

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®] OF SOUTHWEST MISSOURI

The Voter

HOLIDAY PARTY



Date: Monday, December 2, 2024

Time: 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Location: Lisa Langley's Home

Bring an appetizer to share.

This holiday season let's come together to support two incredible organizations making a difference in our community: **Isabel's House Crisis Nursery of the Ozarks** and **Community Partnership of the Ozarks**. As part of our holiday party, we are hosting a drive to gather essential items for those in need.

What to Bring:

For Community Partnership of the Ozarks

- Hot Hands
- Travel-size hygiene products (shampoo, conditioner, body wash)
- Razors
- Dude Wipes
- Long & short socks (all sizes)
- Shelf-stable snacks (soft granola bars, no produce)
- Chargers (all kinds)
- Bus passes w/transfer
- Cash donations for bus passes (checks payable to Community Partnership of the Ozarks - O'Reilly Center for Hope)

For Isabel's House

- Diapers (Sizes: Newborn through Size 6, Pull-Ups, training pants)
- Hygiene items

- Socks and underwear (Sizes: infants to youth size 16, new items only)
- Additional helpful items:
- Baby formula (all types)
- Non-perishable snacks (granola bars, fruit snacks, etc.)
- Gift cards (Walmart, Target, Amazon)

Your donations will provide warmth, comfort, and support to families and individuals in need. Let's make the season brighter for our community!

Please bring your donations to the holiday party or contact us for alternative drop-off arrangements. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

Attention Members: We're transitioning to a new membership system in the coming year! To make this a smooth process, we kindly ask that all membership renewals be completed by December 31st. Renewing your membership now ensures uninterrupted support for the important work we do together. If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

VOTER SERVICE COMMITTEE UPDATE

2024 in a Nutshell

Voter Registration: Registrars provided over ninety opportunities for community members to either register or update voter registration information. Registrars were in high schools in Springfield and Ozark, at the O'Reilly Center of Hope, at Harmony House, at the Glo Center, at Eden Village, Nixa Branch Library, Fair Grove Library, the Drew Lewis Foundation, and at Farmer's Markets on Republic Road and Ozark. We were present during all three Naturalization Ceremonies, at CPO's Taxapalooza, Earth Day, Arts Fest, Pridefest, Juneteenth, Empower: Abilities ADA Celebration, Alamo Draft House, the NAACP Birthday Celebration and at the Labor Day Picnic. We assisted voters in Senior Living Centers with

registrations, absentee applications, and the Disabled List Request. We were at the Excel Center and on the Drury University Campus. PAWS provided multiple opportunities for students to register to vote on the MSU campus (several Paws students are League members). Approximately five hundred voter registrations were turned in at the County Clerk’s Offices.



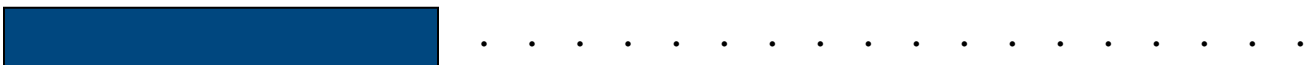
Education and Advocacy: We collaborated with NAACP, Alamo Draft House, and several churches to provide voting information. Election information cards for each election were delivered to Greene County Libraries and to the Nixa Branch Library. We participated in the History Museum’s Civics on the Square, and Parkview’s YCLA program (PAWS students provided the program). Voter education presentations were made to members of the Homeless Service Providers Association, a girl scouts’ troop, the Excel Center, Drury University, the YEP Community Foundation students, the Missouri Organization of Nurse Leaders and to an Immaculate Conception group. Youth attending Civic on the Square participated in voting activities. We participated in three panel discussions including the John Lewis Day of Good Trouble (a collaboration with NAACP which included card writing), the Alpha/Phi Alpha/NAACP Voter Registration Townhall, and a Civil Discourse discussion held on Drury Campus. Other areas of successes in voter education and advocacy efforts included the CU bus wrap collaboration, the Informed Voter Coalition

interviews, the PAWS school board forum, and the Voter’s Guide.

We will be up and running in 2025 with our first meeting scheduled for January 16, 2025, at 6:30, on Zoom. Existing registrars and anyone who is interested in becoming a registrar should mark their calendars. We will also discuss education and advocacy plans.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

The committee met Wed. Nov. 20 at the Brentwood Library. Our topic of discussion was School Vouchers. The LWV is a strong advocate for PUBLIC schools, including involvement in public schools at a federal level. (The president elect's proposal to dissolve the Federal Department of Education is of grave concern.) Part of Missouri's Educational Omnibus Bill signed into law last summer (and yet to be fully funded) is an increase in school vouchers. This may seem like a small threat to public schools at this point, but we urge citizens to become aware of how vouchers have been implemented in other states. First off, vouchers are marketed in a seemingly harmless manner: as Personalized Education Programs, School Choice, Parent Choice, Special Needs Accounts, Education Freedom Accounts, Educational Savings Accounts, or Scholarship Accounts (funded by private donors for tax credits). They begin with eligibility for a limited group and then increase to eventually include any student in the state. Voucher programs starve public schools and balloon state budgets, leaching funds from other areas. For example, Arizona estimated the cost of vouchers to be under 65 million, but they have now surpassed 332 mil with another 429-mil expected this year. What is most troubling is that vouchers cause PUBLIC money to be funneled to unregulated private schools, religious institutions, and homeschools. Some students in Arkansas recently walked out in protest of public money going to private schools. In Ohio, where 90% of students still attend public schools, the cost for vouchers approached one billion last year. Many families who were already willingly footing the bill to send their kids to private school now use public funds to supplement tuition. Parents have every right to choose a different educational path for their child, but that does not mean that public tax money should be used to pay for their individual choices.



Voucher programs could not be as successful as they are without the vilification of public schools. Denouncing teachers and librarians as being groomers and spreading lies (litter boxes in bathrooms, sex change surgeries during the school day, history or literature lessons being falsely labeled as unpatriotic or CRT) have been effective in sowing doubt in our public institutions. Teachers have retired and left the classroom in droves, leading to a nationwide shortage. Public schools need our help on a national level and the first step is renewing our faith in them. The LWV has long supported public schools and believes that “the federal government shares with other levels of government the responsibility to provide an equitable, quality public education for all children from pre-K through grade 12. A quality public education is essential for a strong, viable, and sustainable democratic society and is a civil right” (LWV Impact on Issues).

Some good news is that most citizens want successful public schools and oppose sending students to private schools on the public dime. In many rural areas, protecting public schools is an important issue because alternate schools are not available. Three states, Kentucky, Colorado, and Nebraska, put vouchers on the Nov. 5 ballot. Voters strongly rejected them. Nebraska voted to end their current voucher program. But even when voters reject vouchers, lawmakers (prompted by very wealthy backers and PACs who target non-supporters) still circumvent the will of the people. Lawmakers rarely campaign on the unpopular topic, but instead they work behind the scenes to include voucher initiatives in education bills. Arizona voters said no to vouchers in 2018, but they were still implemented in 2022. The education committee urges members to stay informed on this topic. Links to sources are provided in this article if you wish to read more about what is happening in other states.

The next education committee meeting will be Saturday, Jan. 18, 11:15-12:15 at Empower: Abilities. This meeting directly follows the LWV General Meeting. The agenda will be mailed a week prior to the meeting. Please email cdnymllr@gmail.com if you wish to join our committee and be included in future Education Committee emails.

UPDATE FROM LWVMO

The Cole County Circuit Court ruled this week on both of our lawsuits with NAACP challenging provisions in HB1878.

Judge Jon Beetem agreed with us and blocked four provisions of HB1878 that would have restricted our work to register voters and encourage absentee voting, finding “they are overbroad and impair a wide swath of constitutionally protected rights of speech, expression, and association.

Unfortunately, Judge Beetem supported the strict rules limiting the kind of government-issued photo ID allowed, but admitted, "no credible evidence was adduced of any voter impersonation which would have been prevented by requiring photo ID.” We will appeal that decision.

Please see our two press releases regarding the cases. [LWVMO HB1878 Victory](#)
[LWVMO Photo ID Lawsuit Release](#)

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 13: [Ozarks Public Health Institute to take over Community Focus Report](#)
- November 20: [Goals of RestoreSGF to increase housing stock and home ownership](#)
- November 26: [Increasing civic engagement among young people is goal of grant-funded program](#)

UPCOMING DATES

Holiday Party

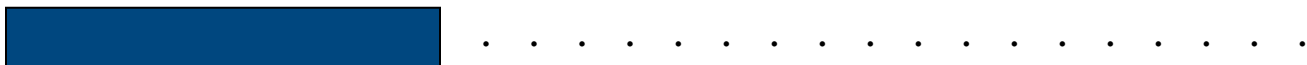
Monday, December 2, 2024
5:30pm-7:00pm
Lisa Langley’s Home

Voter Services Committee Meeting

January 16, 2025, at 6:30, on Zoom.

Education Committee Meeting

January 18, 2025, 11:15am
Empower: abilities



GIVING TUESDAY



Many thanks.

Double your impact for voters on GivingTuesday! An anonymous donor has offered to match GivingTuesday gifts made by December 3, up to \$300,000. Any gift you make will be doubled, dollar-for-dollar, to support voters' rights, defend democracy and continue to provide powerful tools like VOTE411.org. To be matched, your gift must be received by 11:59 p.m. on December 3, 2024.

Don't miss this opportunity to show your support for voters — with twice the impact!

[LWV GivingTuesday link](#)

