

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MANITOWOC COUNTY
SEPTEMBER 2023 NEWSLETTE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

09/26	5 pm Board Meeting
10/??	TBA
11/07	5 pm Board Meeting
11/??	Funding Public Education/Impact of Vouchers

Presidents' Corner



We would like to thank Nancy Slattery, Darlene Wellner, Marilyn Sontag, and the RUTH organization for all their hard work presenting “Transforming the Criminal Justice System” meeting on September 7th to our League members and other invited guests. We also want to thank pastor, Cherie Forret and the Lakeshore United Methodist Church for hosting this event. We had a very nice turnout for our first meeting this fall with 41 people in attendance. It was an excellent presentation by Casey Hoff an attorney from Sheboygan and two representatives from EXPO (Ex-incarcerated People Organizing) Dennis Franklin and Delilah McKinney. There was a lot of information shared and it gave those of us in attendance a lot to think about. The committee has informed us that they will be reaching out to League members who attended to help develop a plan of action moving forward.

Our Board met on Tuesday September 5th and discussed purchasing liability insurance for the board and organization, the upcoming calendar of events, Chamber of Commerce membership, bylaws clarification, zoom membership, and handbook development. We want to thank our Board for all their hard work and dedication. An extra big thank you goes to Cathy and Julie for working on updating our member handbooks.

Cathy Cole, membership chair, is working on updating our membership list and will share that with all of us when she receives dues and other pertinent information. If any of your personal information has changed, please let Cathy know so she can add it to our records.

Our Observer Corps members are back at work viewing and recording information on various governmental boards and committees. Our report on September meetings will come out in early October. Thank you, committee members: Sue Matczynski, Mary Wallace, Nancy Slattery, Jo Ellen Gramling, Suzanne Zipperer, and Darian Kaderabek. 😊

Maureen and I are still working as Co-Presidents, but Maureen is facing some medical problems and will be focusing on her health and well-being for a while. Therefore, please contact me if you have any concerns or suggestions during this time. We are all hoping for a speedy recovery for Maureen. Linda

09/7/23 Meeting League of Women Voters and RUTH

On September 7th 2023 League of Women Voters and RUTH members and guests sponsored a membership meeting at Lakeshore United Methodist Church. Speakers were Casey Hoff, Criminal Defense Attorney from Sheboygan and two members of EXPO (Ex- incarcerated people organization) in Madison, Dennis Franklin and Delilah McKinney.

The subject was "Transforming the Criminal Justice System in Wisconsin." Hoff indicated that our prisoner count has grown 700% since 1978 he cited over criminalization. This situation in the United States with the US having 5% of the world's population and 25% of the world's prison population most people are in prison for non-violent offenses mainly drugs.

Hoff indicated the bail amendment which passed recently in Wisconsin was poorly written. Reason for bail is to increase the likelihood of an offender appearing in court. Most people do show up in court. Illinois is now a no cash bail state, the first in the country. Hoff was negative about pre-trial detention as it causes loss of jobs and family instability.

Solitary confinement was also an issue of concern as well as the Waupun Penitentiary lock down which keeps offenders in their cells most of the time due to staff shortages etc.

On a positive note, salaries of public defenders and district attorneys have increased in Wisconsin.

Hoff discussed the issue of voting in jail for those eligible to vote. The local Sheriff must provide an opportunity for this to happen. Joy Brixius, former jail administrator spoke about services in the jail such as, GED, medical and dental services, employment while in jail, and voting for those who are eligible.

EXPO members spoke of their services and the critical need for peer support when returning to the community. The necessity of having community support, housing, jobs, and education were stressed. The book Locked Up On The Outside was recommended. It illustrates how ex-offenders may be on supervision after incarceration for 20, 30, or 40 years. There is a state campaign to cap supervision for 3-5 years. Long supervision causes people to lose hope for a normal life.

Following the talks discussion of possibly study/action reforms were discussed:

- . Return 17 year olds to the juvenile system (Wisconsin is 1 of only 3 states having 17 year olds in the adult system)
- . Shorten parole supervision
- . Allow ex-offenders to vote when out of prison
- . Decrease use of solitary confinement
- . Develop a plan to decrease the number of persons in prison
- . Evaluate laws preventing formerly incarcerated from finding jobs and housing.

League Members: Please contact Darlene Wellner (920-682-9466) and Nancy Slattery (920-863-2996) regarding your interest in working on these issues. We will pick 1 or 2 and develop a plan for change in legislation. If you know of others, please let us know. We hope there will be a number of people to join this work for justice.

LEGISLATION ACTION COMMITTEE

Darlene Wellner has recently written a letter to the Herald Times Reporter. The letter was printed in the Sunday issue of September 3rd. The subject matter supports the Leagues' position. I have printed the letter for your convenience.

“ELIMINATE THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE:”

Several of the past elections have been won not by a majority of voters for the candidate but by the majority of the Electoral College votes.

The Electoral College has never been a fair way to decide elections. It should be legislated out of existence before the next national election.

The 2020 presidential election has seen how it can be manipulated illegally for a party to maintain power and disregard the people's vote. Thankfully, it didn't work. But it can happen again if our obsolete, unfair system does not change. Every vote in every state must be equal instead of winner-takes-all, state by state.

This will make our elections fair and candidates will be interested in campaigning in every state rather than favoring the “swing” states, such as Wisconsin.

Just five states need to pass legislation to enact the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact to have this happen. These key states include Wisconsin, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Arizona, and Virginia.

To make this happen before the 2024 election, we need to encourage our state senators and Assembly representatives and governor to pass the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. I don't think any of us wants a replay of what happened in the last election to overturn the will of the people. With this compact, every U.S. voter will have their vote counted equally. Be part of saving our democracy. Write, e-mail or call your state senator and representative. Darlene Wellner

THE LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE consists of the entire membership of the League of Women Voters. **All** of us can write, call or email anyone of our legislators to let them have your input about their actions. **REMEMBER** they are elected to represent the people of their district and state. Please save the following addresses, email accounts, and telephone numbers.

CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS:

Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Senator (608) 264-5338/(202) 224-54653
tbaldwin.gov
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ron Johnson, U.S. Senator (414) 276-7282/(202) 224-5323
ronjohnson.gov
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Glenn Grothman, U.S. 6th District Representative (920) 907-0624/(202) 225-2476
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1511 Longworth H.B.O.
Washington, DC 20515

Andre Jacque, Senator -- 608-266-3512
Sen.Jacque@legis.wisconsin.gov
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Madison, WI. 53707-7882

Shae Sortwell, Assemblyman-- 608-237-9102
2nd Assembly District
Rep.Sortwell@legis.Wisconsin.gov
P. O. Box 8953
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Devin Le Mahieu, Senator - 608-266-2056
Sen.LeMahieu@legis.Wisconsin.gov
Room 211 South State Capitol
P. O. Box 7882
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Paul Tittl, Assemblyman - 608-237-9125
Rep.Tittl@legis.wisconsin.gov
P. O. Box 8953
Madison, WI. 53708

MEMBERSHIP STATUS

Currently, I am awaiting 11 people to either pay their dues or to let me know that they no longer wish to be a member. Dues are: \$55.00 for single; \$80.00 for households. My address is: 3816 Riverview Drive, Two Rivers, 54241. My phone #920-553-8757 or email address is: clcole3816@gmail.com

The sooner I get this information, the sooner I will send out the membership list and the results of the interest form to all.

During the summer, Betty Behnke passed away. Betty was a long term member of League. She and her friends sat near the front of the Great Decisions speaker in nearly all the 8 week sessions every year. Betty had a wonderful reputation as head of the county nurses for many years. She was also active in AAUW in our county. She was a fine woman in every way.