

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

VOTER

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The *Voter* is issued the last Friday of the month to provide members advance notice of activities. The **October Voter deadline is September 20.**

SEPTEMBER 2025

The current partisanship going on across states as they rush to gerrymander their congressional districts for purely political gain is dismaying. The League of Women Voters continues to fight against both racial and political gerrymandering and advocate for a fair and transparent process that produces the most representative maps. We are fortunate that in Iowa we have a system in place for reapportionment that is considered a gold standard, thanks in large part to the efforts of the League of Women Voters in Iowa in the 1970's. It should not be radical to believe that communities and neighborhoods should remain intact as much as possible, and districts should be contiguous and not resemble a child's scribble picture. It should be obvious that voters should be selecting their representatives, not the representatives choosing their voters. However, common sense is currently in short supply as raw, partisan political power is being exercised by both parties to silence the voice of the non-majority party voter. Perhaps we can hope that the current tit-for-tat by states to push their clearly political gerrymandering will move voters of both parties to call on Congress to require independent redistricting commissions in every state, using the Iowa method as the model.

I hope to see many of you at our annual Fall Reception and Membership Drive on Wednesday, September 3, 5 - 7 p.m., at the First Presbyterian Church in Iowa City. Our guest speaker this year is Austin Frerick, author of "Barons: Money, Power, and the Corruption of America's Food Industry." This was one of the books selected by our Book Group last year, and we are thrilled to be joined by the author to hear his insights on the corporate consolidation and to lay out a path forward to a fair, prosperous, and healthy food industry in America. If you would like to attend and have not already RSVP'd, please do so by August 29 here: <https://forms.gle/dW2TVFe3f3jL3dU8A>

As we approach this Labor Day weekend, we say good-bye to summer and welcome the cooler autumn days. And of course, that means an election will soon be here - city and school elections are scheduled for November 4.

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We have many League activities coming up including voter registration events, interesting educational presentations, book group, a Making Connections event, and candidate forums. And of course, our Advocacy team remains engaged championing action on policy priorities. Read all the details in this month's Voter. Thank you to everyone who takes time to support our efforts to advocate and to register and educate voters ahead of the November election. You are indeed Empowering Voters and Defending Democracy.

Vicki Aden
LWVJC President



MEMBERSHIP

We currently have 192 members. However, there are 65 members whose membership renewal date was June 30, 2025 who have not yet renewed. Anyone with a June 2025 renewal date should have received several membership renewal reminders from the National League of Women Voters. These email reminders would have been from "Membership," which is the League of Women Voters membership team. The heading of the email was: Renew Your League of Women Voters Membership.

During the week of August 25, members who needed to renew would have also received a reminder from our League's membership email:
lwvjcmembership@gmail.com

Dues Payment

Renewing can be done online by going to our League's website

<https://my.lwv.org/iowa/johnson-county>.

Under "Get Involved" click the "Join or

Renew" link then click the "Fill out online membership form here" link. If renewing with a credit or debit card you will see 3 separate dues charges, one each for national, state, and local dues payments. Members can also renew online with a check by ACH (an electronic payment using the numbers on the bottom of a check). This method lowers fees for the League so more of your dues go directly to funding League work.

If you send your dues renewal check to our League's PO Box, PO Box 5452, Coralville, IA 52241, please make the check out to either the LWVUS or LWV. Do not make the check out to LWV Johnson County.

Please contact me with any membership questions lwvjcmembership@gmail.com

Casual Coffee: All members are always invited to attend our Casual Coffees on the second Wednesday of each month. Enjoy a beverage and get to know other League members. Members meet at 10 a.m. at Poindexter's Coffee in the Graduate Hotel.

Diane Duncan-Goldsmith
Membership Chair



In August LWVJC held two voter registration events: National Night Out, August 5 at Wetherby Park, and Latino Fest, August 16 on the Ped Mall.

On September 7, we will table at the Chauncey FilmScene in conjunction with the Join and Thrive Club Fair. The fair will focus on recruiting adult members to join local clubs/organizations to encourage civic engagement. Registration will be concurrent with the showing of the documentary "Join or Die."

National Voter Registration Day is

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September 16 this year. We will table at the Iowa City, Coralville, and North Liberty Public Libraries. We will register voters at Kirkwood Community College on September 17 and 18. I will send out SignUp evites to members by September 1.

If you would like to register voters, contact Kathy Clark at mkathyclark@gmail.com.

*Kathy Clark
Voter Registration Chair*



Jan Gorman registers voters at Latino Fest, Aug 16



**DEBORAH TURNER
BOOK GROUP**

The first meeting of the Book group for the 2025-26 year is on Monday, September 15 at 5:30 PM at the Coralville Public Library. We will be discussing Jesse Wegman's book, "Let the People Pick the President."

Amazon says: "In this thoroughly researched and engaging call to arms, Supreme Court journalist and New York Times editorial board member Jesse Wegman draws upon the history of the

founding era, as well as information gleaned from campaign managers, field directors, and other officials from twenty-first-century Democratic and Republican presidential campaigns, to make a powerful case for abolishing the antiquated and antidemocratic Electoral College. In 'Let the People Pick the President' he shows how we can at long last make every vote in the United States count—and restore belief in our democratic system."

We meet on the third Monday of the month in September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May. You are welcome to attend all the meetings, the ones that fit your schedule or even just when the books are of interest to you. A member will guide the discussion each month.

Please, park east of the first two rows by the library or in the underground parking area to allow plenty of spots for the library patrons. Contact either of us if you have any questions. Hope to see many of you at our first meeting!

Deanne Mirr dmirr@me.com

Jeanne Bancroft jnn.bancroft@gmail.com

*Jeanne Bancroft & Deanne Mirr
Book Group Co-chairs*

**MAKING
DEMOCRACY WORK®**

This Letter to the Editor was penned by Holly Oppelt, President of the League of Women Voters of Iowa and appeared in the Cedar Rapids Gazette earlier this month.

RE: Still Fighting for Our Independence

To the Editor:

"On Independence Day, the President signed into law nearly a 1,000-page bill stripping tens of millions of our most vulnerable neighbors of health care and food to fund tax cuts for corporations

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and wealthy Americans. This is after thousands of people voiced their concerns to their elected officials. This is not what democracy looks like.

The law makes massive cuts to vital services including Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps). It will make it harder for children, parents, pregnant people, seniors, and people with disabilities to enroll in and keep the benefits they need to survive. It is estimated to leave 11.8 million people uninsured by 2034.

A population deprived of its basic needs is less able to hold elected officials accountable and push back against a constitutional crisis.

The nonpartisan League of Women Voters is working to build a movement of people from all levels of society and political backgrounds, who are ready to take nonviolent action from home or in the streets, to protect and restore our democracy.

Please visit lwv.org/uniteandrise to learn how you can get involved.

Our neighbors and our nation cannot wait.”



Civics Education

EDUCATION

The Education Committee will kick off the 2025-26 Lecture Series on September 25 with a program on “Libraries as Democracy Builders: Funding, Freedom, and Civic Engagement.”

Current American Library Association President Sam Helmick, who also is the

Community and Access Services Coordinator for the Iowa City Public Library, will address:

- current legislative challenges in Iowa around library funding and censorship including the repeal of local library levies and restriction of public materials;
- the real impact of these policies on communities, particularly marginalized residents; and,
- how libraries promote civic engagement from bilingual outreach and bookmobile access to youth programming and public events.

Mark your calendars: September 25 at the Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Rm A, 6:30 - 8:00p.m.

The committee is finalizing arrangements for three more programs this year and will have more information to share at the annual membership reception on September 3.

Rebecca Conard and Susan Enzle, co-chairs

Maggie Elliot, Kathleen Kamerick,

Donna Hirst, Audrey Moeller



LWVJC 2025-26 voter services committee consists of Polly Horton, Sally Stutsman, Mary Gregg, Joan Cook and Jeanne Bancroft.

School board elections and city council elections will be held on November 4. If a primary is needed in the city of Iowa City, that election will be held on October 7. Filing deadline for Iowa City and University Heights is August 28. Filing deadlines for all

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other cities and school boards is September 18. LWVJC will host candidate forums for contested races.

There is also a public ballot measure in Iowa City proposing a 1% local option and services tax. That requires 50% of the vote and if passed would go into effect July 1, 2026.

*Jeanne Bancroft
Voter Services chair*



ADVOCACY

The relaxing last days of summer invite us to reflect on the previous weeks. Currently, there are so many (too many!) issues to address during this on-going assault to our democracy. Our JC League is very fortunate to have the passionate, clear voices of our members many who frequently share their ideas as guest writers and through letters to the editors of Iowa newspapers. The following excerpts are taken from just a few of those writings. They merit a re-read and they serve to remind us to energize for the days ahead.

“Gov. Reynolds rejected Summer EBT (SUN Bucks) replacing it with Healthy Kids Iowa (HKI).

The goal was to reach 65,000 kids, far below the 245,000 kids which could have easily participated in Summer EBT. With over 2,900 Iowa retailers accepting SNAP benefits, Summer EBT could have generated up to \$45.4 million in economic revenue. HKI was to have more than 500 access points, however according to the website there are 264 distribution sites. Families must complete HKI TEFAP forms for each child in both June and July since

TEFAP guidelines change July 1st. Summer EBT provides most eligible families automatic benefits without completing any paperwork. Once again Iowa’s Governor has failed our hungry children.”

Diane Duncan Goldsmith

“...our country has a pattern of passing laws, regulations, and even Constitutional provisions that are then whittled away over time. ‘No law’ in the First Amendment’s protection of free speech eventually means ‘no law but....’ with a long list of exceptions. Laws requiring equal access to the ballot eventually allow all kinds of underhanded actions to undermine voting rights. And laws prohibiting corruption have diminished dramatically over the last decade. Given the cycle we seem to go through with our laws (egregious violations, dramatic reforms, whittling the reforms into oblivion, rinse, repeat), it is time for new reforms. Our current laws, including the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution, are not up to the tasks they were written for. Our current legislatures, executives, and courts will not restore them on their own, instead, they will fire the investigators and hobble the auditors. It is up to the people to force these changes. Our elected officials must serve us, not kings who give them \$400,000,000 jets or multi-billion-dollar crypto investments.”

Kelcey Patrick-Ferree and Shannon Patrick

“The Republican excuse to defund National Public Radio and Public Broadcasting System for ‘liberal bias’ is indefensible. Iowa’s Reps. Mariannette Miller-Meeks and Ashley Hinson and Sen. Joni Ernst all gleefully declare this to be true. In reality, it is dishonest, dirty politics. Even worse, they use this excuse to defund the entire slate of programs. What is biased about children’s programming? Statewide sporting events? Is the Iowa State Fair a leftist event? Please explain where there is bias in music programming (all kinds ranging from country to classical).”

James Conger

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"Funding for science and education is being slashed. Medicaid, the only healthcare many poor depend on, is being slashed. Long admired institutions of higher learning are being defunded and smeared as 'woke.' Immigrants, many of the law-abiding, taxpaying, essential workers are being beaten and seized by ICE masked thugs, inhumanly detained in unthinkable conditions, and deported without due process to countries they have never lived in. Shamefully, some being swept into the net are actually American citizens...." These distressing developments are hardly the hallmark of a golden age, but instead are paving the way for authoritarian rule and the deterioration of civil society, our economy, and our standing in the world."

Eileen Beran

Update: Department of Administrative Services to Close the Iowa City Research Center of the State Historical Society.

In the August issue of *The Voter* we focused on the state's cost-cutting proposal to close this invaluable resource for the University of Iowa history department and our community. Thanks to those of you who have signed the petition in opposition to the closing. Change.org is an excellent resource for more information. The petition has now reached over 5,000 signatures; the expanded goal is 10,000 signatures. Please join the fight to protect Iowa's history.

<https://www.change.org/p/save-iowa-history-2025-redux?>

The second year of the 91st Iowa Legislative Assembly will convene in four months with a particular focus on policy issues like property tax reform, housing, and infrastructure. A key event of the session will be the potential vote on Senate Joint Resolution 2004, a constitutional amendment to prohibit graduated income taxes, which requires approval in this session to be placed on the November 2026 ballot.

With all the local, state and federal challenges that lie ahead, the Advocacy Committee always welcomes new members. Please consider joining us by signing up at the September 3rd annual Membership Meeting. Share your voice! Help us inform, energize and activate to protect our democracy for all Iowans.

*Kathy Wandro
Advocacy chair*

UMRRILO



The Executive Board of the League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization (UMRRILO) met in Alton, Illinois August 8-11, 2025 for our annual retreat and planning. All five states were represented: Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Missouri. Iowa added two new members to the board, Steve Paulsrud of Muscatine and LWVJC member Diane Duncan Goldsmith. With Tam Prenosil from Dubuque completing the list, we have our three Iowa delegates. We welcomed Shiela Wiegman from Minnesota to co-chair the vice-president position with me. Mary Ellen Miller of Corydon, Iowa continues to lead the organization. Mickey Croyle from Missouri now serves on the LWVUS environmental committee.

The four day meeting included tours of the Water Sewage Treatment Plant in St. Louis, the Mississippi River Museum of Alton, and the Audubon Museum. We also met at the Melvin Price Mississippi lock and dam center.

The Mississippi River is at the top of the endangered waters of the USA. Contributing factors include run-off of nitrates from

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confined animal feeding operations (CAFO) and fertilizers from farm fields, issues exacerbated by drought conditions 2021-2024 in Iowa. The river provides drinking water and recreation for 20 million people. The work of UMRR focuses on nutrient pollution reduction in surface and ground water in the Upper Mississippi Basin and impacts of climate change relative to the environment and human health.

Read more at <https://www.lwvumrr.org/>

Nancy Porter, Vice-President UMRR

MAKING CONNECTIONS

October 8

The LWVJC hosts Making Connections events periodically as part of our mission to educate and engage our members. The League strives to build citizen participation in the democratic process and study key community issues at all levels of government in an unbiased manner. This enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues.

We will start this year's Making Connections series on Wednesday, October 8 with a

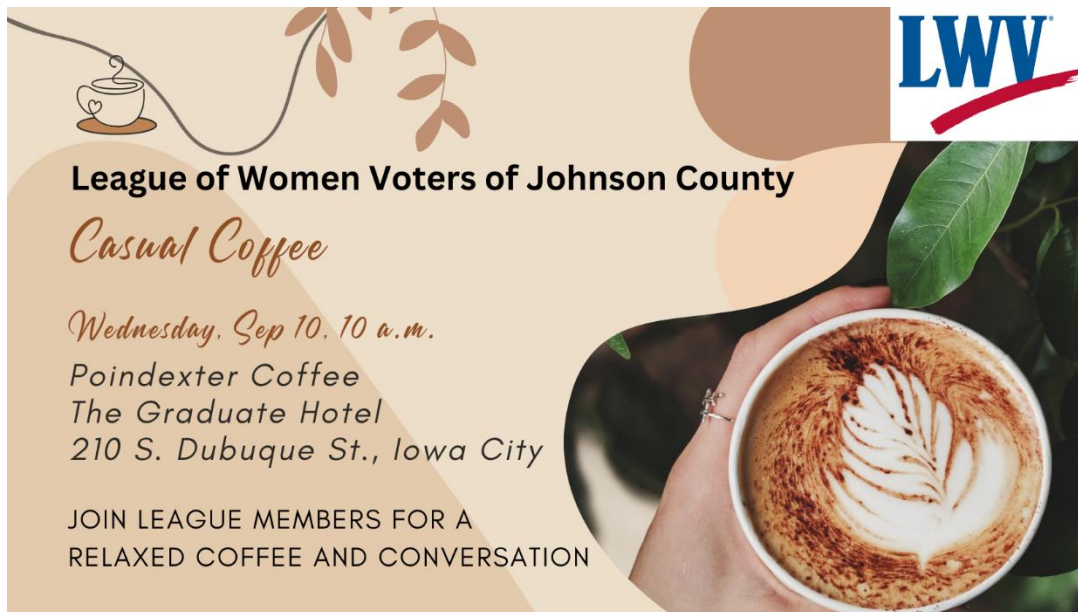
focus on water quality issues. Larry Weber, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at the University of Iowa has agreed to share his expertise on "All Things Water" and to answer our questions. Weber leads the Iowa Watershed Approach, a five-year, statewide research project to enhance Iowa's flood resilience and water quality. He is also the co-founder of the Iowa Flood Center.

For those of you have not attended a Making Connections event, they are casual get-togethers offering opportunities to learn more about an issue as well as connect with other members. League member, Bonnie Boothroy will host. We will start at 5:30 PM at the Boothroy home at 2817 Buckle Down Circle, Iowa City with a social hour prior to Dr. Weber's talk. Beverages and light snacks will be provided.

*Jeanne Bancroft, Gaylen Wobeter,
Vicki Aden and Joan Cook*



*** UPCOMING EVENTS ***



Deborah Turner Book Group

Please join us!
September 15, 2025
5:30-6:45 PM
at the
Coralville Public Library



Book

***Let the People Pick the President: Abolishing the Electoral College* by Jesse Wegman**



LIBRARIES AS DEMOCRACY BUILDERS: FUNDING, FREEDOM, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



**Thursday September 25, 2025
Iowa City Public Library
Meeting Room A
6:30-8:00 p.m.**

**Featuring: Sam Helmick, 2025–2026
President of the American Library
Association and 2023 President
of the Iowa Library Association.**

In this talk, Sam will explore how libraries safeguard democracy by serving as trusted public spaces and skilled civic institutions and why they require sustained funding and strong intellectual freedom protections.

Sponsored by: The League of Women Voters of Johnson County
Find the League online at lwv.org/local-leagues/lwv-johnson-county
Co-sponsored by: Iowa City Public Library

2025 Public Policy Priorities

★ VOTING

Promote equal access to voting and ensure all votes are counted. Adopt automatic voter registration. Enact ranked choice voting. Pass a constitutional amendment allowing Iowans with felony convictions to vote after time served. End electoral college.

🏛️ TRANSPARENCY & CITIZENSHIP

Demand government accountability and transparency by requiring all amendments and bills discussed in committee to be available to the public prior to a vote. Demand timely processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Encourage direct citizen participation by continuing virtual committee and subcommittee meetings. Reinstate gender balance requirements for appointed boards and commissions.

🎓 EDUCATION

Provide oversight and track public funds being used for non-public schools. Require any non-public school receiving public funds to meet the same standards as public schools. Fully fund public schools and reinstate all AEA functions. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare and free four-year-old preschool.

👩‍⚕️ REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Repeal the six-week abortion ban. Make contraception available without prescription and promote programs that help prevent unplanned pregnancies. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

👤 HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Increase state funding for victim services; develop strategies to prevent human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault; and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect victims from criminal prosecution.

💧 ENVIRONMENT

Recognize the need for and fund water quality initiatives. Fully fund REAP. Develop state climate change strategies.

🔫 GUN SAFETY

Enact comprehensive common sense gun safety legislation. Ban assault rifles and military-grade weapons. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal "stand your ground" law, and oppose legislation that allows the carrying of guns in schools.



League of Women Voters of Johnson County

OUR MISSION: *Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.*

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

OUR VALUE: We believe in the power of women and men to create a more perfect democracy.

Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Location	Program
Wednesday, September 3	5 - 7 p.m.	First Presbyterian Church, 2701 Rochester Ave., Iowa City	Fall Reception and Membership Drive
Sunday, September 7	3 - 4:30 p.m. (film) 4:30 - 6 p.m. (Club Fair)	Filmscene at the Chauncey	Screening of the documentary, "Join or Die", followed by a community Club Fair in the Lobby (LWVJC will be there)
Monday, September 8	7 p.m.	Zoom	Monthly LWVJC Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 10	10:00 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee at the Graduate Hotel, 210 S Dubuque St, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Monday, September 15	5:30 p.m.	Coralville Public Library	Deborah Turner Book Club
Tuesday, September 16	Various Times To Be Announced	Various Locations To Be Announced	National Voter Registration Day
Thursday, September 25	6 - 8 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Rooms A, B, and C; Also Livestreamed on the ICPL YouTube channel	Education Committee Program; <i>Libraries as Democracy Builders: Funding, Freedom, and Civic Engagement</i>
Wednesday, October 8	10:00 a.m.	Poindexter Coffee at the Graduate Hotel, 210 S Dubuque St, Iowa City	Casual Coffee
Wednesday, October 8	5:30 p.m.	Bonnie Boothroy's Home	Making Connections: Water Quality Issues with Larry Weber, IIHR Director
Saturday, October 11	11 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Ped Mall in Downtown Iowa City	Voter Registration at Corridor Community Action Network Festival
Monday, October 13	7 p.m.	Zoom	Monthly LWVJC Board Meeting
Thursday, October 16	6:30 - 8 p.m.	Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Rooms A, B, and C; Also Livestreamed on the ICPL YouTube channel	Education Committee Program; <i>Right to Privacy and Government Surveillance</i>
Monday, October 20	5:30 p.m.	Coralville Public Library	Deborah Turner Book Club