

# News You Can Use

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT

*January 2023*

And just like that we are halfway through the first month of the new year.

For the League of Women Voters of Illinois, this means we are gearing up for the third and fourth Illinois elections in a one year period, connecting with legislators of the recently sworn in 103rd General Assembly, and continuing to advocate for the full and fair implementation of bills signed into law during the 102nd General Assembly.

We are focused on ensuring free, fair and accessible elections on February 28 and April 4 and providing nonpartisan voter education through the [Illinois Voter Guide](#) and candidate forums across the state.

We are energized to advocate for the next rounds of legislation to improve the lives of people in communities across the state: voting rights, community safety, access to education and healthcare, environmental justice.

Come make a difference with the League this year! Join the 3500 members who are passionate about the League's mission: Defending Democracy and Empowering Voters.

Increase the impact of your voice on the issues that matter most to you.

Join the League!

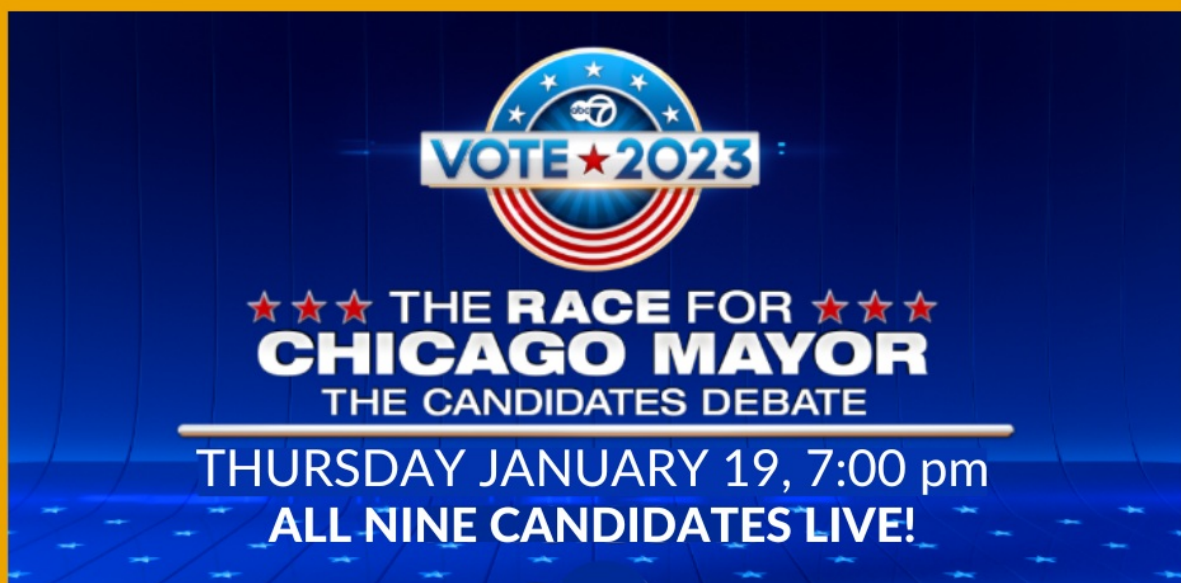
Make a donation!

Your support can be the difference for Illinois—let's do this together in 2023.

With gratitude,



[Allyson E. Haut, Ph.D.](#)  
President



Building on a longstanding relationship, the League of Women Voters of Illinois and the LWV of Chicago team up with Chicago's ABC7 and Univision for this Chicago Mayoral Candidate debate, Thursday, January 19, 2023.

All nine candidates will face off during the 90 minute debate, moderated by ABC7 Eyewitness News anchor Judy Hsu along with ABC7 political reporter Craig Wall and Univision anchor Enrique Rodriguez.

The debate will stream live on [abc7chicago.com](http://abc7chicago.com), ABC7's 24/7 digital stream and News App, ABC7's YouTube account and Facebook, and air on ABC7's 7.2 channel at 7:00 pm. Univision will simultaneously translate and air live on Univision's digital platforms: website, App, YouTube channel and Facebook page.

On Sunday, January 22, the debate will air on UNIMAS (WXFT-TV) at 4:00 pm and on ABC7's main channel, 7.1 at 10:30 p.m.

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Join the League of Women Voters of Illinois for our annual look at current issues, along with legislation being considered in the Illinois General Assembly. Learn from

legislators and nonpartisan experts—be informed and prepared so you can advocate for change in your community and state.

A full day of programming on Zoom provides opportunities for anyone with internet access to take a deeper look at issues facing Illinois today. Learn about defending democracy against threats to elections and how to use grass roots power to get a bill passed. Choose from sessions on racism in schools, carbon capture/sequestration, juvenile justice, housing, gun violence and reproductive rights.

**Use the button below--register to get briefed on February 18!**

*Note: The \$30 registration fee is waived for students and complimentary registration is available on request.*

Issues Briefing 2023 information and  
Registration



## 102nd General Assembly works into final hours: Lame Duck Session

### **Gun Violence Prevention:**

#### **Ban Assault Weapons and High Capacity Magazines**

In an emotionally-charged ceremony Tuesday, January 9, Governor Pritzker signed the Protect Illinois Communities Act (HB5855) into law, making Illinois the ninth state in the nation to ban assault weapons.

Introduced in the ILGA House during the December Veto Session, the bill made its way into the Senate during Lame Duck session, where it passed by a 34-20 vote after a few changes were made, changes that the House quickly approved in a 68-41 vote on Tuesday.

Illinois' new law bans the manufacture, sales, and possession of assault weapons, as well as the sale of "switches" that enable handguns to fire more rapidly. People who currently own semi-automatic weapons do not have to turn them in, although they must register as owners. The law also expands the scope of Firearms Restraining Orders (FROs) so that courts can remove guns for up to one year (instead of six months) from owners who might harm themselves or others.

The new law is a big step in a positive direction, but there is more work to be done to keep people safe from guns. More Americans are [killed every day by handguns](#) than by assault weapons. Guns are the [leading cause of death for children and teens](#) in the United States, according to the most recent data available.

The LWV of Illinois continues to support organizations working in communities to promote trauma-informed solutions to gun violence. Learn more about the work of organizations like [Institute for Nonviolence Chicago](#), [Chicago CRED](#), and [Communities Partnering 4 Peace](#).

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## **Reproductive Health:**

### **Protections for patients and health care providers**

On the final day of the 102nd Illinois General Assembly, legislators passed the Patient and Provider Protection Act (HB4664), which Governor Pritzker signed into law on January 13. The act protects abortion and gender-affirming healthcare seekers and providers from out-of-state legal action and expands access to reproductive healthcare in Illinois.

In a state with some of the strongest reproductive healthcare protections in the country, the new legislation addresses issues stemming from the influx of care seekers coming to Illinois from states with more restrictive abortion legislation.

The omnibus reproductive healthcare bill:

- Permits physician assistants and nurse practitioners to perform certain abortions which do not require general anesthesia
- Speeds up the process for obtaining temporary permits for healthcare workers
- Protects the privacy of patients and healthcare providers to prevent other states from obtaining abortion information for court cases
- Permits medical professionals whose licenses have been revoked in other states to have their cases investigated by Illinois' licensure authority, which can grant them permission to practice here
- Affords liability insurance protections for doctors charged with breaking reproductive health laws in other states—unless they have actually committed malpractice
- Requires state insurance plans to cover abortion and gender-affirming medications
- Expands the reproductive healthcare services birth centers are allowed to provide

Learn more from organizations leading the the work in reproductive health: [ACLU Illinois](#), [Planned Parenthood Illinois](#), [Illinois Now](#), [Midwest Access Coalition](#), [Chicago Abortion Fund](#).

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## 103rd General Assembly sworn in January 11

**Your legislators need to hear from you.  
Contact them today.  
Speak up for what you want!**

**Speak up!**

Contact your legislators.

## Illinois Consolidated Elections 2023



Illinois Consolidated election season has begun. Some Illinois communities will hold primaries or elections on February 28; for many others, Election Day is April 4.

Be prepared to use your voice during your local elections:

- Go to [IllinoisVoterGuide.org](https://IllinoisVoterGuide.org) today to check your voter registration, register to vote, and sign up to be notified when candidate information is available
- Go to [lwwil.org](https://lwwil.org) for our candidate forum dates and information

The [Illinois Voter Guide](#) will cover the municipal offices for all Illinois municipalities with populations over 10,000 people (mayor, alderman/council member, clerk, treasurer, police district council member), as well as **all Illinois school boards**.

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***Mark your calendar!***

### **Important dates for February 28 elections**

#### **January 19**

- First day to vote early at the office of the election authority
- First day for the election authority to mail an official ballot to a registered voter within the United States.

## February 1

- First day of grace period for in-person registration and voting at an election authority and voting sites; continues through election day.

## February 12

- Last day for online voter registration. Grace period in-person registration available at election authority and early voting sites.

## February 13

- First day to vote early at permanent polling places. (Vote early at the office of the election authority starting January 19.)

## February 23

- Last day for election authority to receive vote by mail applications.

## February 28

- **Election Day!** Polls open from 6:00 am to 7:00 pm.

[See the important dates and deadlines for April 4 elections on our website.](#)

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## *New on Chicago ballots*

### Police District Councils

While many eyes are on the crowded, nine-person race for Chicago mayor, Chicago communities are also paying attention to elections for the newly-established Police District Councils in each of the city's [22 police districts](#).

According to the [City of Chicago municipal code ordinance](#), the Councils fall under the umbrella of a 2019 federal court-enforced Consent Decree, which mandates fundamental reform for the Chicago Police Department to restore trust for the police within Chicago's neighborhoods most challenged by violence, poverty, and unemployment. Community-police trust and cooperation helps reduce crime.

The ordinance established a Community Commission for Public Safety and Accountability (CCPSA), composed of seven commissioners appointed by the mayor. This Commission is a way to promote evidence-based, community-focused approaches to public safety and provide Chicago residents opportunities to provide input and shape Police Department practices.

In addition, the ordinance established the 22 Police District Councils, each made up of three community members who are elected. Councils participate in the selection of the seven commissioners, provide policy recommendations to the Commission, and generally serve as the conduit for community input to the Commission and Chicago Police Department.

Chicago's path to community oversight and trust-building with the police department is groundbreaking—it will be watched for its potential to serve as a model for community safety around the state and nation.

## **Criminal Justice:**

### Illinois Cash Bail to Continue--Legal Challenges to the PFA

As it turns out, despite the governor signing the Pretrial Fairness Act into law, the end of Illinois cash bail system did not go into effect on January 1, 2023 as planned.

The constitutionality of the PFA was challenged by state's attorney's in 65 of Illinois'

102 counties, and a Kankakee judge agreed with them, ruling the law unconstitutional. The ruling meant that those counties could keep their current cash bail system in place.

The Illinois state's attorney's office appealed the decision to the Illinois Supreme Court, which then halted the PFA statewide in the final hours before it was to go into effect on January 1. This ensures the integrity of the state's justice system, by preventing a situation where people in some counties would be subject to different laws than those in other counties.

The Illinois Supreme Court has said it will hear the case quickly, but has not set a date. [Read more from the ACLU about the end of money bond in Illinois.](#)

What does it all mean? Find out more from the [Network for Pretrial Justice](#)

**Tuesday, January 31, 7:00 pm,**  
**Zoom** [Registration required](#)



Welcome to the LWV of Illinois' newest local League, the LWV of Grayslake, Round Lakes, and Waukegan, which received official recognition from the League of Women Voters of the United States in December 2022.

LWV of Illinois now has 42 local Leagues, providing the structure for a powerful grassroots network that extends from the Mississippi River to Lake Michigan. From Jackson County, to Adams, from Jo Daviess to Coles, the League's dedicated members work tirelessly to Defend Democracy and Empower Voters in all corners of the state.

Membership in the League is open to any person age 16 and older. Join a [League near you!](#) Find out more and connect at [lwvil.org](#).

## Your donations power the League

**Together,  
we make  
democracy  
work.**

**Donate**

Every day, the League of Women Voters of Illinois works to protect voting rights, expand access to the ballot, and foster civic engagement in Illinois.

We cannot do it without your help.

**Can you give \$20 today?** Your gift of any size matters. **Work with us to protect democracy** — together we can make nonpartisan resources and education opportunities available to every person in

Now

Illinois.

*Thank you for supporting our work to defend democracy and empower voters.*



Donate

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League of Women Voters of Illinois | 332 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 634, Chicago, IL 60604

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