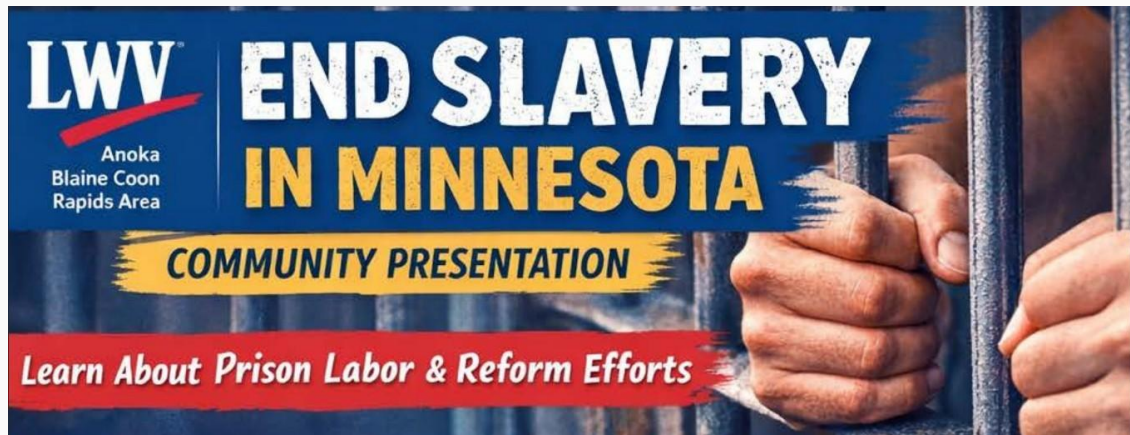


# The Voter

The LWV ABC Monthly Newsletter  
May 2026



## Ending Slavery in Minnesota Understanding Prison Labor and the Push for Change Monday, May 11, 2026

**Andover Community Center  
Mike Knight Community Room  
15200 Hanson Blvd NW  
Andover Minnesota**

**6:30** - Socializing

**6:45** - Presentation of Zilla Way Award and Member Milestone Certificates

**7:00** - Program Begins

What would it mean for our communities if we reclassified incarcerated people as workers, created real employment opportunities inside our prisons, and transformed a system of exploitation into one of dignity, rehabilitation, and economic possibility? Join us for an important conversation about prison labor in Minnesota and the efforts to end subminimum wages for incarcerated workers.

We are pleased to welcome David Boehnke, [End Slavery in Minnesota](#) Co-Executive Director, and Darla Holland, an Inside/Out Organizer with the [Minnesota Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee](#) (IWOC) and a lived-experience advocate. Both are active leaders in the End Slavery in Minnesota Coalition, which is working to end the state’s constitutional exception clause that still permits forced, unpaid labor in prisons.

Minnesota currently pays incarcerated workers as little as a few dollars per day, despite their essential labor supporting state operations. Advocates argue that fair wages and voluntary work are critical steps toward rehabilitation, dignity, and successful reentry. David and Darla will share the history, current policy landscape, and what changes are being proposed.

The program will include a presentation, discussion on ally-building and strategies for advancing reform.

***The guest speakers will be taped and video will be available for viewing on YouTube and QCTV.***





## LWV ABC Annual Meeting April 13 and April 20

Due to a severe weather alert on April 13, our Annual Membership Meeting was held in two parts.

On April 13, we completed our required business via Zoom - electing officers and board members, approving a budget and reviewing our local positions and our non-partisanship policy. The membership re-elected Vice President Julie Trude, Treasurer Wes Volkenant, Action Committee Chair Jody Anderson and Program Committee Chair Leslie Waterhouse for two year terms.

On April 20, we met in person to hear from Committee Chairs about upcoming opportunities to volunteer for our election activities and offer suggestions for topics and speakers for future programs. We enjoyed a meal from Mrs. Taco, learned if we could answer the constitution questions asked of new citizens, won door prizes and connected with old and new friends.



## Welcome New Members

**Kristin Granlund** of Anoka  
**Carolyn Lohman** of Spring Lake Park



## Candidate Forum Training Monday, June 15, 2026

**5:30 - 8:00 PM**

**Moderator Training**  
**Tuesday, August 11, 2026**  
**5:00 - 8:00 PM**

**Davanni's**  
**3430 129th Ave NW**  
**Coon Rapids**

It takes every member working together to have successful Candidate Forums! This year we will host up to 47 General Election forums, as well as some Primary Election forums. Multiple forums will be scheduled in an evening. Each forum evening requires coordinators, question facilitators, greeters, timers and moderators.

**Forum Coordinators**

- Invite candidates by email
- Track RSVPs and follow-up as needed

**Question Facilitators**

- Edit and compile questions from questions submitted by the public

**Greeters**

- Greet, sign-in and orientate candidates to forum site

**Timers**

- Time candidate responses during the forum

**Moderators**

- Host forums and ask questions of the candidates

***All members are encouraged to attend the June 15 training. Pizza and salad***

***will be provided. The August training is for any member who has any interest in becoming a moderator.***

**RSVP for Forum Training**



## **Educate-Advocate-Empower-Repeat!**

**by Cindy Wetzell**

We are living in challenging times and what is happening at home and abroad can feel daunting and disheartening. But as Joan Baez once said, "Action is the antidote to despair." Here is YOUR chance to take action.

Between now and mid-October, join other ABC members walking in parades (Columbia Heights and Andover) or hosting booths at festivals in Anoka, Blaine, Columbia Heights, Nowthen and Spring Lake Park. For the first time we'll have a Constitution Quiz that visitors to the booth can play—with a free pocket Constitution for any participant! These are fun and friendly ways for you to register voters and provide voter education.

We're reserving our place in parades and community festivals right now. But we need you to step up to staff tables and educate, advocate and empower our neighbors.

As events approach, you'll receive an email from the League to sign-up for a shift using Signup Genius. Generally, shifts have two volunteers and are no longer than 2 hours. Information about the location of the event is included in the sign-up. You will also receive a reminder two days before the event. And you can sign for as many shifts or events as you like!!!

### **Voter Registration Training**

LWV Minneapolis via Zoom

7:00-8:15 PM

May 11, 2026

If you are a newbie to voter registration, training is available through LWV Minneapolis. **To register, email Teena Keiser at [teenakeiser@gmail.com](mailto:teenakeiser@gmail.com).** If you're unable to attend Zoom training, there is always a notebook at our events with detailed information about voter registration.

***In addition, you can find comprehensive and clear information on the Secretary of State website and/or watch the LWV ABC series of Public Service Announcements with Tom Hunt, Anoka County Elections Manager***

**SOS Election Information**

**PSAs with Tom Hunt**



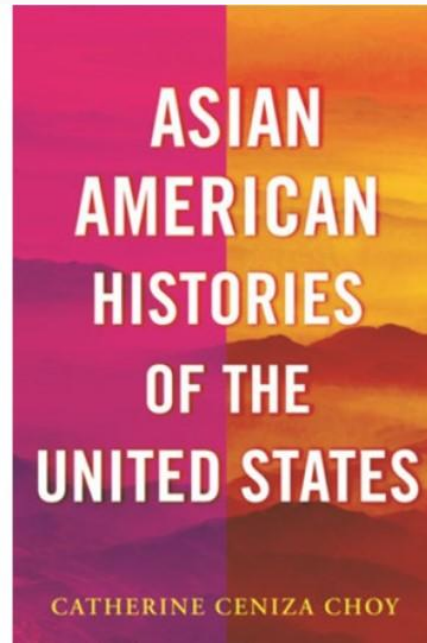
## **Opportunity to Learn Video Production**

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.

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.

Once we have at least four volunteers, we hope to scheduling a late afternoon in May to train on camera use, camera selection, volume adjustments and editing at the NorthMetro studio in Blaine.

[\*\*Sign-Up for Training\*\*](#)



## **Book Club**

**Wednesday, May 20, 2026**

**7:00 pm on Zoom**

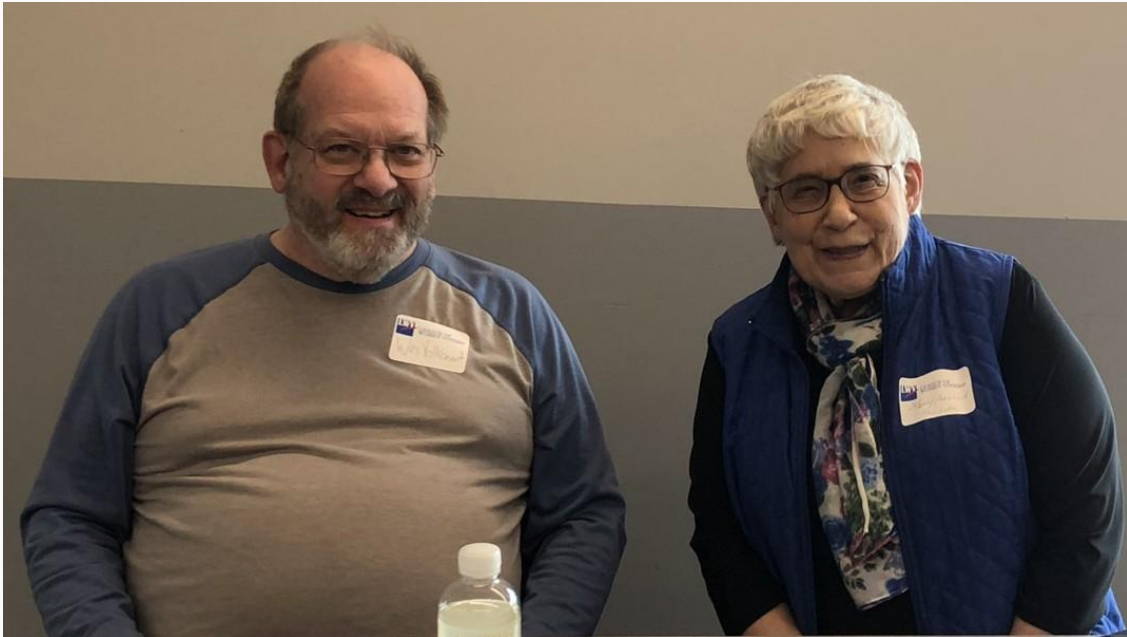
### ***Asian American Histories of the United States (2022)* by Catherine Ceniza Choy**

Asian American Histories of the United States chronicles some of the complexity of the Asian American experience over the past 150 years. Choy uses “histories”, not the singular “history”, noting that there is no one starting point for Asian Americans as various groups migrated at different times and under different circumstances. Each chapter offers a different starting point in history from which we might learn the when, where, and why people of Asian ancestry became part of U.S. history – 1968, 1965, 1953, 1942, 1919, 1875 and 1869.

Catherine Ceniza Choy, the daughter of Filipino immigrants, is a Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to moving to Berkeley, she was an assistant professor of American Studies at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities (1998 to 2004) and a cofounding member of the Asian American Studies Initiative.

[Book Club Zoom Link](#)

[Upcoming Books](#)



Treasurer Wes Volkenant and Secretary Kathy Aanerud

## **Board Highlights**

**April 27, 2026**

By Kathy Aanerud, LWV ABC Secretary

- This was the first board meeting following our annual meeting and board elections. It incorporated elements of our "board retreat" including: appointing committee members and emeritus board members; setting the monthly schedule for board meetings; configuring board agenda format for increased efficiency; and deferred review of handbook, job descriptions and longer-term planning for program and activities to future meetings.
- Identified meeting locations for monthly program meetings that could be rotated to better serve members' geographic distribution
- Set forth program topics for May and June

- Acknowledged strong membership growth and retention and made plans for contacting those who may have been lost in the new member renewal process
- Discussed planning underway for voter registration tabling at community events
- Continued planning discussions for candidate forums including volunteers, studio locations, and applying for grant funds

Note that the May board meeting will be held on June 1 due to Memorial Day.

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

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## **CMAL Annual Meeting**

**May 27, 2026**

**5:30 – 5:45 Social/Dinner**

**5:45 – 6:30 Keynote Speaker**

**6:45 – 7:45 Business Meeting**

**Ridgedale Public Library  
Robert H. Rohlf Room**

**12601 Ridgedale Dr  
Minnetonka, MN 55305**

The Council of Metropolitan Leagues invites all metro area League members to the CMAL Annual Meeting.

Keynote speaker will be Hennepin County Public Health Director Sara Hollie. She will discuss "Metro Area Public Health: Where Do We Go From Here?"

Sara Hollie has spent over 20 years championing community health, equity and systemic change. Born and raised on the north side of Minneapolis, Hollie credits her upbringing for shaping her passion for public health. Hollie holds the distinction of being the first African American Public Health Director in Hennepin County.

All members of LWV ABC are also members of CMAL and are encouraged to attend CMAL meetings. Julie Trude and Wes Volkenant, who also serves as CMAL president, are our LWV ABC delegates.

***RSVP before May 20 to reserve your boxed lunch selection***

**RSVP for CMAL Annual Meeting**

Read the April 2026 CMAL Newsletter to learn more about CMAL

**CMAL Newsletter**

***Subscribe to the CMAL newsletter by sending contact information  
to [LWVCMAL@lwvmn.org](mailto:LWVCMAL@lwvmn.org)***

# The League Condemns Supreme Court Ruling Dismantling the Bedrock of the Civil Rights Movement

## Decision Breakdown: Louisiana v. Callais

May 7, 2026

4:00 PM CST via Zoom

The Supreme Court's decision in Louisiana v. Callais struck the final blow to Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, rendering it inoperable against racial discrimination in redistricting.

On May 4, LWVUS and civil rights groups filed for an emergency injunction to prevent Louisiana from suspending an ongoing primary election to redraw district lines.

Join the LWV Litigation team for a breakdown of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Louisiana v. Callais.

[Register for Webinar](#)

[Read the LWVUS Response to Callais Decision](#)

[May 4 Emergency Filing](#)



## **Data Centers and the Billionaires: The Fight for Democracy and the Environment**

**Wednesday, May 27, 2026**

**5:00 – 6:00 PM**

Guest Speaker: Kathryn Hoffman, Executive Director of Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA)

As data centers rapidly expand across Minnesota and the country, they are reshaping local economies while placing increasing pressure on energy, water, and land resources. Hoffman will explore who benefits from this growth, often large tech companies and billionaire investors, and the cost bearers in local communities and the environment. Hoffman examines how democratic processes can be sidelined in the push to fast track development, reviews proposed legislation aimed at regulating data center expansion, and how communities can advocate for transparency, accountability, and more sustainable outcomes.

[\*\*Register for May 27 WDD Session\*\*](#)



Picture from Save the Boundary Waters at <https://www.savetheboundarywaters.org/>

## What Now for the BWCA?

The U.S. Senate voted to strip federal protections from the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. While many believe that the path is cleared for a Chilean mining company to build a copper-sulfide mine within one of our state's most iconic and beloved watersheds, the fight is far from over. It's just moved to Minnesota.

Minnesota can still stop Twin Metals mine from being built through

- State regulatory authority - Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has the power to deny mining permits.
- State Legislation
- Litigation

Learn more by watching the April 30 webinar "Now What for the BWCA? The Role of MN Law" sponsored by [Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy](#) (MCEA) and [Friends of the Boundary Waters](#).

Also see the article "How can the State of Minnesota protect the Boundary Waters?" on the [Save the Boundary Waters](#) website.

[Watch Webinar](#)

[Read Save the Boundary Waters Article](#)

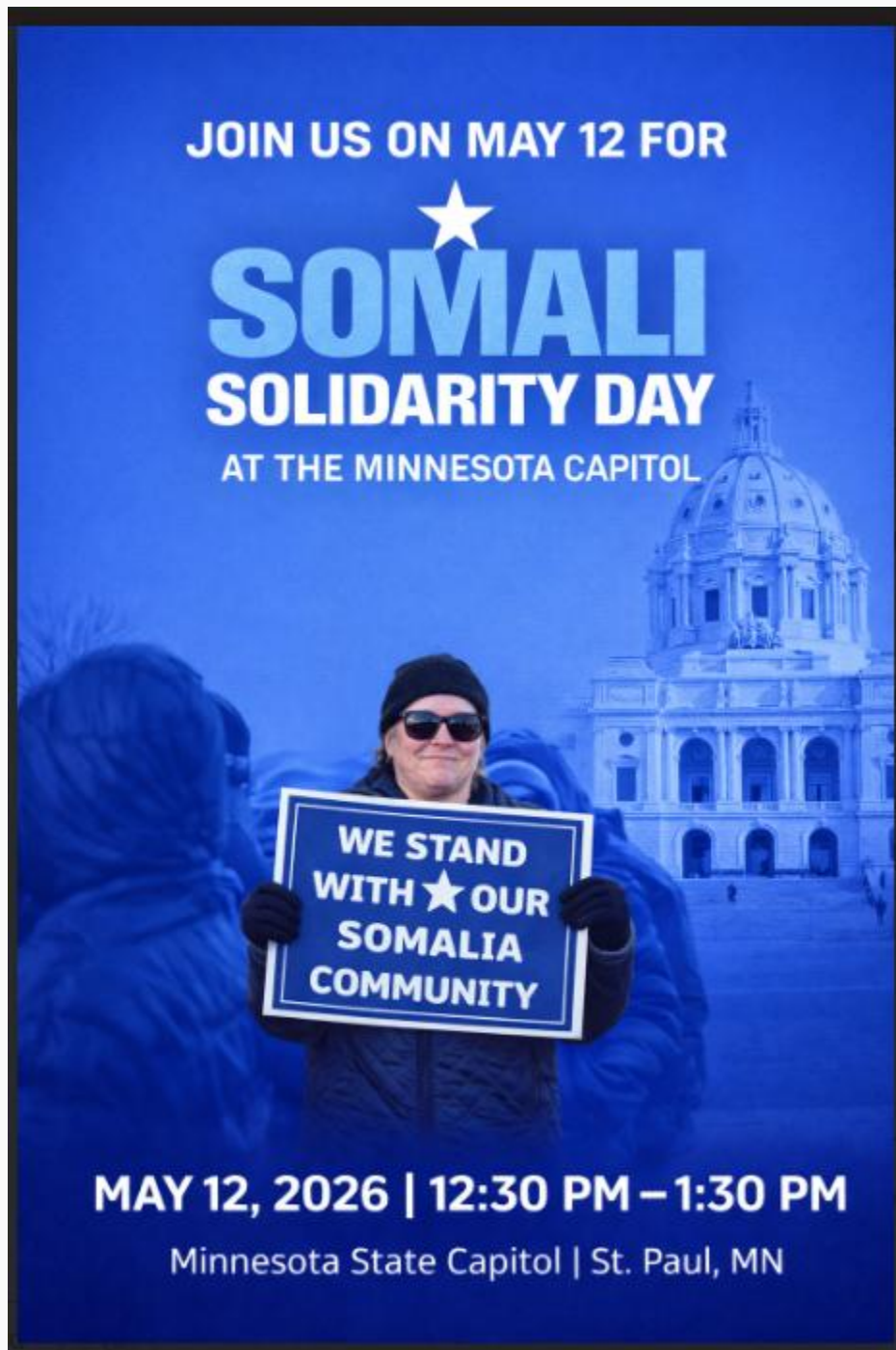


**Are Starry Skies Important?  
Why Darkness Matters for People, Birds, and Wildlife**  
Taped April 14, 2026.

Todd Burlett, [Starry Skies North](#) and Kikki Sonnen, [St Paul Bird Alliance](#) explain why protecting natural darkness matters for human health, wildlife, and the wonder of a star-filled sky. Discover what our community can do to bring back the night.

Co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters Roseville Environmental Subcommittee, Do Good Roseville, and Ramsey County Libraries.

Watch Starry Skies



## **Somali Solidarity Day**

**May 12, 2026**

**12:30 PM – 1:30 PM**

**Capitol Rotunda, Minnesota State Capitol**

The Council on American-Islamic Relations Minnesota ([CAIR-MN](#)) is calling for a visible, united show of solidarity with Somali Americans at a time when their community is under sustained and escalating attack.

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**Coming in June...**

All Month - **LGBTQ+ Pride Month**

June 2 - **Deadline for Affidavits of Candidacy**

June 8 - **Program meeting**

June 19 - **Juneteenth**

June 22 - **Board Meeting**

June 26 - **Early Voting Begins**

June 25 - **LWVUS National Convention**

*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



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[Instagram](#)



[YouTube](#)

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The Monthly Newsletter of LWV ABC*