

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MANITOWOC COUNTY

OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

11/07	Board Meeting
11/??	Voucher Program and Public Schools
12/05	Social

Presidents' Corner



We will be starting up our Observer Corps reports again this month after our summer break. There are some things happening in the Manitowoc School District that need your attention. It was decided by the Superintendent Jim Feil that the school district opt out of the program that provided free breakfast and lunch to all the students in the district and going back to having parents complete an application form to qualify for free and reduced breakfast and lunch. In June 2022 the school board unanimously approved applying for CEP funding. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications. In June 2023, without a board vote, Mr. Feil ended our participation in the program. Our local League worked very hard to get the school lunch program started in the Manitowoc District and I'm sure you will want to continue to support improvements in that program now. If you are so inclined you may wish to write to the Superintendent and school board voicing your opinions. Their emails are: feilj@mpsd.school; hansenp@mpsd.school; traskk@mpsd.school; soeldners@mpsd.school; vlastelicat@mpsd.school; spauldingm@mpsd.school; ablec@mpsd.school; phippsm@mpsd.school

Our state League is encouraging all our members to consider being a poll worker in our local communities. Please consider volunteering at the polls. It's very important that poll workers are non-partisan community members who are concerned about supporting everyone's right to vote and ensuring fair and honest

elections. If you are interested you can contact your local elections clerk to volunteer.

The following is the official League response to the redistricting bill sponsored by state legislators.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Molly Carmichael, Communications Manager Sept. 13, 2023 mcarmichael@lwvwi.org League of Women Voters of WI Pushes for Stronger Redistricting Bill, More Nonpartisan Safeguards MADISON – In response to the redistricting bill introduced by state legislators, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is pushing for stronger, more staunchly nonpartisan solutions to our gerrymandered maps.

Debra Cronmiller, LWVWI executive director, issued the following statement in response. “The League and its grassroots volunteers have been part of a years-long effort to educate the public about gerrymandering and demand a permanent solution to ensure fair maps for generations to come. “While we are happy to see legislators look into a potential solution for the current partisan map-drawing process, this bill does not meet the needs of Wisconsinites and does not have enough nonpartisan safeguards in place. “Simply put, the bill doesn’t go far enough. The League finds several areas troubling and is hoping for amendments. “First, it would not guarantee full independence of the Legislative Reference Bureau, the agency which would draft the maps. The bill should prohibit lobbyists, high-level donors, and those hired by legislative leaders from working on the redistricting process. “Additionally, the bill should provide more transparency in the map-drawing process. Public hearings should be required throughout the process. “And, startlingly, this bill doesn’t have the processes in place to ensure it is fully nonpartisan. With this current bill, the majority of the Legislature would be able to reject the maps twice, and then create their own gerrymandered maps in accordance with their goals and party. “This bill, if enacted, could result in more of the same extremely gerrymandered Legislative maps that we have now. This bill needs to require a supermajority (or 3/4 vote) of the Legislature, to ensure one party does not overrule the process. “Wisconsinites have been fighting long and hard for fair maps. We deserve a strong solution.”

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin is a nonpartisan political organization that advocates for informed and active participation in government. There are 20 local Leagues throughout Wisconsin.

We hope you all enjoy our beautiful fall weather. Linda and Maureen

CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Thank you everyone who attended the Sept 7th meeting on "Transforming the Criminal Justice System" with speakers Casey Hoff and EXPO members. Our plan now is to meet and discuss some of the problems that have emerged and see if we can focus on a few where we can make a difference.

I would like to suggest meeting on either Wednesday, Oct 25th or Thursday, Oct 26th AT 5:30 at Lakeshore United Methodist Church on Reed Ave Manitowoc.

Please let me know your preference. Call or email: ***Darlene Wellner AT 920-682-9466*** or ddwellner@charter.net. I look forward to hearing from you and your ideas!

HOUSING INFORMATION: Reported by Donna Firman

At the last common council meeting, an ordinance was updated to reduce the number of days of allowable temporary housing like tents, RVs and cars from 30 days to 10 days. Our unhoused community is subject to a fine of up to \$2,000 for violating the ordinance.

Punitive fines for conditions like being unhoused keep people in an endless loop of poverty. Fines cannot be paid, so more fines and court costs are charged, making it even more unlikely that people can dig out. Ultimately of course, this leads to jail, making it nearly impossible to get a job and housing. Of course that gives our community more homelessness and fines. The cycle goes on and on.

Some studies suggest that 49% of unhoused people have a mental health condition. Conditions that go untreated due to our lack of adequate providers and other access to care issues. I look at this measure by the common council as an attack on the unhoused as well as the mentally ill. Our leaders are showing an alarming lack of grasp on the big picture issues.

I will be offering public comment at the common council meeting on Monday, October 16 at 6:30 PM. I'm inviting you to join me in support and in speaking out on this egregious move to criminalize homelessness in Manitowoc.

Fines do not fix homelessness. Homes fix homelessness.

LEGISLATION ACTION COMMITTEE

ALL MEMBERS OF LEAGUE are part of this committee. There are many things going on in our community and at the state level that could use your input to your legislators, such as, gerrymandering, day care funding, school lunches. I urge all of you to take the time to call, e-mail, or write your legislators your disapproval of things that are happening. THEY work for us – not the other way around. Their information is listed below:

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
grothman.house.gov
1511 Longworth H.B.O.
Washington, DC 20515

Andre Jacque, Senator -- 608-266-3512
Sen.Jacque@legis.wisconsin.gov
7 South Wisconsin State Capitol
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI. 53707-7882

Shae Sortwell, Assemblyman-- 608-237-9102
2nd Assembly District
Rep.Sortwell@legis.Wisconsin.gov
P. O. Box 8953
Madison, WI 53708-8953

Devin Le Mahieu, Senator - 608-266-2056
Sen.LeMahieu@legis.Wisconsin.gov
Room 211 South State Capitol
P. O. Box 7882
Madison, WI. 53707

Paul Tittl, Assemblyman - 608-237-9125
Rep.Tittl@legis.Wisconsin.gov
P. O. Box 8953
Madison, Wisconsin 53708

Manty Dems understands that partisanship has no place in our schools, or in children's educational experience. We offer this community forum in this spirit. Several community groups have ideas and solutions to contribute. Anyone interested in this issue is invited to attend.

**Public Community Forum
Manitowoc Public School District's (MPSD) Hot Lunch Program:
Past History & Current Update**

Wednesday, October 18th from 6:00 to 7:30 pm.
City Council Room, Manitowoc City Hall

Presenters:
Ron Kossik, Citizen Activist
Linda Gratz, Former MPSD School Board President
Lisa Johnston, Parent Advocate

Ron Kossik will give a brief history of how he successfully brought the school lunch program to MPSD.

Linda Gratz and Lisa Johnston will give an update on the need and the status of the school lunch program since James Feil, MPSD Superintendent, recently decided to opt out of the Community Equity Provision, a part of the National School Lunch Program.

