

# Member Bulletin



## A Note From the President, December 2020

As we approach the end of December, we are all too ready to say so long to 2020 and its extraordinarily trying times and yet, we know that 2020 was also a year of remarkable accomplishments.

The year 2020 brought the League's 100th anniversary, a century of engaging voters and making democracy work. This year gave us occasion to commemorate 100 years of accomplishments, while acknowledging and learning from our historical mistakes and exclusions. We move forward, committed to a future of equity and inclusion. Every single person must have the information and access they need to have their voice heard.

The pandemic helped move LWVIL forward, as we were forced to make choices long considered but not elevated to priority. When it became necessary to purposely limit personal contact, we adopted technologies that facilitate our growth in reach and inclusivity. Now we connect online, which may seem less personal on the surface, but actually affords us the opportunity to make better connections.

By mastering the virtual gathering to increase social distance, we reduced the inequities which keep us apart. Now distance, time and money are less often barriers to participation. If you have access to the internet, you get a seat at the table, at the head table, next to the speaker. Everyone has the chance to meet the experts, ask their questions, connect with more people. Along the way, we have realized that through tiny squares on a screen, we can somehow feel closer, and more in tune with each other, equally present.

Our move to the next century will include in-person and on-screen gatherings, as we look to combine their strengths in support of our mission. And we will continue to work for ways to expand access to the technologies that make this possible.

The lessons of 2020 are not new but newly appreciated.

To paraphrase my friend Celina, we might be tired, but we are still inspired. Hang on to that inspiration, protect and nurture it, look around you to find more, share it with others.

Here's to a safe, healthy and happy 2021,



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

President

League of Women Voters of Illinois

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## LWVIL Needs YOU!

### Seeking Board Members for 2021-23

Share your passion and drive for LWVIL by [applying](#) to join the 2021-23 Board of Directors.

Work with others from around the state to help us be the best resource possible for local Leagues and our communities. With virtual monthly meetings, it has never been easier!

We all have special skills, talents and ideas to bring to the table, but the most important thing you need to serve on the Board is an unwavering dedication to the League. Other useful experience would include:

- Previous governing board experience with not for profit organizations outside of the League
- Experience in any one of these areas: Development and Fundraising; Communications; Community Outreach and Education; Human Resources; Finance or Accounting
- Experience with office tools such as GSuite

Interested? Know someone who might be? An ask from a friend might be just the encouragement they need to take the next step. [Applications are due January 29.](#) Questions? Contact Nominating Committee Chair [Hilary Denk.](#)

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VOTE

[IllinoisVoterGuide.org](https://IllinoisVoterGuide.org)

## Get Out the Vote This Spring

Congratulations to all local Leagues on unprecedented voter education efforts during this unique election. Efforts now turn to the Consolidated Election on April 6, with some communities holding Primary elections on February 23.

Record voter turnout of 72.9% during the general election is inspiring as we seek to maintain voter intensity for the upcoming Consolidated and Midterm elections. Local Leagues are encouraged to refer to this 2020 [summary of local League actions](#) for ideas about how to improve voter turnout this spring.

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# Illinois Voter Guide: Consolidated Elections

The [Illinois Voter Guide \(IVG\)](#) will cover candidates for municipal offices in Illinois towns with populations of 10,000 or more. All school district races in Illinois will be covered.

However, IVG will not cover township, park district, library district, and other special districts. This is due to continued development of Geographic Information System (GIS) data, which does not allow our vendor to map races for all sample ballots.

Please contact [LWVIL Voter Service](#) for voter guide strategies for smaller municipalities and special districts.

IVG will once again support your questions for candidates. LWVIL will share a link in January asking local Leagues for questions and candidate emails, and IVG will contact candidates directly for responses.

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## Candidate Forum Participation: Policy Revision

Candidate forums held by Zoom in response to COVID-19 safety concerns resulted in higher than usual forum attendance for many Leagues. However, some Leagues still had candidates who chose not to participate. Lack of candidate participation is a concern due to potential violations of FEC, and possibly FCC and IRS, fairness rules regarding the appearance of federal candidates without opponents in a debate or forum.

For state and local candidates, LWVIL policy is that Leagues follow the same empty chair policy as they do with federal candidates and not hold a forum with only one candidate.

Per LWVIL recent policy revisions: If a non-Federal candidate does not choose to participate, and there is only one candidate appearing, while there will not be a forum, their opponent may be afforded the opportunity of a two-minute statement, only to outline their platform. The policy does not allow a two-minute statement for a sole federal candidate.

Some Leagues send questions to candidates and ask them to return videos with their responses. This is not a forum and is more like a Q&A found in a voter guide. We encourage Leagues who follow this Q&A video style to make every attempt to receive a response from all candidates in a race.

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**Save the Date for Upcoming Events**

**January 13, 5–7 pm**

## **Bridging the Partisan Divide: Removing Roadblocks to Making Democracy Work**

Learn about the approach used by [Braver Angels](#) to facilitate communication “across the aisle.” The program will include a training exercise to give League members a sense of the process. There is no charge for the program, but [registration is required](#). Please contact [issues@lwvil.org](mailto:issues@lwvil.org) with any questions.

**January 27, time to be determined**

## **Restoring Faith in Illinois with Ethics Reform**

This spring, legislators in the General Assembly will be proposing an ethics resolution. Learn about the fight against Corruption in Illinois government.

**January 30, 10 am–noon**

## **Observer Corps Training**

[Register in advance here](#). You will receive a confirmation email and Zoom link.

Any League interested in setting up an Observer Corps is welcome to attend our next online Observer Training. Additional dates can be arranged, as well as training for Leaguers interested in observing in their current program. Contact [LWVIL Voter Service](#) to discuss possible dates.

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# **ISSUES BRIEFING**

Issues Briefing is our annual opportunity to preview issues and legislation likely to be addressed during the spring General Assembly. This year's Issues Briefing will take place on Zoom over two consecutive Saturdays, February 20 and 27, from 9:00 am to 12:45 pm. Registration will open in January.

**February 20, 9 am–1 pm**

- Restoring Environmental Stewardship and the Pursuit of Ecojustice
- The Graduated Rate Income Tax Failed to Pass—Now What?
- Housing is Everything: The Role of Housing as a Determinant of Economic Success

**February 27, 9 am–1 pm**

- Recognizing and Doing Something About Systemic Racism and Inequality
  - Welcoming City, Sanctuary City
  - Redistricting in 2021: Community Mapping
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## Criminal Justice Position Update Study: Consensus Meetings Underway

Thanks to the hard work of local League Criminal Justice Update Study Committees, this project is successfully coming into the home stretch!

All Leaguers are encouraged to attend consensus meetings! This is a great opportunity to give your input about the position update, which will allow us to advocate for improvements to our current criminal justice system.

For those who are interested in a deeper look at the issues prior to attending a meeting, there are a wide variety of [resources on our website](#). There are 14 consensus questions that will be presented, pro and con, at the meetings. Your committee members will make sure there is plenty of time for discussion so that your group can reach consensus.

Remember, consensus is general agreement. It is not a vote. Your League's consensus, lack of consensus, and general comments are vital to updating the LWVIL Criminal Justice Position, which will be voted on during Convention.

Local League Boards should email their [completed response form](#) to [issues@lwwil.org](mailto:issues@lwwil.org) by **January 31**. Questions? Contact [issues@lwwil.org](mailto:issues@lwwil.org) and use "For CJ Update" in the subject line.

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## Program Planning

It is time for local Leagues to begin working on LWVIL's program of study and action for the 2021–2023 Biennium.

When your League puts out a call for Program Planning, get involved! Member input helps provide the tools to actively engage in public policy change at local and state levels. This is your opportunity to help shape League action for the next biennium.

Local League input is due **March 1**, and the process culminates with the adoption of the 2021-23 LWVIL program at the state Convention in June. Helpful information is available on the website in the Members section under [League Resources](#).

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## Leadership Term Limits: Does the League Have a

## Position?

Establishing term limits for legislative leadership positions is one of nine ethics reforms proposals currently advocated by 16 Illinois Senate and House Democrats.

Their advocacy is based on preventing an individual from accumulating and retaining power at the top of the elected legislative body.

LWVIL does not have a Position regarding term limits for legislative *leadership positions*. However, LWVIL does oppose legislative term limits because they have the following negative effects:

- Restricting voter choices.
- Increasing the number of inexperienced representatives making policy decisions.
- Forcing the best legislators into retirement with no consideration for their effectiveness.
- Causing novice legislators to fill their informational and policy gaps with increased reliance on special interests and lobbyists.

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## Request for Proposals to Amend LWVIL Bylaws

Proposals for any Amendment to the LWVIL Bylaws must be submitted to the Board of Directors no later than **March 12**, three months prior to convention.

Proposals can be submitted by any local League or member. Current bylaws are accessible in the Members section of our website, under [League Resources](#). Please forward any proposed changes to LWVIL Board member [Jan Dorner](#).

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## Remembering Sylvia Tillman

March 13, 1931 – November 3, 2020

A lifelong advocate for citizens' rights, education and labor, Sylvia Tillman was a dynamic contributor to the League, both on a local (Homewood-Flossmoor) and state level. With her passing on Election Day, the community lost an active, energetic ally who made sure her last vote counted.

Born and raised in Nebraska, Tillman held a degree in PolySci from University of Nebraska. She spent her life working in Illinois, as Administrative Assistant to State Rep Anthony Scariano, then as head of the Governor's Action Office under Governor Dan Walker. She moved to the Department of Registration & Education and became Deputy Director of the Department of Labor, where she was actively involved in negotiating labor contracts until she retired.

Upon retirement, Tillman joined the Homewood-Flossmoor League of Women Voters (2000), serving as President (2002-03 and 2008-09) and co-president (2009-11). She joined the LWVIL Board of directors in 2003, becoming VP of Membership (2005-07) and VP of Issues (2007-09).

In addition to her League activities, Sylvia was deeply involved in her community and was especially dedicated to improving race relations in the south suburbs through

[Diversity Dinners](#). She received the Carrie Chapman Catt Award at the 2015 LWWIL convention for her outstanding League leadership and community involvement. A more detailed look at Sylvia's life can [be found here](#).

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Don't forget to follow, like and share with us on social media!



The League of Women Voters Illinois Education Fund (LWVILEF) encourages the informed and active participation in government by providing civic education and voter services. [Make a difference today](#) for you and your community with a tax-deductible gift to support our work to defend democracy and empower voters.

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