



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

LWV-LL Voter

March 2024

President:	Cynthia Peterson
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Vice President:	Carla Larson
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Lunch & Learn Chair:	Tari Hendrickson
Membership Chair:	Sandy Blankenship
Voter Editor:	Janet Chung
Facebook Manager:	Kristen Anderson
Website Manager:	Jim Johnson

Calendar of Events

Mar 7 (Thursday): Noon – 1PM

Lunch & Learn

Rachel Gibson and
Joanna Lindberg
*Update on Priority
Unicameral Bills*
See article at right.

Mar 7 (Thursday): 6PM
LWVLL Board Meeting
Via Zoom

Mar 13 (Wednesday): 9AM – Noon
**2024 Housing Affordability
and Justice Lobby Day**
See article on Page 4

Apr 4 (Thursday): 6PM
LWVLL Board Meeting
Location TBD

Apr 20 (Saturday): 9AM – Noon
**Annual Membership
Meeting**
St Mark’s Methodist Church,
8550 Pioneers Blvd

May 14 (Tuesday): 8A – 8 PM
Primary Election Day

March Lunch & Learn:

Update on Priority Unicameral Bills

There is much to discuss with only a few weeks left in this Unicameral session! Join us for the latest from two League of Women Voters of Nebraska leaders, Rachel Gibson and Joanna Lindberg. Gibson is VP of Action, and Lindberg serves as Government Co-Chair. The League develops position statements on specific bills each legislative session through extensive research and member input. They will provide updates on the League’s priority bills and how Nebraskans can get involved.

The event is Thursday, March 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.

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

Welcome New Members

The League of Women Voters of Lincoln/Lancaster County has recently welcomed 8 new members. We are excited they chose to contribute their time, energy and talents to our nonpartisan, grassroots organization as we work together to register voters, get out the vote, protect and expand voting rights, and ensure everyone is represented in our democracy. Our new members are: Susann A., Bob E., Emily G., Carol H., Shannon K., Deborah R., Mary V., Connie V.

Impact and Recommendations on Local Issues

By Cynthia Peterson and Jean McGuire

In our recent review of League of Women Voters of Lincoln/Lancaster County (LWVLL) positions on local issues conducted February 3, breakout groups provided valuable observations and recommendations. Here's a summary of the key insights:

Government - Breakout Group #1: City Government and County Government

City Government

- Eliminate term limits for mayor/elected officials, pending clarification.
- Propose changes to City Council salary, emphasizing adequacy, compensation, and a shift to "full-time" status.
- Modify Advisory Committees, Boards, and Commissions language for improved communication and attendance.

County Government

- Suggest incorporating the paragraph from Advisory Committees under City Government regarding "Uniform procedures" for County Government.
- Highlight the need for an adequate system with professional staffing in Corrections, and explore expanding the use of drug court and restorative justice.

Corrections

- Suggest incorporating verbiage on expanding the use of diversion courts and restorative justice using the LWVUS Impact on Issues Policy Positions

Land Use/Neighborhood Preservation - Breakout Group #2:

The group recommended forming a working group for a comprehensive review and update of the Land Use section. Key suggestions include:

- Housing should have its own section, and Libraries could be relocated to a more fitting category like Government.
- Address climate change, renewable energy, and natural land use, incorporating positions that "encourage" or "support" these initiatives.
- Advocate for proper ventilation, healthy living spaces, accessibility for all age groups, and recognition of indigenous people and cultural significance.
- Emphasize public education on a science-based approach to climate change and environmental health.
- Recognize the need for grassroots efforts and address equity and affordability issues more comprehensively.

Public Transportation/Education/Childcare - Breakout Group #3:

Public Transportation

- Due to time constraints, the group did not address this area.

Local Issues (cont.)

Education

- Suggested expanding language to include efforts for racial and ethnic minority lifestyles, neurodiversity affirmation, gender affirmation, and English Language Learners.

Childcare

- Identified gaps in guidelines related to affordability, staff training, parent training, and communication. A study group will explore available resources.

Next Steps for LWVLL Impact on Issues:

- Potential study of voting methods to incorporate into the Government section
- Fuller review/update of the Natural Resources section.
- Creation of a separate Housing section requiring a study.
- Study of Elder Care for a potential position.
- Study on Child Care options, especially related to affordability.

Recommended Focus for LWVLL in the Next 12-18 Months:

- Advocacy
 - Expansion of adult pre-trial diversion
- Voter Registration/Education
 - Get out the Vote Education, addressing language barriers and ensuring accessibility.
 - Partnership with other organizations on Voter Forums.

LWVUS Proposed Program for 2024-2026:

The group reached a consensus to support the proposed national program, continuing the campaign for making democracy work. This includes:

- Voting Rights – Expanding Voter Access
- Improving Elections – Fighting Voter Suppression
- Redistricting
- Money In Politics
- Abolishing the Electoral College

Thanks to all who participated and for your dedication to these critical issues. Let's continue making a positive impact in our community.

Lunch & Learn Survey

Consider helping us fine-tune our program planning for our Lunch & Learn series. The League of Women Voters Lincoln/Lancaster aims to deliver programming that our participants are interested in learning about. We encourage you to provide your thoughts!

Thanks in advance for taking 3-5 minutes to share your experience and thoughts. You are a valued part of our work! Link survey: <https://forms.gle/Cf4VCHC1djjNNc939>

SAVE THE DATE

LWVLL Annual Membership Meeting

Saturday 9AM to NOON, April 20, 2024

St. Mark's United Methodist Church
(8550 Pioneers Boulevard)

Upper Fellowship Hall (easy access & free parking)

What is the annual general meeting? It serves as a key forum for members to discuss and make decisions on organizational matters. It typically involves reviewing the past year's activities, electing board members and officers, and setting priorities for the coming year, all while fostering democratic participation within the group. More information will be shared when it becomes available.

2024 Housing Affordability and Justice Lobby Day

March 13, 2024 from 9 AM to 12 PM

Lincoln Community Foundation and Nebraska State Capital

As you know, LWVLL has been actively partnering with a coalition of organizations in Lincoln/Lancaster County on housing issues. The coalition has organized an inclusive advocacy event designed to address key housing issues in Nebraska and provides a unique platform for participants to learn, engage, and advocate for positive change. Attendees of the event will have the opportunity to receive a complimentary "Nebraska Needs Safe, Affordable Housing" t-shirt, available in a limited quantity. For more information and to register for the event, please visit civicnebraska.org/impact/lobbyday24. Don't forget to RSVP on the [Facebook event](#) to stay updated on the latest details.

Schedule of Events

Learn! Advocacy Training

9:00 am - 10:00 am

Option 1: Advocacy 101 for FIRST-TIME Lobby Day Participants

Location: Lincoln Community Foundation, 215 Centennial Mall South

Start your day with breakfast and advocacy basics at the LCF headquarters. Learn how to "pull" senators from the floor, get insights into key tenant protection and housing legislation, and prepare key talking points. After breakfast and training, we'll walk to the Nebraska State Capitol promptly at 10 am.

Option 2: Advocacy Breakfast and Discussion

Location: Roman Hruska Law Center, 635 S. 14th St., Suite 200

Connect with experienced advocates over breakfast to discuss focus bills and prepare for the day. After breakfast and discussion, we'll walk to the Nebraska State Capitol promptly at 10 am.

Engage! News Conference

10:30 am - 11:00 am

Location: Nebraska State Capitol, Hearing Room (TBA)

Join us for a news conference featuring notable speakers, community leaders, and policymakers. Build awareness about our campaign to bring housing affordability to Nebraska.

Advocate! Recognition and Advocacy

11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Location: Nebraska State Capitol

11:00 am: Norris Chamber Gallery

Observe floor debate from the Capitol gallery and receive recognition from state senators on the floor of the Nebraska Legislature.

11:00 am - 12:00 pm: "Pull" State Senators

Discuss our key bills of interest with state senators or continue to observe floor debate from the gallery.

LWVLL Actively Endorses Efforts to Ensure Voters Can Decide on Proposed Amendment to Enshrine Abortion Rights in Nebraska Constitution

By Cynthia Peterson

In December, the League of Women Voters of Nebraska (LWVNE) officially expressed its support for a statewide vote on a ballot initiative to amend the Nebraska Constitution, allowing Nebraskans' rights to legal abortion care.

During the February 2024 board meeting for the League of Women Voters of Lincoln/Lancaster County (LWVLL), officers and directors unanimously passed a proposed and seconded motion to actively endorse both the LWVNE's efforts and the work of interested League members across Nebraska to play a role to ensure Nebraskans have an opportunity to vote on amending the state constitution. The proposed amendment aims to allow legal abortion care up until fetal viability, with some exceptions, and without government/political interference.

The specifics of an active role are not fully defined beyond petition signature gathering at this time. League members **are not** obligated to participate in events, signature drives, or to publicly express support for the initiative to place the proposed Nebraska constitutional amendment on the Nov. 2024 ballot.

For those interested in collecting petition signatures, please sign up on the coalition's website at <https://protectourrights.com>. By indicating your willingness to volunteer, coordinators will provide information on required training for all signature gatherers.



Proposed Amendment (cont.)

Additionally, LWVNE is expected to conduct a training session for League members, though details are currently unavailable.

If you choose to gather signatures, consider employing the **buddy system**, especially when outside your comfort zone or in public spaces. It may be necessary to clarify the initiative is not about deciding abortion law in Nebraska; rather, it's focused on securing a spot on the Nov. ballot, allowing voters to decide.



League of Women Voters Membership Renewal

Sandy Blankenship, Membership Chair

Please renew your membership in the League of Women Voters Lincoln and Lancaster County! Our membership year runs from April 1 to March 31. The 2023-2024 memberships expire March 31st.

The League is non-partisan and does not support or oppose candidates nor political parties. We strive to increase understanding of public policy issues and to increase voter participation in elections.

Check our site for more details: <https://lincolnleague.org>

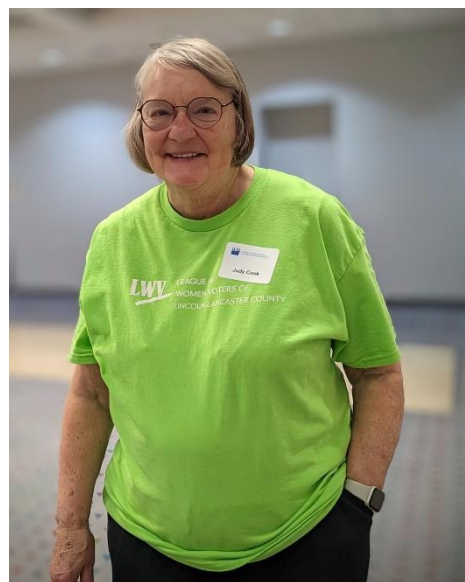
There are two ways you can renew your membership:

- 1) Online at <https://lincolnleague.org/join-us>
- 2) OR download the form from the web site, print it, add your information, and mail it along with your check to:

League of Women Voters of Lincoln Lancaster County, P. O. Box 5054, Lincoln, NE 68505

Pictures from LWVLL Planning Meeting

Photos from the Planning Meeting held on Saturday, February 3. See article on pages 2 & 3 of this newsletter for details about the discussions at the meeting.



Registering Voters

Pictures below show recent voter registration tables at two Lincoln City Library sites.



Voter Registration with Lancaster County Election Commissioner Todd Wiltgen, Walt Library, February 13, 2024



Voter Registration, Gere Library, February 17, 2024

Obituary for Jan Gauger (long time LWV-LL member)

October 30, 1928 - February 14, 2024

by the Gauger family

Jan Gauger, our mother, our mentor, our North. Jan was born to Helen Thorne Fulton and Fred Fulton in Moscow, ID, and grew up in Spokane, WA, as the youngest of seven siblings. While attending the University of Idaho, she met Wendell Gauger, who would become her husband of 38 years. She moved to Lincoln in 1957, and raised her four children there.



Jan was a firebrand, an organizer and a change-maker. Her legacy is written all around this community - a place she made better through long-term involvement with local organizations. She served on the Lincoln Housing Authority and as Tri-Chair of the Antelope Valley project. She was active with the Red Cross and the Lincoln/Lancaster League of Women Voters, among other groups too numerous to mention, and served four terms on the Lancaster County Board. From her start in politics with the League of Women Voters, she fought tirelessly for women's rights. As the first woman in Nebraska to be elected to a county-wide office, she broke down doors and opened the windows of local government, helping to usher in the end of "good ol' boys" networks. She made some enemies along the way, but she made our local governing systems better and more efficient. She was an incredible role model for us, her proud children, in whom she instilled a lasting interest in local, national and international affairs. She watched the news religiously, was always the best-informed person we knew, and through lively discussion helped us understand any topic and determine our own positions.

Jan was also a local business owner, founding One More Time Consignments (now omt! divine resale) in 1979, which has served tens of thousands of customers and consignors. Jan's other interests were as broad as her accomplishments: she kept a large garden with both perennials and vegetables, which she generously shared. She loved crosswords and word puzzles and kept up a text thread with her daughters to share daily results up until her last day. In addition to the giant-sized hole she leaves in our hearts, she leaves behind her four children: Carl Gauger (Shelly), Chris Gauger (Lee Leighton), Kate Merritt (Gary), and Sarah Gauger (Charlie Duerschner); grandchildren: Bri, Jeremy, Carly and Jesse Gauger, Mel and Asher Colborn, Lilly Krause, Jon and Chris Duerschner; and great-grandchildren: Loren and Asa Gauger.

The memorial service was held Monday, February 19, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. at First Plymouth Church.

In remembrance, donations may be made in her name to the Lincoln/Lancaster League of Women Voters, the Lincoln YWCA, and Voices of Hope.

Also see Margaret Reist's *Lincoln Journal-Star* article about Jan's life of public service: https://journalstar.com/news/local/government-politics/jan-gauger-public-service-lincoln-lancaster-county/article_b299a09e-d04a-11ee-a7c5-1790b460ba36.html.

The Lincoln Lancaster *Voter*
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Time Dated Material
Please Do Not Delay