The National League of Women Voters Celebrates 100th Birthday!

The League of Women Voters was established 100 years ago on February 14, 1920. To celebrate, more than 320 local and state Leagues recently held activities to recognize how “Women Power the Vote.”

“For 100 years, Leagues have registered voters, informed their communities on the issues, advocated in their legislatures, and helped shape their communities and this country,” said Chris Carson, president of the board of the League of Women Voters of the United States. “We only saw it fitting that we should celebrate this milestone with the kind of grassroots activism our members and supporters have embraced for an entire century.”

LWV of Missouri used social media and e-mail to send suffragist valentines to legislators, League members and friends. Missouri’s eight local Leagues held voter registration drives across the state. Here are details about some of the other special activities and events in Missouri:

LWV of Kansas City/Jackson/Clay/Platte Counties
Website: http://www.lwvkc.org/

Kansas City Mayor Quinton Lucas presented League President Sandy Eeds a proclamation honoring the local League for 100 years of educating and informing voters. Members were greeted and thanked by all members of the City Council. In turn, the League presented each member of the city council with a certificate of appreciation for running for office and serving the public.

The Kansas City League also held a program on activist women’s organizations in Kansas City by K. David Hanzlick, the author of Benevolence, Moral Reform, Equality: Women’s Activism in Kansas City, 1870-1940.

LWV of Columbia-Boone County
Website: lwvcbc.org

LWV of Columbia-Boone County held a public program called “Every day in every way, how local elections affect your daily life” with presentations by Barbara Hoppe, a former member of the Columbia City Council, and Janet Thompson, the current Northern Boone County Commissioner, both LWV members. The LWVCBC mailed a special valentine signed by LWV members to 125 local elected officials to thank all of their elected officials for their service. LWVCBC members also registered voters several days that week.
Message from the President

Our founders fought to get the 19th Amendment passed 100 years ago, and we honor that long struggle by continuing to educate and empower all voters so that each can participate fully in our democracy.

In Missouri’s 100th year we are particularly challenged to work to maintain elections that are free, fair, and accessible to all voters. We celebrate all League members, past and present, who have contributed their time and efforts to sustain our precious democracy.

— Evelyn Maddox

In the Words of Carrie Chapman Catt
Founder of the LWV

“To get that word, male, out of the Constitution, cost the women of this country 52 years of pauseless campaign; 56 state referendum campaigns; 480 legislative campaigns to get state suffrage amendments submitted; 47 state constitutional convention campaigns; 277 state party convention campaigns; 30 national party convention campaigns to get suffrage planks in the party platforms; 19 campaigns with 19 successive Congresses to get the federal amendment submitted, and the final ratification campaign.” ~ Carrie Chapman Catt

“The world taught women nothing skillful and then said her work was valueless. It permitted her no opinions and said she did not know how to think. It forbade her to speak in public and said the sex had no orators. It denied her the schools, and said the sex had no genius. It robbed her of every vestige of responsibility, and then called her weak. It taught her that every pleasure must come as a favor from men and when, to gain it, she decked herself in paint and fine feathers, as she had been taught to do, it called her vain.” ~ Carrie Chapman Catt

“Everybody counts in applying democracy. And there will never be a true democracy until every responsible and law-abiding adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own inalienable and unpurchaseable voice in government.” ~ Carrie Chapman Catt

“The vote has been costly. Prize it … understand what it means and what it can do for your country.”
~ Carrie Chapman Catt

Guide to State Action

Here is a link to the Missouri “Guide to State Action”

Impact on Issues

The 2018-2020 Impact on Issues from LWVUS can now be purchased from Amazon for $5.95 plus shipping (no shipping charge on Amazon Prime), or downloaded free at LWV.org. It is also available on Kindle on Amazon.
LWV Day of Action—2020
(continued from page 1)

LWV of Metro St. Louis
Website: http://lwvstl.org/

LWV of Metro St. Louis volunteers delivered 100 cookies to workers at several local election authorities on Valentine’s Day. One “historical hometown heroine” was featured on social media each day that week, including the woman from Hannibal, Marie Byrum, who was the first in the U.S. to vote after the 19th Amendment was ratified.

The St. Louis League is also hosting Suffragist Cinema on March 8 with the movie Iron Jawed Angels: Lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way that stars Hilary Swank, Frances O’Connor, Julia Ormond and Angelica Huston. After the film at the St. Louis County Library Headquarters, there will be a discussion of women’s equality in the 100 years since the League of Women Voters was founded.

LWV of Sedalia/Pettis County

The Sedalia League presented a history lesson of women’s suffrage since 1848 and the formation of the League. State Fair Community College teachers agreed to give extra credit for students who attend and write about what they learned from the event.

LWV-Southwest Missouri (Greene, Christian, Webster Counties)
Website: www.lwsvwmo.org (New site just went live Feb. 14!)

Ann Elwell and Marge Bramer gave a 5-minute interview with reporter Jennifer Abreu, Ozarks Live News, and Marge had a guest column on the League's 100th birthday that ran, with a large photo of suffragists, on Feb. 14 in the Springfield News-Leader.

They received three proclamations from the mayors of Springfield, Nixa, and Ozark (see photo on Page 5). They held a “For the Love of the Vote” social at the Alamo Drafthouse Taproom and manned a voter registration table in the Alamo Theater's main hallway. In addition, they held voter registration at a domestic violence shelter and gave a presentation called, "Voting Matters" at Drury University.
Other news from LWVSWMO:

Empowering voters whose voices often go unheard is a major focus in Southwest Missouri. Members are holding voter registration events at the Point in Time homeless count, homeless youth count, Harmony House family violence center, Rare Breed homeless youth shelter, Concerts and Conversations, high school and college voter registrations, treatment court graduations, Taxapalooza (tax preparation assistance for low-income individuals) and other events where young voters and under-registered voters can gain entry into our democratic process. They are partnering with community groups, including Community Partnership of the Ozarks, the Springfield Regional Arts Council, and the Alamo Drafthouse theater. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is our primary focus for members, with a wonderful presentation by Dr. Hannah Harris, Missouri State University, at our January unit meetings.

— Marge Bramer

PHOTO ID NOT REQUIRED

The Missouri Supreme struck down a portion of Missouri’s voter ID law in January saying the affidavit voters without a photo ID were asked to sign was misleading. Rep. John Simmons then introduced a bill to rewrite the affidavit and eliminate the option of using non-photo IDs. HB1600 would also not require voters to be notified in advance about changes in the law.

Voter Protection Coalition leader and League member Denise Lieberman testified against HB1600, calling it an attempt to reinstate a strict photo ID requirement. The following forms of ID are acceptable to cast a regular ballot: non-expired Missouri driver/non-driver license, U.S. passport; military ID; voter notification card; ID from the state or federal government or a Missouri college or trade school; and a current utility bill, bank statement, paycheck or other government document with name and current address.

Voters without any form of ID can cast a provisional ballot. Votes will count if they return to the polling place with a valid ID or if the signature matches the one on file.

VOTE411 OFFERS INFO ON PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

VOTE411.org is now live online with unbiased information on the candidates running for U.S. President in Missouri’s March 10 presidential preference primary. The online guide includes information in English and Spanish on the candidates listed on the Republican, Democratic, Constitution, Libertarian and Green Party ballots. Users can compare the responding candidates’ positions on several issues, including secure elections, immigration, climate change and gun violence.

Volunteers are also working to gather information on hundreds of candidates and ballot issues for the April 7 municipal elections. Voters statewide can use VOTE411.org for all four elections in 2020.
**Fight for Fair Maps**

The Missouri Senate recently approved legislation (SS3/SJR38) to ask voters to replace Clean Missouri’s redistricting reforms with a process that would allow an unprecedented level of racial and political gerrymandering. The House has a substitute, HJR115, but could approve the Senate resolution without changes.

Nancy J. Miller, co-president of LWV of Metro St. Louis, participated in a panel on Clean Missouri at the St. Charles Community College on Feb. 11. She defended Amendment 1’s redistricting process that calls for maps to be fair and competitive as well as compact. She said having an independent demographer draw the initial maps enables a more transparent process, instead of relying on a commission meeting behind closed doors.

“Missouri voters do not want to drop Amendment 1’s independent demographer, give political parties more power, hide the data used for the final maps, or set a weaker race equity standard,” LWVMO President Evelyn Maddox said in written testimony to a House committee hearing on HJR76 and HJR101. Maddox said leaders of both houses should be reviewing the applications of qualified candidates for the new state demographer “instead of suggesting that voters were confused and need to revisit this issue.”

“The gerrymandering plans moving in the legislature would open the door to not counting everyone in future maps, cutting out children and non-citizens from the state’s population for purposes of redistricting,” LWVMO Secretary Louise Wilkerson and John Bowman, President of the St. Louis County NAACP said in a letter published by the *St. Louis American*. “This is part of a devious long-term national strategy to further divide our country and undermine the principles of representative democracy.”

Metro St. Louis Vice President Angie Dunlap defended Clean Missouri at a Senate Rules Committee hearing in January. She said Amendment 1 reforms strengthen all voters’ voices. “For 100 years the League of Women Voters has worked for an accessible, transparent and representative government. Today we continue the effort for accessibility and transparency. Today we continue to work for FAIR maps to have a truly representative government.”

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**Gerrymandering, explained**

Three different ways to divide 50 people into five districts:

1. **Perfect representation**
   - 60% blue, 40% red
   - 3 blue districts, 2 red districts
   - Blue wins

2. **Compact, but unfair**
   - 5 blue districts, 0 red districts
   - Blue wins

3. **Neither compact nor fair**
   - 2 blue districts, 3 red districts
   - Red wins

Adapted from Stephen Nass
CONGRESS MUST REMOVE DEADLINE SO THE ERA CAN BECOME A PERMANENT PART OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

In January, the Virginia State legislature ratified the Equal Rights Amendment, becoming the 38th state to do so and achieving support from the three-fourths of states required for the ERA to become a constitutional amendment.

When the ERA passed Congress in 1972, lawmakers attached a 1977 ratification deadline to it, which they later extended to 1982. The League of Women Voters of the United States sent a letter to the United States Congress urging them to remove the ratification deadline on the ERA.

“Women have waited decades to see the ERA pass, and this is the perfect way to kick off 2020, a year that celebrates 100 years of women’s voting rights,” said Chris Carson, president of the board of directors of the League of Women Voters of the United States. “It’s time for Congress to remove the ERA deadline and make this dream a reality.”

After the 1972 passage of the ERA in Congress, the League took on a nationwide pressure campaign to ratify the amendment in the states that continued through the 1970s. Local and state Leagues continued to push for ratification in their states even after the deadline passed. Now that the ERA has been ratified, the League of Women Voters is urging Congress to remove the deadline and finally incorporate the amendment into our Constitution.

“American women need the ERA, now more than ever,” said Virginia Kase, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the United States. “The League will not stop fighting for equality under the law and pushing to see the ERA become the next amendment to the U.S. Constitution.”

Over the last few years, League members around the country have worked to advance the ERA by testifying at hearings, rallying voters, lobbying legislatures, and building support for the amendment through coalition work with partner organizations. Missouri is one of the states that has not ratified the ERA. Senator Jill Schupp’s ERA bill did have a hearing in 2019.

On February 13, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a resolution to nullify the deadline to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment following Virginia becoming the 38th state to ratify the amendment last month. It now waits for the U.S. Senate to vote on it.

OPOSE CHANGING INITIATIVE PETITION PROCESS

The General Assembly is considering several proposals to make it harder for citizens to bring forward and enact initiative petitions.

Senator Seder’s SJR31 is moving to change the Constitution to make it almost impossible for citizen-initiated measures to get on the ballot. From needing 8 percent of registered voters in six Congressional districts to sign a petition, it would require 15% in all eight districts. It would also require a 2/3 vote for passage. Just five of the 13 initiative measures that passed in recent years had a 2/3 vote.

Similar bills are being considered in the House. HJR102 would require signature thresholds to be met in two-thirds of the U.S. House districts. HCS/HJR97 would allow the General Assembly to amend or block petitions, with a lower vote requirement for measures it approved.

All of these proposals would make an already difficult and expensive task much harder to complete.
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2020 CALENDAR

February 14: The National League of Women Voters was formally organized in Chicago in 1920.

March 8: The St. Louis League presents the movie Iron Jawed Angels: Lead Follow or Get out of the Way followed by a discussion of women’s equality in the 100 years since the League was founded.
St. Louis County Library Headquarters.

March 13: LWVMO Board Meeting in Columbia

May 30: LWVMO Spring Conference, Jefferson City


Mark Your Calendar!

Saturday, May 30, 2020

“Power the Vote”

LWVMO Spring Conference
Jefferson City
The Missouri VOTER is published bi-monthly at the League of Women Voters of Missouri (St. Louis). Subscriptions are $2 per year.

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