



MARCH 2023

Co-Presidents' Message: The Democracy Farm



A recent article published in the Post-Crescent focused on a disconcerting trend the League of Women Voters has had to confront: some candidates are claiming that the League misrepresents itself as nonpartisan and they therefore refuse to participate in our efforts to inform the public on their candidacy or positions. This falsehood undermines the credibility of the League, but more importantly, it does a serious disservice to the voters.



Our mission statement says we “empower voters and defend democracy.” That statement describes the two primary functions of the League: voter service and advocacy. We help people cast an informed vote and we lobby our elected representatives to keep our democracy strong. We are staunchly nonpartisan in both of those realms, and we take great care to keep them separate.

Let’s use an analogy of a farm: The Democracy Farm, we can call it. On a farm, when the crops are harvested, grain is put into silos, with different types of grain in each one. The League’s Democracy Farm has two silos: voter service and advocacy. We keep those two silos separate, but without both types of grain, our Democracy Farm can’t succeed. We need both informed voters and we need laws that provide for greater and more equitable participation in our democratic society.

There is a perception that because of our advocacy, our organization is “left-leaning”. Some context is needed here: The League was founded by skilled lobbyists who were laser-focused on the issue of women’s suffrage. It took them 30 years to get the 19th Amendment proposed in Congress, another 40 years to get it passed, and a feverish year of lobbying in state legislatures across the country to get it ratified by three-fourths of the states. You may be surprised to learn that in 1920 when the 19th Amendment was finally ratified and the League of Women Voters was founded, it was the Republican Party that was aligned with the struggle for women’s voting rights. Most, if not all, of our founders were Republicans.

Like the League today, their lobbying efforts were issues-based. Our advocacy always focuses on issues, not political ideology. It’s important to remember that nonpartisan doesn’t mean neutral. It means policies derive from issues, not parties or candidates. The causes we lobby for or against are determined by our positions, which are adopted after our own in-depth

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Co-Presidents: The Democracy Farm

study and research. Our policy positions represent the consensus of our members who can be affiliated with any political party or none. In this current era, some may label our positions as “left-leaning,” but throughout our century-long history, we have been criticized as both too liberal and not liberal enough. We have not changed what we stand for, but it is undeniable that political parties have moved to more extreme positions.

With the exception of our board of directors, we have always encouraged our members to become engaged in the political process in whatever way they choose, even with candidates and parties. In these extremely polarized times, however, it is important to separate your personal views from League positions. If you are identified with the League, what you say may be associated with the organization.

In other words, we all need to tend to our own two silos. The good standing and respect the League has earned as a trusted source for nonpartisan information is at stake.

— **Linda and Marti**
president@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

ACTION: Legislators Plan Budget Listening Sessions

By Jan Quinlan, Action Vice President
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Now is the time for Wisconsin 2023-2025 Budget deliberations and it is good that our local state elected officials want to hear from their constituents. Legislators have scheduled these initial Budget Listening Sessions as they make decisions about what to include in the budget.

State Budget Listening Session with Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara and Representative Dave Murphy
When: Saturday, March 11 from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Where: Grand Chute Town Hall
1900 W. Grand Blvd., Grand Chute 54913

State Budget Listening Session with Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara and Representative Lee Snodgrass
When: Saturday, April 1 at 10:30 a.m.
Where: Menasha Public Library
440 First Street, Menasha 54952

State Budget Listening Session with Senator Cabral-Guevara and Representative Murphy
When: Monday, April 17 from 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Where: Town of Center Town Hall,
N3990 State Rte. 47, Appleton 54913

(These are initial listings. Legislators are planning additional budget listening sessions later in March and April. Please check our LWV Appleton Fox Cities website "Issues to Follow" for updated information.)

Please add one or more of these Wisconsin budget listening sessions to your calendar. Then come prepared to talk about state issues that matter to you. It is a golden opportunity to have your voice heard.

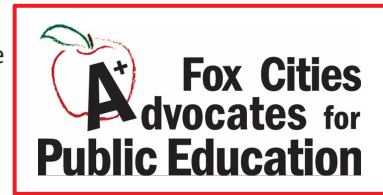
EDUCATION: State Budget Proposes More Funding

By Carol Lenz
LWV Executive Action Team Member, and Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education

“Every child in every public school deserves an excellent public education.” This is the guiding principle for the Budget Presentation recently presented by Fox Cities Advocates for Public Education to the LWV of Appleton-Fox Cities. You can access it here: <https://express.adobe.com/page/3zsDz2dh57Qpo/> Included is also a link to the full Resource Guide.

The challenges facing our public schools are many and complex and have been ongoing for many years. The last year funding kept pace with inflation was in 2009. The cumulative effect of 14 years of disinvestment in public education in reality totals almost \$4 billion in cuts. We have a lot of catch up to do.

The Governor’s budget proposes a \$2.64 billion increase to stabilize school finances. About \$1 billion goes towards increasing revenue limits and making the revenue limits fairer. Another \$1 billion goes for state aid which will help keep property tax increases to a minimum.



One of the most important proposals is to increase the special education reimbursement rate from the current 30% to 60%, at least getting closer to the special needs voucher reimbursement of 90% for private schools. The budget also prioritizes mental health services with a \$270 million boost.

The good news is we know what is best for kids and we have the funding. Wisconsin currently has an estimated \$7 billion surplus and a projected revenue growth of an additional \$1.5 billion. Please contact your state representatives and tell them to support the Executive Budget.

DEI: Stay Tuned for Black Holocaust Museum Road Trip

By April Savage, DEI Director
dei@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee has been focused on improving our resources on our webpage and supporting local DEI organizations by attending community events. We are also in the process of planning a spring trip for further education.

Stay tuned for more info on a Saturday bus trip to Milwaukee in late April or early May. Our first stop will be a guided tour of [America’s Black Holocaust Museum](#), followed by lunch (likely at the [Public Market](#)), and finally a stop at a DEI related arts installation. During travel time, we will be able to watch relevant documentaries/videos.

If you are interested in attending (or planning!) the bus trip, or joining in the webpage research or event workshop, please email April Savage at dei@lwvappleton.org.

Additionally, here are some upcoming events:

First is the [Multicultural Coalition](#), Tuesday, March 14 at 12 p.m., at Fox Valley Tech or virtual. Guest presenters will be Fanni Xie and Lindsay Roake of the Northeast Wisconsin Chinese Association (NEWCA).

Second is a community dialogue on Tuesday, March 14, 6-8 p.m. at Appleton North High School, hosted by Common Ground, in conjunction with World Relief and the ANHS production of *Fiddler on the Roof*. Register here: <https://www.commongroundfoxcities.org/community-conversations>.

Lastly check out “[A Stone of Hope: Black Experiences in the Fox Cities](#)” virtual tour now currently displayed at the History Museum at the Castle.

CONSENSUS: Proposed Positions from Study to be Aired

By Renee Gralewicz, Program Vice President
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Consensus means that we are seeking a “general agreement,” not a 100% agreement on everything. Many indigenous communities still operate on a consensus basis and not a majority vote. It does not mean that everyone agrees with every point. It means that we acknowledge that, though there can be better ways to move forward, this document/proposal/position is as good as we can get it for now. I’ve often been told that, seeking perfection is the ultimate form of procrastination.

According to the LWV-US Handbook for Successful Consensus Meetings, “...consensus is a process whereby members participate in a group discussion of an issue...The goal of consensus is to

“The goal of consensus is to incorporate the interests of all participants in building meaningful agreement.”

incorporate the interests of all participants in building meaningful agreement. It is important that all participants believe that they have been heard and that the agreement reflects their concerns.”

We’re having our annual consensus meeting on Monday, March 20 at 6:00 p.m. We’re gathering at Fox Valley Technical College (1825 N Bluemound, Appleton, Room HS114 B). We suggest that you park in the North Lot and enter the building using

Entrance 16. This gathering will discuss and analyze the proposed position statements generated by the 2020-2023 Study: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in Local Healthcare. We drafted statements based on

1. **Affordability** - how the provider's charges relate to the client's ability and willingness to pay for services.
2. **Availability** - the extent to which the provider has the requisite resources, such as personnel and technology, to meet the needs of the client.
3. **Accessibility** - geographic accessibility, which is determined by how easily the client can physically reach the provider's location.
4. **Accommodation** - the extent to which the provider's operation is organized in ways that meet the constraints and preferences of the client.
5. **Acceptability** - the extent to which the client is comfortable with the more immutable characteristics of the provider, and vice versa.

This gathering is for members only. Members should have received an email invitation for the event along with a link to view the draft. We request that you register, but you are welcome to attend even if you don’t. The more voices discussing the issues, the better we will understand their scope, and the better we can establish our expectations.

Upcoming confirmed programs:

March 20: Consensus Meeting — 6:00 - 7:30 p.m.; Fox Valley Technical College (1825 N. Bluemound, Appleton, Room HS114 B); in-person only

April 17: April program focused on the importance of local journalism (details TBD)

May 20: 10 a.m. — Noon: Annual Meeting and Brunch - Scheig Center, Memorial Park, Appleton

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin

will hold its annual meeting on Friday, June 9 through Saturday, June 10 in La Crosse. The meetings will all take place at the Home2Suites, and a bank of rooms has been reserved for League attendees. This is always an exciting gathering with dedicated League members from all 20 Leagues across Wisconsin. Great networking! Great information! Great camaraderie! Please consider attending. Our local League can provide financial help to defray the costs, so don’t hesitate to ask any board member for details. Or email info@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

VOTER SERVICE: Much Work Leads Up to April Election

By Jacqui Klimaszewski, Voter Services Vice President
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It has been a busy month and this will probably continue until the election on April 4th.

Just a reminder that many school districts in the area have spring break that week. So, if you are planning to travel, please plan to **vote early** or **get your absentee ballot** in before you go! Remind family and neighbors, too!!

Here's what we've been up to:

INTERVIEWS/VOTE411:

- Look for the recorded Outagamie County Executive Candidate Interviews on our website, and on VOTE411.
- VOTE411 invitations have been sent to Grand Chute candidates for Town Supervisor and Town Chair, and they are coming in. Candidates Tim Bantes and Beth English have done recorded interviews which will be posted in VOTE411. There will be a link to VOTE411 from our webpage.
- Grand Chute Town Supervisor #1 and #3 candidates responded to Voter Guide Questions which will appear on our website.
- Appleton Area School District School Board candidates have all been sent invitations to VOTE411 and all five have agreed to a Candidate Interview. These are to be recorded the week of March 6 and uploaded to our website.
- VOTE411 questions have also been sent to:
 - Appleton City Council
 - Kaukauna School Board
 - City of Kaukauna Alderperson
 - Village of Harrison-Village Board President and Trustee



VOTER REGISTRATION ASSISTANCE EVENTS before April 4 Election:

- Appleton East-March 15 – 9:30 a.m.
- Appleton West-March 13 – 9:30-10:30 a.m.
- Appleton North—March 6 and 13 –8:30-11:30 a.m. where we are also working with two students to encourage the students to come and register.
- Voter registration assistance and information will be available at the Womenwinwi.com rally on March 11 in Houdini Plaza from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Events are also being scheduled at Lawrence and UWO Fox Cities.

Thank You to —

- Julie Evers for her help in getting candidate information into VOTE411
- Brian Post, Linda Bjella, Sandi Rohde, Donna Clark-Mauel, and Nancy Pourciau for work on voter registration assistance and information events!

MEMBERSHIP: Name Encompasses More Locales

By Cindy Fallona, Membership Director
membership@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

The weather in February may be cold and snowy but it has not deterred a new member from joining our League. **Please welcome Donna Clark-Mauel – Kaukauna.**

Our new name of LWV Appleton-Fox Cities truly does reflect our geographically diverse membership. The following list of cities, towns and villages indicates where our members live.

Appleton • Menasha • Shiocton • Clintonville • Freedom • Neenah • Kaukauna • Grand Chute
Kimberly • Hortonville • Larson • Ogdensburg • Greenville • Little Chute • Harrison

Joining is EASY. Go to our website, lwwappletonfoxcities.org, and click the Join button on the home page. This is also the site to go to if you have any updates to make to your personal information.

SPECIAL: Making Sense of Referenda on Your Ballot

NOTE: The April 4 election ballot will include three statewide referendum questions for voters' consideration. The following summary of these issues is excerpted from "The Smart Voter," a nonpartisan newsletter created by Xavier High School student Maggie McGinnis, and the original source for the information was [Ballotpedia](#). This is a summary of the questions, who authored them, and where their support or opposition lies. The complete article can be found on The Smart Voter [website](#). (McGinnis received the League's Making Democracy Work Youth Award in 2022.)

A referendum is a general vote by the electorate on a single political question that has been referred to them for a direct decision. In other words, a referendum means voting "yes" or "no" on a policy. Referendums give voters a direct say in the way their government functions. But all too frequently, voters feel confused and misled by deceptive wording.

Wisconsin has three important referendums on the ballot this April. Questions 1 & 2 deal with law enforcement. Question 3 deals with welfare. Today's article of *Smart Voter* is lengthy and examines the nuances of the proposals. For readers who prefer a short read, here's a simplified overview:

Question 1: "Authorize the state legislature to define serious harm in relation to the conditions a judge imposes on an accused person released before conviction"

What would Question 1 do?

"Question 1 would amend [Section 8\(2\)](#) of [Article I](#) of the [Wisconsin Constitution](#) to authorize the [state legislature](#) to define *serious harm* when deciding the conditions under which an accused person can be released before conviction. Currently, the constitution states that an accused person may be released under certain conditions meant to "protect members of the community from serious bodily harm or prevent the intimidation of witnesses."

Who supports and opposes Question 1?

"Question 1 was sponsored in the state legislature by State Sen. [Van Wanggaard](#) (R) and State Rep. [Cindi Duchow](#) (R). It has received endorsements from the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, [Americans for Prosperity](#), and Wisconsin State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police."

The amendment is opposed by the ACLU of Wisconsin, the Ex-Incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO) of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Wisconsin Justice Initiative."

Question 2: "Authorize judges to impose cash bail on an accused person of a violent crime based on circumstances, like the need to protect the community from serious harm and the probability the accused will not appear in court"

"Question 2 would amend [Section 8\(2\)](#) of [Article I](#) of the [Wisconsin Constitution](#) to authorize judges to consider the following conditions when imposing and setting cash bail:

- a previous conviction of a violent crime as defined by the legislature,
- the probability the accused will not appear in court,
- the need to protect the community from serious harm as defined by the state legislature,
- the need to prevent witness intimidation, and
- the potential affirmative defenses of the accused.^[2]

Currently, the state constitution authorizes judges to consider whether "there is a reasonable basis to believe that the conditions are necessary to assure appearance in court" when they consider cash bail."

Who supports and opposes Question 2?

"Question 2 was sponsored in the state legislature by State Sen. [Van Wanggaard](#) (R) and State Rep. [Cindi Duchow](#) (R). It has received endorsements from the Wisconsin Chiefs of Police Association, [Americans for Prosperity](#), and Wisconsin State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police."

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SPECIAL: Making Sense of Referenda, continued

“The amendment is opposed by the ACLU of Wisconsin, the Ex-Incarcerated People Organizing (EXPO) of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Wisconsin Justice Initiative.”

Question 3: “Advises the state legislature to require able-bodied childless adults to look for work in order to receive tax-payer funded welfare benefits”

“The advisory question would ask voters if able-bodied childless adults should be required to look for work in order to receive welfare benefits. The question is not legally binding and would not enact a work requirement law for welfare benefits.^[2]”

Currently, state law requires able-bodied individuals without dependents to look for work in order to receive unemployment insurance. There is also a work requirement for Wisconsin's food stamp program, Wisconsin Foodshare, but the requirement has been waived since October 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic.”

Who supports and opposes Question 3?

“The question was introduced by Senate Majority Leader Devin LeMahieu (R). Foundation for Government Accountability also supports the measure.”

“Senate Minority Leader Melissa Agard (D) spoke out in opposition to the question.

Helpful Links

- [Register to Vote Online](#) (Deadline: March 15)
- [Request an Absentee Ballot](#) (Deadline: March 30)
- [Find your Polling Place](#)
- [Sample your Ballot](#)

- Spring Election: April 4