this legislative session took place on March 30 at the Iowa City Senior Center on the topic of public safety. About 50 people were in attendance. Four of the nine legislators were in attendance. Representative Jacoby had a scheduling conflict and Senator Wahls did not attend due to the birth of his son earlier in the week. Congratulations Senator Wahls! Senator Dawn Driscoll and Representatives Heather Hora and Brad Sherman did not respond to our invitation. Participating were Senator Janice Weiner and Representatives Amy Nielsen, Elinor Levin, and Adam Zabner. Video is available on the League website and at Iowa City Channel 4.

We thank all those who helped make these forums successful. League members, Barb Stein and Kathleen Kamerick, served as our moderator and timekeeper respectively for the March Forum. The City of Iowa City tech team was excellent all year in helping us with live streaming and recording. We also appreciate the engagement of the League members and community who attend the forums with excellent questions.

The primary election is on June 4. There are two contested primary contests in Johnson County. The candidate forum for the Board of Supervisors Democratic Primary will be held on Tuesday, May 21 at 7 p.m. at the Iowa City Senior Center. We are working to schedule the candidate forum for the State House District 91 Republican Primary. Watch the LWVJC calendar for that date in May.

*Jeanne Bancroft, Jean Donham, Maggie Elliott, Sally Stutsman, Vicki Aden  
Voter Services Committee*



## UMRR-ILO

The LWV UMRR Annual Meeting will be on Wednesday, May 29 at 6pm via Zoom! Registration and materials are on the LWV UMRR [Annual Meeting 2024 page](#).

GET READY FOR A MISSISSIPPI CELEBRATION that goes on and on. First, on Sunday, June 9, it is back to Dubuque for a day of music and fun to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Upper Mississippi Fish and Wildlife Refuge with UMRR-ILO. UMRR-ILO has received a grant from MRN and will display the results on that day. A work of art that helps explain the Mississippi River and its importance will be the center of attention. Secondly, on Friday, July 12, the UMRR Board will be holding a retreat. We will tour the Moline Water Plant mid-afternoon (see <https://www.moline.il.us/144/Water>). If you're interested, we would arrange meal plans and see the Mississippi River water at work. I'm in need of several "interested hands" to work with UMRR. There are so many constant activities that go on with our environmental priorities, we need "workers". It's not work if you're interested! Contact me at [nancy55555@icloud.com](mailto:nancy55555@icloud.com) if you want to attend June 9, or July 12, or both; help the UMRR Board of Directors; or have questions about any of the activities. Put UMRR in the subject area, please. Thank you!

### Iowa Water Troubles

Recently, you may have heard about the Nishnabotna River in southwest Iowa. It is the victim of an open valve left on over the weekend of March 11 at a fertilizer plant. This created a massive amount of nitrates flowing into the river. Almost immediately about 750,000 fish died. The count is still in process and they are beginning to get test results for other organisms (frogs, insects, birds, plants). This water flows to the Mississippi River by way of the Missouri River. Our river boundaries in Iowa have produced the richest farmland in the world. This devastating accident will have a powerful, negative effect on all the land and waters with which it comes in contact. Iowa is a farming state and the needs of farmers should be protected, but good practices could be encouraged, and our precious recreation areas could also be preserved.

Before COVID, I reported in the JCLWV *Voter* that the "forever chemicals": per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) had been linked to cancers (Iowa has the second largest rate of cancer in the US). Since then, we have learned that PFAS also link to impacts on the liver and heart, immune system, developmental damage to infants

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and children and seems to correlate to higher mortality risk for COVID. Earlier, Iowa State University had received a grant to work on how to remove PFAS from our waters. Now there are filters that do help, and our government is working on this issue. Good news! In addition, the EPA has taken action against the deadly PFAS issue, finally. At least ten of the nineteen chemicals comprising PFAS can and are to be eliminated. One billion dollars is set aside for that purpose. Awareness has been raised and the Federal Government is doing its job working to protect our citizens.

On the EPA website is a PFAS information page that includes types of filters, videos and ways to communicate with the public: [PFAS drinking water regulation information](#).

Filters to remove PFAS include:

- Charcoal (Granular Activated Carbon or GAC): These filters use carbon to trap chemicals as water passes through them.
- Reverse Osmosis (RO) Systems: Reverse osmosis is a process that forces water through an extremely thin barrier that separates chemicals from the water.
- Ion Exchange Resins: Resins are tiny beads that act like powerful magnets that attract and hold the contaminated materials from passing through the water system. Check for Certification (Certification by an independent entity is an assurance that the filter works)

The good and the bad about Iowa's water is that we all need to care and VOTE for people who represent us and our desires.

*Nancy Porter  
UMRR-ILO and Mississippi River Network*

## Book Club

Deanne Mirr and Jeanne Bancroft are resurrecting the League Book Club. There will be an organizational meeting on Wednesday, June 12 at 5:30 p.m. at the Bistro (Courtyard by Marriott). Please stop by if you are interested in learning about it or participating. Email Deanne Mirr ([dmirr@me.com](mailto:dmirr@me.com)) or Jeanne Bancroft ([jnn.bancroft@gmail.com](mailto:jnn.bancroft@gmail.com)) if you have questions or can't make the meeting but want to get on the list. All are welcome!



## New Member Spotlight

Since we have added many new members recently, we will be featuring three new members this month – **Amy Donhal, Mary Gregg, and Liz Bartell.**

From **Amy Donhal**: “My name is Amy Dohnal (pronounced "doe-null"). I joined the league after hearing about it from a current member. It sounds like a great opportunity to engage in bi-partisan discussions and efforts that can improve our local community and hopefully make a ripple that will grow and touch many. I worked as a K-1 elementary teacher for nearly 20 years. I left teaching in 2022 after the politicization and vilification of teachers and public schools became too much for me. I strongly believe that when we support our public schools, we can raise all boats! I have worked at UIHC in Cancer Research & Clinical Trials since 2022 and I volunteer at the North Liberty Food Pantry as much as my schedule allows. Away from work, I enjoy power tools, live music, and traveling National Parks and baseball stadiums.”

From **Mary Gregg**: “Hi, my name is Mary Gregg, and I live in North Liberty. I have 3 sons and 5 grandchildren. I am a retired elementary teacher and was looking for more ways to get involved. Since retirement, I have had more time to watch the news and thought the League had a lot to offer. I look forward to learning more from you.”

From **Liz Bartell**: “Hi! My name is Liz Bertell and I have lived in Iowa City for the past 27 years. I am married and mom to twin sons. I hold a degree in Social Work/Psychology and have spent my career working in adoption, foster care and para educating. Recently I decided to join League of Women Voters due to personal experiences. Areas of concern for me are: education, mental health and women's rights. I have had personal connections to these issues and my hope is to make a difference for others.”

Welcome Amy, Mary, and Liz!



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

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Please Join Us for  
**Our May Membership Meeting**

May 16, 2024  
Unitarian Universalist Society  
2355 Oakdale Rd, Coralville, IA 52241  
5:00-7:00pm

**GUEST SPEAKER**  
**BECCA EASTWOOD, ACLU IA**  
**'THE FREEDOM TO DECIDE'**



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**TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024**  
**IOWA CITY SENIOR CENTER ASSEMBLY ROOM**  
**7:00-8:30 PM**

**JC BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
**DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY**  
**CANDIDATE FORUM**

**PRIMARY ELECTION DATE: JUNE 4, 2024**



Forums will be in-person and live streamed to the LWVJC Facebook page,  
and recorded to the LWVJC and City Channel 4 websites



## 2024 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.

### 🏛️ 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.



# Photo Gallery



On April 17, Connie Mutel closed out the 2023-2024 League Lecture Series with *Iowa, the Beautiful Land? Envisioning an Action Agenda for Nature and Agriculture*. Above left, Connie Mutel during the presentation. Above right, Moderator Larry Weber, Director of IIHR-Hydroscience and Engineering Institute, and speaker Connie Mutel admiring their LWVJ mugs!

Below left, League member Barbara Beaumont asking a question during the Q&A portion of the event. Below right, a good crowd was on hand for the event. The Iowa City Public Library was one of eight event co-sponsors, the others being the University of Iowa Environmental Coalition, Bur Oak Land Trust, Project GREEN, 100 Grannies, TRAIL of Johnson County, Sierra Club Iowa City Area Group, and Johnson County Master Gardeners. Miss it? Check out the recording on the ICPL Library Channel at [Iowa the Beautiful Land? Envisioning an Action Agenda for Nature and Agriculture | LWVJ and ICPL \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)





**Above: On March 30, the final legislative forum of this legislative session was held at the Senior Center. Pictured, left to right, are Senator Janice Weiner, Representative Amy Nielsen, Representative Elinor Levin, Representative Adam Zabner, and the moderator Barb Stein.**

**Below: Scenes from the Annual LWVIA Defending Democracy event held April 11 in Des Moines at the Jasper Winery. Below left: Keynote speaker Deidre DeJear and LWVIA co-president Holly Oppelt. Below right: Connie Ryan, Director of the Interfaith Coalition of Iowa, was the recipient of this year's LWVIA Defending Democracy Award.**







Above left: Left to right, Keynote speaker Deidre DeJear with LWVIA co-presidents Terese Grant and Holly Oppelt. Above right: LWVJC member and LWVIA Treasurer Shannon Patrick emceed a portion of the event. Below: LWVJC was well represented at the Defending Democracy dinner.



## Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Wednesday, May 8	10 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee, Graduate Hotel, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Wednesday, May 15		Johnson County Auditor's Office	First Day of Early Voting for the Primary Election
Thursday, May 16	5 - 7 p.m.	Unitarian Universalist Society, 2355 Oakdale Rd, Coralville	Annual Membership Meeting
Monday, May 20	5:00 p.m.		Deadline to request a mailed (absentee) ballot for the primary election
Tuesday, May 21	7 - 8:30 p.m.	Iowa City Senior Center, 28 S Linn St, Iowa City	Candidate Forum: Board of Supervisors Democratic Primary
Friday, May 31	8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Xtream Arena, Coralville	Voter Registration at ICCSD High School Graduation Rehearsals
Tuesday, June 4	7 a.m. – 8 p.m.	Find your polling place here: <a href="#">Johnson County, Iowa Polling Places</a>	Primary Election
Saturday, June 8		Grinnell	LWVIA State Council Meeting
Wednesday, June 12	5:30 p.m.	Bistro at the Courtyard by Marriott, 901 Melrose Ave, Iowa City	Organizational Meeting for LWVJC Book Club
June 27-30		Washington DC + online	2024 LWVUS National Convention

### 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.