



The Voter

August 2025

Monthly Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Helena Area

August 2025 Calendar

(read on for details)

- **Saturday, August 2, 2 pm:** PRIDE PARADE! March with us! [Details here.](#)
- **Monday, August 4, 9:45 am:** Yes! for Helena Schools KICK-OFF Press Event
- **Tuesdays, starting August 5, 10 am:** Members invited to Sip & Share
- **Thursday, August 7, 6 pm:** Speed Date Your Candidates!
- **Saturday, August 9, 10-12 pm:** Postcard Party to get out the vote on 9/9
- **Thursday, August 21, 6 pm:** School Bonds Forum hosted by LWVHA
- **Thursday, August 28, 6 pm:** Book & Discussion Group



LWV Helena Area - Our President's Note

There's no doubt about it--we're living in difficult times. What we're not often seeing or hearing, however, is what is taking place in every city and every state--rallies and registration efforts that convince non-voters to weigh in on our elections, and citizens speaking up to educate and advocate. There are many success stories out there!



With determined searching on the LWVUS site you can find the many actions our national League has been taking to fight for our democracy, often in concert with other dedicated groups--from writing letters to Congress to helping litigate against the most flagrant attacks on our right to vote, reproductive rights, environment, and more. Go to <https://lww.org> and use the "Library" drop-down to click on "Legal Center" to get a full picture. Or click on: <https://www.lww.org/legal-center-search>.

Our state and local Leagues have also been busy. We've actively advocated for the right to due process and habeas corpus for all who reside in the US, regardless of immigration status. We're working to bring local issues to light as well as supporting pressing needs in our own communities. **Look for our Action Alerts** for quick ways to help out with these and other efforts.

Still, take a break from ALL the news when you need to, take a moment to enjoy the natural beauty that surrounds us, and know that the League of Women Voters is continually working to defend our democracy.

Cherri Jones, President
League of Women Voters of the Helena Area



Kick-off Press Event & Rally

Monday, August 4 - 9:45 am

Helena High School - Billings Avenue

Attend the **YES! For Helena Schools kick-off press event** on **Monday, August 4 at 9:45 a.m.** There will be signs available to hold up as speakers discuss the importance of passing the elementary and high school bonds.

Meet outside Helena High School on Billings Avenue. The press event begins at 10:00 a.m. Wear your League button and bring your friends – a large crowd will underscore community support for our schools.



More Good Actions to Support the *Yes! for Helena Schools* Campaign

As you know, LWVHA has, in keeping with our Education Position, been actively supporting the Helena Public Schools bond issues. (We have two districts-- elementary and high school--thus two bonds to pass.) **You can help! How?**

- **Attend a fun-filled Postcard Party!** Help hand-write (already addressed) postcards to voters who are most likely to support the bonds. This has been a proven method to get out the vote. Suggested wording available – just bring your favorite pen and a cup of coffee or tea and join a number of your fellow League members on **Saturday, August 9 from 10:00 a.m. to noon at Lewis & Clark Library**. Snacks provided!
- **Put up a YES! For Helena Public Schools Yard Sign!** These are available at the Helena Area Chamber of Commerce offices, [225 N. Cruse Avenue, Suite A](#). Just mention you're a League member. A staple at the bottom of the sign will keep the wind from blowing it away. Or, if you would like a sign delivered to your house, send an email to info@lwvhelena.org and we will contact you.
- **Write a letter to the editor (LTE)** of the Independent Record that explains why you are supporting the Helena School District bonds! **How to submit a LTE to the Helena IR.**
- **Attend the final Brown Bags & Bonds School Tours** – wear your pin! Lunch is provided. Email info@HelenaChamber.com to RSVP or call (406) 442-4120. You will gain a deep knowledge of the crisis that is looming with our school buildings and provide your own personal perspective for that LTE you want to write.
 - Tuesday, August 5, Capital High School
 - Tuesday, August 12, Helena High School
 - Tuesday, August 19, Kessler Elementary School
- **Sign up to canvas voters!** For non-partisan races like the Helena School Bonds, chatting with a supporter has been shown to get positive results. Person-to-person contact can be a powerful motivating factor! If you like getting to know your neighbors, email info@yesforhelenaschool.com to learn more and sign up!

Speed Date Your Candidates running in the
Municipal Primary Election on September 9





Get to know the candidates for
Helena Mayor and City
Commission

Thursday, August 7 - 6:00 pm

Best Western Great Northern Hotel

REGISTER

Eight of the ten candidates running in the September 9th municipal primary election have confirmed their participation in this event.

Mayoral candidates participating are **Emily Dean, Braxton Hudson, Chris Riccardo,** and **Andy Shirliff**. Sonda Gaub is unable to attend.

City Commission candidates are **Brenton Craggs, Haley McKnight, Melinda Reed,** and **Ben Rigby**. There are two openings on the Helena City Commission. Shawn White Wolf is unable to attend.

This event is co-sponsored by the **Helena Area Chamber of Commerce** and the **League of Women Voters of the Helena Area**, which are local nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations.

For more information, visit the [LWVHA Events Calendar](#).





Save our Tradition of Excellence: School Facilities Matter will help voters understand why **we must act now** to pass the high school and elementary bonds, which will fund rebuilding Helena High School and Kessler Elementary, and make critical upgrades to Capital High School, PAL (Project for Alternative Learning), and the district's central kitchen.

Forum speakers are PAL teacher **Ryan Cooney**, district facilities manager **Todd Verrill**, State Representative **Luke Muszkiewicz**, and School Board Chair **Jennifer McKee**.

Visit these websites for details about the school bonds election:

<https://helenaschoolbond.org> and <https://yesforhelenaschools.com>.

For more information about this forum, visit the [LWVHA Events Calendar](#).





Watch for your ballot in the mail after August 22.

*Information about the **September 9** municipal election in Helena will be available on August 11. Visit <https://www.vote411.org/montana>.*

VOTE411 is the LWVUS-hosted online voter guide that is a complete resource on how to register and vote in our state, and **provides answers to questions posed by the LWVHA to the candidates**. Encourage your friends and others to use VOTE411 for Montana-specific election and candidate information.

Our thanks to Patrice Anderson, Tracy Donaldson, and Deb Sargent for their work updating and launching the VOTE411 info!

All members welcome!

**Tuesdays starting August 5
10:00 am**

**1889 Coffee House
at 1800 Prospect Avenue**



Join our casual group for a beverage and get to know the other members of the LVWHA. We normally do "serious" work at our meetings to help our democracy, but we also need some "downtime" and a chance to socialize with the great members of our organization, so we are meeting weekly at a local coffee shop.

In August we will meet on Tuesdays, starting August 5, at 10:00 am at the 1889 Coffee House (upstairs at 1800 Prospect Ave).

Bring a friend and get to know other members of the League. See you there!



Book & Discussion Group

Thursday, August 28, 6:00 pm via Zoom

With the school facilities bond election coming up on September 9th, our book and discussion group will review and discuss the positions of the LWVHA and LWVMT on education. The positions can be found in the League website. We will also start discussing the need for a Health Care position.

Looking forward to a healthy discussion! We will send a reminder a week before the meeting. ***Click the button below to register for the Zoom link.***

Kathy McNeill, Chair, Book & Discussion Group

Register now to attend the Zoom Meeting

National League Actions & Advocacy

From Montana State President, Rosanne Nash

- **NEW August Recess materials:** LWVUS has created new materials that can be used to hold Congress accountable for the passage of the **One Big Beautiful Bill Act** during the August recess. [Read more.](#)
- The League and nearly 500 organizations joined together to defend the **National Education Association's right to advocate** as Congress and the administration continue retaliating against advocacy groups and silence organizations advocating for the people they serve. [Read more.](#)
- To mark the **60th anniversary of the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965**, LWVUS will send a letter co-signed by state Presidents calling on Congress to pass legislation that will modernize and restore the vital protections of the VRA. [More info.](#)

Tell our Montana U.S. Senators to oppose the SAVE Act

[CLICK HERE](#) TO LEARN MORE about the SAVE Act and send a message to our Senators right from the LWV website.



"The House of Representatives passed the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act for the second time in April 2025. The SAVE Act would require citizenship documentation to register to vote even though voters in every state are already required to affirm or verify their citizenship status when registering.

Now, the Senate must reject this bill to prevent it from becoming law."

Local Government Committee Update

The Local Government Committee and the Observer Corps members have enjoyed taking the month of July off for a well-deserved vacation. Committee meetings and Observer Corps reports will be starting up again in August. The Local Government Committee will next focus on the Helena Forward draft land use plan.

During July, a meeting was held with the League Communications Committee and a plan was developed to make the Observer Corps reports available to the public and community organizations. [Click HERE to access the archive of Observer Corps reports](#). This is an important step forward in the League's commitment to help keep the public informed and build community.

Mary "Mickey" Harlow, Chair, Local Government Committee



Here We Go! Membership Meeting

Tuesday, September 16, 6:00 pm

Lewis & Clark Library - in person

SAVE THE DATE to join us for an informative and fun kick-off to the coming year! Rosanne Nash, President of LWV Montana will attend from Bozeman to update us on the State League's program and activities. Learn how you can get involved in local league committee work, and get to know the other members of the Helena Area League. There will be finger food refreshments.

Look for an agenda and more info in **The Voter** next month.



Welcome to our New Members Joining in June and July!

Ligia Arango
Linda Beischel
Julie Crowley

Deb & Bill Entwistle
Lisa Ferino
Denise Herman
Sheila Hogan

Savannah Olsen
Patricia Sinclair
Margaret Wright



2025-26 Board Officers

President: Cherri Jones
Vice-President: Celeste Jazwinski
Treasurer: Connie Griffith
Secretary: Denise Pengeroth
Past-president: Sharon Haugen

Board Directors

Ann Gilkey
Lynn Hinch
Julie Huntington

Committee Chairs

Book Club: Kathy McNeill
Civics Education: Rebecca Johnson
Communications: Patti Borneman & Becky Piske
Health Care: Sue Hoell & Celeste Jazwinski
Local Government: Mary "Mickey" Harlow
Membership: Wendy Wheeler
Nominating: Sue Hoell
Program: Mary I. Johnson & Ann Gilkey
Student Essay Contest: Ann Gilkey & Sherry Meador
VOTE411: Patrice Anderson & Tracy Donaldson

Coming up in the September 2025 issue of the LWWHA Voter

- GOTV Push - September 9 Election
- September "Here We Go" Meeting
- Sip & Share with Members
- National Voter Registration Day
- Committee Reports
- And more!



Voter Services: Seeking chair and volunteers!

Young Voters Project: Seeking members!

The Voter Editor: Patti Borneman



**Read our statement about Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion**



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