

SUMMER SOUNDING BOARD

The League of Women Voters of Southwest Missouri keeps the work of active, informed citizenship going year-round — and this summer is no exception. Mark your calendars for three Summer Sounding Board sessions covering some of the most pressing issues facing our community and our democracy.

June 15 | Voter Access for People with Disabilities
Monday, 5:30–7:00 PM | Prima's Mexican Kitchen, 2662 S. Glenstone

Our summer series kicks off with a conversation about voting accessibility. Many voters — including seniors with functional limitations who may not identify as "disabled" — face real barriers at the polls. Shelby Butler, Director of Advocacy and Public Policy at EmpowerAbilities and ADACC, will walk us through why accessible voting matters and what options are available to Missouri voters.

July 18 | League Positions on the August 4 Ballot
Saturday, 9:30–11:00 AM | Library Center, AB Auditorium

Governor Kehoe recently placed two amendments on the August 4 ballot, and the League opposes both. Join us to understand why we have taken positions against Amendment 4 (Initiative Petition Changes) and Amendment 5 (Tax Changes) — and leave ready to share what you've learned with other voters. While our nonpartisan League does not endorse candidates, we do take positions on ballot issues, and this session is a great opportunity to dig into the details before election day.

August 22 | Local Immigration Enforcement Q&A
Saturday, 9:30–11:00 AM | Brentwood Library

Our summer series wraps up with a candid conversation about how Immigration and Customs Enforcement is being managed at the local level. Representatives from the Greene County Sheriff's Office will be on hand to answer member questions. Watch for a link in the July newsletter to submit your questions in advance.

We hope to see you at all three sessions. These gatherings are a chance to learn, connect, and carry the League's mission into our broader community.

INPUT NEEDED: MEETING VENUES

For the past few years, our **Monday Night Unit Meetings** (5:30-7:00) were held at The Pitch Pub on East Sunshine. The Pitch recently closed, and we are on the lookout for another location with the same amenities: Private area, no booking fee (spending goal is acceptable), Seating for at least 30 people, food and drink (wine/beer a plus), AV capabilities of a large projection screen.

The majority of our **Saturday General Meetings** (9:30-11:00) and **Tuesday Unit Meetings** (12:00-1:00) are typically held at our public libraries on the south side of town. At our Annual Meeting in May, a member suggested we change up the locations, especially if our goal is to welcome a more diverse group of members. The ability to have a large screen is important for most topics/speakers.

If you have any ideas for meeting locations, please email Cindy Mueller cndymllr@gmail.com.

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/f614c099e92e/sms-signup>

June 2026

2026-2027 BOARD

During the Annual Meeting on May 18th, members approved the following nominated slate of officers and directors. Congratulations to the 2026-2027 Board!

Sandy Michaels, Co-President
Kelly Sutton, Co-President
Cindy Mueller, Vice President
Donna Thompson, Secretary

Elected Directors:

Pam Shaver, Skyler Hawkins, Jennifer Johnmeyer,
Emily Fessler and Michelle Breshears

Appointed Directors:

Becky Callaway, Sandy Hopper, Lisa Langley, Joan Gentry (State Board Member), Suzanne Walker-Pacheco, Sherry Buchanan (State Board Member) and Tracy McGrady

EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

No Meetings this summer.

Sad Library News: Our state and local leagues are members of the **RIGHT TO READ COALITION**. Individuals may also join for free by [following this link](#). The most recent newsletter has some terrible news about Missouri library funding:

Libraries across Missouri will receive half of the funding provided by the state in Fiscal Year 2027 compared to the previous year (\$1.65 million in FY 2027 compared to \$3.3 million the prior year).

The 50 percent reduction for libraries in FY 2027 (beginning July 1, 2026) will have a significant impact on Missouri's libraries, particularly those in small towns and rural areas; they rely on state funding for a greater percentage of their budgets than larger, urban area libraries.

MSU PARTNERS ADVANCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Two exciting developments from Missouri State University signal a busy and productive fall ahead for civic engagement in our community.

Ranked Choice Voting Takes Center Stage

Suzanne Walker-Pacheco's proposal has been accepted for the Innovations in Democracy Summer Cohort, sponsored by the American Democracy Project. The cohort brings together participants for virtual training sessions this summer, with intentional campus activities to follow in the fall. The centerpiece will be a public interdisciplinary event on ranked choice voting, featuring faculty from political science and mathematics alongside a political analyst and author. Attendees will explore both our current voting system and the ranked choice alternative from social, political, and mathematical angles — and participate in a hands-on activity whose results they'll then analyze together. Details will be announced in August, so watch this space.

Paws to the Polls Lands Major Grant

The MSU student organization Paws to the Polls has received the MSEED Grant (MSU Experiential Education for Student Development), funded through MSU's 2026–2030 strategic plan. Their project, "Building a Civic-Minded University Community," will expand their work beyond voter registration tabling and nonpartisan election information to include focus group discussions, civil dialogue workshops, and a fall 2026 voting fair.

Together, these initiatives reflect a growing culture of civic participation at MSU — and promising opportunities for League members to engage with the next generation of voters.

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The statewide Legislative Action Committee, co-led by Brandi Blackburn and Sherry Buchanan, produced 151 Calls to Action. Local members Kelly Sutton, Ann Elwell, and Vreni Jones led tracking teams. Other LWVSWMO members who tracked bills were Mary Schnelle, Rebekah Meadows, Rike Reuter-Hart, Anna Dowell, Christine Debold, and Deborah Moody. Thanks

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to them and everyone who followed through on Calls to Action for valiant efforts to advocate for League priorities.

Some things we can be glad about:

1. None of the attacks on the LGBTQ+ community passed. They got a lot of attention but didn't get to the finish line.
2. Looser gun laws didn't get much attention or see success.
3. Work requirements for MO HealthNet did not pass, but stricter federal regulations are pending.
4. HB 1871 brings some good things to the election process and expungement for some with drug-related offenses who have not finished probation or parole; restores their right to vote.
5. None of the harmful environmental bills that we tracked were passed.
6. None of the attacks on the Initiative Petition process were passed. However, we must defeat Amendment 4 on the ballot in August. It would require a majority vote in all legislative districts for a citizen initiative to pass, eliminating "one person, one vote."
7. Several of the issues tracked by the Healthcare Team got wrapped into a 110 page omnibus bill SS SCS HCS HB 2372: epinephrine delivery; pregnancy mortality, food as medicine, doula reimbursement thru MO HealthNet; and insurance coverage for 1-year prescriptions of hormonal birth control.
8. MO now has a "Geospatial Advisory Council" (SB 959) which helps ensure that map-based data is accurate and shared between state government, local agencies and private entities. This could have significant utility for voting maps and redistricting purposes.
9. Open school enrollment stalled.
10. The defeat of the Second Amendment Preservation Act in the House committee essentially stopped all pro-gun bills from moving into April and May. These included bills that would weaken domestic violence laws, loosen concealed carry and age limits statutes, and strengthen "stand your ground"-style protections.

Some things to be concerned about:

1. HJR 173 (replacing income tax with sales taxes on goods and services), Amendment 5, will be on the ballot in August. This is very disappointing because the weight of the testimonies showed the legislators

that this bill is not favored by the public. Hopefully, this sentiment will be reflected by the polls.

2. Many bills proposing to eliminate the state income tax on food were proposed, and a couple even were passed, but did not progress.
3. Public education will be underfunded by \$190 million in FY 2027 based on the foundation formula. This will be the first year since 2017 that public schools have received no increase in the state budget.
4. Private school vouchers were increased from \$50 million to \$60 million
5. SB 1002. School board and bond elections in St. Charles County were moved to November. Candidates for school board must designate their party affiliation and agree to having that shown on the ballot. Will this become more widespread?
6. Abortion rights continue to be under attack, including the upcoming Amendment 3 vote and the "Born Alive" section of SB 999.
7. Gender transition is still vulnerable in the abortion ban and "gender-affirming care" ban, Amendment 3, which will be on the ballot in November
8. "Nuclear" being considered as a "renewable" energy source. MO Advanced Nuclear Energy Task Force has been established by Executive Order. Will this be prioritized over other renewables? A moratorium on solar farms was proposed but stalled. And no guidance/regulations regarding Data Centers were established.
9. The session ended without passing universal background checks for firearms purchases, extreme risk protection orders, responsible firearm storage, or stronger domestic violence firearms restrictions.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Is it time for you to pay your annual dues? Just a reminder that dues are now \$75 per year.

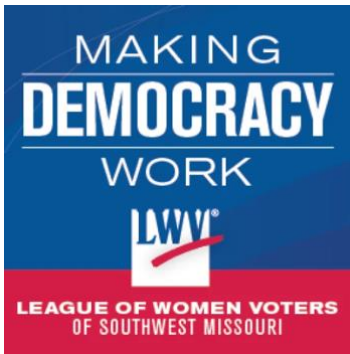
Click here to pay online: portal.lwv.org

To pay by mail send a check to:

League of Women Voters of SW Missouri
PO Box 3036
Springfield, MO 65808-3036

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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.

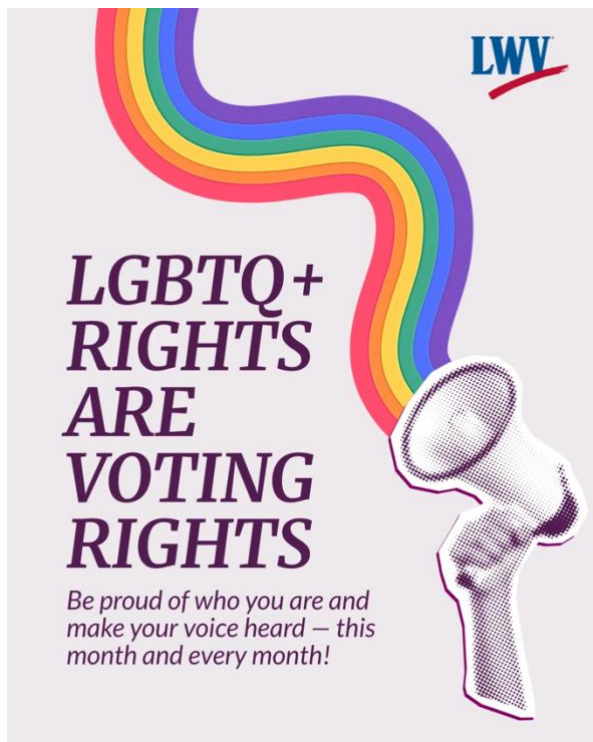
If you missed recent episodes, you can explore past programs and listen at your convenience here: [Making Democracy Work Archives](#).

May 4: [US Supreme Court remains vital to protecting democracy](#)

May 6: [Springfield's Gun Safety and Violence Collaborative](#)

May 18: [5 states unite to support small farms](#)

May 20: [City Council member discusses housing need for Springfield](#)



JOPLIN GLOBE ARTICLE

From the Joplin Globe Editorial Board.

OUR VIEW: Plan attacks ‘conservative’ Missouri principles

Missouri voters will decide the fate of four proposals at the polls in August, including one that will effectively eliminate a power that has been theirs for nearly 120 years.

It is an interesting that much of the criticism of the proposal is coming from Republicans and from a business group that characterizes it as an attack on “conservative” principles.

Amendment 4 would change how constitutional amendments proposed by initiative petition are approved in Missouri.

Right now, they require a simple majority, to pass but under this plan they would also need a concurrent majority, meaning also a majority in every one of the state’s eight congressional districts.

The net result is that even if a proposed change wins overwhelmingly statewide, it could be stopped by a small number of voters in just one of those eight districts.

According to analysis by the Missouri Independent, as few as 6% of voters could stop a proposal from becoming law.

As the Missouri Association of Realtors has warned, “This gives a small minority the power to veto what the vast majority of Missourians support.”

Amendment 4 is nothing short of an effort to thwart the will of Missourians.

Missouri’s Hancock Amendment, for example, was one such initiative that has protected Missouri taxpayers.

Not long ago, Carl Bearden, a former Republican lawmaker, urged voters to reject the changes, saying in *The Kansas City Star*: “The freedom to have a say on important issues is a fundamental right — and Missouri’s ... ballot measure process allows voters to circumvent partisan divides and directly get things done

for the people.... the legislature should resist further changes that would create massive roadblocks to access or inject politics into the people’s use of their reserved power.”

Former Republican Gov. John Ashcroft had to fight off similar attempts from Democrats when they were in power. Ashcroft said: “It is through the initiative process that those who have no influence with elective representatives may take their cause directly to the people. The General Assembly should be reluctant, therefore, to enact legislation which places any impediments on the initiative power which are inconsistent with the reservation found in the constitution.”

Missouri’s initiative petition and referendum process has been around since 1908, meaning more than half the life the state, and it has worked well.

This promises to be a fight, and some business groups are already lining up against it.

The Missouri Association of Realtors, for example, notes: “Conservatives” believe in limited government and the power of the people. Amendment 4 does the opposite: it concentrates power in the hands of politicians and takes it away from citizens. The initiative petition process is one of the most powerful checks citizens have against government overreach. It’s the tool that allowed Missouri voters to ban new taxes on real estate and services. No conservative should want to hand that power to politicians, regardless of who currently holds office.”

LWVMO LEGISLATIVE UPDATE PODCAST



(Click image to see full screen)

UPCOMING DATES

Summer Sounding Board

Monday, June 15, 2026, 5:30-7:00 PM
Prima’s Mexican Kitchen, 2662 S Glenstone

LWV National Convention

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

Summer Sounding Board

Saturday, July 18, 2026, 9:30-11:00 AM
Library Center, AB Auditorium
4653 S Campbell Ave

Summer Sounding Board

Saturday, August 22, 2026, 9:30-11:00 AM
Brentwood Library, 2214 S Brentwood Blvd

Unit Meetings

Monday, September 21, 2026
Tuesday, September 22, 2026

General Meeting

Saturday, October 17, 2026

Adopt-A-Street Cleanup Dates

Sunday, October 25, 2026; 9:00 AM

Unit Meetings

Monday, November 16, 2026
Tuesday, November 17, 2026

Holiday Social

Monday, December 7, 2026