



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Fall 2022

Noncitizen Voting: Rising Nativism and the Repression of Home Rule (Marguerite Adelman)

In 2021, 19 states passed legislation restricting voting rights. In 2021, state lawmakers passed nine laws that could lead to tampering with how elections are run and how results are determined. While all the new legislation is disturbing in a democracy, it is even more troubling to realize that local home rule is being overthrown as well, and that nativism is on the rise.

In July, a San Francisco Superior Court Judge overturned San Francisco's legislation allowing noncitizens to vote in school board elections, approved by San Francisco residents and practiced since 2018. In June, a New York Supreme Court Judge struck down a New York City ordinance that would have allowed noncitizens to vote in local elections. Both San Francisco and New York are considering whether or not to appeal.

Here in Vermont, lawsuits were filed against both Winooski and Montpelier, cities whose voters approved charter changes that allow noncitizen voting in local elections. A Superior Court Judge threw out the case against Montpelier, but the case in Winooski is still pending. While it is expected to be thrown out, the plaintiffs have vowed to take it to the highest court in the state.

During the first 150 years of U.S. history, 40 states allowed noncitizens to vote in local, state, and/or federal elections at different points in time. Arkansas was the last state to repeal this practice in 1926.

In 1996, the Congress passed a law prohibiting noncitizens from voting in federal elections. Federal law did not address state or local elections. As of March 2020, two state constitutions specified that noncitizens may not vote in state and local elections: Arizona's and North Dakota's. While no state constitutions explicitly allow noncitizens to vote in state or local elections, neither do those other state constitutions forbid it.

As of January 2022, fifteen municipalities across the country allowed noncitizens to vote in local elections. Eleven were located in Maryland, two in Vermont, one in New York, and the other in California. Since 1993, Tacoma Park, Maryland has offered the right to vote to all residents—citizens or not—in local elections. Many other cities across the country are looking at expanding local voting rights to legal noncitizens.

These new challenges to noncitizen voting at the local level are indicative of a trend toward nativism and fear that noncitizens will change the voting power of citizens. In communities like Winooski, home to the state's largest refugee and immigrant populations, more than a quarter of Winooski's 8,000 residents speak a language other than English. Many of Winooski's immigrants are now U.S. citizens and many of those citizens and the newer group of noncitizens own businesses, pay taxes, work, and send their children to the local schools.

Cont'd on p. 5

Editorial

Fall 2022

This is in place of the usual Message from the Board. The message usually gives a quick rundown of what we have done in the last quarter, and what we are looking forward to in the next. Before Covid, we had a pretty active calendar.

In the fall of 2019, the League in Central Vermont compiled a manual of events that the League hosted or participated in every year. The manual listed the tasks and a timeline for each event:

New Year Breakfast

A social event in February (League anniversary) and August (Women's Equality Day)

Legislative Review and Bill Tracking

Coffee Service at East Montpelier Town Meeting

Annual Meeting (no longer applies)

Independence Day Parade (Montpelier)

Democracy Tent (voter registration, Independence Day)

New Citizen Voter Registration and Reception at the State House

Program series in partnership with Kellogg Hubbard Library

Candidate Forums (election years)

These events were just those centered around Montpelier. *The list does not include Legislative Day, the Spring Lecture sponsored by the State League, LWWVT Convention (biannual), or other events organized by the Champlain Valley League and members in the Northeast Kingdom, or the New England Leadership Conference held in Maine every April for thirteen years.*

These events made the League visible to the public and our members, and strengthened member ties to the organization and each other.

Because of Covid-19, in the past 2½ years, we have become used to staying at home, limiting contact with groups larger than our own personal circles. As we see from the above list, this has been a large loss to us as an organization and personally.

The LWV/KHL series has been continued virtually, as have many committee meetings, etc. But before we have forgotten how to do these things entirely, I hope that we can again turn outward as we learn to accommodate to what appears to be a long-term situation.

The state League has ventured into hybrid in-person/virtual state-wide office candidate forums. It is a hopeful sign that we may be moving out of the shadows.

Let us soldier on to become our former selves once more.

Kate Rader



Naturalization reception, 2018

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Kate Rader, Editor

Membership in the League includes a subscription.

If you would like to join the League, go to our website,
<https://my.lwv.org/vermont>, or write:

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Prop. 5/Article 22/ RLA Action

(Dotty Ricks)

The Reproductive Liberty Amendment began life as “Proposition 5” but moved to being called “Article 22.” We have just found out that on some ballots it will be listed as “Proposition 5.” RLA partners are working on getting that information out to voters so there will be no confusion on which is the amendment to protect choice.

As part of the RLA, VPIRG is coordinating a voter registration campaign across Vermont primarily at college campuses. The first event was Friday, on the UVM campus, Upper Circle Green. If there are those of you who can help with future voter registration opportunities, now is the time to step up and help save democracy. Register voters and get out the vote! Contact Dotty at drdaerin@gmail.com if you are able to help.

The RLA partners continue to work on getting out factual information on the RLA. The group has paid for several 30-second production spots in support of the amendment. Links to those spots will be in the next League mailing as they currently need final approval before sharing. Postcard mailers are also in the works. The mailers urge voters to vote “Yes” for Prop 5/Article 22 and emphasize keeping health care decisions between patients and doctors and out of the hands of politicians. They also have information on when and the different ways Vermonters can cast their ballots.

The opposition is ramping up its campaign against passing the RLA with endorsements by former Vermont legislators who oppose it, mailers, and signs which promote half-truths and misrepresentations of the amendment. The RLA partnership has chosen to promote what the amendment really will do as opposed to responding to opposition fabrications.

All of this work costs money. Please, go to <https://reprolibertyvt.org>. Pledge your support and donate to the campaign. Help preserve the privacy of health care and the right to choose.

ADDENDUM

What more perfect way to spend a lovely early Fall day than to sit in front of the state house, register

voters, talk to kids about the League of Women Voters, and support the RLA! It was my privilege to do that on Friday, September 30 in Montpelier from 9:30 to 2:30. Over eight busloads of high school students attended a rally sponsored by the Vermont Student Antiracism Network (VSARN). The Day of Racial Equity was organized by Astrid Young among others, a senior at Stowe High School. Students from all over Vermont have worked to incorporate antiracism curriculum into Vermont schools, and today they celebrated that among themselves and with their teachers. There was music, food, ice cream (Ben and Jerry’s of course), speeches, politicians, and more food and ice cream.



I literally never stopped talking for the first three hours of the event!! That was a lot, even for me!! By offering LWV stickers, I was able to engage participants and explain to them what the League is and how we are working with the PPNNE to support the passage of PROP 5, Article 22, the Reproductive Liberty Amendment. Although they had NEVER HEARD of the League, students were intrigued with our record of supporting voting rights for over 100 years. They wore their stickers with pride. I passed out many League brochures and many, many *Voting in Vermont* brochures. Teachers took handfuls to take back and share in the classroom. I signed up voters and encouraged kids to take literature to their folks and emphasize how important voting is, especially in this upcoming election.

It was a well-spent day. I hope many of you will have the opportunity to enjoy tabling at other events.

Youth Voter Project 2022

(Anne Mixer)

The Youth Voter Project (YVP) is an effort by volunteers with the League of Women Voters of Vermont to focus on young eligible voters to increase voter registration and voting; provide civic education; and promote civic engagement with this significant and important group of citizens.

Started in the Fall of 2019, the YVP is now getting back underway after coming to a standstill when schools were unable to allow visitors in the buildings due to Covid restrictions. Beginning in April 2022, trained LWVVT members have visited U32 in East Montpelier, Montpelier HS in Montpelier, Spaulding HS in Barre and this Fall, St Johnsbury Academy in St Johnsbury. At least eight additional high schools have been contacted in the greater Burlington and Central Vermont area to offer voter registration prior to the November 2022 General Election.

The Youth Voter Project in Vermont is part of a nationwide effort supported by the National League of Women Voters. Go to [LWV Hosts 900 High School & Community College Registration Events Ahead of Midterms | League of Women Voters](#) to learn more.

The CIRCLE, Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, at Tufts University provides ongoing data on youth voter turnout and engagement throughout the country. Their work indicates that the youth vote has been historically low, but that 2018 and 2020 have shown significant increases with strong indicators that this population will be significant contributors to outcomes in a number of States in 2022. <https://youthdata.circle.tufts.edu/>

The LWVVT YVP is planning to expand across Vermont as League members show interest in engaging in their own communities in high schools, colleges, technical schools and other settings where eligible 17 and 18-year-old residents can be offered voter registration.

If you have interest in this project, more information is available at league@lwvofvt.org.

Candidate Forums: It's What We Do!

[Lieutenant Governor](#). September 21

[Attorney General](#). September 29

Thank you to the League's Election Committee, chaired by Sonja Schuyler, for coordinating a series of informative candidate forums this election season.

Sonja Schuyler, Marguerite Adelman, Susan Kuecker, Anne Mixer, and Debbie Ramsdell met regularly to plan and coordinate four very successful forums: Attorney General (September 29), Lieutenant Governor (September 21), U.S. House of Representatives (June 30) and Secretary of State (June 22).



Sec. of State preprimary forum

Many thanks to Bob Joly of St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, who coordinated and helped publicize the forums, our moderators Cary Brown and Tom McKone, for skillfully facilitating a discussion of the issues, Sarah Henshaw for successfully managing the virtual sessions on Zoom, Jez Harrington for handling audience questions, and Kingdom Access Television for live-streaming the forums, making these available long after the event was done.

We were also privileged to partner with many community groups including: ACLU of Vermont, St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, Vermont Commission on Women, Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, Vermont Women's Fund, Vermont Works for Women, Voices for Vermont's Children, Women Business Owners Network Vermont, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (Burlington).

Act 60 and You

(Lila Richardson)

Important changes in election procedures supported by the League are significantly increasing voter accessibility in the Vermont 2022 primary and general elections.

On June 7, 2021, the governor signed Act 60 (S. 15): *An act relating to mailing out ballots, correcting defective ballots, and miscellaneous changes to State election laws.* During the 2021 legislative session, the League worked with a coalition of organizations called Vermont Voter Choice to advocate for the reforms in Act 60.

The statute as enacted can be found at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT060/ACT060%20As%20Enacted.pdf>.

A useful summary of the Act is at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2022/Docs/ACTS/ACT060/ACT060%20Ac%20Summary.pdf>

Vermont now has a permanent system with universally mailed ballots. Ballots for the November general election were sent out to all registered voters in late September. Registered voters who do not receive a ballot by October 10th are advised to contact their town clerks.

An important new feature of the universal vote by mail system is a notice and cure process for ballots that are defective. Act 60 requires town clerks to open ballots that have been returned, notify the voter if a ballot is defective (usually because the voter failed to put the ballot in the certificate envelope provided or failed to sign the certificate envelope) and give the voter an opportunity to “cure” the problem.

In the August 2022 primary, town clerks received 809 defective ballots, representing .6% of all ballots cast. Using the new “cure” process in Act 60, voters were able to cure 492 of these ballots, reducing the percentage of defective uncounted ballots to .25% of the total ballots cast.

This year Vermont moved from #23 to #3 in a ranking of state voter accessibility in the Cost of Voting Index. As the index explains, "Vermont makes the most significant move toward a more

inclusive electoral-institutional process. The state moves from the middle of the pack in 2020 (23rd most accessible state to vote) to the third easiest state by 2022. The single most important change in Vermont is the adoption of a statewide vote-by-mail process. Now citizens of the Green Mountain State can vote while sitting at their kitchen table, insert the ballot in a pre-paid envelope, and drop it off at the nearest mailbox."

As League president Sue Racanelli wrote when the legislature passed Act 60, the bill is “an important step forward in making our democracy more accessible and equitable for all Vermonters.”

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Noncitizen (from p. 1)

It is not an easy process to pass noncitizen voting at the local and state levels. Winooski worked for over three years to educate the public and follow a process. In 2020, seventy percent of Winooski voters approved a charter change to allow legal residents to vote in local elections; this change was ratified by the VT Legislature in June 2021. To overthrow this locally mandated vote causes citizens to wonder if their votes really matter at all, undermining the entire election system.

In a time when some are trying to expand the right to vote to legal residents in order to be more inclusive and representative, we see others doing everything they can to limit the right to vote.

The U.S. is a nation of immigrants. As of 2017, there were approximately 25 million noncitizens living in the U.S., including 12.3 million permanent residents and 2.2 million temporary residents. More than 45 countries on nearly every continent permit voting by resident immigrants. It's time we let go of our fear and allow legal noncitizens to vote at the local level, giving them representation in the communities in which they live, work, and pay taxes. The children of these immigrants and refugees will be our future new Americans and we would do well to help them get involved in our democracy.

Commentary

Ruthie and Me: Thoughts While Riding a Camel through the Saharan Desert

(Dottye Ricks)



In late August I had the privilege of traveling to Morocco where I did many things, including riding a camel through the Saharan desert!

Unfortunately, my camel, Ruthie, hated me! She took one look at me, brayed in protest, and

continued to bray throughout the whole trip!!
Broke my heart!

Being in Morocco and seeing the status of women in that country moved me to many discussions with my fellow travelers. While there has been a history of preventing women from voting in Morocco, since 1963, through voter registration efforts, women now vote in large numbers. An article from *Gender Concerns International* on Moroccan voting spoke of how streamlined the voting process has become. There are plenty of places to vote and lines are short. There is a diverse population of voters with no observable pressure to vote one way or another nor is intimidation evident.

How does that compare with our own process where in state after state, polling places have been shuttered, polling hours have been cut, and voters wait in long lines to cast their ballot, often giving up? Some states require citizens to provide an ID in order to vote; groups, such as churches, are not allowed to give rides to polling places; and voters in lines are intimidated and harassed. All of these anti-voting measures have a greater impact on lower income voters, older voters, and non-white voters. How does that fit into our view of ourselves as the greatest democracy in the world?

Here in our country where we pride ourselves on the strength of our democracy – **we have to do better**. In an article at americanprogress.org, the authors suggest six steps to improve voter

participation for eligible Americans, many of which the League supports and we find in Vermont:

1. Streamline voter registration with automatic voter registration, same-day voter registration, preregistration of 16- and 17-year-olds, and online voter registration.
2. Provide in-person early voting, no-excuse absentee voting, and vote centers, one stop locations for all things voting.
(<https://elections.sacounty.net/VoteCenters/Pages/What-is-a-Vote-Center.aspx>)
3. Provide sufficient resources in elections and ensure voting is accessible.
4. Restore rights for formerly incarcerated people.
5. Strengthen civics education in schools.
6. Invest in integrated voter engagement (IVE) activities, an approach to civic participation that goes beyond traditional get-out-the-vote initiatives.

The bottom line to increase voting in the US, however, is to REGISTER VOTERS!! For this upcoming election, I encourage all of you to prioritize voter registration and Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV). More voters ensure a stronger democracy and voting rights are at the core of what the LWV is about.

In the upcoming weeks, there will be many opportunities for you to help register voters and GOTV. Watch for LWV emails announcing those opportunities. Step up and support them. I believe the very basis of our democracy is at stake in November and we must do all we can to save it. Register voters! GOTV! Bray like Ruthie in protest of anti-democratic actions! Your vote is your voice! Let's be heard!!

Climate Change Speaker Series

For Zoom registration, go to kellogg-hubbard.org/adult-programs

What Climate Change Means to You

November 16, 2022 7 PM *On Zoom*

Moderated by Peter Walke from Efficiency Vermont, with panelists Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, our State Climatologist, Jared Ulmer from Vermont's Department of Health, and Julie Moore from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, this discussion will focus on the effect of climate change on Vermonters.

Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture & Ecology

December 14, 2022 7 PM *On Zoom*

Featuring panelists Jillian Limer from Vermont Audubon, Jim Shallow from the Nature Conservancy, Abbie Corse of the Corse Farm Dairy and Vermont Climate Council, and Josh Faulkner of UVM, this discussion will focus on the effects of climate change on Vermont landscapes.

Climate Change & Social Justice

January 11, 2023 7 PM *On Zoom*

Moderated by Senator Kesha Ram Hinsdale with panelist Judy Dow and other TBD, this discussion will focus on social justice aspect and climate change.

Current Legislative Initiatives Update

February 8, 2023 7 PM *On Zoom*

This discussion will look at proposed legislative initiatives and the impact of past legislation with panelists TBD.

What Can We Do?

March 8, 2023 7 PM *On Zoom*

This panel will discuss what we can do individually and as a community, including the perspective of the next generation.



Photo by Roman Escuta on Unsplash

Watch Candidate Forums

Vermont Public Election 2022

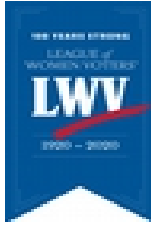
You can attend debates at Vermont Public Winooski Studio, listen during [Vermont Edition's radio broadcast](#), to watch it on the [Vermont Public YouTube page](#). All debates start at noon.

October 11. U.S. House
October 13. U.S. Senate
October 18. Governor
October 20. Lieutenant Governor

The Bridge & ORCA MediaNine forums.

View entire series and schedule at <https://www.orcamedia.net/series/2022-generalelection-forums-live>

October 11. [Secretary of State](#). 7:30 PM
October 14. [Lieutenant Governor](#). 6 p.m.
October 14. [Governor](#). 7:30 p.m.



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