

The League Is Awake to the World!

2018 LWVTX Convention

Thank you all! A special thanks to the Nominating Committee, who worked hard to find members for the League of Women Voters of Texas Board who had the necessary skills to empower voters and defend democracy.

In 1919, the League was founded here in Texas. That was not the end but rather a beginning. We secured women the right to vote and then we continued to work to ensure other citizens had equal access to their freedom to vote. Today the League empowers all voters to improve their local, state, and national governments.

I would like to start with a quote by Margaret Atwood from *The Handmaid's Tale*:

“Now I'm awake to the world. I was asleep before. That's how we let it happen. When they slaughtered Congress, we didn't wake up. When they blamed terrorists and suspended the Constitution, we didn't wake up then, either. Nothing changes instantaneously. In a gradually heating bathtub, you'd be boiled to death before you knew it.”

The League is and always has been **AWAKE** to the world!

The future of democracy in Texas and in the United States is tied closely to the work of the League of Women Voters.

The League spends much of our energy in Texas doing the important work of Empowering Voters.

- Register voters
- First Vote programs
- Voters Guide
- Educate voters about election laws
- Programs about issues in our communities
- Provide Candidate Forums

We also work hard Defending Democracy through advocacy

- We advocate for fair voting and election laws.
- We fight for redistricting reform
- We work for a fair and accurate census.

No matter how hard we try though, we will never finish our work empowering voters and defending democracy—and we can't do it alone. There are always

new citizens to register, new communities to help, another election, another Voters Guide.

Why is it so hard for League members to just relax and enjoy the hill country evening, without thinking about new and more effective ways to empower voters and defend democracy?

Why is it so difficult for League members to just plop down with a cup of coffee in the morning, read the news, and go about their day without ranting about the damage that is happening to our democracy?

Why is it so difficult just to lie in bed at night and drift off to sleep without thinking about how we can and should be working together using every tool we have to make our democracy a better one?

Because League members are AWAKE TO THE WORLD!

I encourage all League members to keep a “Democracy List” of important work that needs to be accomplished. I keep mine on my Google Tasks app. It is right next to my entirely too full Democracy Google Calendar. It makes me feel so good to check off a task that’s been accomplished. Unfortunately, as soon as one task gets checked off, I add three more.

Here are three items I have added to my Democracy list

- Create new partnerships
- Promote voting and elections
- Use new tools and technology effectively

Take a moment to think about what is on your Democracy list?

Empowering Voters and defending democracy is important work!

Now let’s think about how we can amplify our work!

Be Awake to New Contacts

If you have lunch or dinner with a friend or coworker, or sit next to a stranger at a meeting or event, strike up a conversation with them and invite them to find a way to empower voters in their lives. These acquaintances you encourage will have new ideas, talents, experiences, and resources. Listen to them. Encourage them. Be open to their new ideas! They may or may not join the League as members but they may find important League work they can help with or support, and then share their knowledge with others.

More and more Texans are AWAKE TO THE WORLD

It is so exciting to see Leagues working with Texans who have a newfound enthusiasm for Democracy!

- Leagues all over the state joined with students on the March for Our Lives protests around the state and registered voters.
- Youth memberships now have no PMP from LWVUS and LWVTX.
- Leagues at Large can now form with as little as five members.

It is a fantastic time to be a part of the League

Be Awake to new ideas!

Here are a few ...

- Research ways to make the Voters Guide more accessible, user friendly, and readable!
 - And I know some of you are working on this already!
- Use Facebook Live video streaming. LWV Comal plans to use streaming for their Land & Water review. Leagues and communities all across Texas can participate.

What a great idea!

Be Awake to New Partnerships.

- The League is partnering with other organizations such as Texas Association of Business, Texas public radio and TV to share our Voters guide on VOTE411.org.
- We are working with Election Protection to ensure all registered voters have access to the polls.
- We joined the Texas Educators vote coalition to help create a culture of voting in Texas.
- The League is improving Civics Education in Texas high schools. The energetic partnership between LWV Dallas and the Dallas community college has created a new and fantastic “BeATexasVoter.org” Civics Education curriculum.
- Always Be on the lookout for partners who will promote VOTE411.

Leagues are awake! Be proud! Share what you accomplish!

- Check out the new and improved LWVTexas and LWVDallas websites which were super easy to create and maintain using the MyLo web design. The MyLo websites coordinate state leagues with local Leagues and can be viewed easily on cellphones, tablets, and laptops. Could your League use it?
- Check out the Get Out the Vote program which addresses the challenges in this low-voting state. What League resources are you using. Share your successes!
- Share your work with your community on Social Media, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram

- Be excited about the increasing number of Texans following Leagues on social media.

Our work empowering voters and defending democracy is amazing.
What is missing?

Where are the futuristic, innovative and cutting-edge ideas that will amplify our efforts to empower voters and defend democracy?

- Be AWAKE to new resources, tools, and modern technology available to empower Texas voters.
 - Social media is a cost-effective modern tool that Leagues can use right now to educate their community about voting and elections, local government, and issues. Leagues can easily boost posts to their community.
 - Our Fund a Need uses new technology with “Text To Vote.” Texting will provide Voter Education and will amplify our Get Out the Vote efforts to reach more young Texas voters!
- Be AWAKE to new ideas and new technology to enhance our effectiveness.
 - One Click Politics was a new tool we used during the last legislative session. We didn’t know if it was going to work, but we were willing to give it a try. It turned out to be a fantastic new tool that enhanced our advocacy.
 - New technology will help local Leagues to communicate and share ideas. Check out Facebook groups, Google groups, and video conferencing and webinars.

We should all be awake to those outside the League

- LWV Dallas is partnering with Community Colleges.
- LWV CyFair is partnering with the school district to get teachers, students, and staff all registered and ready to vote!
- A group of individuals interested in our position on redistricting reached out to the LWVTX. They are now members leading our advocacy in redistricting and the Census.

I encourage you to use all the tools and resources available to you in your work empowering voters and defending democracy. Share your innovative ideas with me and other Leagues. Surprise us with your ideas!

Update your Democracy tool list with new ideas, new contacts, new partnerships, and new technology.

As Margaret Atwood warned in the *Handmaid’s Tale*:

“Now I’m awake to the world. I was asleep before. That’s how we let it happen.”

The League is awake and fighting for our democracy!

If you are awake too, then Texans will be "AWAKE TO THE WORLD"!