



MARCH 2025

A Constitutional Crisis?

US League Demands Congress Restore Order of Law

On February 14, 2025, the 105th anniversary of its founding, the League of Women Voters sent a letter to Congress to express its grave concern over the state of our nation. The letter was signed by each of the 50 state League presidents, and those of Washington, DC and Puerto Rico, representing over a million members. The League demanded that members of Congress honor their oaths of office, protect their constituents, uphold their powers under our Constitution, and oppose illegal Executive Orders by the President.

The following are excerpts from that letter:

President Trump's executive orders violate the law and encroach upon the authority of Congress as representatives of the American people. This administration has attempted to:

- *End birthright citizenship for all persons born in the United States;*
- *Pause the distribution of federal funds already allocated to programs by Congress;*
- *Dismantle federal agencies such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau which require notice to, and the input of, Congress before such actions can be taken;*
- *Allow private citizens, who have neither been elected or complied with the advice and consent requirement of the Senate, to access sensitive government systems; and*
- *Attempt to reduce the federal workforce through unorthodox means that deny them due process.*

So far, we have seen limited action from members of Congress to assert its authority under Article I of the United States Constitution. The outcry by Americans speaking out against the impact of these Executive Orders, including those who voted for President Trump, should be all that is needed for Congress to stand in its authority, legislate on behalf of the American people, and restore stability to the country.

To read the [entire LWVUS Letter to Congress, click here.](#)

Our local League wholeheartedly supports these actions. Senators Ron Johnson and Tammy Baldwin and Congressmen Tony Wied and Glenn Grothman must protect our Constitution, the rights of all Americans, and democracy itself. Please contact elected representatives today and in the weeks ahead. Congress must do its duty to uphold our Constitution and the rule of law to ensure that our great democracy is safeguarded and preserved.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Another Unnecessary Referendum

There will be another referendum question* on the April 1 ballot. Here is the wording:

Question: "PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION FOR VOTING. SHALL SECTION 1M OF ARTICLE III OF THE CONSTITUTION BE CREATED TO REQUIRE THAT VOTERS PRESENT VALID PHOTOGRAPHIC IDENTIFICATION VERIFYING THEIR IDENTITY IN ORDER TO VOTE IN ANY ELECTION, SUBJECT TO EXCEPTIONS WHICH MAY BE ESTABLISHED BY LAW?"

As an organization dedicated to advocating for voters, the League urges a NO vote on this ballot question. Here are some reasons why:



By Linda Bjella

president@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

- Wisconsin already has one of the most restrictive voter ID laws in the country, and there is well documented evidence that some voters are disenfranchised by this requirement. I personally experienced this when working with senior voters last fall -- people who used walkers or wheelchairs, who were miles from the DMV office and had no way to get there. How could they update their expired state ID's? Feeling defeated, some just gave up the idea of voting.
- A constitutional amendment is a long process: it must be passed by legislatures in two consecutive sessions in two different calendar years, then placed before the voters as a question on the ballot. As with all ballot questions, when approved by the voters, it becomes an amendment added to our state constitution. Once adopted, it cannot be easily changed.
- This would tie the hands of all future legislatures. With the rate that technology is changing, a voter ID law could quickly become antiquated. Legislators would not be able to respond nimbly to changes that may cause a security threat.
- The law that is currently on the books was passed through the normal legislative process, which the governor can either sign or veto. The proposed ballot question was passed as a joint resolution which is not subject to the governor's veto. Passing legislation this way upsets the balance of power between the governor and the legislature.
- Unlike legislation, a constitutional amendment is less vulnerable to differing interpretations by the courts which also diminishes the constitutional power of this branch of our government.
- And finally, let's not forget that Wisconsin elections are administered openly, fairly, and competently. We don't need an inflexible constitutional amendment to address a nonexistent problem.

Our purple state is always ranked high in voter turnout. In fact, in the November 5, 2024 election, Wisconsin achieved the highest voter turnout in the country at 76.9 %. We point to the convenience of the myvote.wi.gov website, our same-day voter registration, and the ease of requesting absentee ballots as examples of voter-friendly laws, but in fact, since 2010, Wisconsin's ranking in the "Cost of Voting Index" has fallen dramatically.

A recent article by Madeline Heim in the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* noted that Wisconsin ranks 5th hardest state in the nation for voting in contrast to its ranking as 4th most accessible in 1996 on the "Cost of Voting Index". The article noted, "In addition to the strict voter ID law, Wisconsin has

(Continued on page 3)

PRESIDENT: Another Unnecessary Referendum, cont.

stringent rules for voter registration drives, does not have automatic voter registration, does not have preregistration for young voters, does not allow all voters to join a permanent absentee ballot list, does not consider Election Day a public holiday and does require the signature of a witness on absentee ballots...

"The state's ranking also drops because it doesn't offer early voting...On the index, that's different from in-person absentee voting, which Wisconsin does have. True early voting functions similarly to voting on Election Day, with multiple sites and evening and weekend hours to cast a ballot, while in-person absentee voting can be more restricted..."

The job of empowering voters and fighting against further restrictions to ballot access is always a priority for the League's work now and in the future.

**This is the 5th ballot question since 2024, and there may be more to come. We could see proposed amendments to prohibit the closing of places of worship during a state of emergency, prohibit the governor from using a partial veto to raise taxes, and another that would end discrimination or preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin. Yet, proposals to allow citizen-initiated ballot measures which are possible in 26 other states have fallen on deaf ears on the legislature. In addition, legislators have limited local advisory referendums to only those that concern tax dollars.*

— Linda

2024 Ballot Questions

2024: Prohibit non-citizens from voting. APPROVED

2024: Prohibit any level of government in the state from applying or accepting non-governmental funds or equipment for election administration. APPROVED

2024: Provide that only election officials designated by law may administer elections. APPROVED

2024: Prohibit the legislature from delegating its power to appropriate money. DEFEATED

2024: Require legislative approval before the governor can expend federal money appropriated to the state. DEFEATED

If You Ask Me . . .

Are you finding yourself engaging in conversations about the current state of affairs in our nation's capitol?

You can trust information from the League of Women Voters, at all levels, as nonpartisan, informed, and fact-checked. You may quote information shared by the League.

What you cannot do is speak on behalf of the League! Only the League president or a designee can do that. Exercise your right to free speech.

Just be sure it is *your opinion* your represent!

VOTER SERVICES: Forums Include Student Questions

The League held three candidate forums for the spring election.

By Jacqui Klimaszewski

Voter Services Vice President

voterservice@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

The first was before the primary for Appleton Alderperson, District #11. All three candidates attended with Stuart Brehm and Adrian Stancil-Martin moving forward to the April election.

The second was for Grand Chute Town Chair/Supervisors. All five candidates were invited. Participating candidates were Beth English, candidate for Town Chair; Mark S. Heling, candidate for Supervisor Seat No. 1; and Anthony Lehrer, candidate for Supervisor Seat No. 2.

The League was very excited to hold the third forum for Appleton Area School Board candidates at the newly renovated Appleton Public Library. Pheng Thao, Oliver Zornow and Christy Codner all participated. The League also uses this opportunity to promote civic engagement with high school students. Appleton East, West, North and Central were contacted to identify students who would be interested in asking questions of the candidates.



Aurora Smith, Anthony Lindenstruth, Preston Antrim

The students who participated were Aurora Smith, Editor-in-Chief of the Appleton North school newspaper, the *Noctiluca*; Anthony Lindenstruth, an AP US History student from East High School; and Preston Antrim, a student from Appleton Central. Elena Eubank, the West High School Senior Editor of the *Talisman*, also submitted questions but was unable to attend due to a scheduling conflict.

All of their questions were reflective of important issues facing students and the school district. A special thank you goes out to the AASD staff who helped identify the students and sent the questions ahead of time to be included at the forum.

A thank you also goes out to all the League members who volunteered to help out at these events, assisting with timing, greeting the audience, and collecting and collating question cards. Their participation helped the event run smoothly.

MEMBERSHIP: Any Season Is League Season

By Cindy Fallona

Director, Membership

membership@lwvappletonfoxcities.org

Cold winter weather has not stopped new members from joining the LWV Appleton-Fox Cities League. Our mission to **Empower Voters/Defend Democracy** carries on in every season.

Please welcome —

Betsy Krizenesky from Neenah, Jeff Jones from Appleton, and Germaine Millard from Menasha.

Our League now has 139 members, truly representing the Fox Cities!

DEI: Book Share Turns Page to Welcome More Attendees

dei@lwwappletonfoxcities.org

New selection. New location. New participants?

Check out what's new for the League's Book Share this month. We've chosen "We Have Never Been Woke," by Musa al-Gharbi.

We'll try out a new location by meeting at Copper Rock Coffeehouse on College Avenue in downtown Appleton at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26. We're switching things up, hoping new times and locations will enable and encourage more people to participate.

We welcome everyone to come share your comments, or to simply come and listen to the conversation. Besides the book discussion, we're all about enjoying each other's company.

Here's what one of the group has to share about her experience with the gatherings:

"I eagerly look forward to our League Book Share each month as the books are thought provoking, the member conversations and insights expand my understanding of the book, and we laugh and enjoy each other's company."

— Cindy

DEI: Calendar of Community Activities

March is dedicated to celebrating Women's History Month. This month also features important observances across different faiths and cultures, emphasizing the importance of equality and diversity. Quoted from this Source:

<https://www.diversityresources.com/diversity-calendar-2025/>

March 1 – Islamic: Ramadan

A holy month of fasting, prayer, and reflection for Muslims.

March 5 – Christian: Ash Wednesday

Marks the beginning of Lent, a season of fasting and prayer.

March 8 – International Women's Day

Celebrates the achievements of women and calls for gender equality.

March 14 – Hindu: Holi

The festival of colors, celebrating the arrival of spring.

March 14 – Sikh: Hola Mohalla

A Sikh festival featuring martial arts, poetry, and community gatherings.

March 20 – Baha'i: Naw-Ruz*

The Baha'i New Year, celebrated with joy and festivities.

March 31 – Islamic: Eid al-Fitr*

Marks the end of Ramadan, celebrated with a feast and prayers. On one of the most important

[Islamic holy days](#).

MARCH COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Multicultural Coalition diaper drive (ongoing) — <https://ourmci.org/>

Tuesday, March 18 — [Appleton Comprehensive Plan Workshop](#), Appleton Public Library, 4-7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 26 — DEI Book Share, Copper Rock, Downtown Appleton, We Have Never Been Woke, by Musa al-Gharbi

EARLY APRIL COMMUNITY EVENTS:

Tuesday, April 1 — Spring Election; [Vote NO](#) on statewide voter ID referendum

Thursday April 3, — Pillars Report to the Community, 7:30 am at the CORE (register [here](#))