

# TWO BIG ISSUES

**A**lthough the General Assembly will not reconvene until the second Tuesday in January 2025, the state legislature has been at work.

First, they have placed a proposed constitutional amendment on the November ballot:

“Must Section 4, Article II of the Constitution of this State, relating to voter qualifications, be amended so as to provide that only a citizen of the United States and of this State of the age of eighteen and upwards who is properly registered is entitled to vote as provided by law?”

This language would replace the current text of Article II, Section 4:

“Every citizen of the United States and of this State of the age of eighteen and upwards who is properly registered is entitled to vote as provided by law.”

A “yes” on this proposition would mean that we lose “every” in Section 4. We trade inclusion for exclusion.

The League of Women Voters opposes this change as both unnecessary (voting is already limited to citizens in Article II, Section 3, as well as in the federal constitution) and it is potentially damaging (losing a guarantee of voting rights for “every citizen” not otherwise disqualified).

The other big issue is planning for our state’s energy future. The Senate Special Committee on South Carolina’s Energy Future, chaired by Senator Shane Massey and Senator Nikki Setzler, has been meeting since early September. They are attempting to draft a bill to deal with the rapid growth of energy demand in South Carolina.

Why is this committee important? Energy utilities are state-granted monopolies. The State gives our utilities a captive customer base and guaranteed return on investment. As a balance to that, it is the responsibility of the State to protect the public interest, ranging from supporting economic development to ensuring ratepayer fairness. This is done through strong and effective evidence-based regulation. Failure to legislate to ensure this gave us the V. C. Summer debacle, but regulatory reform following that event has greatly improved oversight of our energy providers.

Now, the CEOs of Dominion, Santee Cooper, and Duke Energy have asked that South Carolina abandon basic elements of the system of utility regulation established after the V.C. Summer collapse. The utilities want to replace those effective protections with a weak regulatory regime, a new version of the Base Load Review Act (BLRA) called “capital tracking” that would again bill customers who have received nothing, and guarantee an increased profit. They want to rewrite the missions of the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) and the Public Service Commission (PSC) to bias them towards protecting the specific interests of utility companies rather than the broader public interest. The League has asked the committee not to make these unfair and dangerous changes.

We are also concerned because much of the expected energy demand is from expansion of commercial and industrial users, especially data centers. Data centers provide few jobs to justify a public subsidy but are receiving incentives in energy rates and property taxes. When

utilities are guaranteed a set profit, this can mean that small business and residential ratepayers are subsidizing very profitable mega-corporations like Google. This transfer of costs should be prohibited.

We have not yet heard the committee debate these issues, but it is encouraging that committee members, especially Co-chair Shane Massey, are concerned that our energy regulation remain effective and balanced and that there is fairness in allocating the cost of growth.

Our testimony to the committee did not address the important issue of climate impacts of carbon-based energy generation. We told the committee that we support the work of our colleagues in the conservation community who address those crucial issues. However, hurricane

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# Demonstrating Our Impact

What do you say to people who ask, “What does the League of Women Voters do?” Every organization needs an elevator statement in response to a similar question. Here’s my answer. “The League of Women Voters is a 104-year old, nonpartisan, grassroots voting rights organization working to empower voters and defend democracy through education, advocacy, and litigation, at the local, state, and national levels.”

## *We are registering and reaching thousands of voters with information they need.*

Even though this description is inclusive, we need to expand upon it to tell our story. On the following page, we share data that demonstrates our collective impact during the past fiscal and program year. The data, which is collected from LWVSC activities and our annual survey of our local Leagues, shows that we wield considerable influence!

Thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, we are registering and reaching thousands of voters with information they need — via community events, electronic

billboards, bus signs, social media, eblasts, League in Action, and other advertising. In addition, two LWVSC digital marketing campaigns during the November 2023 municipal elections and the June 2024 primaries focused on low-propensity voters, driving them to LWV’s award-winning VOTE411 online election and candidate guide.

Our efforts were leveraged by a myriad of partnerships at the local and state level. The LWVSC works with other groups in

both our education and advocacy efforts—with the Legal Defense Fund, ACLU, and Healthy Families, Voting Rights, Election Protection, Conservation Voters, Freedom to Read, and CoverSC coalitions.

Our advocacy alerts, monthly legislative updates, *SC Voter* and *Making Democracy Work* newsletters, and frequent testimony by our three volunteer lobbyists at the State House also served to amplify the LWVSC’s voice.

We accomplished all this on a small budget of about \$56,500 supported by



membership dues and donations. More than 76% of our expenses supported programmatic efforts; 16%, general management and LWVUS PMP; and 8% fundraising, with a return of \$9.97 for every dollar invested.

Not reflected in our income and expenses is the value of the time and expertise given by our 13-member board and the *pro bono* assistance of attorneys at Duffy & Young who have worked with us on two major gerrymandering lawsuits, one that continues in this fiscal year.

We extend our gratitude to all our volunteers, partners, and donors!

— Nancy Williams, LWVSC President

The poster features a purple background with yellow and white text. At the top left is the LWV logo and the text 'LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF SOUTH CAROLINA'. The word 'LEAD' is written in large, bold, yellow letters. To the right, 'SAVE THE DATE' is written in yellow, slanted, bold letters. Below 'LEAD', the words 'EDUCATION & ADVOCACY' are written in white inside yellow rounded rectangles. At the bottom right, 'SATURDAY FEBRUARY 1, 2025' is written in white, bold letters, with 'COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA' below it.

# OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT 2023-2024

## GROWING OUR LEAGUE COMMUNITY

- 13** local Leagues in SC
- 2** member-at-large units
- 1,081** members

## INCREASING VOTER ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

- 87,545** voters educated via VOTE411 in 2023 general election and 2024 primary cycles
- 15,410** people received voter registration assistance at 421 events with the help of 376 volunteers
- 120** candidate, issue, and education forums
- 3,212,983** people received information to actively participate in our democracy through voter and citizen education

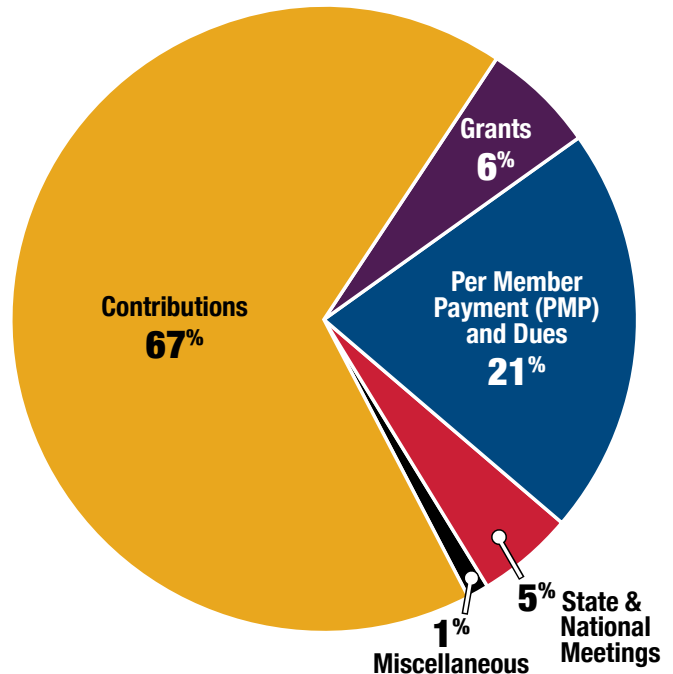
## GROWING OUR ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM

- 35** state partners
- 8** Making Democracy Work Network Updates
- 168** local partners
- 19** oral and/or written testimonies at the State House
- 7** action alerts
- 150** activists attending monthly legislative updates
- 3** registered volunteer lobbyists

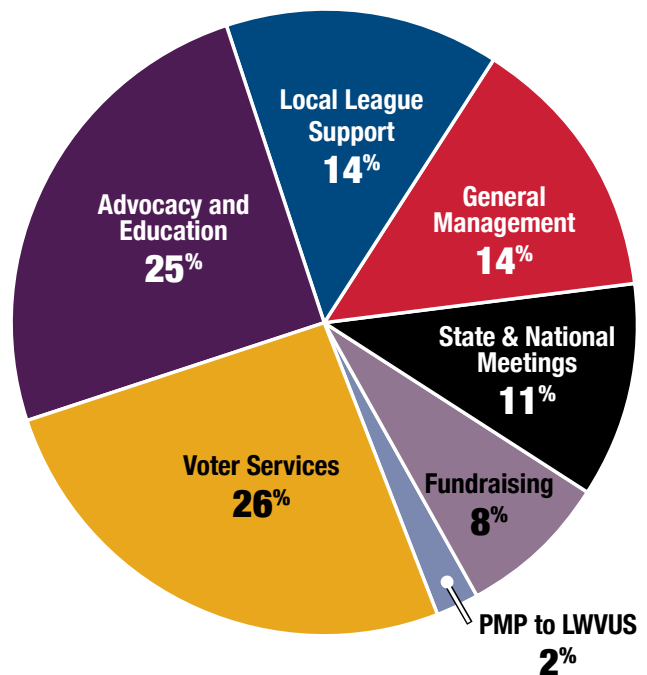
## STRENGTHENING OUR OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

- \$45,000+** raised; 36 percent increase
- 136** donors

## Our Revenue



## Our Expenses



# VOTING LIKE DEMOCRACY DEPENDS ON IT

**F**ree and fair elections are the cornerstone of our democracy. Even though 90% of those surveyed by the SC Election Commission say they trust the election process, we know election workers and local Boards of Elections are being challenged. This 2024 election season has been called the “AI Election” for the amount of mis- and disinformation that is being spread across social and print media and other sources of communication. What’s a voter to do to determine what is truth and what is rumor? The League of Women Voters remains a trusted source of nonpartisan election information, as it has for over a century. Here’s a look at what our Voter Services team is doing to empower voters during this election season.

## National Voter Registration Day (NVRD)

The League of Women Voters has been an active partner of NVRD since its beginning in 2012. Local Leagues across South Carolina reported hosting voter registration events in communities big and small on September 17. These included partnering with groups like the National Council of Negro Women and the NAACP to register high school and college students, as well as partnering with the State Library of South Carolina. In addition to registering new voters, our Voter Services teams shared election information including early voting, absentee voting, and asking registered voters to make a pledge to vote so we can follow up with them to Get Out the Vote.

## LWVSC Social Media Campaign

Thanks to many generous donations, the LWVSC has launched its most ambitious social media campaign yet to promote VOTE411. We are targeting households in

every zip code across the state with women 18-35 who have not registered to vote as well as those who have registered but rarely vote. This data allows us to reach women in both rural and urban areas. The register to vote campaign began August 26 and ran until October 6. Early data shows thousands of women have gone to [scvotes.gov](https://scvotes.gov) to register as well as to VOTE411 to check out its information. The second part of the campaign focuses on getting out the vote and is providing information on early voting and ballot and candidate information.

## VOTE 411 Pressure Campaign

Eleven of our fifteen local Leagues are participating in VOTE411 this election year, covering hundreds of races across the state — from congressional, state house and senate races to local sheriff, mayor, council, school board, and commissioner races. Our volunteers not



Younger women received these LWVSC social media messages.

only invite candidates to participate in our nonpartisan voters’ guide, but they follow up with candidates yet to respond to the questions posed by the League. We’ve also asked League members to help by checking VOTE411 to see if their candidates have posted their information and, if not, to contact them to remind them that it is critical that they do so. When we exert pressure to respond, we’re helping to make VOTE411 more effective. When candidates respond, they are helping to build a stronger, more informed electorate.

—Joan Zaleski,

LWVSC Vice President, Voter Services

## Need help or have a concern on Election Day?

Our Election Protection Coalition partners help administer

The Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law’s helpline:

866-OUR-VOTE  
[lawyerscommittee.org](https://lawyerscommittee.org)

## Two Big Issues

*Continued from page 1*

Helene has provided a painful reminder that more frequent and more extreme weather events because of human-caused and human-amplified climate change are happening now; and their cost — including in human lives — is immense.

The bill produced by this committee will be debated in the 2025 session. League members will need to advocate for preservation of a strong system of utility regulation that is fair to everyone and protects our long-term interest in a healthy economy in a healthy environment.

—Lynn S. Teague,

LWVSC Vice President, Issues & Advocacy

# YOUR VOTE AND THE ELECTORAL COLLEGE

**D**o you know for whom you're voting when you vote for president and vice president?

Because it is the Electoral College that officially elects the president and vice president of the United States, when we South Carolina voters make our choices—whether for the Republican, Democratic, or other certified party candidate—we are voting for nine electors who are committed to vote for that candidate. Why nine? South Carolina's number of electors is equal to the number of seats in the US House of Representatives (7) and the US Senate (2).

At least 60 days prior to Election Day, the political parties file their electors' names and their candidate declarations. After South Carolina's popular vote for president and vice president is certified, electors of the winning candidate convene on December 16 and cast their separate ballots for their declared candidates for president and vice president.

Since electors' names don't appear on the ballot, we voters don't know who they are. We're assured, though, that they must vote for the candidate they initially declared. Any elector who votes contrary to their declaration will be guilty of violating the election laws of South Carolina and upon conviction will be punished according to law. There were no "faithless electors" in 2020.

On January 6, 2025, the states' electoral votes will be counted during a joint session of the US Congress. If no candidate for president were to receive a majority of the electoral votes, the president would be elected by the House of Representatives, with each state receiving one vote. If no candidate for vice president were to receive a majority of the electoral votes, the vice president would be selected by a majority vote of the Senate. This has occurred twice in our nation's history and could conceivably happen in the close and contentious 2024

presidential race. There are other scenarios in which the electoral votes of a state might be challenged on January 6.

These scenarios and the fact that the winner of the popular vote has lost the election five times — twice in recent years — are reasons to question the fairness of this process of electing a president. The president should be elected by direct popular vote — rather than by the votes of 538 electors — so that the vote of every person, regardless of where they live, will count equally.

In 2024, seven "battleground" states, whose 93 electoral votes can swing a close election, will determine the outcome of the presidential election. Since the winner takes all electoral votes in all but two of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, many voters' votes simply won't count.

The League of Women Voters has supported the abolition of the Electoral

*In 2024, LWVUS launched its One Person, One Vote campaign to eliminate the Electoral College by constitutional amendment.*

College since the 1970s. In 2024, LWVUS launched its One Person, One Vote campaign to eliminate the Electoral College by constitutional amendment. The LWVSC will launch its own effort in support of this "moonshot goal" at its 2025 convention.

In the meantime, more information can be found on the LWVUS website: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/advocacy-litigation/abolishing-electoral-college-resources>

## Need Ideas for Holiday Gifts?

Consider empowering your South Carolina friends and relatives with the gift of *Know Your State: South Carolina Government*. First printed by the LWVSC in 1972 and recently updated and edited by past LWVSC co-president Holley Ulbrich, *Know Your State* is a compendium of information about our state's constitution, branches of government, voting and elections, public education, finance and taxation, and local government and home rule. Now in its sixth printing, *Know Your State* is a guide to understanding how government works in our state and a tool for effective citizen advocacy.

Also available for purchase is our own Sheila Haney's *In Her Shoes: A History of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina, 1920-2020*. This colorful history begins with the efforts of suffragists such as Eulalie Salley and features seven other remarkable women who've worked over the years to make democracy work for all of us.

Each book is only \$15. Go to [lwvsc.org](http://lwvsc.org) and order your personal and gift copies via Amazon today!



## Around the State



The Post & Courier panelists join LWV Charleston for a lively discussion of fact checks and misinformation.

### Countering Mis- and Disinformation in Charleston

How can we know what's true? LWV Charleston tackled the timely topic of fact checks and misinformation in partnership with *The Post and Courier* newsroom at a well-attended event on September 5.

Moderated by Executive Editor Jeff Taylor, the lively session provided insights into how local journalists hold themselves accountable to facts in their reporting. Regardless of where they turn for information during this election season and beyond, citizens must be savvy in identifying and rejecting both false information that is spread unintentionally ("misinformation") and false information that is spread with intent to deceive ("disinformation").

Four panelists shared engaging stories and answered questions. Reporter John Ramsey spoke about investigating a tip on medical prescription fraud that seemed, at first, too wild to believe. Reporter Tony Bartelme shared notes from a rigorously fact-checked piece, and drew the evening's biggest laugh when he admitted, 'Lies are catnip for us', suggesting that good reporters are at their best when sniffing out truth. Editorial Writer Robert Behre discussed facts in the context of opinion commentary. Cal Lundmark, Digital Managing Editor, explained the challenge of elevating breaking news to



LWVHHI-BA Co-President Kay Roshnow (left) moderates a municipal candidate forum in the Council Chambers of the Hilton Head Town Hall.

readers through alerts and headlines, without overplaying stories for effect. And when Executive Editor Jeff Taylor vowed, "I'd much rather be right than first... *always*", he articulated a standard that distinguishes a reliable news source.

This program also presented an opportunity to share information about the new LWVUS position on Local News and Democracy, which includes support for education that promotes news literacy. For both partners, the event provided a public service while also yielding new prospects for membership or subscriptions.

LWV Charleston has created a new Truth and Democracy page on its website with video of this event, as well as resources and infographics provided by News Literacy Project and other reputable sources.

— Cara Erickson,  
LWV Charleston VP, Communications

### Educating Voters on Hilton Head Island

LWV of Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Area sponsored and moderated a candidate forum featuring six candidates competing for the three open positions on the nonpartisan Hilton Head Town Council. Over one hundred people attended the forum, which was also broadcast by Beaufort County TV.

### Registering Young Voters in Columbia

LWV of Columbia Area League recruited 48 volunteers who reached 943 students at four area high school and two college registration events. The League also created a PowerPoint illustrating the history of the League and voting in America for use in classrooms.



Carole Walker, Sharon Ayling (suffragist), and Pam Craig register eligible students at Spring Hill H.S. in the Lexington-Richland 5 School District.

# WE APPRECIATE OUR DONORS

We couldn't do it without you! LWVSC is grateful to each and every one of our donors. Your financial support helped advance our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy. Please know your gifts fueled our ability to inform voters about issues and candidates and strengthened our advocacy efforts. Together we've made a difference in South Carolina. THANK YOU!

## **Sarah Leverette** **\$1000+**

Rachel Dieter  
Sharon Fratepietro  
Elayne Goodman  
Nancy Moore  
Elizabeth Oakman  
Elizabeth Patterson  
John Shockley  
Meira Warshauer  
Lawson Wetli  
Harriet Williams  
Nancy Williams  
Stephanie Wood

## **Defender of Democracy** **\$500 - \$999**

LWV Alameda  
California  
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Dyan Cohen  
John and Robin Dean  
Connie Deerin  
Rick and Mary Agnes  
Garman  
Cynthia Flynn & Guy  
Jones  
Eleanor Hare  
Marianne McGrath  
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## **Suffragist** **\$300 - \$499**

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Hannah E. Parker  
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## **Advocate** **\$200 - \$299**

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## **Supporter** **\$100 - \$199**

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## **In Kind**

Christine U. Prado  
Duffy & Young, LLC

## **Legacy Society**

Laurel Moxon Suggs  
Lynn S. Teague

This list reflects donations received between 7/1/23 and 6/30/24. Any received after 6/30/24 will be included in the 2024-25 edition of this publication.

## Help Defend Democracy

There are so many ways to support the LWVSC. Make a gift in a way that is meaningful to you.

### Become a Monthly Donor

Our democracy needs defending every single day. Your monthly recurring donation will provide ongoing support to oppose threats to our democracy.

### Bequests

The bequest is the most common form of planned giving. With a bequest, you may make provision in your will, designating either a dollar amount or a percentage of your estate to the LWVSC. Bequests should be prepared and executed with your attorney's assistance.

### Gifts of IRAs

A qualified charitable distribution (QCD) is a wonderful option for people 70 ½ and older. That's because it allows you to make a gift — from \$100 to \$105,000 — without the distribution counting as taxable income.

This giving option is a direct contribution made from your traditional or Roth IRA to the LWVSC and is a great option if you don't normally itemize your charitable deductions.

### Employee Matching Gifts

Many employers will match employee donations to eligible nonprofit organizations. It's an easy way to double your contribution to us. Contact your employer's HR or community giving department to find out if they have a matching gift program.

Stephanie Wood, LWVSC Treasurer and Johnson & Johnson retiree, understands the value of doubling her dollars to advance our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy: "My contribution to the LWVSC is doubled by my former employer. The process is so easy. I just complete the matching gift application and mail it with my personal contribution."

For further information or questions, please contact Karen Petrucelli, Development Associate, at 412-310-7537 or [kpconsultingllc@yahoo.com](mailto:kpconsultingllc@yahoo.com).

## Welcome Karen Petrucelli, LWVSC Development Associate!



Karen joined our team in June and will focus on working to strengthen relationships with LWVSC donors and others to secure funds.

She comes to us with an extensive background in development with over forty years of experience as a fundraising consultant and as a staff member for various organizations. Karen has worked with a wide range of non-profit organizations conducting successful

annual, capital and planned giving fundraising programs.

Ms. Petrucelli is an active member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, SC Lowcountry Chapter, and a volunteer for the Sea Island Hunger Awareness Foundation and the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Charleston.

Says Karen, "I'm excited to be a part of the LWVSC organization and look forward to working with our volunteers and donors to advance our mission."

Post Office Box 8453  
Columbia, SC 29202

## SC VOTER

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Established in 1920, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages people to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. League membership is open to any person who subscribes to the purposes and policy of the League. All members receive the *SC Voter*, email communications and news from their local League.

Prefer a digital newsletter only? Email us.

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# OUR VOTE IS OUR POWER

Through our votes, elections make our voices heard. The League of Women Voters of South Carolina protects and empowers voters to ensure that our elections are fair, accessible, and representative of all Americans. As Election Day approaches, we need your help and support now more than ever. Your generosity will make an impact in empowering voters and defending democracy.



Donate online: [lwvsc.org](http://lwvsc.org)

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