

# The Voter

The LWV ABC Monthly Newsletter

June 2026



## "The Officials" Screening and Discussion

Monday, June 8, 2026

Online via Zoom

**6:30** - online socializing

**7:00** - program begins

*The Officials* is a 26 minute documentary by Margo Guernsey and Sara Archambault that offers a behind-the-scenes look at a group of election officials who, despite facing increased threats, harassment, and intimidation, remain committed to serving their communities by running secure elections and ensuring every eligible vote is counted accurately.

Join us online for a screening of the film followed by a discussion about the

challenges faced by election worker today and how we can help support our local election officials.

[Program Zoom Link](#)



## **Anoka County Highway Projects**

In May, Joe MacPherson, P.E., Anoka County Chief Transportation Officer and County Engineer joined LWV ABC to provide some quick facts about the Anoka County Transportation Division and explain the four year plan for Hwy 65 in Blaine. His presentation includes a video rendering of the planned upgrades to the Highway 65 corridor between 117th Ave and 109th Ave.

[Watch Spotlight Video](#)

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Colleen Werdien at LWVMN Convention

## **Colleen Werdien**

**November 25, 1949 - May 16, 2026**

We were saddened to hear that Colleen Werdien died on May 16.

Colleen was an active member of LWV ABC since 2021, as well as a member on and off in the past. She served LWV ABC as one of our representative to the Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization, also serving on the UMRR Board as the Minnesota Representative. A passionate advocate for the environment and clean water, Colleen was elected as an Anoka County Soil and Water Conservation Supervisor in 2021. A retired nurse, an artist, a Master Gardener, an avid card player and a musician, Colleen was also an active volunteer in her church and several local organizations.

Colleen's grace, thoughtful comments and passionate advocacy stand as a testament and example for all.

### **Funeral**

**June 15, 2026**

**Zion Lutheran Church**

**1601 Fourth Ave S, Anoka**

**10:00 AM visitation**

**11:00 AM service**

**12:45 PM reception**

Funeral Home Obituary

LWV UMMR Obituary



## Welcome New Members

**Briana Colton** of Blaine  
**Carolyn Lohman** of Spring Lake Park  
**C Meyer** of Spring Lake Park  
**Maery Rose** of Anoka  
**Barbara Schilling** of Andover



## Member Milestones

Congratulations to **Kay McCulley** who became a Lifetime Member this year, reaching her 50th Anniversary as a member of League. Until her move to Iowa, Kay was very active in LWV ABC, serving on the Board for many years. Kay joins our other Lifetime Members **Zilla Way, Geri Nelson and Mary Jo Truchon**. Mary Jo reached her 65 year member milestone this year for her many years of service with both LWV ABC and LWV Riverdale Illinois.

Other member milestones this year:

40 years - **Jeorgette Knoll**

30 years - **Betsy O'Berry**

10 years - **Karen Varian**

10 years - **Leslie Waterhouse**

5 years - **Diane Kroll, Rachel Mero, Laura Moore, Colleen Werdien**

***See our Member Milestones webpage for all member milestones. Milestone certificates are awarded for every five years of service.***

[All Member Milestones](#)



**Candidate Forum Volunteer Meeting**

**June 15, 2026**

**5:00 pm**  
**Davanni's, Coon Rapids**

Candidate forum season is upon us with the June deadline for candidate filings for state, county and many city and school board offices. (Some cities and school boards do not allow primary elections so candidate filing deadline is in August.) Volunteers are needed to act as timers, greeters, question facilitators, moderators and forum liaisons.

**All members are encouraged to join us at 5:00 on June 15, 2026** at Davanni's Coon Rapids to learn more about the role you can play in educating voters about candidates. Pizza and salad will be provided.

**Linda Rodgers** and **Geri Nelson** will be offering moderator training on August 11, 2026 for every member considering becoming a non-partisan League moderator, including experienced moderators who want a refresher.

***RSVP for the June 15, 2026 Candidate Forum Meeting  
and August 11, 2026 Moderator Training***

**RSVP for Forum Meeting and Moderator Training**

***After June 15, 2026, go to our Candidate Forum webpage to submit your questions for candidates for Primary Election candidates.***

**Candidate Forum Webpage**

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Program Chair Leslie Waterhouse moderating the Champlin City Council Special Election Forum on April 22, 2026.

## **June 1, 2026 Board Highlights**

By Kathy Aanerud, LWV ABC Secretary

- Significant activity underway for LWV ABC community presence. Voter registration is scheduled for Anoka Pride Day on June 6; and it's expected that voter registration will also be confirmed for at Blaine Festival on June 28. Participation in the Andover Family Fun Fest is being planned for July 11.
- Gretchen Sabel will be attending the LWVUS National Convention in Columbus, Ohio June 25-28; and Julie Trude will be attending virtually.
- Scheduling for videotaping candidate forums is underway. Reports were provided on recent arrangements for videotaping Fridley, Columbia Heights, and area state races. Arrangements to be discussed for incorporating Ham Lake candidates and related state races in the schedule.
- Candidate forum coordinators are being finalized. Training for forum volunteers remains scheduled for June 15.
- Pat Kennedy resigned from her board position as Communications Chair.

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

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## 2026 Legislative Session

It's a wrap on the 2026 Legislative Session!

### What Passed in 2026:

- Budget Agreement
- [Bonding Bill](#)
- [HCMC Rescue Plan](#)
- [IT Upgrades for counties and tribes](#)
- [Funding for Wildlife, Wetlands and Woods](#)
- [Tax Bill](#)
- [Creation of Office of Inspector General for fraud prevention](#)
- [Environmental Trust Fund Bill](#) (minus money for Boundary Waters)
- [Study of the Nuclear Energy Moratorium by Feb 1, 2027](#)
- Sustainable Aviation Fuel Guardrails
- [Outdoor Heritage Fund](#)
- Gas regulation guardrails (with fracking ban)
- [Rental and Mortgage Assistance](#)
- [\\$1 million for statewide nonfatal shooting investigation](#)

### What Did Not Pass:

- [Gun control](#)

- [Metro Surge relief](#)
- [Regulations for ICE officers](#)
- [MN Civic Seal for students](#)
- [Local news internship funding](#)
- [Battery bill](#)
- [Wild Rice Protections](#)
- [Prohibition of NDAs for Data Centers](#)

## LWVMN Legislative Recap



LWV ABC President Gretchen Sabel advocating for the ERA in 2023 with Suzann Willhite, President of ERA Minnesota.

## Looking Ahead on Advocacy Priorities

LWVN Advocacy does not end when session ends. Between legislative sessions League members continue to work with partners on LWVMN priorities.

Work continues on

- **Census** - working with Minnesota Council of Foundations
- **Money in Politics** - working with Clean Elections MN, LWVUS

- **Gun Violence Prevention** - working with Minnesota Justice Research Center and Protect MN
- **Environmental Protection** - working with Minnesota Environmental Partnership (MEP) and LWVMN's Climate Change Task Force (CCTF)
- **Data Centers**
- **Equal Rights Amendment** - working with Minnesota's for Equal Rights Coalition and ERA MN
- **Budget Year** (Housing, Federal Impacts, etc.) - working with MN Budget Project and Minnesota Council of Non-Profits
- **Local News** - working with True North News Alliance
- **Voting Rights Act**

***If you have a passion for any of these issues, attend a Fired Up Friday Call or email our Action and Advocacy Jody Anderson at [lwvabc@gmail.com](mailto:lwvabc@gmail.com) to learn how you can get more involved.***

### **June 19 Fired Up Friday Call**

**12:00 PM**

On June 19, LWVMN will discuss the history of voter suppression tactics in communities of color and provide an overview of the resources and opportunities.

**Register for June 19 Fired Up Friday**



# LWV UMRR Annual Meeting

**Keynote: The Wetlands Initiative: Then, Now, Next**

**June 9, 2026 via Zoom**

**6:00 PM - Business Meeting**

**7:00 PM - Guest Speaker**

The keynote speaker will be Paul Botts, Executive Director of the Wetlands Initiative. The Wetlands Initiative designs, restores and creates wetlands. They innovate, collaborate, and employ sound science to improve water quality, create habitat for plants and wildlife, and help to slow the warming of our climate. Join LWV UMRR to learn about the Wetlands Initiative's work in restoring farmland and industrial sites to vibrant wetlands teeming with diversity.

***All members are welcome to attend the business meeting and/or join the zoom meeting for the keynote speaker.***

[Register for UMRR Annual Meeting](#)

[UMRR Blog](#)

**OFFICE OF THE MINNESOTA  
SECRETARY OF STATE STEVE SIMON**

**Lunch & Learn**  
The Different Types of Elections  
June 5 | 12:00 PM

**EMILY HUNT**  
Deputy Director  
of Elections

**The Different Types of Elections**

**SOS Lunch & Learn**

**12:00 PM via Zoom**  
**June 5, 2026**

Join the Office of the MN Secretary of State to get a breakdown of the different types of elections you might see on your ballot from year to year from primaries to generals, and everything in between. We'll talk about what each one means and why they matter.

[Register for Lunch and Learn](#)



## **LWVMN 2026 Trusted Elections Strategy**

**June 12, 2026**  
**12:00 PM via zoom**

Join LWVMN to learn LWVMN plans to reinforce the safety and security of our elections in 2026. LWVMN will provide an overview of the election certification processes in Minnesota and how we plan to train nonpartisan, independent observers at the county level. We will also talk about how we can respond to election threats by providing voters with trusted information and monitoring mis- and disinformation at the local level. This call aims to provide League members with the information and resources that they need in coordination with other statewide efforts to protect elections.

[Register for LWVMN Webinar](#)



The 2024 Anoka County Post Election Review

## **Sign Up to Observe the 2026 PER**

If you want to support Minnesota's free and fair elections, please consider signing up to observe the 2026 Post-Election Review (PER)! Every volunteer with LWVMN will be trained as a nonpartisan observer and join a team of observers.

LWVMN hopes to build on 2024 when 160 trained volunteers observed the PER in 43 of Minnesota's 87 counties, and we subsequently reported that Minnesota's elections are transparent, verifiable, and accurate to county boards and newspapers across Minnesota.

[\*\*Register to be a PER Observer\*\*](#)

[\*\*Learn More About Observing the PER\*\*](#)

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

**Taped May 27, 2026**

On May 27, Kathryn Hoffman, Executive Director of Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA), highlighted the four key issues behind the rapid expansion of hyper scale facilities in Minnesota:

- enormous electricity demands
- massive water consumption
- growing demand for metals and minerals that drive new mining projects
- local impacts such as noise, light pollution, and diesel generator emissions

The discussion focused on transparency and public accountability. Many proposed projects are advancing under non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) between developers and local governments. Minnesota currently lacks robust permitting and environmental review processes for facilities of this scale.

Other recent developments discussed included Minneapolis's temporary moratorium on small data centers and a court ruling in Pine Island that halted Google's proposed data center pending environmental review.

***Watch the video using Passcode: JU\$6^nx%***

**Watch Data Centers & Billionaires**

**Read the LWVMN Position on Data Centers**



passing both the state and national ERA in a time of increased threats to women's rights, including efforts to repeal the 19th Amendment.

[Watch on YouTube](#)

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## Coming in July ...

### No July Program or Board Program Meeting

July 15 - **Book Club**

July 22 - **LWVMN Observer Corp Training**

July 26 - **Last Day to Pre-register to Vote for the Primary Election**

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

[LWV ABC Calendar](#)

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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](#)



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[Bluesky](#)



[Instagram](#)



[YouTube](#)

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