



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Winter 2023

LWVVT Board Sets Legislative Priorities

At the beginning of each legislative session, the Legislative Team of the League of Women Voters of Vermont sets priorities based on relevance to our mission and closely monitors proposed legislation related to our positions, which can be found at <https://lwvofvt.org/positions/>.

For the 2023 Legislative Session, League priorities will be: Voting Rights, Ranked Choice Voting, Ethics, Healthcare, Climate Change, Education, Violence Prevention, and Basic Human Needs.

The Legislative Committees are now meeting in-person, with live streams hosted on the committee meeting pages. You can listen to hearings, either live or recorded, at the Legislature's website: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/> .

Kate Rader monitors bills every week and we alert League members about important bills making their way through the legislative process. We encourage you to contact your legislators to express support or concern about pending legislation.

If you would like to be a part of the League Observer Corps, please email Kate at raderca2015@gmail.com.

Your Gift Makes a Difference!

Thank you to all our members who made a contribution to our Winona Smith Scholarship Fund. Because of your support, we have been able to increase the stipend to \$1500, and were able to do so without the support of the League's Keyes Trust. Take a look at this year's winners at <https://lwvofvt.org/past-scholarship-recipients/>,

For those who may have missed our appeal, you can make a tax-deductible contribution at <https://lwvofvt.org/donate-today/> , or by check payable to LWVVT Education Fund, P.O. Box 1391, Montpelier, VT 05601.

Message from the Board Winter 2023

Some thoughts on Nonpartisanship and the League of Women Voters.....

As a member of the League of Women Voters of Vermont I have had opportunities to interact with various community members across the state with the Youth Voter Project. As most are aware, there are many competing voices regarding a plethora of issues facing this country that become evident as we bring up voting.

In the effort to increase the Vermont League's presence in high schools and colleges, the YVP team is met with the ongoing challenge of accessing these institutions given the busy nature of educational settings and the understandable caution on the part of school leaders regarding the nature of our message when talking with students. It has become increasingly clear that the YVP team volunteers are welcomed in the schools given the reputation and trust that the League is nonpartisan, and not there to influence how students vote, but to educate eligible voters regarding their right to vote and to encourage civic engagement.

Nevertheless, there has been some confusion because the League at every level (state, national and local) holds advocacy positions that are often seen as partisan in the political arena, such as Reproductive Rights, the Environment, Health Care, and others. The League emphasizes that these are not partisan issues, but ones that promote civil and human rights. Some observers suggest that these positions compromise the work of the League. It is important to acknowledge this concern and clarify the neutral voter registration work of the League in educational institutions and other community settings.

One of the greatest strengths of the League is that we consistently approach schools with an assurance

that our teams present voting information and an opportunity to register to vote in a nonpartisan manner. All volunteers understand that even when asked, no information is offered regarding personal positions on issues or how one should vote. We make clear the League position of neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government.

We are reminded of this when tabling and meeting many young eligible voters who often ask why we are there, what they should know and even who should they vote for. It is always our responsibility to represent the League and our work in a nonpartisan manner that emphasizes **their rights as citizens**, the importance of **what they know and care about** and most importantly how significant **their contribution** can be to the democracy in which we live. It is a privilege to offer this time to each voter to welcome them to this important right and obligation.

Anne Mixer, Coordinator
Youth Voter Project
LWVVT

<p>The Green Mountain Citizen is published four times per year by The League of Women Voters of Vermont Kate Rader, Editor</p> <p>Membership in the League includes a subscription.</p> <p>If you would like to join the League, go to our website, https://my.lwv.org/vermont, or write: League of Women Voters of Vermont P.O. Box 1391 Montpelier, VT 05601-1391 e-mail, League@lwvofvt.org</p>
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LWVVT Convention to Consider Noncitizen Voting Concurrence

Marguerite Adelman

The LWVVT's Committee on Noncitizen Voting has spent time studying the LWV of Boulder County's position on *Noncitizen Rights in Boulder County*, which was adopted in February, 2020. We've read their research and looked over the pros and cons that the Boulder County LWV developed. On November 3, 2020, Colorado Amendment 76, the Citizenship Requirement for Voting Initiative passed; noncitizen voting became a moot point. Nevertheless, we want to share the Colorado position statement with members of the LWVVT as we consider adapting it to Vermont.

“League of Women Voters of Boulder County, Colorado

NONCITIZEN RIGHTS IN BOULDER COUNTY

Adopted February 20, 2020

The LWVBC supports the inclusion of certain noncitizens residing in Boulder County, in some of our local democratic processes, at the county, municipal, school district, and special district level.

First, the LWVBC supports voting rights, limited to the county and municipality where they reside, for noncitizens whose immigration status is one of these four:

- Legal permanent residents (green card holders)
- Immigrants granted asylum
- Noncitizens who have applied for citizenship or
- DACA recipients (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) and TPS holders (Temporary Protective Status).

Each immigration status carries a length of U.S. residency requirement, which meets or exceeds the state's residence requirements for voting. If these noncitizens also meet the state's age requirement, they should be eligible to vote in local candidate elections and on local ballot proposals with and without fiscal impact.

Second, we support allowing noncitizen residents who meet one of the four criteria above for voting in Boulder County, plus noncitizen residents with expired visas or no visa, to participate in the following additional ways: being appointed to boards and commissions; serving on non-Federal juries; and running for elected office.

We believe that neither working within the relevant jurisdiction's boundary nor holding a temporary visa are by themselves, sufficient grounds to give voting or participation rights to noncitizens in local elections.”

History: The LWVBC has studied noncitizen rights since 2013 and concluded that the U.S. immigration policies, as practiced, are failing to provide a clear, consistent, and fair path to citizenship, with the attendant privileges and responsibilities of participating in the democratic processes which provide individuals with representation in government.

If you are interested in getting either Boulder County, Colorado's research and information on noncitizen voting or in seeing LWVVT's noncitizen Voting Committee research on this topic, don't hesitate to contact Marguerite Adelman at 802-540-9101 or madel51353@gmail.com. You can also attend one of our upcoming *What is noncitizen voting?* presentations, in person or via YouTube.

LWVVT Receives Grants

The League of Women Voters of Vermont was the recipient of three grants from LWVUS to undertake voter registration activities aimed at young voters, new citizens, or formerly or currently incarcerated voters.

1. Youth Voter Registration \$500. LWVVT plans to register 200 students in 12 schools, in particular Technical/Vocational Schools and career centers. Working with school administrators, Anne Mixer and her team have established relationships and contacts with over 10 high schools across the state and the Vermont State University system. Trainings are offered to all members on the team prior to going into schools.

2. New Citizens \$750. LWVVT plans to register 400 new citizens at 15 naturalization ceremonies throughout the state. Sonja Schuyler and her team have conducted new citizen voter registration for over a decade working primarily with the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Vermont Federal Judiciary with whom we have an excellent working relationship.

3. Inmate Voter Registration \$500. The LWVVT Inmate Voter Registration Initiative will create and disseminate *Your Right to Vote in Vermont*, an inmate specific brochure to Vermont correctional facilities. Working with Department of Correction administrators, the brochure will be included in the inmate on-board information packets upon arrival at the facility and displayed in common areas. Headed by Madeline Motta since 2018, members have been registering inmates in Vermont correctional facilities. Vermont is one of two states (Maine) to allow inmates to vote.



Photo credit: Lloyd Devereux Richards

What is noncitizen Voting?

An educational presentation from the League

Saturday, February 18 | 2:00-3:30 PM

Fletcher Free Library, Fletcher Room, 235 College Street, Burlington

Stream: Town Meeting TV.

<https://youtu.be/Z01ZXiE2KRk>

Saturday, February 25 | 10:30-noon

Kellogg-Hubbard Library, Hayes Room, 135 Main Street, Montpelier

Stream: <https://www.orcamedia.net/show/what-noncitizen-voting>

Residents from Winooski and Montpelier who are not U.S. citizens will be able to vote in local elections. Burlington voters will have the opportunity to approve noncitizen voting on their ballot at Town Meeting Day on Tuesday, March 7.

To learn more about non-U.S. citizen voting, join Marguerite Adelman, Board member and Chair of the League's noncitizen Voting Committee, who will present a free educational program about the two cities that allow noncitizen voting. Historical facts on noncitizen voting, what is happening in other states and nationally with noncitizen voting, as well as arguments for and against noncitizen voting will be covered.

Joining Marguerite in Montpelier is City Clerk John Odum, who will register both citizens and non-U.S. citizens at the event.

Co-sponsors of the Fletcher Free

program: Immigration Justice Team of the First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network, Fletcher Free Library, and Town Meeting TV.

Co-sponsors of the Kellogg-Hubbard

program: Central Vermont Refugee Action Network, Unitarian Church of Montpelier's Racial Justice Team, Kellogg-Hubbard Library, and ORCA Media.

The Privatization of Medicare

On Monday, February 6, Dr. Marvin Malek, past president of Vermont Physicians for a National Health Program (VT PNHP), will give a presentation on the privatization of Medicare. The program, sponsored by the LWVVT, will take place at 5:30 pm, in the Hayes Room at Kellogg Hubbard Library in Montpelier. Dr. Malek will discuss Medicare Advantage, DCEs and the new ACO/REACH program. The event is cosponsored by VT PNHP, Vermont Health Care for All, VSEA, and Vermont Workers' Center.



Dr. Malek

For the first 20 years after its implementation in 1965, the Medicare program reimbursed hospitals and doctors directly for the care they provided to Medicare enrollees. Beginning in 1985, some Medicare recipients were given the option of electing to have their benefit managed by a private company, currently known as the Medicare Advantage program. Last year, officials in the Medicare program announced that by the year 2030, they would be involuntarily enrolling the remaining Medicare enrollees into another managed care program, the ACO/REACH program.

The goal of the February 6th program is to discuss the impacts of these privatization initiatives on the care that Medicare beneficiaries receive, on the costs they will be facing, and the impacts of these changes on the financial stability of the Medicare program.

Dr. Malek, MD MPH, received his medical training at SUNY Upstate in Syracuse, NY, residency training at Cook County Hospital and earned a Master's Degree in Health Policy at Harvard University's School of Public Health. He has spent most of his career in community medicine, providing care to underserved populations, including Latino, Black, and Navajo communities. He currently works on the hospital care team at Springfield Hospital in Vermont.

The program will be recorded by Onion River Community Access, and will be available online later at <https://www.orcamedia.net>.

Community Engagement Sought

State legislation (Act 167/S.285) passed last year charged the following:

The Green Mountain Care Board, in collaboration with the Director of Health Care Reform in the Agency of Human Services, shall develop and conduct a data-informed, patient-focused, community-inclusive engagement process for Vermont's hospitals to reduce inefficiencies, lower costs, improve population health outcomes, reduce health inequities, and increase access to essential services while maintaining sufficient capacity for emergency management.

The LWVVT has been working with health care reform allies to offer assistance to the GMCB and AHS to ensure the integrity of the community engagement process. We are pushing to have community input before any reforms are proposed, so that the input can influence the creation of the proposals, and then again after the proposals are drafted.

The GMCB and AHS expect to select a contractor by the end of January and have them working by March. Our LWVVT Health Care Committee is meeting by video conference on Feb 6 at 11 AM to consider how to impact the public engagement process, and ensure changes to our health care system reflect what the public has said it wants. Please contact raderca2015@gmail.com if you would like the link to attend.

Join The Board

Board members will be elected to a two-year term at the LWVVT biennial Convention in June.

If you are looking for a unique leadership opportunity, look no further!

Two key positions – Secretary and Treasurer – are available. Contact our Nominating Committee at league@lwvofvt.org to let them know of your interest.

New Citizen Voter Registration is Back!

After a nearly three-year hiatus, public naturalization ceremonies have returned, and the League was there to register the new citizens to vote.

Scott Hess, Barbara Magaliff, Anne Mixer, Kate Rader, and Amy Willis registered 11 members of the class of 30 who were naturalized at the American Legion Barre Post 10 on December 14.



New citizens registering to vote in Barre.

A second ceremony was held on Jan. 18 in Burlington, where League members Jean Hopkins and Sonja Schuyler represented the League at the Citizenship Ceremony at the Federal Courthouse in Burlington. This was the first ceremony in the Courthouse since the Covid lock-down. Twenty new citizens were sworn in and each received a copy of *Voting in Vermont*. Six new citizens registered that day and a few copied the QR code for online registration. U.S. Rep. Becca Balint was there and welcomed the new citizens. She also made a point to thank Jean and Sonja for the work that the League does.

Further ceremonies are scheduled for February 15, March 1, and March 31, all at

United States District Court
11 Elmwood Avenue, Room 200
Burlington

There will be others throughout the year. If you are interested in participating, contact Sonja Schuyler at sonjapeter@comcast.net

Library Series Looks Back and Forward

The fourth program of the 2022-23 LWV/KHL Lecture Series on *The Impact of Climate Change on Vermont* on Wednesday, February 8 at 7:00 pm presents a Current Legislative Initiatives Update. Vermont legislators will provide a preview of relevant state legislation and the impact of past legislation. Panel members are Sen. Andrew Perchlik and Rep. Gabrielle Stebbins; Jared Duval, Executive Director of Energy Action Network will moderate.

The program will be hosted via Zoom and is open to the public. Attendance is free, but all guests must register at www.kellogghubbard.org/adult_programs.

The series will close on March 8, with What Can We Do?

In Memoriam

Stella Bukanc passed away from cervical cancer on December 4th. Stella shared her enthusiasm for the League's work to promote social justice. She worked as the Office Manager for the League when we had a physical office in Essex Junction. At her Memorial Service her daughter Kat recalled playing on the floor of the office while Stella copied the League Newsletter. She worked hard with the League on passage of the Equal Rights Amendment and shared the disappointment that our hard work did not result in success. She also served as State Board Secretary and tried her best to keep us from keeping too much paperwork! In 1983 she started working full time for the Vermont Department of Human Services and her insight into policy making at the state level was very helpful for League advocacy.





We were founded by leaders of the women’s suffrage movement on February 14, 1920, six months before the 19th Amendment was ratified and women won the right to vote.

As you raise a toast to the League, consider giving the [gift of membership](#) to a friend or family member who, like the League, believes that voters should play a critical role in democracy, that elections should be free, fair, and accessible, and that our democracy should be preserved. Members help us continue our work of empowering voters and making democracy work. ❤️

What is the Noncitizen Proposal About?

Kate Rader

The article on page 3, about noncitizen voting, contains a lot of League-y language. Because our League has not done a study in some time, many of our newer members are not familiar with the process. Therefore, we present this brief primer regarding adoption of advocacy positions.

A *position* is a statement of what League supports or opposes on the basis of a particular consensus. A consensus position is not tied to specific legislation, but is general enough to serve as a standard for evaluating and monitoring legislation related to the issue under consideration.

Here is a brief description of how a League position is reached.

In Convention, members vote on an issue to be studied.

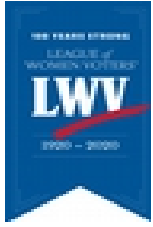
A Study Committee examines the issue in an objective manner to determine if the issue is best addressed through a consensus or concurrence

process. A *consensus* study requires thorough research including reviewing pros and cons of the issue and may involve meeting with experts and public officials before shaping consensus questions for members to consider to come to an agreement. Consensus by group discussion is based on the overall sense of the group, not on simple majority or unanimity.

When members reach consensus, a position statement is written for approval by the Board of Directors. It may then be used for advocacy, and will be ratified at the next Convention.

On occasion, positions are adopted by *concurrence*, adopting another League’s study or policy, after reviewing the basis for that position. That, too, requires adoption by Convention.

Continued support of each position is affirmed at the biennial state and national conventions, or at the local annual meeting.



GREEN MOUNTAIN CITIZEN

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