



# THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

## LWV-LL Voter

December 2023

President:	Cynthia Peterson
Vice-President:	Kat Waters
VP for Action:	Jean McGuire
Secretary:	Terri Rittenburg
Treasurer:	Dorothy Ramsey
Voter Services:	Jane Witte, Kate Borchman
Lunch & Learn Chair:	Tari Hendrickson
Membership Chair:	Sandy Blankenship
Voter Editor:	Jim Johnson
Facebook Manager:	Kristen Anderson

### Calendar of Events

**Dec 7 (Thursday):** Noon – 1:00 pm  
**Lunch & Learn**  
 Becky Seth  
*Citizen’s Climate Lobby*

**Dec 7 (Thursday):** 6:00 pm  
**LWVLL Board Meeting**  
 Dino’s Storage Conference Room  
 1945 N. 84<sup>th</sup> St., Lincoln

**Jan 4 (Thursday):** Noon – 1:00 pm  
**Lunch & Learn**  
 Dr David Meyer  
*Nebraska Soils/Farming/Climate*

**Feb 1 (Thursday):** Noon – 1:00 pm  
**Lunch & Learn**  
 Todd Wiltgen,  
 Lancaster County Election Comm.  
*Voter ID Law, Mail-In Ballots*

### December Lunch & Learn: Citizens’ Climate Lobby

The December League of Women Voters Lunch & Learn welcomes the Citizens’ Climate Lobby to its continuing series on issues affecting Nebraskans all across the state. The Citizens’ Climate Lobby is a non-partisan, volunteer organization empowering everyday people to work together on climate policy. Supporters are organized in 420 chapters around the U.S., with three chapters in Nebraska: Lincoln, Omaha, and Chadron. The presentation will address priority climate solutions and how to engage in climate advocacy. The speaker is Becky Seth, co-leader of the Lincoln chapter. Before retirement, she was head naturalist at Pioneers Park Nature Center. Seth is a member of the Mayor’s Resilient Lincoln Roundtable and the Coalition for Environmental Improvement.

The event is Thursday, Dec. 7, from noon to 1:00 PM, and is free and open to the public throughout Nebraska via Zoom. Membership is not required.

For over 100 years, the League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, has encouraged informed and active participation in government, worked to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influenced public policy through education and advocacy. Membership is open to all. For further information regarding the League, go to [www.lincolnleague.org](http://www.lincolnleague.org).

Those wishing to attend the meeting, use this Zoom link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89137424915>.

### Celebration of Life for Shirley Maly

Many members of the League of Women Voters of Lincoln/Lancaster County will remember long-time LWVLL member Shirley Maly. Shirley, who was a very active participant in the League and many other nonprofit organizations, passed away on October 18. Her funeral is Saturday, December 2, at Noon, at the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, 6300 A Street. Obituary and condolences may be found at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/journalstar/name/shirley-maly-obituary?id=53516024>.





### Notes from the LWVLL President

Hi! However, whenever, wherever you chose to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday, I hope it brought you a lot of satisfaction and enjoyment! If you're a Black Friday shopper, I hope you found lots of bargains, too.

Nebraska's ballot initiative process was featured in *The Washington Post* on Nov. 16. "A boom of ballot initiatives is reshaping this state's democracy" by Greg Jaffe is an interesting read. Here's the link: <https://wapo.st/3G93r1R>

LWVLL member Kate High brought an [article/survey](#) to my attention in the *Lincoln Journal Star* (Nov. 17). LJS wants to know what people want from the Nebraska Unicameral next session. I've submitted my thoughts, and I hope you will too. The link may take you to a pay wall. If so, clear out your browser's history and cookies, close the browser, open it back up, and then try the link again. This doesn't always work, but usually.

If you haven't already done so, please consider signing (as a private citizen) this petition related to source of income discrimination in Lincoln: <https://www.civicnebraska.org/speak-up-for-housing-rights/turned-away>

Petition organizers have reached the desired 500 signatures, but more is always better. LWVLL is a partner in this effort. Last I heard, the ordinance will be presented to the City Council in mid-December, and we'll need a show of support from LWVLL members. Vice President for Action Jean McGuire will keep us updated.

♥♥ Please remember the LWVLL Ed Fund when you're thinking about your year-end giving.

The hubbub of the Christmas season is upon us. Let's be kind and patient with one another, and especially with ourselves.

/Cynthia P.

[lpresident@lincolnleague.org](mailto:lpresident@lincolnleague.org)

## Are you interested in becoming a member of a Lincoln/Lancaster Observer Corp?

### WHAT IS AN OBSERVER CORP PROGRAM?

An observer is an individual or individuals who attend governmental meeting (ex. City Council meetings, County Commission meetings or School Board meetings, etc.), notes what happens at the meeting, and reports back to the League Board of Directors. By attending public meetings of local governmental bodies/agencies, observers learn more about what their government is doing. They learn about the issues facing their community. They also learn *how* issues are being addressed.

Observers keep elected and appointed officials on notice; their presence shows them that someone is watching what decisions are being made and how they are being made. They help ensure that the issues facing their community are being handled "in the sunshine," in the open.

Ideally, observers are monitoring both the issues being discussed as well as the process by which they are being discussed. While not every item up for discussion will relate to the League's priorities, ensuring that the meeting is being conducted in an open and acceptable way is critical to all of the League's efforts and the health of our democracy.

Observer Corp programs are *not* vehicles for individuals to work personal or partisan agendas. Observers generally do not “act” on issues in these meetings. Unless serving as a designated spokesperson for the League, observers should not provide commentary or testimony on issues on behalf of the League. Instead, observers attend meetings to gather information and report back to the League board. Through the process, their presence encourages better, more transparent government.

If you are interested in becoming involved in an observer corps, please contact Jean McGuire at [llvp\\_action@lincolnleague.org](mailto:llvp_action@lincolnleague.org).

Please know that if you do want to participate, there would be no expectation that you would have to attend all meetings. Looking at the agenda ahead of time is always a good first step in determining whether you might attend. In addition, we all have busy lives with other commitments so there will be no expectation to attend all meetings of one particular group or another.

### ***LWVLL ACTION ALERT: Advocate to reduce hunger in Nebraska***

Below are two opportunities for you to advocate and take action for our neighbors here in Nebraska.

#### Summer Food Program

A child nutrition program poised to launch nationwide could deliver an estimated \$18 million in grocery-buying benefits to Nebraska families starting next summer.

The program was authorized by Congress via the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023 and is modeled after the nationwide pandemic-era initiative that has now ended.

It will offer an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card to children whose household income makes them eligible for free and reduced school lunches during the school year. Each youth would receive a card loaded with \$120 to help buy food during months that school is out.

Based on Nebraska’s participation in the pandemic program, it is estimated that 150,000 Nebraska kids would benefit next summer **if the state opts into the new EBT program.**

Please send a letter or email or call the Governor's office to let him know that this is a food program that we must participate in to support families and children who experience food insecurity in Nebraska.

Governor Jim Pillen  
Capitol Building  
PO Box 94848  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848  
402-471-2244

<http://governor.nebraska.gov>

To learn more about this program go to:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sebt>

#### Farm Bill

The “Farm bill” is a narrow name for an enormous piece of legislation that impacts many parts of the U.S. food system. Much of the farm bill is not about farms: Over 80% of the funding is directed to

nutrition programs with the greatest share supporting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the main program for reducing hunger in the U.S. More than 41 million people receive SNAP benefits.

The farm bill is reauthorized approximately every 5 years and is due for reauthorization this year, 2023. As with much that is happening in Washington, D.C., some lawmakers are calling for deep spending cuts in the Farm bill, particularly as it relates to nutrition, including SNAP. Instead of cutting nutrition, we should be encouraging needed updates such as:

- Increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables in SNAP
- Eliminate barriers to SNAP for marginalized populations
- Keep food out of landfills – support post-harvest food recovery
- Support funding for international food aid programs

If the farm bill expires without a new bill in place or if programs are not granted an extension by Congress, programs face a few different scenarios. Some lose the funding to operate and must shut down. A few key programs, like SNAP, would continue as is with no needed enhancements, but others that America's farmers rely on to sustain their enterprises would revert back to outdated laws from 1938 and 1949 farm bills.

To learn more about the Farm Bill go to:

<https://www.bread.org/article/what-is-the-farm-bill/>

Please contact our Congressional Representatives, Senator Deb Fischer (on the Senate Ag Committee), Senator Pete Ricketts and Representative Mike Flood to let them know how important the passage of the Farm Bill is to the citizens of Nebraska and the needed changes that should be adopted.

Contact Information:

**Sen. Pete Ricketts**

**Lincoln Office**

1248 O Street, Suite #1000  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 476-1400

**Sen. Deb Fischer**

**Lincoln Office**

1248 O Street, Suite #1111  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 441-4600

**Rep. Mike Flood**

**Lincoln Office**

301 South 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 100  
Lincoln, NE 68508  
(402) 438-1598

/Jean McGuire

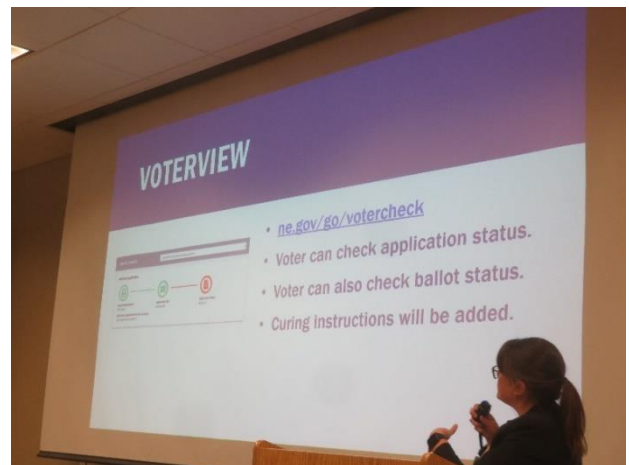
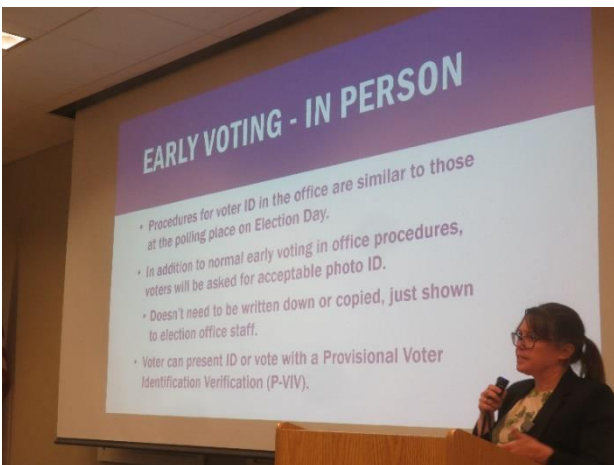
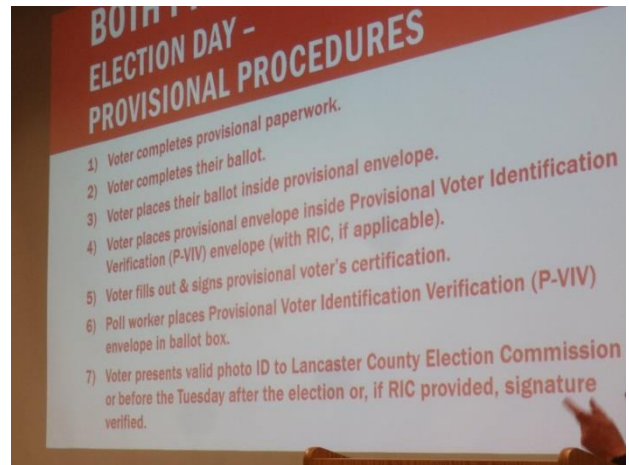
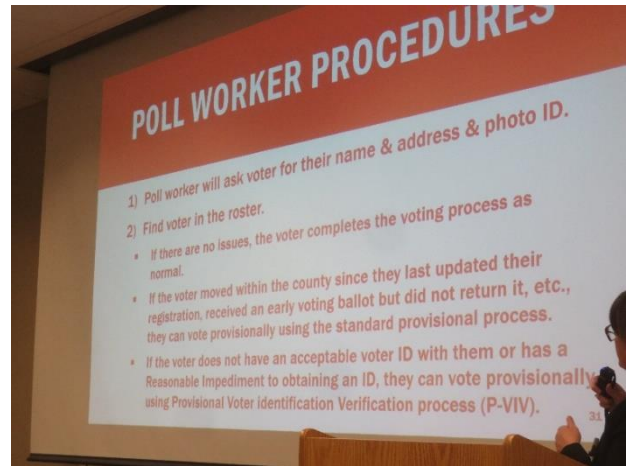
LWVLL VP of Action

[llvp\\_action@lincolnleague.org](mailto:llvp_action@lincolnleague.org)



## Report on LWVLL Fall Membership Meeting

The League of Women Voters/Lincoln-Lancaster County held a Fall Membership Meeting on November 2. Speaker for the event was Becki Gaston-Wise, Deputy Election Commissioner for Lancaster County, who spoke about voter ID requirements that go into effect next spring. Pictures below are from that event. Gaston-Wise reminded us that people who are unsure of their voter registration status can check it at <http://ne.gov/go/votercheck>.



**The Lincoln Lancaster *Voter***

League of Women Voters - Lincoln/Lancaster County

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<http://www.LincolnLeague.org>



Time Dated Material  
Please Do Not Delay