



ANNUAL MEETING

Join us for the LWVSWMO Annual Meeting on:

 **Monday, May 18 | 5:30 PM**
 **Springfield Botanical Gardens Banquet Hall**
2400 S Scenic Ave, Springfield, MO 65807

Price is \$15. Dinner and refreshments are included (You can pay at the event or [online here](#)).

Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow League members! Please RSVP using this form: [RSVP Here](#)

CALL TO ACTION

If you have ever wondered "what can I do with the LWV that's not too time consuming and supports the organization?" Here is your answer!!

Put **May 19, 2026** on your calendar NOW, **6:30 to 7:30pm**. You don't have to leave your house!

The **Power Hour** is to help educate voters through this education service to the voting community. Important information relevant to actions by our state and federal officials which threaten democracy is discussed.

Here is the [LINK](#) to sign up. DO IT NOW.

The Power Hour started last fall and has had presentations on the following, two of which were researched, prepared, and presented by LWV members:

- Impacts of Medicaid on MO with passage of the reconciliation bill last July
- Immigration Enforcement in MO - presentation by the Ashrei Foundation and the Migrant & Immigrant Community Action Project
- Legislative Tracking of Missouri Bills by LWV members

Our next Power Hour will feature a presentation by Amy Blouin, founder of the Missouri Budget Project and its President & CEO. This will focus on the current initiative by our Missouri Legislature to replace

our state income tax with sales taxes not only on purchases but also on services such as home maintenance, auto repairs, salons and barbers and many others.

MO Budget Project provides objective research and analysis of state budget, tax and economic issues. Taxes affect us ALL --- and legislation this session may fundamentally change the way MO taxes us.

Amy will share with us the recap of the MO legislative session as it relates to tax bills, possible ballot measures and the budget that will ultimately affect us all.

Here is the [LINK](#) to sign up. DO IT NOW.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Looking for a way to be involved with the League? Have you ever wondered what takes place at School Board or Library Board Meetings?

"Protecting our right to know is integral to the health of our democracy. Decisions that determine how our schools will be run, at what level community safety programs will be funded, and how land in our towns will be used impacts our lives and are vital to our well-being. These kinds of decisions need to be made with public input and oversight. One important way to ensure that is to observe government meetings." (Preface, LWV - Observing Your Government in Action)

We need more volunteers for Springfield, Nixa and Ozark school board meetings, Christian County Library and Springfield/Greene County Library board meetings.

Please email Sue Walker at: susieqwmo@gmail.com if you would like more information. If you live in Christian County, we could definitely use your help!

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Some members presented our research on “*Threats to Public Education*” at the April Unit Meetings. ([A link to the slide show](#) is posted on the local league website in the podcast/posts section.) One slide had some statistics about book challenges. Since then, the ALA has updated its statistics. Noticeably is that the percentage of challenges coming from outside pressure groups rose from 72% to 92%, proving once again that these complaints are not organic or grass-root driven.

If you haven't already viewed this, please view this 14 minute [ProPublica Video!](#) about what is happening to public schools at the FEDERAL level. It is grim.

Our committee capped this week's meetings/events with a "Let Freedom Read" event on April 29. We'll do this again during Banned Books Week in the fall. We are winding down our committee work for the year. There is no May meeting planned, and we always take the summer off. Our next meeting will be in September.

Please stay vigilant about contacting your representatives about the under-funding of Missouri Public Schools and Libraries. Cuts to both are in the state budget.

VOTER AND ELECTION SERVICES COMMITTEE UPDATE

April registration tabling began with the monthly Drew Lewis Family Night and ended with the first Naturalization Ceremony of 2026 occurring as a part of the Sons of the American Revolution state convention. We were also present, along with PAWS, during the Meet the Elected event held on the MSU campus. We will hit the floor running in May with Artsfest and ending with the beginning of summer voter registration at the Farmers' Markets.

As a part of our education and advocacy program, Kelly Sutton and Joan Gentry participated in a Girl Scout's Day at the History Museum of the Square. Scouts “registered to vote” and participated in a mock election activity. And, as a part of our election service endeavors, attendees at the Meet the Elected event had an

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opportunity to visit with five different elected officials representing the SPS school board, the Assessor's Office, the Auditor's Office, the County Clerk's Office, and the County Commissioner's Office.

If you are interested in becoming a deputy registrar, please contact Joan Gentry at Joangentry2012@gmail.com or by text message at 417-840-4551.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Is it time for you to pay your annual dues? Just a reminder that dues are now \$75 per year. Click here to pay online: portal.lwv.org

To pay by mail send a check to:
League of Women Voters of SW Missouri
PO Box 3036
Springfield, MO 65808-3036

UPCOMING DATES

Annual Meeting

Monday, May 18, 2026; 5:30 PM
Nathaniel Greene Botanical Garden
Community Room

Voter Power Hour Webinar

Tuesday, May 19, 2026; 6:30-7:30 PM

LWV National Convention

Thursday, June 25 – Sunday, June 28, 2026
Columbus, OH

Adopt-A-Street Cleanup Dates

Sunday, October 25, 2026; 9:00 AM

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STAY CONNECTED

Don't miss important League news and opportunities to take action! By signing up for our SMS program, you'll receive timely updates, event reminders, advocacy alerts, and ways to stay engaged — all delivered directly to your phone.

We're committed to keeping messages meaningful, concise, and respectful of your time. You can reply with questions at any time, and you may opt out whenever you choose.

Sign up today:

<https://mailchi.mp/f614c099e92c/sms-signup>

MISSOURI VOTER

The latest edition of the [Missouri Voter](#) is live on the State League website. Inside, you'll find additional information about upcoming amendments and the registration link to this year's [Spring Conference](#) that you won't want to miss.

RADIO PROGRAM



Have you caught our weekly **Making Democracy Work** program on **KSMU 91.1 FM**? The League hosts this show every **Monday at 9:45 AM**, covering timely topics about civic engagement and public policy.

If you missed recent episodes, you can explore past programs and listen at your convenience here: [Making Democracy Work Archives](#).

April 2: [Small deposits of kindness have a big impact](#)

April 7: [Reminders as voters go to the polls](#)

April 15: [Springfield Ambassadors Program pairs volunteer opportunities](#)

April 22: [Crystal Quade discusses the importance of a vibrant downtown](#)

OPINION PIECE BY STATE

LEAGUE PRESIDENT

[Missouri Supreme Court must protect the people's power of referendum](#)

An accountable state government is like a seesaw: government on one side, people on the other. When it works, it moves in a steady rhythm — government acts, people respond. But when one side grows too heavy, the system stops working. The people can push, organize, and speak out, but the balance no longer shifts. That is when accountability breaks.

Missouri now stands at one of those moments.

For more than a century, Missouri courts have recognized a simple but foundational principle: the people reserve the power to legislate directly through referendum. This right is not symbolic. It is explicit in our Constitution and essential to maintaining balance between citizens and government.

That is why the upcoming May 12 Missouri Supreme Court hearing in *Maggard v. State of Missouri* carries such weight for the future of direct democracy in our state.

More than 300,000 Missourians have acted. They signed petitions to challenge the congressional redistricting map passed during the 2025 special session — and followed the rules. In doing so, they exercised a right that has long served as a democratic safeguard in our state.

Under Missouri's Constitution, that action should have a clear effect: the law in question is suspended until voters can decide its fate.

Yet, state officials have argued otherwise, raising troubling questions about whether Missourians can meaningfully enforce their own constitutional rights. If citizens who follow every requirement still lack standing to defend the referendum process, then the right itself risks becoming unenforceable in practice.

At the same time, recent legal battles over ballot language underscore another critical piece of this system: voters must have access to fair, accurate, and unbiased information. A Cole County judge recently struck misleading language related to the referendum, reinforcing a basic democratic principle: voters deserve

clarity, not confusion, when making decisions at the ballot box.

These issues are deeply connected.

Fair maps, fair ballot language, and a functioning referendum process all serve the same purpose, ensuring that elected officials remain accountable to the people they represent.

Redistricting is not an abstract concept. It shapes how our communities are represented in Congress — affecting decisions about funding, health care access, housing, infrastructure, education, economic development, and more. When politicians manipulate district lines to predetermine outcomes, accountability weakens. Communities can be divided or diluted, and voters lose meaningful influence over the decisions that affect their daily lives.

The referendum process exists precisely to check that kind of imbalance. It gives Missourians — regardless of political affiliation — the ability to push back when they believe politicians go too far.

Courts have long played a critical role in preserving that balance. For generations, Missouri's judiciary has allowed citizens to challenge laws that interfere with their constitutional rights, including the right to referendum. Departing from that precedent would tilt the system in a dangerous direction, away from the people and toward unchecked power.

The Missouri Supreme Court now has an opportunity to reaffirm what has long been understood: that constitutional rights must be enforceable to have meaning.

If the balance is lost, it is not just one decision that is affected. The entire system begins to break down. The seesaw stops moving. The people's ability to respond, to hold the government accountable, is lost.

Missourians have done their part. Now, the question before the court is whether that right will continue to function as intended. Because in a healthy democracy, the will of the people must be heard, and when they are ignored, people have the right to hold politicians accountable.

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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CONDEMNS SUPREME COURT RULING

[League of Women Voters Condemns Supreme Court Ruling Dismantling the Bedrock of the Civil Rights Movement](#)

WASHINGTON, DC - The League of Women Voters President Dianna Wynn and CEO Celina Stewart issued the following joint statement in response to the US Supreme Court's 6-3 decision in *Louisiana v. Callais*, a case concerning the constitutionality of Section 2 of the *Voting Rights Act of 1965*.

“In recent months and years, we have watched this Court become less faithful to its constitutional mandate, but today, we have witnessed the final nail in the coffin of its legitimacy. By weakening Section 2 to the point of inoperability, the Court sends a clear message: racial discrimination in redistricting against Black voters and other voters of color is acceptable as long as you don't say it out loud. This will immediately open the door to racist redistricting; indeed, we have already seen it happening in anticipation of this decision.

Those who seek to silence you wouldn't be trying to stop you from voting if your vote didn't matter. The people have the power to determine the outcome of this democracy. And we will.