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LWV ABC E-News February 2023

Primary and Spring Elections to Select a Supreme Court Justice are February 21, and April 4, 2023

State courts make decisions that affect our day-to-day lives. Many of the freedoms that we have as Wisconsinites could come before the Wisconsin Supreme Court in the future. This includes decisions on issues like education, reproductive rights, voting rights and more. Click to review [WI Supreme Court Fact Sheet](#)

The League supports a system of justice that assures adults and juveniles prompt and equal treatment before the law. Several of the recent decisions of the state Supreme Court have been contrary to positions of the League, such as the decisions regarding redistricting, and prohibiting the use of drop boxes. Please join the League of Women Voters of Dane County on **Thursday, February 9, 6:30-8pm** for a virtual public issues forum Wisconsin Supreme Court: Why Your Vote Matters. The forum will be presented on Zoom and closed captioning will be available. [Click here to register.](#)

WisconsinEye covered a WisPolitics.com event featuring the four declared candidates for the Wisconsin Supreme Court on January 9, 2023. The candidates included: Waukesha County Judge Jennifer Dorow, Former Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Dan Kelly, Dane County Judge Everett Mitchell, Milwaukee County Judge Janet Protasiewicz. [Click here to view the forum.](#)

Are you prepared to Vote in the February 21 Primary?

- A valid photo ID is required for voting which includes: Wisconsin Drivers License, State ID, Military or student ID. [How to get a free ID.](#)
- See what's on your ballot at <https://www.vote411.org/>
- Check your voter registration, update an address, register to Vote or request an Absentee Ballot online at <https://myvote.wi.gov/en-us/>



Our **Voter Services Committee** has continued to meet virtually the third Friday of every month. In between, League members and partners have engaged in numerous activities designed to Make Democracy Work! (*Anne Chartier and Diane Koosed, Co-Chairs*)

LWV/ABC members mailed out about 350 postcards to encourage youth to vote in the December Senatorial run-off in Georgia. Several members have volunteered to assist writing 500 postcards to voters in northern Wisconsin promoting the WI Supreme Court Justice Election.

500 bookmarks promoting voting in the Spring Election will be printed and distributed in libraries and handed out in Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer Counties.

Committee Members attended a statewide Candidate Forum Training organized by LWVWI. **Local Candidate Forums are in process of being planned in Ashland and Mellen for School Board races, and also for one of the municipalities in Bayfield. Look for email updates on times and locations.**

Vote.411 continues to be a valuable resource for candidate information in lieu of forums. We are grateful that for Fred Haueter and Roger Aiken who work on the Vote411.org voter guides. The guide for local elections will be published on March 1.

Honest and fair elections do take place. Local clerks are required to publicly test the voting machines to ensure they are working properly. Ashland Election Specialist Sarah Szymaniak invited elected officials and LWV/ABC to attend the demonstration and certification of the voting machine for the November election. Twelve LWV members attended. Outreach to the public will be expanded in future presentations.

The Wisconsin Elections Commission website: <https://elections.wi.gov/statistics-data/voter-registration-statistics> provides data on each county's voting records. Between August and December, Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer counties registered 1,750 new voters. Lissa Radke's migration study shows that people moving north are registering to vote.

The LWV/ABC cosponsored "The Decline in Wisconsin's Conservation Legacy and the Shift in Balance of State Government" with the LWV LaCrosse, the LWV Greater St. Croix Valley and the LWV Milwaukee County Leagues. This webinar discussed the imbalance of power between the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch as it relates to Conservation and Environmental Protection. The program was based on a recent publication of Wisconsin Green Fire, a non-partisan organization whose mission is to advance science-informed analysis and policy solutions to address Wisconsin's greatest conservation challenges. [Read the full publication.](#)

Four amendments to the Wisconsin Constitution could be on the ballot as early as the April 4 Spring Election. If approved by voters the amendments will immediately become part of the Constitution. The proposed amendments, which are opposed by the LWV, address the following topics:

- **Bail**
- **Voting eligibility**
- **Election administration**
- **Governor's authority**

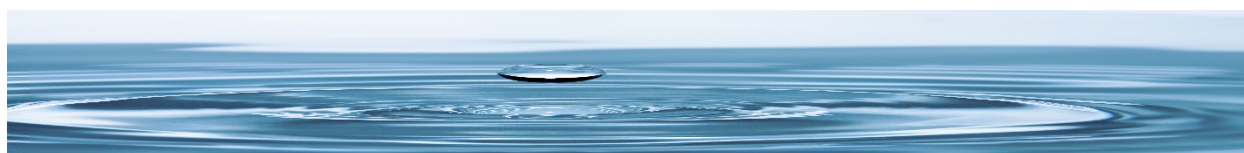
View the recorded forum that reviews the proposed amendments https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c268J3Nw_po

Threats to Medicare

Follow-up to the Fall Presentation on Threats to Medicare: ACO REACH is now officially up and running. This means commercial insurance companies (as well as other profit-driven entities) are being allowed to “manage” the care of millions of Americans who signed up for Traditional Medicare. In essence it is the latest move to privatize Medicare. The added threat to Seniors and their health providers is the REACH model’s ability to “move” Seniors into this model without their knowledge or approval. If their provider is working for an organization that is not aligned with REACH, the patient is required to find another provider/health care system. Clearly lack of transparency in this process is alarming and goes way beyond what Medicare Advantage has done. Currently 50% of Medicare patients have their health care and payments actually overseen by private for-profit insurance corporate entities. This is predicted to rapidly increase under the REACH model. The privatization threatens the viability of Medicare. The REACH model itself takes away choice in terms of provider but further it increases the insurance payer’s ability to overrule the decisions of professional health care provider whose decisions are based. This model puts profits above care.

A group of lawmakers, spearheaded by US Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.), has [asked](#) CMS to examine the ACO REACH model to prevent organizations with a history of fraud and abuse from participating in the program in 2023. In a [letter](#) to CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure, the lawmakers voiced concern that the model may still allow healthcare insurers and providers to cause harm to the Medicare system.

Representatives Mark Pocan (WI-02), Ro Khanna (CA-17), and Jan Schakowsky (IL-09) are reintroducing the “Save Medicare Act.” This bill renames so-called “Medicare Advantage” plans, prohibits private insurers from using “Medicare” in plan titles or advertisements, and imposes significant fines for any insurer that engages in this deceptive practice. [See January 31, 2023 Press Release.](#)



The **Natural Resources Committee** continues its efforts to protect clean water and move forward on planning for climate change. (*Joan Elias – Chair*)

- Line 5 Opposition. The Committee continues working in a broad coalition with Tribes and WI environmental organizations to monitor the permitting process for Line 5 and to oppose Line 5.
- Three members were interviewed by Bad River’s Historical Preservation Officer about how the proposed rerouting of Line 5 would affect us.
- The committee is currently working with the Ashland County Land and Water Conservation Dept. on the potential for the County Board to pass a Clean Water resolution (instead of a referendum on the spring ballot as was passed in Bayfield County last fall).
- Ongoing work with the Lake Michigan Region and Upper Mississippi River Inter-Leagues, as well as the LWVWI natural resources committee.

LIVELY ISSUES

Our Annual **Lively Issues** gathering was held January 17. The conversation focused on what participants felt were the most salient issues for the league's attention.

- Among the most pressing local concerns identified were:
 - Continued Voter Services work to promote Democracy
 - Be champions of non-polarized language in communications and calling-out disinformation
 - Engage in relationship development with County, Town and School Boards through meeting participation, as well as communicating from the grass roots to the Legislature, Governor and various State Agencies and Commissions.
 - Continue to advocate for integrity and strength of public education.
 - Continue Climate Change work:
 - end line 5,
 - Continue advocacy for clean water
 - Awareness of trends – building resilience through climate migration study by looking at the weather and economic impacts, needed housing and transportation modifications, as well as public health readiness.
 - Address the need for the State to increase shared revenue with local units of government and adequately fund schools. Cannot move on big issues like climate resilience when we cannot even fund our basic services such as fire, EMS, police.

Join a Unit!

Want to get engaged locally? Our four Units continue to meet focusing on issues most relevant to their locale. They provide a welcome opportunity for members and friends to keep informed and informally discuss the bigger state and national issues. Units Conveners:

- Ashland: Kate Ullman (kateullman@gmail.com) and Kate Siegler (ksiegler4621@gmail.com)
- Bayfield: Bev Lindell (bjlindell8@gmail.com)
- Washburn South Shore: Kate Miller (catherineclarkmiller@gmail.com)
- Sawyer County: Carolyn Pare (cpare91@gmail.com)

Officers and Board Members Needed!

Officer and Board Openings! Your Opportunity to Serve!

We are still looking for people to serve as officers and board members in the upcoming year. We really need more people to serve in these critical positions. If you are looking to focus more on giving back to the community over the next year, We hope you seriously consider becoming an officer or board member. If you are interested, please contact president@lwwabcwi.org.

Our Mission... The League of Women Voters of Ashland & Bayfield Counties (LWV/ABC) is a nonpartisan political organization whose main objective is to promote political responsibility through the informed and active participation of all in government at all levels, especially locally.