

Member Bulletin



Letter from the President, July 2020

Dear League members and friends of the League,

"There is not a man beneath the canopy of heaven, that does not know that slavery is wrong for him." -Frederick Douglass

Every year during the days around the Fourth of July, groups of people gather across Massachusetts to read aloud portions of Frederick Douglass's important address "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" until the entire speech has been read aloud. Born into slavery in Maryland, Douglass escaped slavery in 1838, making his way to Massachusetts where he became a leader in the abolitionist movement. He was also involved in the women's movement, and was the only African American to attend the pivotal 1848 Seneca Falls Convention of women's rights activists.

The Fourth of July speech was delivered on July 5, 1852. Consistent with his reputation as a talented orator, Douglass delivered a moving examination of the guarantees of liberty in our Constitution. In the words of Mass Humanities, the nonprofit sponsor of these annual readings, Douglass' style and words, "... challenge us to think about the histories we tell, the values they teach, and if our actions match our aspirations".

Today, all of us must focus more sharply on the histories we tell *and live*, on the values we teach *and live*. We must assess our aspirations and then *live to those standards*. Education, housing, employment, healthcare, recreation, we must do the work to make our society inclusive and equitable.

Our LWV positions are all based in social justice. This month please look for ways to advocate for Vote by Mail, voter access and education, our Criminal Justice Study and the Fair Tax amendment. You will be working toward equity and inclusion in our state. Check out ways you can step into state League leadership. And in the coming weeks, watch your mailbox for details about our September 24th Anniversary Fundraiser, as we gather virtually to launch into our second century.

Best wishes, be safe, stay well,

Vote By Mail

As a League member you can encourage your community to help protect everyone's health this election season and **VOTE BY MAIL!** Here are five quick facts to share with family, friends, neighbors:

1. You can apply for a ballot online or through your election authority NOW.
2. Voting by Mail is Safe, Secure, Smart, Easy, and Common.
3. Voter Fraud is Rare.
4. Ballots will be finalized and sent to applicants on or after September 24.
5. Your ballot must be mailed/returned by November 3.



Don't forget to also follow LWVIL on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), where you can share LWVIL Vote By Mail posts via social media.

LWVIL Voter Service introduces Shared Resource Center

In preparation for election season, the LWVIL Voter Service Committee is excited to share resources with local Leagues around the state through our Shared Resource Center (SRC). This Google Drive will be an online resource that will hold LWVIL information for local Leagues to use, as well as a place where all Leagues can share messaging and information with each other. Together we will build a set of resources that will make informing and engaging our communities easier than ever.

Vote by Mail (VBM) materials in the SRC include: letter to the editor templates, social media posts, an FAQ sheet, and several summaries of the new VBM election law. Local League presidents whose voter service and/or communication members need an invitation to this drive should send their email information to the [LWVIL Voter Service Committee](#).

The Voter Service Committee continues to meet with local League Voter Service teams through Zoom chats. We are eager to meet everyone, so if your league has not yet scheduled a zoom meeting, please reach out to the [LWVIL Voter Service Committee](#).

Preparing for Upcoming Candidate Forums

Is your local League organizing candidate forums? For the safety of our communities, LWVUS prefers that forums be held virtually this fall. In order to facilitate this, LWVIL

is funding an online webinar subscription for August and September. The LWVIL Voter Service Committee will inform local League leaders about how to access the subscription service as soon as possible.

Let's all work together. Several collar county Leagues are already working together on one combined forum for their shared congressional districts. We hope others will do the same, making it possible to host a forum for each of Illinois 18 congressional districts. By sharing the forums on websites, Facebook and YouTube, we can reach more people around the state than was possible with in-person forums.

Once you organize your online forum, contact the [LWVIL Voter Service Committee](#) to reserve your date and time, and to set up online. Preference will be given to Congressional contests.

Questions? Reach out to the [LWVIL Voter Service Committee](#).

Go to Illinois Voter Guide to Register to Vote



The [Illinois Voter Guide](#) (IVG) currently has links to confirm voter registration, register to vote, and apply for a vote by mail ballot. In August, IVG will go live with additional information, including candidate bios, forum videos, Q&A's, endorsements, and bar association ratings for judicial candidates.

Criminal Justice Position Update

The following questions and more are addressed in the section of our study, "Sentencing Laws and Procedures" in the [Background Information for the Consensus Questions](#).

- Should violence be treated as a public health issue?
- What really deters criminal activity?
- What are racial impact statements? How might they influence sentencing policies?
- Does our adversarial style of criminal justice need modification?
- Are long sentences a good solution to crime?
- What can we learn by observing how other countries treat their incarcerated offenders?



Is **YOUR** Local League getting ready for the January 2021 Consensus meetings? Look for more information [on the LWVIL website](#). Questions? Contact the [Issues & Advocacy Committee](#) and use **CJ UPDATE** in the subject line.

Your Advocacy Needed



The fight for the Fair Tax Amendment is shaping up to be a nail-biter. We need your help NOW. Voting begins in less than 3 months and League members throughout the state are hard at work urging people to Vote YES for the Fair Tax amendment at the end of the ballot.

There are several actions which League members can take RIGHT NOW:

1. [Check out resources on the LWWIL website](#), which include a recording of a LWWIL training session where League members' questions are answered, and the exact wording of the Fair Tax Amendment.
2. Prepare a 30-second (60-word) "elevator speech" about why you support the fair tax. You can find examples are on the LWWIL website.
3. Share your elevator speech with family and friends who you are meeting for coffee in small, socially-distanced groups or on Zoom.
4. [Sign up to be an Endorser](#) and urge your friends and relatives to do likewise. (Endorsers are willing for their names to be shared with others in their community so that people know that the amendment is supported by someone they know and respect.)
5. [Join the Fair Tax Google Group](#) which is meeting every two weeks to ensure that members of your local League have the latest information.
6. Share this one-minute video on your League and personal social media. Use these links on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
7. Keep an eye on the local conversation about the Fair Tax vote, write letters to the editor, and respond to attacks with facts. Need help? Reach out to the [LWWIL Issues & Advocacy Committee](#).

Thank you for your courageous efforts to make change happen, to rebuild a stronger, fairer, and better Illinois.

LWWIL Needs YOU!

Help fulfill the LWWIL mission with your skills and expertise. There are currently several open positions on LWWIL committees and the LWWIL board. This is a great way to get involved with committee work, meet Leaguers (virtually) statewide, and explore your interest in state League leadership. Come share your passion and energy. [Learn more](#) about opportunities to join LWWIL. **Questions?** Reach out to the [LWWIL Board](#).



Important Dates to Remember

- August 26: 100th Anniversary of adoption of 19th Amendment
- [September 22: National Voter Registration Day](#)
- September 24: LWVIL 100th Anniversary VIRTUAL Luncheon Fundraiser
- September 24: Ballots released to Vote By Mail applicants. Early voting begins.
- [October 24: Vote Early Day](#)
- June 11-13, 2021: LWVIL Convention

Please note that this list of important dates is not exhaustive. You can find more events on the [LWVIL Events Calendar](#).



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.

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



