

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF SOUTHWEST MISSOURI

The Voter

WINTER HOLIDAY PARTY

Mark your calendar! The LWVSWMO Holiday party will be Monday, December 11, 2023, from 5:00pm-7:00pm at Mahua's home. A separate detailed email invitation will be sent to members.



We will be collecting donations for the O'Reilly Center for Hope. Suggested items include Hot hands, Travel Size Hygiene Products (Shampoo, Conditioner, Body Wash), Razors, Dude Wipes, Long & Short Socks (all sizes), Chargers (all kinds), and cash donations to be used for bus passes (checks can be made out to Community Partnership of the Ozarks – O'Reilly Center for Hope).

NEW LWVSWMO COMMITTEE & ACTION TEAM STRUCTURE

The newly approved [structure for committees and action teams](#) allows members to get involved in a variety of initiatives and committees that fall under key topics that they may be passionate about. As a part of the newly approved structure, the establishment of new action teams includes a Fundraising Team and an Education Committee.

The Fundraising Team focuses on core fundraising efforts for the LWVSWMO. This includes yearly fundraising efforts, auctions and donations. This group works in partnership with the Treasurer to increase core income. For those interested in participating in fundraising efforts, connect with our Treasurer, Kelley Nicholas at kstill@drury.edu

As one of the main priorities of the League is education, the Education Committee works to address local issues related to education. This includes funding, book banning, curriculum, and more. 1-2 members of this local Education Committee will serve on the Board approved Statewide Education Committee, along with members from Leagues across the state. For those interested in participating in the Education Committee, please contact Cindy Mueller at cndymllr@gmail.com

OBSERVER CORPS REPORT

School Board Meetings: Springfield Public Schools. The SPS BOE continued to disagree, sometimes vehemently, over the inclusion of "gender identity and sexual orientation" as a part of SPS Board Policy relating to the federal lunch program and food service management. The recommendation for the inclusion of the phrase came from the Missouri School Board Association to bring school board policies into compliance with federal lunch program and federal school nutrition programs' antidiscrimination statements. The issue was first brought up and voted on during the September 26 meeting. It was defeated three – three. It was brought up for a vote again during the October 24 meeting and was tabled by a vote of 4 – 3. During the November 14, 2023, the issue was brought back to the table and the Board voted 4-3 to include the gender identity and sexual orientation phrase as a part of the Board's antidiscrimination policy. Some board members have taken an inordinate amount of time to discuss any policy that might include any reference to SOGI, to denigrate parents of LGBTQ children, to invoke partisan politics by referencing certain members of the US Senate and to a letter written by Missouri's Attorney General, all of whom are opposed to any SOGI references. Biblical ideology has been cited with reference to man and woman and boy and girl. Misinformation and disinformation have been a part of the discussion.

Ozark Public Schools: One patron and one school board member objected to the removal of patrons during the October meeting. The patron claimed that those removed had not had "due process" The board member said that the board does not invite enough input from the community and objected to the current policy of asking

for disruptive patrons to leave. Board members pointed out several ways in which patron input is possible. All board members but one voted in favor of the policy. A new capstone project “Ozark Academics on the Job” was presented to board members and to improve communication Superintendent Wilson has offered to meet monthly with each board member individually.

VOTER SERVICES UPDATE

Voter Registration: Voter registrars were busy at work registering voters beginning on November 1, 2023, ending on November 22, 2023. Registration tabling included the following: NAACP Job Fair, Transgender Celebration of Life Art Show, Drury University, Glo Center Vote with Pride, SPS University, and the O'Reilly Center of Hope. Seventy-eight folks either registered or updated their registration information. No registration events are scheduled for December.

Voter Education and Outreach: The History Museum is ready to set up pilots for the Girl Scout Behind the Ballot program during January. The Voting Matters presentation is scheduled to be presented to both the youth group and the young adult group at the Glo Center. A voter registration, education and outreach zoom meeting will be scheduled for some time in January.

Informed Voter Coalition: The Coalition met November 14, 2023. **Expanding school board interviews to surrounding school districts** – Since the only race on Springfield’s ballot for the April election is the school board election, we will be exploring other races to add to our interview list for cities in the Metropolitan Statistical Area, specific to Greene County. As we know more about the races and issues, we can have a more in-depth discussion in January and make better decisions on races to focus on. Please keep your eyes and ears open and be ready to help decide where our focus will land. **Bus wrap** – the LWV is collaborating with Leadership Springfield and NAACP to secure grant funding to purchase bus wraps for all three 2024 elections. The wrap will simply be the word VOTE and the date of the election. The August and November wraps will have Vote411 info. Voter turnout is a Red Ribbon issue in the Community Focus Report. We see this as an extension of this group helping to educate and then encouraging voters to vote. We are submitting grant requests to the state LWV as well as

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CFO – Inclusion and Belonging and the Jewell Schweitzer Collective Impact Grant.

DEI UPDATE

The DEI Committee will meet for coffee and brainstorming Saturday, December 16, 9 a.m. at Mama Jean’s deli, 228 W. Sunshine, across from Bass Pro. Anyone interested may come or email Cynthia at cynerb@gmail.com.

The Springfield Art Museum has two events linked to World AIDS Day (Dec. 1). On Saturday, Dec. 2, 6 p.m. in the Museum’s auditorium, Lynn Meyerkord of AIDS Project of the Ozarks will deliver opening remarks for a program of short films. On Saturday, Dec. 16, 4 p.m., in the Museum’s auditorium, the documentary *Remembering the Normal Heart Controversy in Springfield, MO*, will be shown, followed by remarks from the film’s director and executive producer. Both events are free. No registration required.

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

The Environment and Sustainability Committee came together for two events this month. On October 19 we met at the Schweitzer-Brentwood Library to listen to Laurie Davis and Ashley Krug present “Sustainability 101.” Our event was well-attended, and we learned about the three pillars of sustainability.

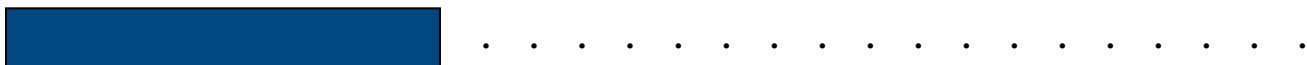
Later that week, on October 21, we picked up trash along Sunshine Street.

Our final trash pickup will be Saturday afternoon, November 18, at 1:30, after our general meeting.

EDUCATION UPDATE

The education committee recommends a new 25 min documentary called [ABCs of Book Banning](#). It is streaming on Paramount+.

The next committee meeting is at Empower Abilities Jan 20 directly after the general meeting. All are welcome.



RADIO PROGRAM

Have you listened recently to our weekly Making Democracy Work program on KSMU radio? The League hosts a weekly program, every Monday at 9:45am, on KSMU 91.1FM. In case you missed the most recent episodes, you can click here to browse through the archives for topics you might want to listen to now: [Making Democracy Work](#).

November 6: [Springfield Greene County library director discusses upcoming retirement and reflects on a long career](#)

November 13: [‘If you have a passion, we probably have a board to match,’ says Springfield City Clerk](#)

November 20: [The Tooth Truck has served thousands of children in Springfield and the surrounding areas over the last 2 decades](#)

November 27: [KVC and Great Circle have joined forces in an effort to increase support for improving youth mental health](#)

SIGN UP FOR TEXT MESSAGES

Sign up for text message announcements from the League. Message 81010 with the text @lww2023 to join.

SPIRIT OF INDEPENDENCE

EXHIBIT

Find a time to visit the [Spirit of Independence exhibit](#) at the Springfield Art Museum 12/2/23-4/7/24. Suffragists Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton are one of the subjects. Our League was asked to submit a “What does independence mean to you?” comment to be displayed with their portrait. Co-presidents Sherry Buchanan and Emily Fessler sent this:

“We wish we could tell you, honored Sister Stanton and Sister Mott, that the aspirations of your Seneca Falls 1848 “Declaration of Sentiments” have been achieved and that authentic independence for women now guarantees “all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States”.

However, 175 years later, we must continue your struggle because your aspirations remain unfulfilled. We celebrate progress and are immensely grateful for the pioneering accomplishments of our predecessors. But

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true independence is not guaranteed until women’s rights and privileges are assured constitutionally through an Equal Rights Amendment and practiced as the cultural norm.

We are inspired by this portrayal of your fierce determination and solidarity, and the League of Women Voters will continue to champion your cause.”

END OF YEAR GIVING OPPORTUNITY

Our LWVSWMO Education Fund is a tax-deductible option for end of year donations. This is a wonderful way to support our work!



Donate to the Education Fund by mailing your donation to the address below. Checks must be made out to LWV of Missouri Education Fund. Online donations to the Education Fund are not possible at this time. League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri PO Box 3036, Springfield, MO 65808-3036

NEW GUIDE TO STATE ACTION

The *Guide to State Action* has been updated for 2023-2025. Click [here](#) for a PDF of the 66-page document with all the State League issue positions.

CORRECTION TO NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

A correction to the Observer Corps report in the November newsletter needs to be made.

Moms for Liberty questioned the Springfield Board of Education’s refusal to allow U.S. Constitutions to be distributed to all 8th grade students. Board members considered whether to add “gender identity and sexual

orientation" to anti-discrimination board policies, in particular regarding school nutrition programs and food service workers. **The board voted 4-3 to not include the two phrases in the current board policies.** It should read "The board voted 4-3 to table the inclusion of gender identity and sexual orientation in the board policies regarding school nutrition programs and food service workers."

UPCOMING DATES

Spirit of Independence Exhibit

December 2, 2023 – April 7, 2024
Springfield Art Museum

Deputy Registrar Training

Friday, December 8, 2023, 10am

Winter Holiday Party

Monday, December 11, 2023, 5-7pm

DEI Committee Meeting

Saturday, December 16, 2023, 9:00am
Mama Jean's Deli, 228 W Sunshine

Education Committee Meeting

Saturday, January 20, 2024, at 11:00am
Empower Abilities

LWVMO Spring Conference

June 8, 2024
Location TBD

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Andrew Cocker, Political Science Instructor at OTC speaking at the League November General Meeting.

