

The Voter

The LWV ABC Monthly Newsletter
September 2025



Legislation Update

In-Person Only

Monday, September 15, 2025

Note: This is the third Monday

Centennial Library
100 Civic Heights Circle
Circle Pines

6:00 - online and in person socializing

6:30 - program begins

Join us for an engaging September program!

LWV ABC members **Jody Anderson and Wes Volkenant** (pictured above) will provide members with a recap of the most recent legislative session, highlighting key issues, setbacks, successes, and the lessons learned along the way.

We'll take a closer look at LWV ABC's top policy priorities, what happened to them in the legislature, and what's ahead as we prepare for the 2026 session. Learn how you can get involved in shaping our advocacy efforts and supporting the issues that matter most.

This meeting is primarily for members, but members are welcome to bring guests.

Don't miss this opportunity to be informed and inspired for action, because every voice and every vote matters!





Annual Picnic



TJ Tronson taping forums in 2024.

2025 Candidate Forums

LWV ABC will be taping **seven candidate forums** during September. Four school board races - Fridley and Anoka-Hennepin Districts #3, #4 and #6. Three city races - Circle Pines City Council and Lino Lakes City Council and Mayor.

The remaining races in Anoka County - Circle Pines Mayor and school board elections in Spring Lake Park and St. Francis, as well as the Fridley School Board

Special Election - are uncontested.

Submit your questions now for the candidates on our 2025 Candidate Forum webpage.

2025 Candidate Forums

***Members:
Timers and Greeters are still needed.***

Check your email for the Invitation to the Candidate Forum SignUp



Cindy Wetzell helping a voter register in 2023.

LWV ABC Senior Housing Voter Registration Coming Soon

Naomi Peterson will be scheduling voter registration events at local senior housing locations. Members will receive a SignUp Genius email invitation to volunteer once Naomi confirms the events.

Voting by Mail in 2025

Providing absentee ballot information is an important aspect of voter registration work. **With no federal offices on the ballot this year, absentee ballots must be requested by completing the paper form and mailing it to your local city, town or school clerk.** The online absentee ballot application is only available when federal offices are on the ballot. If voters wish to request permanent absentee ballots, you may still do so by updating your voter registration online.

[Absentee Ballot Application](#)



Our 2023 National Voter Registration Day billboard.

Voter Registration Billboards

Thanks to **Rachel Mero's** graphic design expertise, LWV ABC will once again use electronic billboards to remind people to register to vote and remind people to vote in local elections.



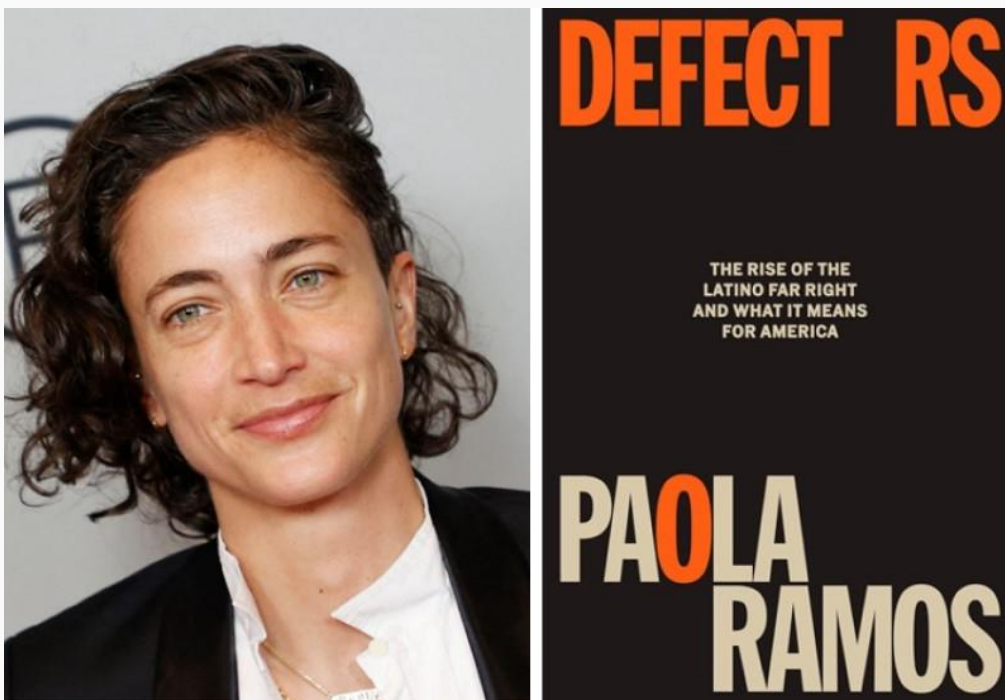
First in Nation Suffrage Celebration

On August 27, Suffrage-19 honored LWVMN with the 2025 "Pass the Torch" award at the First in the Nation Suffrage Celebration at the State Capitol. Following the reception, League members gathered at the Women's Suffrage Memorial Garden on the capitol mall, as the Capitol Groundskeeper planted a purple hyssop in honor of Senator Melissa Hortman. **LWV ABC member Cindy DeRuyter placed three yellow roses at the base of the memorial plant, in memory of Melissa and Mark Hortman and their dog Gilbert.**

This year, the First in the Nation Suffrage Celebration marked the 105 anniversary

of the first votes cast by women after the passage of the 19th amendment and the 25th anniversary of the opening of Women's Suffrage Memorial Garden. On August 27, 1920, less than 24 hours after the 19th Amendment was officially signed into the U.S. Constitution, the women of South St. Paul became the first women to vote under the Amendment. The Women's Suffrage Memorial and Garden was dedicated on August 26, 2000. **Gretchen Sabel** is pictured above placing a yellow rose, a symbol of the suffragist movement, on the Dr. Barbara Stuhler memorial bench. Stuhler, a member of League, led the efforts to establish the memorial garden.

LWV ABC Blog



Book Club

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

7:00 pm on Zoom

Defectors: The Rise of the Latino Far Right and What It Means for America (2024)
by Paola Ramos

Democrats have historically assumed they can rely on the Latino vote, but recent elections have called that assumption into question. Journalist Paola Ramos pulls back the curtain on these voters, traveling around the country to uncover what motivates them to vote for and support issues seemingly at odds with their self-interest.

[Book Club Zoom Link](#)

[Upcoming Books](#)



Reproductive Rights A Persistence and Resistance Conversation

Thursday, September 25, 2025

6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Andover Community Center - Knight Room

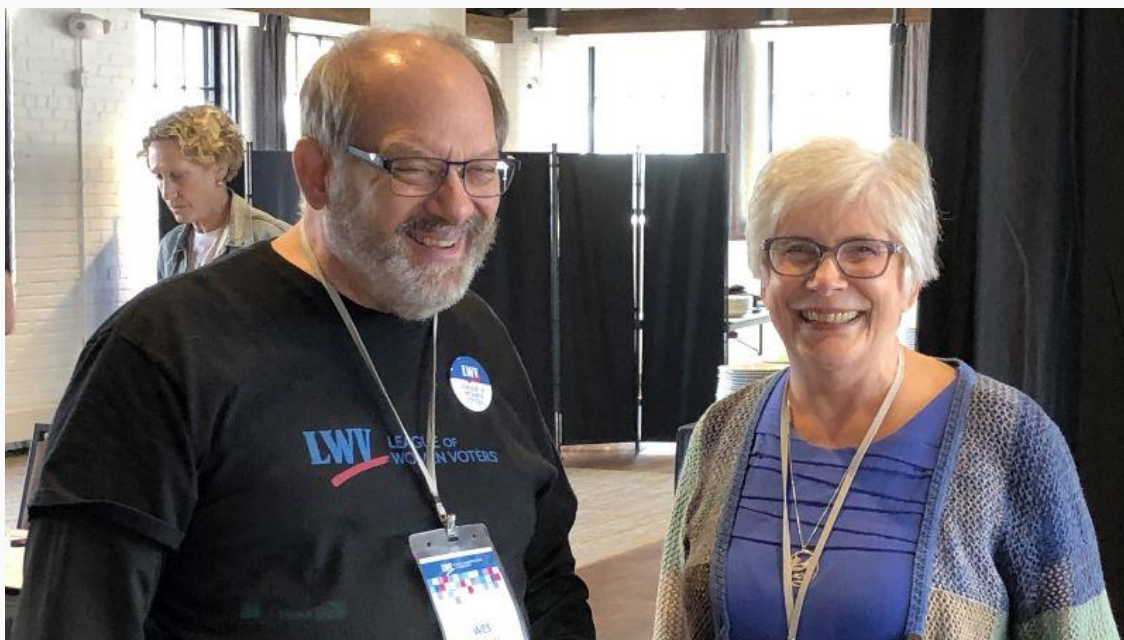
Tickets (\$8) Required

Have you recently read *The Evidence of V* or *Booth Girls*? How do these works connect with your personal experiences of pregnancy, abortion, or birth control?

Join the first session of the "Persistence and Resistance: A Conversation Series about Women's POWER". The conversation is not a book discussion but will be grounded by books to establish a solid foundation for discussion on the topic.

The four part series, created by Anoka County Historical Society (ACHS) and co-sponsored by LWV ABC, is an opportunity to engage in conversation regarding society's perception of women throughout history, the challenges they have faced, and the valuable lessons we can draw from that legacy.

[Buy Ticket for Persistence & Resistance](#)



Treasurer Wes Volkenant and Emeritus Board Member Geri Nelson at 2025 LWVMN Convention.

August Board Highlights

By Kathy Aanerud, LWV ABC Secretary

- Finalized a selection for Friend of League award which will be presented at our October meeting.

- Confirmed topic and arrangements for the September monthly program meeting which will be held at the Centennial Library in Circle Pines (The date will be the third Monday, September 15, not our usual second Monday.)
- Plans are being finalized to present LWV's Post-Election Review at a September meeting of Anoka County Board of Commissioners.
- Candidate Forum planning and publicity is underway for forums for Anoka-Hennepin and Fridley School Districts and City Offices in Circle Pines and Lino Lakes.
- Voter registration activities were discussed for senior housing and schools, and follow-up will be conducted. Also National Voter Registration Day is under discussion

Members can find Board Agendas and approved Board Minutes in the Members Only section of our website



Take Action

The LWVUS Take Action Webpage contains all LWVUS action alerts to contact Congress, as well as details of some of the recent actions by LWVUS. Action Alerts are a fast and easy way to contact congress.

Whether you have five minutes or five hours, the LWVMN Take Action webpage has lots of opportunities to help protect democracy and the link to register for LWVMN's Fired Up Fridays, where members share concerns and coordinate actions.

Watch the August Academy "Advocating for Healthy Communities" to learn more about how you can get involved in LWVMN Action and Advocacy.

[LWVMN Take Action Webpage](#)

[LWVUS Take Action Webpage](#)

[Watch LWVMN's Advocating for Healthy Communities](#)



Take the Unite & Rise Pledge

Want to DO SOMETHING to respect and protect the U.S. Constitution?

Unite with LWV and pledge to uphold our constitutional rights and the rule of law. Not just for members, but for anyone, whether a Democrat, Republican, or Independent, interested in taking action to protect our constitution.

Take the Unite & Rise Pledge and Sam Streukens, LWVMN Civic Engagement

Director, will email you monthly with timely information on how to stay informed on the issues and take action that matters!

The pledge is for everyone, not just members.

LWVN Unite & Rise Pledge



Women Defending Democracy Series (WDD) Unite and Rise

LWV Minneapolis
Bi-monthly on Wednesdays
5:00 pm via Zoom

In June, LWV Minneapolis Launched the Women Defending Democracy (WDD) initiative. **All members of Minnesota Leagues are encouraged to attend.** Each session focuses on a single issue and discusses concrete actions we can take.

Effective Constituent Communication

On August 13, the "Maximizing Impact" WDD program featured **staff from Senator Tina Smith's office who shared their thoughts** on effective constituent communication:

- All types of communication matter
- Phone calls most effective, petitions least effective
- Call regularly and consistently—not repeatedly in a single day
- Keep messages short and concise
- Multiple issues in one message will be tallied
- Messages of support are valuable
- Share personal stories
- Focus on your own representatives
- Identifying as constituent more important than affiliation with an organization

Future events can be found on the LVV Minneapolis WDD webpage. Upcoming topics include The First Amendment and a second look at Incarceration without Due Process.

LWV Mpls Women Defending Democracy Series

Maximizing Impact: Key Takeaways

Incarceration without Due Process Slides



2025 Voter Registration Update

LWVMN Lunch & Learn

September 5, 2025

12:00 Noon - via Zoom

Join Secretary of State Steve and LWVMN for an update on the 2025 elections.

[Register for Lunch & Learn](#)



National Voter Registration Day (NVRD)

LWVMN and Secretary of State

September 16, 2025

For the second year, LWVMN and the Secretary of State will hold **two statewide virtual rallies for high school students** on National Voter Registration Day. The virtual rallies, will be based at two schools, one in Moundsview and a charter school in Minneapolis, and live streamed to schools across the state. Both rallies will feature Secretary of State Steve Simon, student speakers and special guests.

All high schools, including home schools, are invited to join this celebration of youth voices and civic engagement. The 30 minute rallies will be live streamed at 8:45 and 10:45.

Over one hundred schools participated in 2024, when the rallies originated at Bemidji High School and Blackduck High School. Over 40,000 16 and 17 year old students pre-registered to vote during the rallies.

Every school principle has been contacted by LWVMN, but members are encouraged to share information about NVRD with your school contacts.

School Registration for NVRD Rally



"I am committed to listening, learning, and leading in partnership with you. Together, we will build on the League's strengths, meet the challenges of our time with clarity and courage, and ensure that LWVMN remains a powerful force for informed participation and civic engagement across the state."

Amy Perna
New LWVMN Executive Director

On August 4, LWVMN President Laura Helmer announced our new LWVMN Executive Director, Amy Perna.

Amy has most recently served as Assistant Director of LWVMN. As a member of LWV St. Paul, she has held many roles including Candidate Forum Coordinator, Voter Service Chair and Co-President. Amy holds a Master of Public Policy from the Humphrey School and a B.A. in Anthropology and African History from the University of Minnesota. Her experience in nonprofit leadership, public policy, and civic engagement spans county government, nonprofit management, and grassroots initiatives, shaping her collaborative, accountable approach to leadership and her deep belief in the power of people-driven democracy.

Michelle Witte, the LWVMN Executive Director for the last eight years, has accepted a position as Executive Director of Final Exit Network (FEN), an organization with a mission of supporting end-of-life choice. On August 13, Michelle shared her thoughts on nonpartisanship, belonging and hope.



Watch Nonpartisanship, Belonging, and Hope



Educate. Agitate. Act.

In a powerful speech for the Chautauqua lecture series, LWVUS CEO Celina Stewart **called for everyone to rise up for democracy and reminded us of our League history of perseverance** in the face of threats to democracy:

"Let me take you back to 1950, a time when fear ruled American politics. McCarthyism gripped the nation...In this climate of paranoia, most civic organizations went silent, purging members and abandoning core values to protect their reputations. But the League of Women Voters chose a different path...In 1952, at the height of this hysteria, the League launched its "Freedom Agenda" — an unapologetic campaign to defend civil liberties and educate the public about their constitutional rights.

*The League understood that **democracy cannot survive on silence or self-preservation. It requires courage — even when, especially when — fear tells you to stay quiet.***

This conviction came at a cost. Membership declined. Local chapters faced pressure to disaffiliate. Politicians and newspapers accused the League of being subversive. In Westchester County, New York, the local American Legion chapter went so far as to brand the League un-American. But the League stood its ground — and in time, that courage became a defining chapter in its legacy.

*The League's strategy succeeded because it grasped a fundamental truth: **authoritarianism doesn't rise by force alone — it thrives when citizens are convinced that liberty is too risky to protect.** Refusing to bow to fear or conformity, the League upheld open debate and inclusive participation, sustaining the democratic habits necessary to resist tyranny.*

*So, when the tide finally turned — when Senator McCarthy was censured in 1954, when the Supreme Court began reasserting civil liberties, pushing back on the Red Scare narrative, when Americans remembered the value of dissent — the League of Women Voters was already there. Unshaken. Uncompromised. A steadfast reminder that **democracy's power lies not in enforced agreement, but in the freedom***

to disagree.

*The Freedom Agenda worked because it embraced a bold truth: **democracy isn't defended by making it smaller and safer, but by making it bigger and braver.** The League showed that principled, nonpartisan citizens could take on the most powerful forces, stand up for truth, and prevail."*

[Read Celina Stewart's Full Speech](#)



Redistricting public hearing in Texas. Picture from LWV Tarrant County website.

Texas Redistricting

LWV Tarrant County and the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), along with individual plaintiffs, have filed a suit in county district court against the new redistricting maps in Texas. The suit alleges multiple violations of the Texas Constitution, as well as violations of anti-discrimination and open-meeting laws. Tarrant County has more black residents than white residents.

Even prior to the recent mid-cycle redistricting, Texas was already one of the most

extreme gerrymanders in the United States. Nine lawsuits were filed regarding the Texas redistricting after the 2020 census, some still pending, according to the Brennan Center for Justice.

"It is not okay for the Legislature to use mid-census redistricting as a way to hold up our maps in court indefinitely, preventing these communities from ever seeing relief."

- LWV Texas

LWVUS Condemns Texas Maps

LWV Tarrant County and Partner Challenge Discriminatory Maps

Brennan Center Redistricting Litigation Roundup



LWVUS Opposes Mid-cycle Redistricting

In several August press releases, LWVUS clarified that **League opposes all mid-cycle redistricting by any state and condemns all gerrymandering as a threat to democracy**. "State legislatures redrawing their maps mid-cycle reflects political gamesmanship that erodes public trust in our democracy...Voters deserve stable, fair representation — not to be used as pawns in a power grab. When politicians rewrite the rules mid-game to protect their control, democracy loses."

The August 26 press release was accompanied by publication of redistricting guidance to all elected officials. LWVUS called for transparent processes, with public participation, to develop redistricting plans that:

- Comply with US Constitution and State Constitutions
- Comply with state and federal laws including the Voting Rights Act
- Ensure population equality
- Ensure geographic contiguity
- Preserve communities of interest
- Respect existing municipal and county boundaries
- Promote partisan fairness

LWVUS Condemns Harmful Texas Gerrymandered Maps

LWVUS Response to Governor Newsome

Mapping Guidance for Elected Officials

It has been a very busy month at LWVUS with several more press releases covering a procedural win in a Virginia voting rights lawsuit, the federalization of DC, a lawsuit on the attempt to remove a Texas legislator from office, a collaboration with the American Library Association and comments on mail-in ballots.



The 5 D's Bystander Intervention

In August, [Gender Justice](#) and Gerika Mudra filed a discrimination complaint with the Minnesota Department of Human Rights against Buffalo Wild Wings. Gerika Mudra is an eighteen year high school student, who is not transgender, who experienced very aggressive gender identity harassment by a server in April. After filing the complaint, Mudra commented that this was not the first time she was harassed, just the most aggressive.

The increase in gender identity harassment of trans women, women and non-binary people in women's bathrooms, is a reminder that **we all can play a role in creating safe public spaces.**

The "5 D's" of bystander intervention are a set of strategies to safely and effectively respond to situations where someone is at risk or experiencing harm.

1. Distract - divert the harasser's attention
2. Delegate - ask another bystander to help intervene

3. Document - if someone else is already helping
4. Delay - help the target afterward
5. Direct - ask the harasser to stop

Distraction can be just as effective as direct confrontation and often a safer option for bystanders. "Accidentally" and loudly dropping something can interrupt the situation and refocus attention away from the target. Pretending to know the target and starting a conversation, while completely ignoring the harasser, can de-escalate the situation.

Even when the incident happens fast and is over with quickly, the target has been harmed. Just like you would if you witnessed physical harm, ask the target if they are okay, if they want to talk about what just happened or if you can help contact someone for them.

Recordings or other documentation should not be shared on social media without the target's permission. Since not everyone has the same experience with police, do not call the police without the target's permission, except in extreme situations.

Learn more about the incident in Owatonna

Gender Justice Video

Learn more about bystander intervention. Transformative Circle's 2020 Bystander Intervention is as relevant today as it was five years ago.

Read "Right to Be" Guide

Watch Transformative Circle Bystander Training

Coming in October...

All Month - Early Voting

Sept 15 - Oct 15 - National Hispanic Heritage Month

Oct 13 - Program with Anoka County Commissioners

Oct 14 - Last Day to Pre-Register to Vote

Oct 22 - LWVUS - Building Coalitions to Amplify Action

Oct 27 - Board Meeting

Click button below to get details and find more events on our online calendar.

LWV ABC Calendar

The League of Women voters is a non-partisan civic organization which promotes good government and active, informed participation in local, state and federal government.

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

Become a Member

Support Our Work

More about LWV ABC



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