

THE VOTER

March 2025



Valentine's Day and LWV's 105th Birthday Celebration during the Winter Art Walk at Lewis & Clark Library with (L-R) Wendy Wheeler, Tracy Donaldson, Cherri Jones, Lynn Hinch, and Kathy McNeill

Hello Patti,

Spring cannot get here fast enough. It's been a chaotic winter, with ample opportunities to share our views via emails, testimonies, phone calls, and at Capitol rallies. Thanks to all LWVHA members who have played an active role in championing our democratic values!

We've heard from numerous sources that phone calls are the most effective way to have our voice count with our legislators in Washington, D.C. So, I finally put both the Helena and D.C. office numbers in my phone contacts.* Now I can easily make that one-minute call to politely advocate for or against a specific issue as a concerned constituent. I remind myself that every small step forward helps.

Our LWWHA committees have been busy planning meetings to bring local issues of importance to our members and to the public. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us.

Again, THANK YOU for being a part of the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area!

~ Cherri Jones, Co-President, LWW of the Helena Area

**[Download Cherri's article](#), "Take Action on the Federal Level," that includes those all-important phone numbers.*

March 2025 Calendar

(read on for details)

- Tuesday, March 4 - noon - March4Liberty event at the Montana Capitol
- Thursday, March 6 - Part I: Judiciary Study Process with Nancy Leifer
- Monday, March 10 - Part II: Judiciary Consensus Discussion with LWWHA
- Thursday, March 20 - Book Club on Zoom
- Thursday, March 27 - Membership and Public Meeting on local land use plans

SAVE THESE DATES!

- Tuesday, April 22 - Annual Business Membership Meeting
- May 3-4 - Montana LWW Convention - Bozeman

March4Liberty

Montana State Capitol - Tuesday, March 4, 12-3 pm

Acting as defenders of democracy and voters' rights, we in the LWW might want to participate. Because the League is a nonpartisan organization, we are sharing this for information purposes only, so if you go, please do not display any LWW pins or logos; nothing that might be seen as an endorsement by our organization.

Meanwhile, what can you do as a grassroots member of the League?
Monitor the LWWUS website for news and action opportunities. Sign up for **League In Action**, the communication tool LWWUS is using to send Action Alerts to League members across the country. To sign up, go to the website



for [Outreach Circle](#), download the app, then search to become a supporter of LWVUS.

March 4th, Tuesday, 12-3pm

Montana State Capitol

Flag Plaza

1301 E 6th Ave
Helena, MT 59601

Bring flags, signs, friends, and family.



5 Calls - the easiest way to give your reps a piece of your mind

Need a ride? Want to help bring people? Sign up to carpool!



YOU ARE the protest - PRINT & POST flyers, SHARE on social media, & BRING people!

Members Invited to Participate in Urgent LWVUS Judiciary Study

Two Zoom Meetings Scheduled!

- **Part I: Thursday, March 6, 5:30-7:00 pm**
- **Part II: Monday, March 10, 5:30-6:30 pm**

You are invited to participate in an historic and crucially important project, the LWVUS Federal Judiciary Study Process. LWVUS wants all League members to help define a position for the League on the federal Judiciary. This means you!

Time is short! The deadline for each League to submit its consensus results is mid-April. LWV Montana is hosting a discussion of the process and the issues on March 6th to help members prepare for their local league consensus discussions. We will have legal expertise in the meeting to help answer your questions.

How do you participate? Here are the steps:

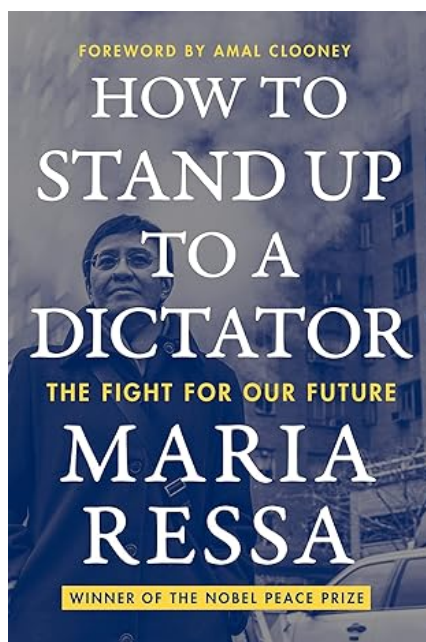
- [Watch the video](#) on the **Federal Judiciary webpage** that introduces the Study and the Process.
- [Go to the LWVUS webpage](#) on the **Federal Judiciary Study** and read through the Policy Briefs that are listed further down on the page. You can also watch the Townhall on the federal Judiciary video.
- [Log into Zoom on March 6](#) to attend the **LWV Montana Federal Judiciary Discussion**

Session from 5:30 – 7:00 pm. This is an opportunity to get your questions answered and discuss the critical issues surrounding the federal judiciary. [Zoom Link](#). If needed: Meeting ID: 819 6888 9353 and Passcode: 995153.

- [Log into Zoom on March 10](#) to attend LWVHA Federal Judiciary Consensus Discussion. We will send a reminder on Monday, March 10, from 5:30 to 6:30 pm. [Zoom link](#). If needed: 832 8356 1322. Passcode 677760.

The Study and Consensus process for arriving at positions is the core of the democratic process in the League. Given what is happening in the country right now, learning more and helping to arrive at a position on the federal judiciary is absolutely crucial to the future of the country.

~ Nancy Leifer, President, LWV Montana



Helena-Area LWV Book Club

Thursday, March 20 on Zoom
6:00 to 7:00 pm

All members are welcome to join in the second discussion featuring Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa's *How to Stand Up to a Dictator: The Fight for our Future*, "... an urgent cry for Western readers to recognize and understand the dangers to our freedom before it is too late."

For more background on Maria Ressa, watch the free, streaming 2021 PBS Frontline documentary, "[A Thousand Cuts](#)."

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

This book is available at Lewis & Clark Library, on Hoopla Digital, and on Audible.

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

[Click here to log into Zoom](#)

Monthly Membership Meeting: Public Invited

Local government planners to give presentation
on coordinated land use planning

Thursday, March 27 - 5:30 to 7:00 pm

Planning officials from Lewis and Clark County and the cities of Helena and East Helena have been writing joint zoning and land use plans to handle projected growth. Three presenters representing these municipalities will talk about their new plans at a public meeting that will be in-person at Lewis & Clark Library and on Zoom.

Under several new state laws, dubbed the “Montana Miracle,” all three entities must work together to coordinate and update their land use plans and zoning codes.

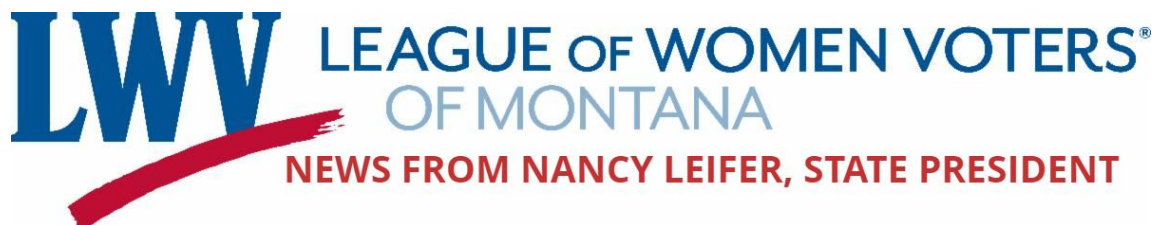
Speakers include **Christopher Brink**, City of Helena community development director, **Greg McNally**, Lewis and Clark County director of community development and planning, and **Kevin Orr**, City of East Helena public works director.

Now is the time to find out where residential, multi-family, commercial, and multi-use development is planned in your community as well as open space and parks.

This hybrid meeting (in-person and zoom) is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area and Lewis & Clark Library, 120 S Last Chance Gulch.

If you plan to participate via Zoom, please pre-register for the Zoom link by clicking the button below. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

**Register for the Zoom
Link**



Dear League of Women Voters Montana member:

The first month of the new federal administration has upended many of the basic pillars of our democracy. **What is the League doing about it?**

LWVUS sent a letter to Congress signed by all fifty state League presidents calling for Congress to take action to challenge the unprecedented constitutional overreach actions taken by the administration in its first 30 days. The letter lays out multiple actions taken by the administration and their destructive effects on our democracy. I highly recommend that you read the letter, on the [LWV website](#).

LWVUS is strategizing with League leaders across the country on how best to leverage the League presence in responding to this systematic destruction of our democracy. It is crucial that the League response be coordinated across all fifty states and local Leagues, so that we speak with one voice.

Meanwhile, the Montana Legislature is making its way through the session, with a coalition of Republicans and Democrats working together to get some important things accomplished for the people of Montana, including, at this writing, continuing the Medicaid Expansion program that provides health care for about 80,000 low-income Montanans. **More information on how you can make your voice heard in the Legislature is below.**

Our democracy is only as strong as we are when we demand that our elected officials do the right thing. Now is the time to make your voice heard, at the national and state level, and with your friends and neighbors!

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: LWV MONTANA VIDEO STORIES OF DEMOCRACY PROJECT

LWV Montana received a \$25,000 grant 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 run 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, send an email with "Video Project" in the subject line to: nancleifer@gmail.com.**

FINAL REPORT: MONTANA ELECTION OBSERVATION INITIATIVE (MTEOI)

The **Montana Election Observation Initiative**, sponsored by the Carter Center, has released its final report on Montana's 2024 elections. You can find the final report on the MTEOI webpage, under 'MTEOI Docs': <https://mteoi.org/#documents>.

The report concludes that "Montana's 2024 elections were secure, transparent, and well-managed, reflecting the state's strong civic participation and commitment to democratic integrity." Observers noted strong dedication from election workers and volunteers to navigate the complex nature of elections and overcome challenges to better serve voters. MTEOI further provided recommendations for potential areas of improvement including as relates to resource allocation, the increased standardization of and collaboration around best practices, and enhanced voter education and outreach.

Thank you to all the League members who participated!

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTANA CONVENTION

All Montana members are invited to attend the Montana LWV Convention in Bozeman on May 3-4, 2025. The theme of the in-person **League of Women Voters of Montana 2025 Convention** is "Making the Case for Democracy" with keynote speaker John Adams, founder, Executive Director and Editor in Chief of the Montana Free Press. Look for more information and registration information in early April.

~ Nancy Leifer, President, LWV Montana



On Zoom - Wednesdays through the middle of May at 7:00 pm

Montana LWV members are meeting via Zoom every Wednesday night through the end of the legislative session. We 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 anyone 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.

To register for access to the Members-Only pages on the Montana LWV website, [download these step-by-step instructions](#).

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

Log into Zoom on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm

ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING of the LWV of the Helena Area

Please mark your calendars now! We need you to attend!

**Tuesday, April 22, 5:30 pm – 7:00 p.m.
In person at Lewis & Clark Library**

Each year we call our members to an annual business meeting to celebrate our accomplishments over the past year and to plan our activities for the coming year. Since our fiscal year begins April 1, we also take care of business, which usually means voting on changes to our bylaws, positions, studies, and electing officers to serve on the Helena Area LWV board.

This year we'll vote for a Vice President (VP) (*we're returning to a President/Vice President leadership model*) and we will vote on a change in our bylaws (see below). We are pleased to announce that Celeste Jazwinski has been nominated to run for VP. Nominations will be accepted from the floor during the April meeting if other members are interested in being considered for VP. After the first year, the position could merge into the role of President.

Your vote is needed to adopt changes in our Bylaws!

At this Annual Business Meeting, we'll vote on a minor change in the financial section of our bylaws. This is to keep current with the new Member Portal launched by the national LWV in February. To read the proposed bylaws update, [download here](#). To read the current bylaws, visit the [Helena Area LWV webpage](#) and scroll to the bottom.

Pizza and cookies will be served!

County Elections Office Seeking Temporary Workers

Wanted: A few good individuals (election judge experience preferred) to work temporarily, helping the Lewis and Clark County Elections Office during the month of May through election day on May 6. If employment goes well, there is potential to assist with future elections, too!

Job duties: Registering voters during late registration or during same day registration (as they are available), assisting with preparing absentee/mail ballots for mail out, processing returned ballots, and/or assisting with other elections processes as needed.

Total days: Minimum one day, Election Day itself. If available longer, they can use that time to train. Maximum per election would be about 30 days, working roughly through late registration.

Hours: Weekdays, typically 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, though Election Day is 7:00 am to 8:00 pm (just like the polls).

Flexibility: Both full time and part time available. If available for just Election Day, you can still help this effort! Definitely flexible on appointments.

Job Site: City-County Building, Helena.

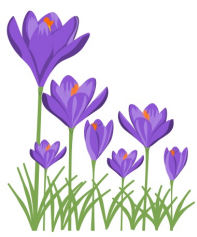
Pay: \$16-\$17/hour, depending on duties.

If you are interested, please contact:

Connor Fitzpatrick
Elections Division Supervisor
Lewis and Clark County
316 North Park Ave. – Room 168
Helena, MT 59623 (406) 447-8338
cfitzpatrick@lccountymt.gov

Welcome New Members who joined in February!

- Dave Antos
- Teresa Asleson
- Annika Borneman
- Martha Kohl
- Susan Nimick
- Angie Osborne



- Elizabeth Burns
- Julie Early
- Charlotte Henson

- Elizabeth Rivard
- Emilee Pike
- Arnica Schaubert

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 April 2025 issue of the LWVHA Voter

- Legislative Updates and Actions
- Member Business Meeting
- Committee Reports
- Register to attend the LWV Montana Convention in May
- And more ...



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



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



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