

You are receiving this email because you are a member of the League of Women Voters of Elmhurst.

[View this email in your browser](#)

Voter Editor: Katie Marsico - TheVoter@lwvelmhurst.org



THE VOTER

MARCH 2019

CONTENTS

- President's Post
- Voter Service Reminders
- Program Updates
- Interested in Meeting with a State Legislator?
- Recap of the Annual **LWVIL** Issues Briefing
- Observe and Report
- For Your Calendar: Related to the Election
- For Your Calendar: Upcoming Events and Program
- Trivia Time and Other Reminders

PRESIDENT'S POST

Since 1970, the **League of Women Voters of the United States** has taken the position to abolish the Electoral College. In 2018, at the **LWVUS** National Convention, this position was urgently reaffirmed. On **February 18**, we partnered with Progressives for Change to inform our community about the Electoral College, with a presentation by Peggy Pissarreck (**LWV Arlington Heights**) and Joyce Williams (**LWV LaGrange Area**). Below are some of the myths that linger on this topic, as well as the truths behind them:

MYTH: Without the Electoral College, our presidents would be chosen by just a few states.

FACT: Election by popular vote would mean every person is equally represented, regardless of where they live. We no longer would be voting by state, but by person.

MYTH: The Electoral College protects the rights of the minority from the tyranny of the majority.

FACT: The courts and Senate protect the rights of minority groups. The president is supposed to represent the interests of all Americans. This means one person, one vote.

MYTH: Abolishing the Electoral College will mostly benefit Democratic candidates.

FACT: This system can—and has—affected both parties. This is a nonpartisan issue.

To learn more and get involved:

- Visit [Abolish the Electoral College](#) (a Facebook page).
- Check out [the LWV Wilmette's advocacy efforts](#).
- Find out about what the **LWV** is doing by emailing lwwabolishelectoral@gmail.com.
- Write your U.S. Representative to support [H.R.Res.7 to abolish the Electoral College](#). This correction requires a constitutional amendment.

On **February 20**, local **League** members supported the **LWV**'s position on another relevant issue (gun violence prevention) by attending an event on school safety hosted by Moms Demand Action (Elmhurst). Panelists included Elmhurst Police Chief Michael Ruth, District 205 Director of Facilities Todd Schmidt, private counselor Jeanne Kett MS, LCPC, and educator Kristina Sandrock. Information shared included the following:

- Cooperative work being done within the Elmhurst Police Department and District 205
- Active shooter and lockdown drills, as well as the stressful impact they create on students and staff
- Security tests
- The importance of training and continued communication

I hope to see you all at our screening of the documentary *RBG* (Ruth Bader Ginsburg) on **Thursday, March 21**, at 6:30 PM in the Elmhurst Public Library.

Sue Whitworth

VOTER SERVICE REMINDERS

Register to vote at [the Illinois Online Voter Registration Application website](#) by **March 17** to cast your ballot in the Consolidated Election by **Tuesday, April 2**. You may also change your address on that same website.

Visit the [Illinois Voter Guide](#) for a nonpartisan voter guide to all races covered during the **LWV Elmhurst's** Candidate Forum.

If you missed that event on **February 10**, view it on [our website](#) or look for it during March on Comcast Channel 6 and AT&T U-Verse Channel 99. Here is the TV schedule:

**Candidates for Elmhurst Park District Board of Park Commissioners
and Community Unit School District 205 Board of Education**

Tuesdays at 4:00 PM and Saturdays at 7:00 PM

**Candidates for Elmhurst City Council (Wards 1 and 4) and the College of
DuPage Board of Trustees**

Sundays at 7:00 PM and Wednesdays at 4:00 PM

PROGRAM UPDATES

Come join us at the Elmhurst Public Library to celebrate Women's History Month. On **Thursday, March 21**, we'll use the interactive 90-inch screen to show *RBG*. The film is 96 minutes long, so we will start showing it at 6:30 PM. We'll supply the popcorn!

Save the date! Our annual meeting will be at 7:00 PM on **Thursday, May 9**. We have reserved the Guaranteed Rate Office at 115 Adelaide Street in Elmhurst.

INTERESTED IN MEETING WITH A STATE LEGISLATOR?

Every spring, the **LWVIL** asks local leagues to schedule meetings with their state legislators. One purpose of these meetings is to develop a positive relationship. Another is to determine legislators' opinions about topics on which the **LWV** has taken a position. We in Elmhurst have two new legislators representing us: State Senator Suzy Glowiak and State Representative Deanne Mazzochi.

If you are interested in attending one of these meetings, please [contact Jan Dorner](#). They are held in legislators' offices and are usually limited to a couple of people. The General Assembly is not in session Friday thru Monday.

RECAP OF THE ANNUAL LWVIL ISSUES BRIEFING

Four of us (Jeanne Davik, Jan Dorner, Katie Marsico, and Dorothy McGuire) went downtown for the annual **LWVIL** Issues Briefing. The purpose of this event is to prepare **League** members for the upcoming legislative session. The theme was “Creating Quality of Life for ALL in Illinois.”

For additional details related to this event, click [here](#). In addition, attendees received complimentary flash drives with PowerPoint slides from the various presentations. If you would like to view them, please [email us!](#)

MORNING PLENARY SESSION: THE VIEW FROM CONGRESS AND THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

*(Attended by all **LWV Elmhurst** members present)*

Congressman Mike Quigley had to cancel due to Cohen hearings, so State Representative Justin Slaughter (D) of the 27th District discussed what is happening in Springfield. With Democrats having a supermajority in our state capital, there is a bipartisan feel, though he noted that legislation could be jammed through if necessary.

Representative Slaughter also outlined Governor J. B. Pritzker’s recent budget presentation:

- Governor Pritzker proposed a \$39 billion budget.
- Illinois is facing a \$3.2 billion deficit.
- The state has \$15 billion in unpaid bills.
- Annual late fees total \$700 million.
- Pensions comprise one quarter of the budget.

Governor Pritzker proposed \$1.1 billion in new revenue. He anticipates that sources of this funding will include:

- \$174 million in legal cannabis licenses
- \$200 million in sports betting (more casinos and video gaming)
- \$400 million in managed care fees

MORNING BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Challenges and Opportunities for Reproductive Health in Illinois

*(Attended by **Katie Marsico**)*

For this presentation, we heard from Lorie Chaiten, former director of the Reproductive Rights Project (the Roger Baldwin Foundation of the American Civil Liberties Union). Senator Heather Steans of Illinois's 7th District was supposed to join her but had to cancel.

With recent changes to state legislatures, Congress, and the Supreme Court, there is growing concern about an intensifying threat to *Roe v. Wade*. Such worries are substantiated by legislative challenges that set the stage to undermine the impact of that landmark case. These include restrictions on when abortions can be performed, which medical professionals can provide abortion services, and whether abortion should be covered by Medicaid. Other statutes involve the need for parental notice, limits on even early-term abortions, and requirements dictating that women have specific justifiable reasons for terminating a pregnancy.

Individual states are becoming increasingly polarized in their stance on reproductive rights. At present, some (including Illinois) still codify various elements of abortion as criminal activity, versus healthcare. The implications of this are staggering and reach far beyond legislative designations. For those states in which abortion is criminalized rather than properly treated as healthcare, everyone from medical professionals to patients are at risk of facing prosecution based on often seemingly arbitrary restrictions.

As Ms. Chaiten explained, advocates of reproductive rights should lobby on behalf of measures that will modernize state laws. Proposed legislation such as [HB 2495](#) would replace more dated reproductive policies in Illinois and would have a more targeted focus on *individual decision making*. If enacted, it would help ensure patient access to affordable and readily available reproductive services. [SB 1594](#) is likewise significant, as it repeals the Parental Notification of Abortion Act. Currently, minors are legally obligated to consult with a parent or guardian before having an abortion. This delays their ability to follow through with procedures that are typically safer when performed earlier.

Community Policing: Best Practices and Current Challenges ***(Attended by Jeanne Davik)***

The two chiefs of police presenting were from Hazel Crest and Park Forest. They oversee law enforcement in relatively small, poor, and mostly African American communities. One chief was African American and the other white, and both had more than 20 years of law enforcement experience. Both

stressed the importance of police being viewed as *part of the community* and having *transparency* in their dealings with community members. This often requires a change of “culture” for officers—a change of “mindset”—and it’s the chiefs’ responsibility to work with individual officers under their command to affect that change.

In March 2018, the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police adopted [10 Shared Principles](#), dealing mainly with interactions between police and people of color. Communities were asked to sign onto these principles. You can view the list of signers [here](#). The DuPage County Sheriff’s Office has adopted the 10 Shared Principles, as have many other police departments, including those in Villa Park, Oak Brook, Downers Grove, and Naperville. So far, Elmhurst has not signed on.

Count Me in 2020: Census in Illinois ***(Attended by Jan Dorner)***

The census process is currently behind schedule. There are already some challenges:

- Budget issues: The region used to be three states and is now eight, with less money allocated to it.
- Incomplete testing: There are usually three pretests, but there has only been one.
- A leadership vacuum: Steven Dillingham was nominated Director of the Census Bureau in July 2018.

The proposal for the 2020 census is that the first wave of forms will be filed online (with assurances that cybersecurity will be in place and no data will be shared with other agencies/departments). A second wave of census forms will be dispatched via “snail mail,” and a third wave will be distributed via door-to-door workers. The controversial “citizenship question” will come before the Supreme Court in April. (See the question below.)

Is this person a citizen of the United States?

- Yes, born in the United States
- Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or the Northern Marianas
- Yes, born abroad of a U.S. citizen parent or parents
- Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization (Print year of naturalization.)

- No, not a U.S. citizen

It is important to have a complete count to make sure that Illinois is represented by the appropriate number of legislators in the House of Representatives (redistricting, as we all know, is dictated by the census) and to have accurate information to use in making economic decisions.

;

Getting the Lead Out: Illinois Drinking Water
(Attended by Dorothy McGuire)

Speakers for this presentation were David G. Mueller, an environmental partner at Guscott Mueller Law, LLC, and Jennifer Walling, executive director of Illinois Environmental Council. They outlined how lead service lines connect water mains to homes, businesses, and schools. The plumbing between the street and the tap is the problem. Water that is delivered from the municipality may be clean; possible contamination occurs when water flows through pipes/fittings that contain lead.

In 1986, the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) banned new lead pipes but did not mandate the removal of old pipes. In 2014, legislation required that brass plumbing fixtures be lead-free. The current problem involves changing out the old fixtures. This process can be costly and necessitates the implementation of a water management plan to identify lead-containing plumbing fixtures and address fixture replacement and monitoring.

Ingested lead is particularly toxic to young children. In terms of exposure, there is no “safe” amount. One of Illinois’s responses to Flint-type water hazards is [SB 550](#) for schools, municipalities, and daycare operators. The state has established testing deadlines for schools and daycare facilities and has developed protocol to deal with situations in which lead is detected. Legislators and advocates continue to work on improved solutions to this complicated problem.

AFTERNOON PLENARY SESSION

The Environment: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
(Attended by all **LWV Elmhurst** members present)

During the afternoon plenary session, attendees heard from Jack Darin, president of the of the Illinois chapter of the Sierra Club. Though this presentation by no means sidestepped the Trump administration's hostile

approach to environmental protection, it also offered a sense of optimism.

Darin explained that what was initially disturbing to many environmental advocates was a shift away from baseline support. Prior to 2016, there was the notion of certain ethical standards superseding partisanship when it came to environmental protection. More simply, as a nation, there was a floor we wouldn't fall beneath. Since the presidential election, however, what constitutes "baseline" has grown somewhat fluid.

On the other hand, Darin observed a recent slow down in legislation and budget cuts that undermine environmental protection. Presidential appointments and overturned conservation laws still pose definite threats. Yet they are barreling forth with slightly less momentum. Darin contended that, in order to maintain this deceleration and ultimately turn policy back in the right direction, it's important to demonstrate how environmental protection is linked to economic well-being. For example, a common misconception is that closing mines and committing to clean, renewable energy inevitably increases unemployment. In reality, communities that go green often witness a need for new and improved infrastructure, as well as workers who will help implement it.

The Sierra Club's platform in Illinois includes advocating for clean energy, water, and transportation. The organization is also a proponent of environmental justice, meaningful action to address climate change, and conservation of the state's wild spaces. Moving forward, Illinoisans must focus on environmental solutions that reflect economic incentive and community sustainability.

To this end, Darin encouraged attendees to support the Clean Energy Jobs Act ([HB 3624/SB 2132](#)). This bill would require communities throughout Illinois to transition to 100-percent renewable energy by the middle of the 21st century. In addition to protecting the environment, the proposed legislation would yield opportunities for job growth. In addition, it would assist residents of lower-income areas in their efforts to go green.

The afternoon plenary session was a reminder that Illinois still has a long way to go, but environmental advocates are confident we can get there.

AFTERNOON BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Equity in Action: Affordable Housing Advocacy

(Attended by Katie Marsico)

Access to affordable housing is an increasingly relevant issue, as was discussed at the **LWV Elmhurst**'s January program. On March 2, this point was reemphasized by Sue Loellbach, manager of advocacy for [Connections for the Homeless](#) (one of the multiple groups that comprise [Joining Forces for Affordable Housing](#)), and Gail Schechter, executive director of [Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly \(H.O.M.E.\)](#). They began their presentation with the basic premise that housing provides stability to individuals, entire communities, and the community at large. In describing what constitutes "affordable housing," they noted that tenants and homeowners should ideally not have to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs. People who end up paying more are said to be living with a "housing burden." At present, the number of Illinois residents struggling with a housing burden appears to be trending upward.

The simple answer is to ease the burden by ensuring that communities offer more affordable housing. This ultimately increases diversity and allows more residents to either "move up" or "downsize" without relocating to another area. Communities that prioritize affordable housing are also typically at an advantage when it comes to attracting and retaining businesses.

Despite the clear benefits of ingraining affordable housing into community culture, it is an often challenging and misunderstood process. Myths and stereotypes abound, which requires advocates to battle the "Not in My Backyard" (NIMBY) mentality. Opponents of affordable housing frequently voice fears that it will drive up crime, lower school ratings, and tank property values. As the presenters explained, such individuals sometimes envision towering high-rise housing projects. In reality, affordable housing (when developed properly) should be visually appealing and indistinct from nearby residential dwellings.

Fortunately, there are several ways to successfully advocate for affordable housing. One is to limit or restrict single-family zoning. Another is to improve land use. Community education and engagement also need to be top priorities. So does involving a broad range of stakeholders (including local officials, developers, and taxpayers/residents) in creating a sustainable, transparent affordable housing plan. Finally, advocates should support initiatives that inevitably tie into affordable housing. A few examples are efforts to prevent

homelessness and increase the minimum wage.

A resounding takeaway from the presentation was, "This is not about 'affordable housing,' but [rather] the value of the community."

Protecting Immigrants' Rights in Times of Change *(Attended by Jeanne Davik)*

A senior attorney with the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law gave this presentation. The focus was the Public Charge Test, which is a term used in immigration law. It describes the screening process utilized by U.S. immigration officials with non-citizens who are applying for lawful permanent resident status (a green card) or a visa. It was intended to screen out anyone who was likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence or institutionalized long-term care. However, many classes of individuals were exempt from the Public Charge Test or could get a waiver.

The rule itself goes back to 1999 but was never finalized. This left an opening for the Trump administration to use its rule-making powers to change the Public Charge Test. Their intention is to exclude all low-income immigrants, including those who might be eligible to receive public benefits at any time in the future. A proposed rule was filed on **October 10, 2018**, and a 60-day public comment period concluded **December 10, 2018**. More than 260,000 comments were filed. All of this has had a chilling effect on immigrants, often causing those who are entitled to benefits to disenroll from them in the hopes of avoiding deportation. Final word from the presenter: *If you know any immigrants, tell them there is no advantage to disenrolling from benefits.*

ERA Ratification: Moving Forward After Illinois Success *(Attended by Dorothy McGuire)*

Linda Coberly, managing partner at the Chicago offices of Winston & Strawn, LLP, presented on the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA).

The amendment has been ratified by 37 states. We need 38 for it to become law. Then, following the date of ratification, two years must pass before the law is put into effect.

Virginia is close to ratifying the ERA. Legislators plan to vote again in the fall. We have to keep the pressure on them.

One potential roadblock is the seven-year deadline to pass an amendment. There is currently a bill in the House to remove this deadline. (For context, it took 203 years for the last amendment to be approved.)

What can we do to move this process along?

- Collaborate with the [ERA Coalition](#).
- Talk to people in the states that have not yet ratified the ERA.
- Reach out to Congressional representatives to support the House bill ([H.J.Res.33](#)) to remove the deadline mentioned above.

Hopefully we will see the ERA on the books by 2021!

OBSERVE AND REPORT

What happened in local government in February? See our online Observer Reports at <http://www.lwvelmhurst.org/Observerreports.asp>.

As stated on our website: "The Observer Reports were written by volunteer observers who are members of the **LWV Elmhurst**. The reports are presented here as a public service. They are in no way 'official,' but are intended solely as an informal means of enabling citizens to monitor the meetings of local government bodies. Every effort has been made to make these reports accurate; however, like all materials of this nature, they are subject to human error."

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: RELATED TO THE ELECTION

Be sure to vote! Remember to check out the [Illinois Voter Guide](#) to learn more about local candidates and their positions on relevant issues. For footage of our **LWV Elmhurst** Candidate Forum, head to [our website](#) (which also contains information on when/where you can view the forum on local cable).

SUNDAY, MARCH 17

The last day to register online to vote in the upcoming Consolidated Election; head to [our website](#) for a link to online registration.

MONDAY, MARCH 18

Opening of multiple additional locations for early voting throughout DuPage County; visit [our website](#) for a comprehensive list.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28

The deadline for requesting a vote-by-mail application

MONDAY, APRIL 1

The final day of early voting; starting tomorrow, voters should head to their designated polling place.

TUESDAY, APRIL 2

Consolidated General Election . . . remember to vote!

RECAP OF DATES TO MARK DOWN

3/17, 3/18, 3/28, 4/1, 4/2

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: UPCOMING EVENTS AND PROGRAM

Check our website's [Activity Calendar](#) for updates.

THURSDAY, MARCH 21

Screening of *RBG* (for the **LWV Elmhurst** March program and in honor of Women's History Month) at the Elmhurst Public Library, starting at 6:30 PM

THURSDAY, APRIL 25

Program co-hosted by the **LWV Elmhurst** and Elmhurst Cool Cities Coalition on current water-related issues in Illinois, featuring Krista Grimm of the **LWV Lake Michigan Region** and starting at 7:00 PM at the Elmhurst Public Library

THURSDAY, MAY 9

Annual Meeting at the Guaranteed Rate Office, starting at 7:00 PM

FRIDAY, JUNE 7–SUNDAY, JUNE 9

The **LWVIL** State Convention

RECAP OF DATES TO MARK DOWN

3/21, 4/25, 5/9, 6/7–6/9

TRIVIA TIME AND OTHER REMINDERS

Q&A FOR THE PREVIOUS EDITION OF *THE VOTER*: On **February 14, 1920**, which famous suffragist formed the **LWV**? You were right if you said **Susan B. Anthony!**

Q&A FOR THIS EDITION OF *THE VOTER*: On **March 13, 1920**, suffragists held their first parade in Washington, DC. Which major event was scheduled for the day after, **March 14**? Read our April edition of *The Voter* to see if you're right!



Click on the green button for our website:

<http://www.lwvelmhurst.org/>



Click the blue button for our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/LeagueOfWomenVotersElmhurstII/>

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF ELMHURST, ILLINOIS · P.O. Box 12, Elmhurst, IL 60126