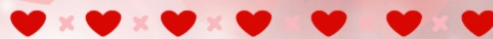


LWV

This Valentine's Day



Celebrating LWV's 105th Birthday!

THE VOTER
February 2025



L-R: Red MoonEagle from LWV Bozeman along with Sharon Haugen, Cherri Jones, Donna Aline, and Bob Jones from LWV Helena Area, sharing the LWV Montana table at the State Capitol during Climate Advocacy Day on January 24.

Hello Patti,

For many years my mantra has been “forward motion.” When life is hectic, the world is chaotic, and nothing seems to be going right this phrase has reminded me that every small step we take counts. And when we take these steps with others, as we consistently do in the League, much can be accomplished. So a huge THANK YOU to all of you for your participation in LWVHA!

Right now I know many of us are responding to Action Alerts from LWVMT and providing testimony that supports our advocacy positions in the Montana State Legislature. (Want to get involved? See the article further down!) Others are studying local concerns and planning events to educate voters on issues that will directly affect our lives here in our hometown. And still more are writing or calling our representatives in Congress to express our opinions on the national front. All of these steps lead us forward.

When I get discouraged or overwhelmed, I try to remember that there are many, many organizations and people who are taking steps to effect positive change. Your involvement in the League of Women Voters is a crucial part of moving forward.

Thank you!

Cherri Jones, Co-President, LWV of the Helena Area

February 2025 Calendar and Dates to Save

(read on for details)

- Thursday, February 13 - Montana Constitution Lobby Day at the Capitol
- Friday, February 14 - LWV's 105th Birthday during the Art Walk at the Library
- February 25 - Membership Meeting on Education Issues
- Thursday, February 27 - Book Club on Zoom
- Thursday, March 27 - Membership Meeting on draft Helena Land Use Plan
- May 3-4 - Montana LWV Convention - Bozeman

2025 "I Love the Constitution" Rally

Thursday, February 13, 12:00 pm
Montana State Capitol Rotunda

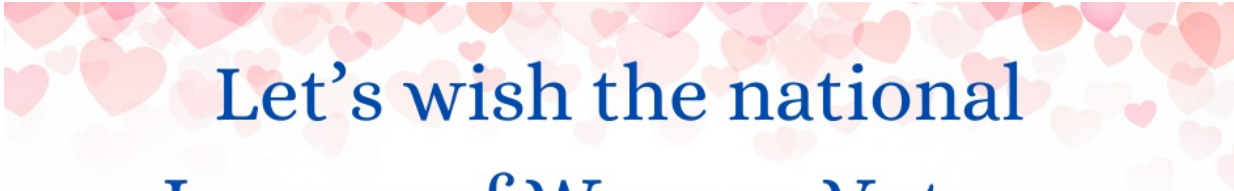
Join Montana LWV, Montana Conservation Voters, Northern Plains Resource Council, Montana Conservation Voters Education Fund, and others at this rally to celebrate and protect the core values that uphold our democracy.

The rally will take place at the Capitol Rotunda starting at 12:00 pm. Your voice is needed to help defend the rights and freedoms enshrined in our Constitution. As challenges to our civil liberties continue to grow, it's more important than ever that we stand united in support of the rule of law and the principles that safeguard our future.

This event will feature powerful speeches, insightful discussions, "Valentines for Legislators" station, and a chance to connect with others who care deeply about preserving our constitutional rights. It's a time to stand together and show our shared commitment to a fair and just system for all Montanans.

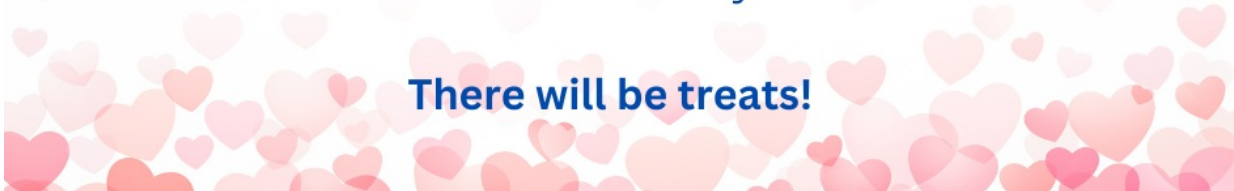
Please join us in standing up for freedom, fairness, and the rule of law. Your presence matters — together, we can send a powerful message about the importance of defending our Constitution.

**More info about this
Rally**



Let's wish the national League of Women Voters a Happy 105th Birthday on Valentine's Day

During the **Helena Art Walk** on
Friday, February 14, from **4 to 8 pm**
come to **Lewis & Clark Library** to write
what you **love about democracy**
on a heart-shaped leaf and help us
create a Democracy Tree!



There will be treats!

Education Issues Focus of February Membership Meeting

Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 - 7:00 pm

In person and via Zoom at Lewis & Clark Library

For more than a year the Education Working Group (EWG) of the League of Women Voters of Montana has worked to better understand education issues facing Montana. In January, we held a Zoom meeting so Helena LWV members could become familiar with the issues and resources the EWG compiled into an Education Issues Briefing Book.

Our February membership meeting will take the next step to discuss and hopefully come

to a consensus on the updated Education Position they will propose for adoption at the LWV Montana State Convention in May.

The Helena members of the Education Working Group--Cheri Bergeron, Cheryl Crawley, and Bob Jones--will be available to answer our questions as we go through this material.

Before this meeting, we hope you can find the time to read the Briefing Book which includes a Study Guide and Proposed Changes document.

[Click to download the Study Guide for Education Issues.](#)

[Click to download the entire Education Issues Briefing Book](#)

We look forward to seeing you either in-person or via Zoom!

If you are attending via Zoom, please pre-register so we know how many members and whom to expect at this meeting. Pre-registration ensures you receive reminders and the Zoom link the day of the meeting. Thanks!

[Register Here for the Zoom Link](#)

Citizens turn out for Public Meeting on Helena's Upcoming Land Use Plan



Almost every chair was taken in the Large Community Room at Lewis & Clark Library on January 23 with engaged, thoughtful, and curious citizens who came out to hear Community Development Director Christopher Brink discuss plans underway to create the City's first [Land Use Plan](#) (zoning and a growth policy is how development decisions are currently managed). The draft Land Use Plan is expected to be ready for public review in March and a March 27 meeting is scheduled at the Library. Stay tuned for updates!

[Click here to watch the HCTV recording](#)

Local Government Committee Update

Advocacy Policy & Advocacy Request Form

A new [LWVHA Advocacy Policy and Request Form](#) has been prepared by the committee and adopted by the League Board of Directors. The policy provides a guide for League members requesting League action on local issues for which there is a LWVHA, LWVMT or LWVUS position. Advocacy activities are considered educational and serve to increase League credibility, visibility, and effectiveness in the community. Developing public policy briefs, public meetings, or forums to discuss issues and educate policy makers and the public are also considered advocacy.

City of Helena Budget Preparation for 2025-2026

Six members of the Local Government Committee met with City Finance Director Sheila Danielson. The committee provided Director Danielson with four questions related to preparation of the 2025-2026 city budget in advance of the meeting. The questions asked were:

1. When will the newly adopted city department strategic plan be implemented, work prioritized, and a budget for the work be incorporated into a city budget?
2. What are the core services the city provides and includes in the budget?
3. What are the biggest challenges facing city revenue and expenditures?
4. How can citizens participate at the beginning of the budget development process?

Committee members are preparing a report of the answers to the questions.

Montana Land Use Planning Act & Helena Land Use Plan Development

Sixty-five Helena residents attended a League and Lewis & Clark Library co-sponsored Zoom and public meeting at the Library on January 23. Valuable information on the impacts of the 2023 Legislature Montana Land Use Planning Act was shared. City Community Development Director Christopher Brink provided attendees at the meeting with a handout of the PowerPoint presentation.

The Land Use Planning Act requires public participation during the development, adoption or amendment of a Land Use Plan map, zoning regulations or subdivision regulations. Using a 20-year population projection, existing conditions and future estimates of housing needs will be reviewed. Local services and facilities for public safety, emergency services, water and wastewater, solid waste, transportation, and school system collaboration, economic development, natural resources, environment, and hazards will also be reviewed. New zoning and subdivision regulations and a new future land use map will be developed. The plan emphasizes that public participation and the opportunity for public

involvement is limited after adoption of the land use plan, which must be adopted by 5/17/2026.

The League of Women Voters of the Helena Area and Lewis & Clark Library are co-sponsoring another public meeting on March 27th at 5:00 pm at Lewis & Clark Library. Please plan to attend.

*Mary "Mickey" Harlow, Chair
Local Government Committee*



The LWVHA Health Care Committee seeks your input on health care in Helena

The LWVHA Health Care Committee is looking for your thinking and your ideas on access, quality, and availability of health care for seniors in Helena. The focus of the League has always been on voting, elections, and weighing in on public policy. We think that health care is a critical part of public policy. The National League Position on Health Care favors universal health care.

More important to us as a local League are which services in Helena are excellent, not so good, or are lacking. Which services are not adequately regulated or are over-regulated? It's a constantly moving target, but we want to identify any glaring problems that exist, and the best way to solve them.

To that end, Health Care Committee members are willing to interview experts, tour facilities, research regulations, and do whatever is needed to ensure that Helena seniors have the best care possible. If you would like to participate in the committee, please contact Sue Hoell by email: suehoell056@gmail.com.

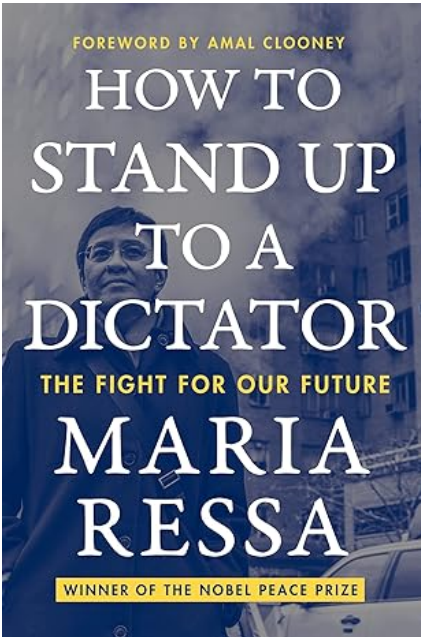
We are also inviting League members to share their ideas and experiences related to access and availability of health care in Helena. There are two ways we plan to gather this information: via phone calls and emails.

Over the next few weeks, the Health Care Committee plans to phone our members to gather very general information about health care experiences in Helena. If we aren't able to reach you when we call, we will leave a message to call us back.

The questions we will ask are very general (see below). We don't expect members to share private information, but everything shared with our committee will be treated with the utmost respect and discretion.

1. Are you satisfied with the health care available in Helena? Please elaborate.
2. Do you travel to other cities for health care? If yes, please explain your reason for traveling.
3. Are you satisfied with your health insurance costs, payments, and communications with you? Again, please elaborate.
4. Do you have suggestions for improvement?

If you'd like to respond in writing, please answer these questions in an email to suehoell056@gmail.com.



For more information, visit the [Harper Collins website](#).

This book is available at Lewis & Clark Library, on Hoopla Digital, and on Audible. Or for purchase at local independent bookstores.

Please join us whether you've read the book or not!

Helena-Area LWV Book Club

Thursday, February 27 on Zoom
6:00 to 7:00 pm

The January meeting of our book club and discussion group had a lively discussion about health care in the Helena area and our country. It was so enlightening that we didn't want to stop talking!

At our February and March meetings, we will discuss *How to Stand Up to a Dictator: The Fight for our Future* by Maria Ressa. This Noble Prize winner tells us "Democracy is fragile. This book is an urgent cry for Western readers to recognize and understand the dangers to our freedom before it is too late."

To join the discussion, click on the button to login to Zoom. We will also send a reminder on Thursday, February 27.

Kathy McNeill, 2025 Book Club Coordinator

**Click here to log into Zoom on
2/27**

Voter Registration News & Kudos

The Young Voter Project Team is now in action. Thank you Patti B., Marga L., Connie G., and Rebecca J. for your work on this team. We are right now interviewing leaders of other programs around the country that empower young people to vote. Our first interview was with Pat Supplee with the [Energizing Young Voters Program](#) in New Jersey. We are hoping to create a similar program here in Montana. We are still looking for members to join this team.

Please contact Rebecca at rebeccainmt@gmail.com if you can join this team. We meet one hour every two weeks.

Clare Kearns started our voter registration work in 2025 by organizing a team of volunteers (Dick T., Connie G., Nancy P., and Donna A.) to register new citizens at the Naturalization Ceremony on January 16th. *Good work everyone!*

*Rebecca Johnson, Chair
Voter Services Committee*

New Dues Structure and Membership Portal for Joining and Renewing

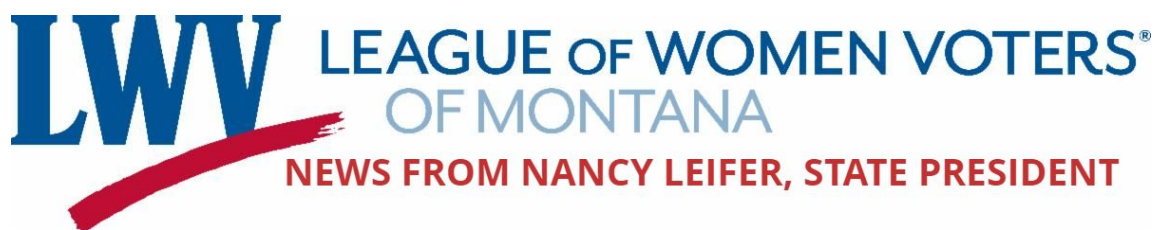
All League chapters in the U.S. are converting to a new membership system on **February 3, 2025**, that will change how membership is managed and how dues are collected. **You will soon receive an email from LWV to log into the new Member Portal, but you will not be asked to renew again until a year after your most recent renewal.**

When it comes time to renew, you will receive an email reminder. Dues will no longer be a fixed rate, but will be pay-what-you-can. The recommended amount for all members across the country will be \$75, but members can pay any amount that is \$20 or more.

OTHER FAQs ABOUT THE NEW MEMBER PORTAL

- Most new members will join online using a new credit/debit card and check withdrawal system. Members who prefer to pay by check can still do so.
- Members will be emailed a short survey via the new system to foster engagement in the League.
- Active members' data will be moved from the current roster system to the new system, called ChapterSpot. Their renewal date will be one year from their last dues payment.
- Members will have the option of managing their own membership data, such as auto-renewing and updating contact information.
- Members can also make tax-deductible donations to the Education Fund along with paying their membership dues.

*Wendy Wheeler, Chair
Membership Committee*



Dear League of Women Voters Montana member:

As I write this in mid-January, the Montana Legislature is finally in full operation, after a bit of a rocky start in the Senate. LWV Montana is making the case for democracy in the 2025 session. Look below for more information on how you can be involved, including the Lobby Day in Helena for the Montana Constitution on February 13.

LWV Montana has an active team of League members who have volunteered to track legislation in specific areas and do the necessary analysis and research to allow the League to take action on bills as they arise. Thank you!

If you want to get Action Alerts about bills and taking action in the 2025 Legislature, and you haven't already signed up and are getting them, send an email to the state League

and we will put you on the list: montanalwv@gmail.com.

LWV Montana is using its website to post **Legislative Action Alerts** on bills using the “Members Only” portion of the website. You have to register and set up an account to access the Members-Only content by using the link in the upper right-hand corner of the website. If you have any difficulties, send an email to the state League at the email address above.

If you aren’t familiar with the Legislature’s new website, or if you would like to send messages to the Legislature but aren’t sure how to do that, it isn’t too late! Every Wednesday evening while the Legislature is in session, LWV Montana’s Action Committee is hosting a Zoom meeting. Look below for more information. Now is the time to make the case for democracy, especially in the 2025 Montana Legislature!

And, we continue to recruit volunteers for our grant-funded **Stories of Democracy** video project. LWV Montana received a grant of \$25,000 to purchase video recording equipment, learn how to use it, and produce a series of interviews with individuals telling stories of how Montana’s democracy has affected their lives. The project will begin in April and runs for a minimum of three years. No experience needed to volunteer! Volunteers will be trained to run cameras and recording equipment, conduct interviews, edit recordings, and manage social media sites.

To volunteer for this fun project, send an email to nancleifer@gmail.com with “Video Project” in the subject line.

Please also save the weekend of May 3-4, 2025, to attend our annual LWV Montana Member Convention in Bozeman. Details will be sent to all members soon.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Leifer, President
LWV Montana*



This Week at the Legislature!

Wednesdays through middle of May at 7:00 pm

We are meeting via Zoom every Wednesday night through the end of the legislative session. We will discuss which bills are up for action each week and how to use the Legislature’s website to contact legislators or sign up to give testimony.

Starting at 7:30 pm, League members will offer technical assistance for members needing help with access to the Members-Only section of the LWVMT website, help navigating the

Montana Legislature website, or any other issues related to taking action. (See below for information on registering for Members-Only access.)

To join the Legislative Action list, please send an email to montanalwv@gmail.com.

Log into Zoom on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

MEMBERS ONLY ACCESS – HOW TO GET MEMBERS-ONLY ACCESS ON OUR WEBSITE

<http://my.lwv.org/montana>

Username or email Password **LOG IN** Register Forgot password

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTANA

To create an account:

Visit <http://my.lwv.org/montana>

Click "Register" to access the Registration page (see above where it's located on the webpage).

Click button: **I WANT TO CREATE AN ACCOUNT**

- Create a username
- Enter your email address (twice to confirm)
- Create a password (twice to confirm)
- Enter your First and Last Name
- Enter your mailing address (this helps us match you to your local league)
- Then find **Montana** on the list of League Membership and check the box.
- Confirm you're not a robot by clicking that box and submit by clicking **CREATE NEW ACCOUNT**.

Your registration will be pending until we verify your membership and move you into "active" status.

To expedite this process, please send an email to montanalwv@gmail.com to let us know you've registered and check back within a day or two to see if you can log in.

Once activated, you will see MEMBERS-ONLY at the bottom of the navigation links on the left side of the website with a list of pages that only members can access (2025 Legislative Action, Observer Corps, Voter Resources, Civic Education, The Voter newsletters, etc.).

If you need help registering or accessing the pages, send an email to montanalwv@gmail.com and we'll troubleshoot the issue and get it resolved.

MT LWV WEBSITE Members-Only Access

Our website (which we hope all members visit regularly and use as a resource) has a password-protected Members-Only section that contains resources and information restricted to our members. Members need only register to gain access to these items. Access is determined by verification of membership.

Many of our members have already registered and can access these pages. If you want to know more about 2025 Legislative Actions you can take, Voter Resources, Civics Education, an archive of the *The Voter* newsletters, Observer Corps reports, and a calendar of Members-Only events and meetings, please register!

**CLICK THE IMAGE TO
DOWNLOAD STEP-BY-STEP
INSTRUCTIONS ON
REGISTERING FOR MEMBERS-
ONLY ACCESS.**

Democracy Highlights from the LWVUS

The links copied below are from the national League's **January's Democracy Highlights** email. We think you'll find these words inspiring, wise, and empowering (even for our non-women members).

Women Defend Democracy

- In light of the current political climate, LWVUS created its own [Oath to Democracy](#).
- LWV launched [Women Defend Democracy](#) to center people's power in moving our country towards a stronger, multi-racial democracy.
- League President Dianna Wynn reminds us why [we'll always be the League of Women Voters](#).

Members Joining or Renewing in January!

Thank you for your support and involvement!

Donna Aline
Patrice Anderson
Cheri Bergeron
Laura Gerlach
Susan Hall

Lois Olsen
Emily Sedgwick
Jim Smith
Ann Waickman



2024-25 Board Members

Co-president: Sharon Haugen

Co-president: Cherri Jones

Treasurer: Connie Griffith

Secretary: Denise Pengeroth

At-Large Board Members:

Ann Gilkey

Mary "Mickey" Harlow

Lynn Hinch

Julie Huntington

Mary Irish Johnson

Committee Chairs

Book Club: Kathy McNeill

Communications: Patti Borneman & Becky Piske

Health Care: Sue Hoell & Celeste Jazwinski

Local Government: Mary "Mickey" Harlow

Membership: Wendy Wheeler

Nominating: Sue Hoell

Publicity: Marga Lincoln

Student Essay Contest: Ann Gilkey & Sherry Meador

VOTE411: Patrice Anderson & Tracy Donaldson

Voter Services: Rebecca Johnson

The Voter Editor: Patti Borneman

Coming up in the March 2025 issue of the LWVHA Voter

- Legislative Updates and Actions
- Judicial Issues Briefing
- Draft Land Use Plan Meeting
- Committee Reports
- LWV Montana Convention
- And more ...



[Read our statement about
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)



**Visit our
Website**

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

League of Women Voters of the Helena Area | PO Box 6534 | Helena, MT 59604 US



Try email marketing for free today!