

The VOTER

January 2025

Hello Patti,

Greetings on this snowy winter's day! In your January 2025 issue of *The Voter*, you will find:

- 2025 Legislative Action Opportunities
- Education Issues Briefing Book
- Shape Helena's Future Meeting on Helena's upcoming Land Use Plan
- Barb Harris Student Essay Contest Winners
- Update: Local Government Committee
- LWVHA Book Club
- Update! Changes Coming to Membership System
- Members Renewing in December

January 2025 Calendar and Dates to Save

(read on for details)

- January 6 - Montana State Legislature convenes
- January 8 - First of Wednesday-evening Legislative Action Zoom meetings
- January 14 - LWVMT Education Issues Briefing Book Presentation
- January 16 - Book Club meets
- January 23 - Member and Public Meeting on Helena Land Use Plan
- January 24 - Climate Advocacy Day at Montana Capitol
- February 14 - LWV's 105th Birthday
- February 25 - Membership Meeting on Education Issues
- March 27 - Membership Meeting on draft Helena Land Use Plan
- May 3-4 - Montana LWV Convention - Bozeman



2025 Montana Legislature: Taking Action

Wednesday, January 8, 7:00 to 8:00 pm

Montana Legislature 2025: How a Bill Becomes Law and How to Contact the Legislature

The law-making process includes many steps: introduction; committee assignment; committee hearing; executive action; floor vote 2nd reading; floor vote 3rd reading; transmittal to other chamber; conference committee if needed; to Governor for signature. This session will show you how LWV MT will track a bill through the process, and when and how citizens can weigh in.

Join Zoom Meeting (*click this link or the red button below*):

<https://us05web.zoom.us/j/81203950203?pwd=jJ1awuRE8bZbreaxYEGAR6Ey7cAnax.1>

Meeting ID: 812 0395 0203

This is the first of weekly Zoom meetings every Wednesday at 7:00 pm for Montana LWV members to learn and take action during the 2025 Legislative Session. Members on the Legislative Action list will receive regular weekly emails with updates and meeting invitations. The next email from Montana LWV will be sent on January 6 to everyone on this list.

Please note: a new Zoom link will be sent for all the Wednesday meetings on and after the Wednesday, January 15 Zoom meeting.

To join the Legislative Action list to receive updates and invitations to these Zoom meetings, please send an email to montanalwv@gmail.com.

**Click here to log into Zoom on
1/8/25**

LWVHA Presentation on the *Education Issues Briefing Book*

Montana LWV Education Working Group Releases Study
Tuesday, January 14, 2025 - 6:00 pm

[Download](#) the LWVMT Education Issues Briefing Book
[Download](#) the Study Guide

In December, our state president, Nancy Leifer, sent all local Leagues in Montana an Education Issues Briefing Book (actually a five-page document with links to documents and websites) so members could review the document at the beginning of the year and then convene a meeting to discuss and ask questions about it.

Nancy Leifer wrote that "The incoming administration at the federal level has elimination of the federal Department of Education as part of its agenda. The LWV Montana Education Issues Briefing Book can help us prepare for what will be coming to our state. The Briefing Book has all of the research papers written by the Group and links to articles on education issues from other sources."

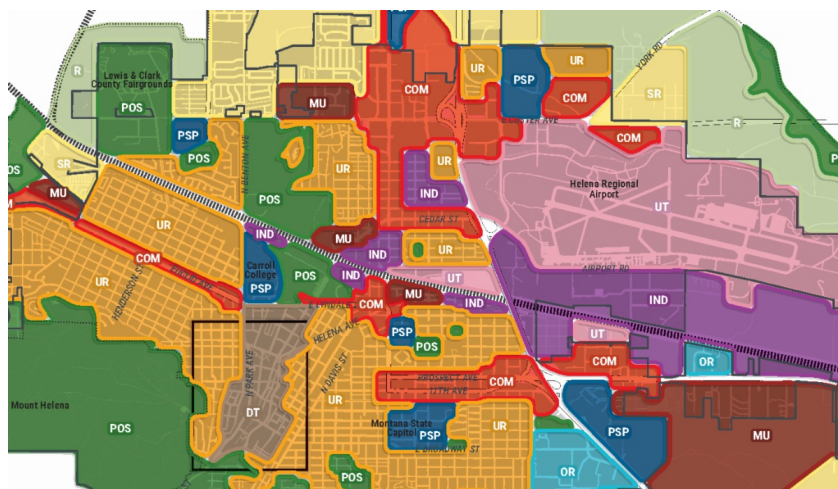
All Helena-Area members are invited to a special Zoom meeting for a presentation on the Education Issues Briefing Book hosted by Helena-Area LWV members of the LWV MT Education Working Group. The PowerPoint will introduce the issues crucial to upcoming Montana legislation.

It would be helpful (but not necessary) if you could read through these materials before the meeting. Look for a reminder email on the day of the meeting.

The Briefing Book can also be found on the state League's Legislative Action webpage (Members-Only section): <https://my.lwv.org/montana/members-only/legislative-actions>.

Our February 25 Membership Meeting will focus on Education Issues and use the resources in the Briefing Book.

**Click here to log into Zoom on
1/14/25**



Help Shape Helena's Future

A New Land Use Plan is in the Works

Thursday, January 23, 2025 - 5:00 to 6:30 pm

In-person at Lewis & Clark Library and on Zoom

Now is the time to find out how the City's proposed Land Use Plan could change our community. Under a new state law, the City of Helena is developing a [Land Use Plan](#).

Join the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area at a public meeting with **Christopher Brink**, the City's Community Development Director. This in-person and Zoom option meeting will run from 5:00 to 6:30 pm on Thursday, January 23, at Lewis & Clark Library. The public is invited to attend in person or on Zoom.

The proposed revisions could change the quality of life in your neighborhood, as well as your taxes, your schools, traffic flow, parking, and more. In the future, there will be fewer opportunities for public comment than in the past.

Join League members and Helena neighbors to learn more and ask questions.

This public meeting is co-sponsored by the LWV of the Helena Area and Lewis & Clark Library.

A follow-up meeting on the draft Land Use Plan is set for March 27.

If you are attending the Zoom Webinar, register in advance by clicking the Event Registration button below. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email with information about joining the webinar.

**Register here for the Zoom
Webinar**

Announcing the Winners of the Barb Harris Student Essay Contest!

The League of Women Voters of the Helena Area was excited to sponsor our fourth annual student essay contest. The contest was named this year in honor of Barb Harris, member and longtime supporter of the League and of student civics education. We had the most applicants ever and were pleased with the quality of their essays. We raised \$1,000 in donations for this year's prize money and are accepting donations to keep the scholarship funded.

The prompt was "Should voting be just a right or should all eligible voters be required to vote?" Authors expressed a variety of opinions based on evidence from other countries, an analysis of consequences, and their own interpretation of human nature.

Join us in congratulating our three winners!

- 1st Place - Chris Jenemann
- 2nd Place - Elliot Stimpson
- 3rd Place - Jasmyn Paul

Please check out their essays on our [website](#) where you can also learn more about the essay contest and donate to the Education Fund to support future contests.

Thanks to all the students who participated and to the teachers and parents who

encourage them in their education.

Sherry Meador and Ann Gilkey, Co-chairs, Student Essay Contest

Local Government Committee Update

Members of the committee are meeting on January 16 with Helena City Finance Director Sheila Danielson. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the preparation of the 2024-2026 budget. Questions concerning the preparation have been forwarded in advance to the Director. The committee will provide League members with a report on the meeting and a recommendation as to whether further action on the budget preparation should be considered.

A new Helena League member Advocacy Policy and form for acting on local community issues has been drafted and is being reviewed by the League Board. Advocacy works to increase the Leagues' credibility, visibility, and effectiveness in the community.

Mary "Mickey" Harlow, Chair, Local Government Committee



Read the OBSERVER CORPS Reports

Members of the LWVHA Observer Corps are attending meetings and submitting brief reports that will be emailed to members on a bi-monthly schedule.

Look for these reports in an upcoming email or read them on this Members-Only webpage: [Observer Corps](#).



Helena-Area LWV Book Club

Thursday, January 16 on Zoom - 6:00 to 7:00 pm

Hi, I'm Kathy McNeill, your 2025 LWVHA Book Club Coordinator. We are looking at a few changes this year, including joining the Missoula LWV book club for some shared meetings. We will also enjoy more articles and media presentations as well as books.

Our book club meets once a month, usually on the fourth Thursday of the month, from 6:00 to 7:00 pm via Zoom. Please note in January we will meet on January 16. Stay tuned for updates on book club selections.

Health Care is one of the topics we will read about as we prepare for the 2025 Legislative session. On Thursday, January 16, we will discuss these two articles:

- “Eat What You Kill” - the ProPublica investigation of Dr. Tom Weiner. Read on the [Montana Free Press website](#).
- "America's Health Insurance Grinches: A Scathing Indictment of "Market" Economics." Read on the [Institute for New Economic Thinking website](#).

We invite anyone who wishes to join us! You don't even need to read the book or articles. You can even come in your pajamas from the comfort of your home!

Kathy McNeill, 2025 Book Club Coordinator

LWV Membership Update

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 1, 2025, that will change how membership is managed and how dues are collected.

- 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.

DUES STRUCTURE CHANGING TO PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN

- Effective February 1, membership dues are changing to a *recommended* \$75 per year individual membership with a required \$20 minimum. Members can basically pay what they want each year as long as they pay at least \$20.
- Household and student memberships will no longer be offered. Everyone will be required to pay the minimum annual membership dues of \$20.

There will be lots to learn as we proceed through this exciting change. Please download and read [Membership Changes Slides for Members](#) for more details about the new system.

Wendy Wheeler, Chair, Membership Committee

2025 Statewide Events - Mark Your Calendars Now

January 24: Climate Day of Action at the Capitol Building Rotunda, Helena,

Montana. Activities start at 11:00 am. Rally at 12:00 pm. Watch for more information coming from the LWV Montana Climate Action Working Group.

February 14, 2025, LWV's 105th Birthday Celebration! More information coming in early February.

Saturday and Sunday, May 3-4, 2025 - LWV Montana 2025 membership meeting and Convention in Bozeman. Details to come.

CLIMATE ADVOCACY DAY

JANUARY 24TH, 2025 | MONTANA CAPITOL, HELENA

BUILD A BETTER FUTURE TOGETHER



Click on the graphic above to learn more.
The Montana LWV has a Climate Action Working Group.

MT LWV WEBSITE

Members-Only Access

Our website (which we hope all members

**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



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.

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.**

Members Renewing in December

Thank you for your continued support and involvement!

Mandy Alvino
Patrice Anderson
Margaret Bentwood
Robin Biffle
Patricia Bik
Rita Blouke
Mait Board
Lynne Boone
Patti Borneman
Cheryl Crawley
DeeDee Cress
Jane Demaray
Tracy Donaldson
Cathy Duncan
Sherry Ehret
Susan Epstein
Ellen Feaver
Janet Gates
Ann Gilkey
Connie Griffith
Elizabeth Hale
Mary "Mickey" Harlow
Barb Harris

Sharon Haugen
Anne Hausrath
Marjean Heisler
Julie Huntington
Suzy Holt
Sue Jackson
Bobbi Jasmin
Celeste Jazwinski
Jolene Jennings
Mary I. Johnson
Rebecca Johnson
Bob Jones
Cherri Jones
Marie Kall
Clare Kearns
Janet Kelly
Cathy Kendall
Jane Kollmeyer
Melinda Leas
Kate Lewis
Marga Lincoln
Barbara Martin

Marcy McLean
Kathy McNeill
Wendy Marsh
Sherry Meador
Penny Moon
Jon Motl
Paul Pacini
Denise Pengeroth
Becky Piske
Margaret Regan
Debora Sargent
Darien Scott
Harlan Shropshire
Peter Sullivan
Mary Sivula
Norma Tirrell
Richard Thweatt
Mary VanBuskirk
Niki Whearty
Wendy Wheeler
Cindy Yarberry

NOT YET RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP, BUT INTEND TO?

If you intended to renew, you still can! Our treasurer, Connie Griffith, sent emails to everyone who still needed to renew in December. If your membership expired at the end of December, you can still send a check or pay online. Or, you can wait until February 1 when the new online system rolls out (see LWW Membership Update) and you can help us try it out. If you'd like to do that, please email lww.helena@gmail.com and we'll be in touch.



2024-26 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 February 2025 issue of the LWWHA Voter

- Legislative Updates and Actions
- LWW's 105th Birthday
- Membership Meetings
- Committee Reports
- New Membership Portal
- And more ...



**Read our statement about
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**



**Visit our
Website**



Try email marketing for free today!