

# **The Voter**

**The LWV ABC Monthly Newsletter**  
**April 2026**



# **ANNUAL MEETING**

## **Annual Meeting**

**Monday, April 13, 2026**  
**6:00 PM - 8:00 PM**

**Members Only**

**Andover Community Center**  
**15200 Hanson Blvd**  
**Andover, MN 55304**

Our Annual Membership Meeting, our annual business meeting, will begin with a time to meet others and enjoy a light supper. Food from Mrs. Taco, plus other lighter fare will be available at 6:00. The meeting will start at 6:15.

Our required business includes electing some of our Board members, as well as reviewing, discussing and adopting a budget for the coming year. We will

acknowledge the members reaching participation milestones - celebrated in 5-year increments from 5 to over 65 years - with certificates. We will celebrate the 2026 Zilla Way Award recipient. The award is presented each year to a member who demonstrates outstanding leadership.

This year, we will work together in small groups to develop suggestions for future programs and actions. There will also be opportunities to learn about how to get more involved - Committee Chairs will bring you up to speed on the many activities available to members discuss how you can participate in the state and national conventions/councils.

Learn more about our past successes which may spark ideas for the future. **Gretchen Sabel** will interview **Jeorgette Knoll** about her experience observing and evaluating practices at Anoka County meetings. Jeorgette will also talk about a Sustainable Agriculture project. Gretchen will interview **Geri Nelson** about our Pollinator Project.

Come, learn, get more involved!

Over 20 prizes and a grand prize will be awarded!

***Suggested donation of \$10 to defray cost of dinner from Mrs. Taco.***

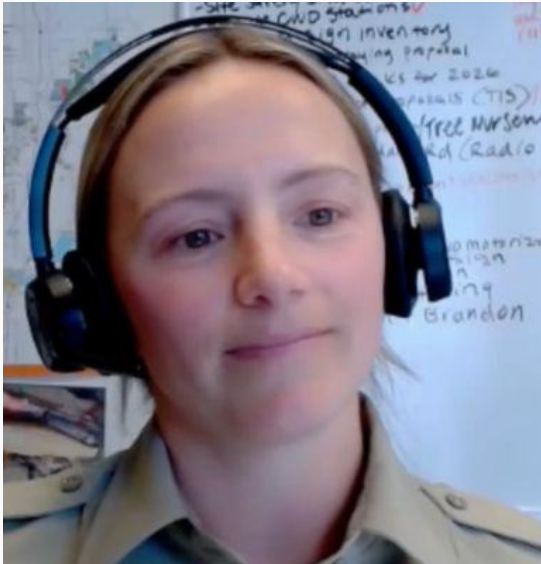
***The agenda and proposed budget will be emailed to all members prior to the Annual Membership Meeting.***

## **Membership Renewals**

If you are a long-term member, your membership will expire at the end of April. **Members continue to be able to renew by check - just bring your check, made out to LWVUS, to the Annual Meeting and give it to Treasurer Wes Volkenant.** Any donation to LWV ABC should be a separate check, made out to LWV ABC.

[Renew Membership Online](#)

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# Living with Animal Predators in Anoka County

Alexandra Schmitz,  
DNR North Metro Area Wildlife Manager

Taped March 16, 2026

## Living with Animal Predators in Anoka County Taped March 16, 2026

In March, we were joined by Alexandra Schmitz, DNR North Metro Area Wildlife Manager. Schmitz noted that coyotes are Minnesota's most abundant large predator, with increasing populations in the metro area. Coyotes are unprotected in Minnesota and roughly 4,000 are shot or trapped each year.

She reminded us that the 13,000 - 18,000 black bears in Minnesota usually try to avoid people but repeated access to food on your property can teach bears to associate your home with a food source and erode the bear's natural instinct to avoid people.

Learn more about coyotes, black bears, bobcats and raptors by watching our Spotlight on Issues video.

[Watch Spotlight Video](#)

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## **Welcome New Members**

**Geoff Grinney** of Nowthen

**Angela Krats** of Nowthen

**Karen LaBat** of Circle Pines

**Lucy Martignacco** of Andover

**Dianne Sutton** of Elk River

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# Election 2026

Election season is upon us.

On April 14, there is a Special Election for Columbia Heights School Board. On May 12, there is a Special Election for Champlin Ward 3 City Council. **Our Champlin Special Election candidate forum will be completed in April, with candidate questions due by midnight April 19.**

Candidate filings begin May 19, 2026 for the general election for state and county offices, as well as for city and school board elections in which a primary is possible.

In early June, after close of the candidate withdrawal period, LWV ABC will determine if any primary forums are needed and start a tentative schedule for general election candidate forums. The final general election forum schedule will be determined in August, after primary results are in and filing for cities without primaries are closed.

***Check out our Voting & Election Webpage for more information on elections***

[Submit Questions for Champlin Ward 3 Special Election](#)

[Voting & Election Webpage](#)



# Voter Service Volunteers Needed

Election years are busy - and require lots of organization and labor for both voter engagement and candidate forums!

## Voter Registration

We could really use volunteers to organize voter registration events. In the past, we have held events in senior housing and at city festivals and libraries. All the supplies needed for a successful event are available but we need members to reach out to communities to arrange events.

## Candidate Forums

Volunteers are also needed for forums. With over 50 potential forums for city, county and state offices, we need many volunteers. Given the sheer number of forums we host, Linda Rodgers and Geri Nelson helped devise a system that breaks all this work down into manageable parts.

Our Voter Services Co-Chairs determined which races are contested and group forums by location. Multiple forums are held in an evening. Most of our forums are taped in cable studios without a live audience. Each evening requires a Forum Planner/Organizer (or co-organizers). Each of our forum organizers coordinate with one local cable station, schedule the forums, send email invitations to candidates and track candidate RSVPs. The Voter Services Co-Chairs will provide training and ongoing support. Formal training is also available from LWVMN (see below).

On a forum night, in July for primaries and in September for the general election, we also need candidate greeters, timekeepers and moderators. Moderators require training (see below) but these other volunteer opportunities require minimal training, provided on the night of the forums.

***If interested, send an email to [lwvabc@gmail.com](mailto:lwvabc@gmail.com) or sign-up at the annual meeting on April 13.***

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Some of our 2024 moderators - Karen Varian, Linda Rodgers, Susan Witt, Wes Volkenant, Gretchen Sable and Leslie Waterhouse.

## Moderator Training

Every year, some of our trained moderators retire from moderating forums so we are always seeking new moderators. LWVMN moderator training is scheduled for April but both sessions are full. **LWV ABC hopes to be able to offer training. If you have any interest in moderating, please let us know.**

**Completing the training does not require you to moderate a forum, but no one can moderate without completing the training.** Once you are trained, our voter service chair will contact you to see if and when you are available to moderate. Moderators only moderate forums for races in which they are not a constituent. **Moderators must complete training every four years.**

## Event Planning Training

Although training from LWVMN is not required to act as a Forum Planner/Organizer, LWVMN is offering event planning training for any interested member:

- April 9, 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm ([register](#))



## **Producing LWV ABC Cable Programs**

### **Opportunity to Learn Studio Operations**

Have you ever wanted to operate a TV camera or help produce a show? Eric Houston of NorthMetro TV will train members to record our own forums, interviews, voter information sessions and more! With an hour of training time, you can learn every role needed to create recordings for posting on our YouTube channel and playback on their public broadcast station.

Producing our own candidate forums will eliminate the cost of candidate forums in the NorthMetro viewing area. NorthMetro TV recommends four volunteers to produce a forum - two people working cameras, one person adjusting microphone volume in control room and one person in control room selecting a camera for recording. Staff will be available to help with any problems.

We are looking at scheduling a late afternoon in May to train on camera use, camera selection, volume adjustments and editing at the NorthMetro studio in Blaine.

***If interested, send an email to [lwvabc@gmail.com](mailto:lwvabc@gmail.com) or sign-up at the annual meeting on April 13.***

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Action Chair Jody Anderson (right) at March 12 ERA Rally at the Capitol.

## **Board Highlights**

By Kathy Aanerud, LWV ABC Secretary

- Finalized agenda for LWV ABC's annual meeting on April 13. Discussed member engagement activities for recruiting forum volunteers and action and advocacy participation.
- Nominations committee reported on calls to members to seek candidates for officers, board members, committee co-chairs, and candidate forum leaders.
- Date, time, and location will be forthcoming for candidate forum training.
- Continued discussion of fees collected when donations to LWV ABC are included with LWVUS dues and how to proceed with guiding members.
- Meetings with our cable television partners have yielded strengthened partnerships and cost-savings.

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

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## ERA Rally

March 12, 2026

Were you unable to attend the ERA Rally? Gender Justice created a highlights reel.

[Watch the highlights reel.](#)

The full rally was also taped by Fox 9 News.

[Watch the full rally.](#)



## Money in Politics

### Clean Elections Minnesota

Supreme Court decisions have given corporations increasing power to influence elections. [Clean Elections Minnesota](#) has been working on a proposal to limit corporate money in elections using an approach developed by the Center for American Progress.

The idea is simple: corporations exist because states create them and give them certain powers. Minnesota can clarify in its corporate law that corporations do not have the power to spend their treasury money to influence elections. Bills have been introduced - SF4147 (Boldon) and HF3419 (Greenman) - prohibiting corporate

powers related to election activity. **Stay tuned for an action alert from LWVMN or simply contact your legislators now to encourage them to support these bills limiting corporate influence in our elections.**

Clean Elections Minnesota notes in their recent newsletter that major tech companies are preparing to spend massive sums to shape the upcoming midterm elections. Their goal is straightforward: elect candidates who will allow unregulated AI development, leading to more data centers and fewer privacy guardrails. Candidates on both sides of the aisle are likely to be targeted. Clean Elections Minnesota reports that:

- Meta (Facebook) is launching a \$65 million effort, including two new super PACs—Forge the Future Project (Republican-focused) and Making Our Tomorrow (Democratic-focused)—to advance its AI agenda
- Anthropic has committed \$20 million to midterm spending
- OpenAI and Palantir executives are expected to spend more than \$100 million combined.

## **Action Alerts**

### **LWVMN and Partners**

Action alerts offer a quick and easy way to contact your elected officials.

- **LWVMN:** [Assault Weapons Ban](#)
- **Minnesotans for Equal Rights:** [Equal Rights Amendment!](#)
- **Rise & Repair:** [Stronger Protections for Wild Rice](#)
- **Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA):** [Protect Minnesota's groundwater from nitrate pollution](#)
- **MN Zero Waste Coalition:** [Support Zero Waste Policies in Minnesota](#)
- **CURE:** [Press Pause on Hyperscale Data Centers](#)

**Register for Fired Up April 10 Friday**

**Capitol Letter**



## **Under Threat: Freedom of the Press and the First Amendment**

**Wednesday April 1, 2026  
5:00 pm via Zoom**

Guest Speaker: Jill Burcum, Strib Editorial Board and two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist.

[Register for 4/1 WDD Session](#)

## **Justice for All: The Plague of Sexual Abuse in the Epstein Era**

**Taped March 18, 2026**

Journalist Anne Midgette speaks about her experience investigating sexual abuse in the classical music world, including co-authoring the groundbreaking 2018 Washington Post exposé, which involved eight months of interviews with over 50 victims.

**Passcode: C.5fBJ&s**

[Watch the 3/18 WDD session](#)

# Defending Civil Rights in Minnesota: Legal and Policy Responses to ICE

Taped March 5, 2026

John Boehler, Policy Counsel, ACLU Minnesota, discusses the ACLU's legal response to what it describes as the largest scale violations of constitutional rights in Minnesota history. He discusses ACLU's challenges to unlawful detentions, racial profiling, and denial of access to counsel for detainees and also outlines proposed ICE accountability legislation.

**Passcode: =iQ3ag@J**

[Watch 3/5 WDD Session](#)



**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF MINNESOTA

## 2026 Council

April 25 | 9:00-12:00

Keynote Speaker:  
Kimberly A. Hamlin

## LWVMN Council

April 25, 2026

9:00 AM - Noon via Zoom

**Members Only**

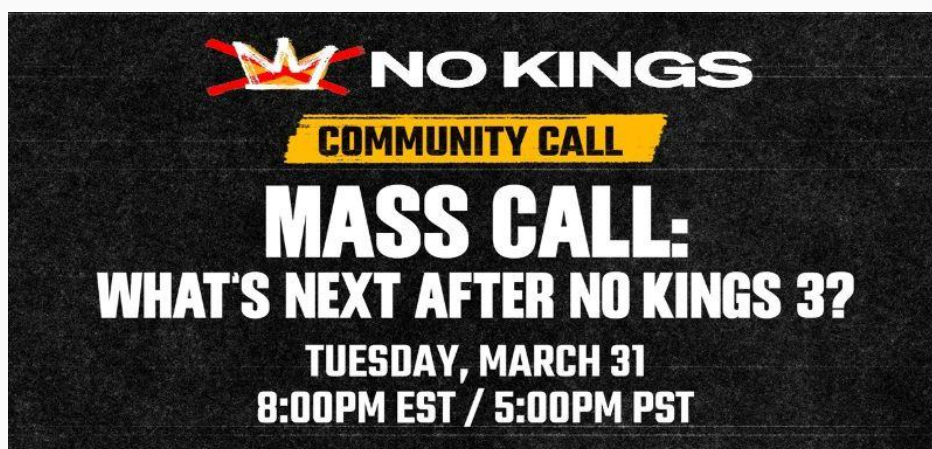
Become a delegate to 2026 Council and step into the League's democratic process. With members from across the state, help set priorities and shape how we show up for voters and democracy in the year ahead.

Keynote speaker will be Kimberly A. Hamlin, author of *Free Thinker: Sex, Suffrage, and the Extraordinary Life of Helen Hamilton Gardener*. Kimberly is a member of the LWWUS Board and an award-winning scholar, teacher, and public speaker.

***Register with LWVMN as a delegate and send us an email and let us know.***

[Register as Delegate for Council](#)

[LWVMN Council 2026 Webpage](#)



## **No Kings Community Call**

**Tuesday, March 31**

**7:00 PM CST**

LWWUS encourages members to join the March 31 No Kings Mass Call, to celebrate the historic March 28 mobilization and dig into what comes next.

Speakers at Twin Cities No Kings 3 announced that the next nationwide day of action will be May 1, International Worker's Day (May Day) - a day of no work, no school and no shopping.

**Register for the Community Call**

**Watch the Twin Cities No Kings 3 rally livestreamed by Indivisible**

**No Kings Twin Cities Video**



The poster features a central logo of a monarch butterfly with the word "MONARCA" in large, bold, black letters. Below the logo, the text reads "UPSTANDER TRAINING | BLAINE, MN" and "TOGETHER WE KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE" in orange. The date and time "Saturday, April 11, 2026 10:00 AM" are listed. The main text describes the training's purpose: "Every family deserves safety, dignity, and the peace of going to work or school without fear. But a group of politicians are pushing policies meant to divide us. They are relying on intimidation and raids that tear families apart and weaken whole neighborhoods." It lists three bullet points: "Learn practical skills to keep families safe", "Become part of a people-powered rapid response network", and "Stand with neighbors so no one faces intimidation alone". A QR code is provided for registration, with the text "REGISTER HERE" above it and the URL "bit.ly/RRBLN0411" below it. The UNIDOS MN logo is at the bottom left, and the background features a faint city skyline.

**MONARCA**

**UPSTANDER TRAINING | BLAINE, MN**

**TOGETHER WE KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE**

**Saturday, April 11, 2026 10:00 AM**

Every family deserves safety, dignity, and the peace of going to work or school without fear. But a group of politicians are pushing policies meant to divide us. They are relying on intimidation and raids that tear families apart and weaken whole neighborhoods.

- Learn practical skills to keep families safe
- Become part of a people-powered rapid response network
- Stand with neighbors so no one faces intimidation alone

We're coming together across race and background to **protect one another, build people-powered safety**, and make sure **no one** faces this alone.

**Register to attend our Blaine training—location details provided after registration.**

**REGISTER HERE**



**UNIDOS MN**  
COMMUNITY • LEADERSHIP • POWER

**[bit.ly/RRBLN0411](https://bit.ly/RRBLN0411)**

## **Legal Observer Training**

**Saturday, April 11, 2026**

**10:00 AM**

**Blaine**

Monarca has trained over 30,000 everyday Minnesotans as neighborhood observers to help protect people's rights.

***Details about the location will be provided once you register.***

Register for Monarca Training



## Coming in May...

### Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

- May 11 - **Program Meeting** - Ending Slavery in Minnesota
- May 12 - **Special Election** Champlin Ward 3
- May 18 - **Session Ends**
- May 19 - **Candidate Filings Begin**
- May 20 - **Book Club**
- May 25 - **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**

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## More About LWV ABC



[Website](#)



[Facebook](#)



[Email](#)



[Bluesky](#)



[Instagram](#)



[YouTube](#)

**League of Women Voters ABC**

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