



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Fall 2024

Naturalization Ceremony Returns to the State House

The September 11 Naturalization Ceremony has returned to the State House after a five-year hiatus, and a refurbished State House sparkled for the occasion. League members registered voters and hosted the traditional reception for the new citizens and their guests.



Photo credit: Gillian Randall

Forty-nine of fifty candidates were sworn in as U.S. citizens, and twenty-six registered to vote. Thanks to Lyn Blackwell, Rachael Grossman, Mary Jane Harris, Judith Hinds, Barbara Magaliff, Madeleine Mongan, Kate Rader, Gillian Randall, Lila Richardson, Sybil Schlesinger and Leryda Vazquez for registering the new voters and/or contributing refreshments to the reception, with apologies to anyone we missed.

Message from the Board Fall 2024

The League in Vermont: Small and Mighty!

Fall is here, and Election Day almost upon us. It has been a busy season for the League with members immersed in a variety of election activities:

- Launching Vote411, the League's online resource guide allowing voters to look up information about candidates in state and federal races.
- Five candidate forums across the state – one each in Burlington, Windsor, Northfield, and two in St. Johnsbury.
- Voter registration drives at seven naturalization ceremonies, six prisons, four high schools, two universities, and at Montpelier's Another Way, Christ Episcopal Church, Just Basics, and the Food Shelf.
- National Voter Registration Day at Fletcher Free Library (Burlington), Isley Public Library (Middlebury), Hunger Mountain Coop (Montpelier), and Vermont State University (Randolph).
- Voter education presentations in Sharon and East Montpelier.
- Interviews with National Public Radio (San Francisco) podcast, *tbh*, on college-going voters and Vermont Public on voting in Vermont and incarcerated voters.
- Attending LWVUS Electoral College Committee meetings.
- Posting on Front Porch Forum statewide, putting together our bi-weekly E-news, and maintaining an active social media presence.
- Responding to numerous inquiries and questions from the public.

In addition, members continue to meet regularly to discuss non-U.S. citizen voting, health care reform, and plan our annual lecture series with Kellogg-Hubbard Library. While it is not possible to list the names of all members who have given their time to register and engage voters, I am thankful to each one of them for fostering efforts to empower voters and defend democracy.

Fulfilling Our Mission.

Sue Racanelli
President



<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/824769970/tbh>

The Green Mountain Citizen

is published four times per year by
The League of Women Voters of Vermont

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>, e-mail, or write:

League of Women Voters of Vermont

P.O. Box 1391

Montpelier, VT 05601-1391

e-mail: League@lwvofvt.org

League Sponsored a Record Five Candidate Forums!

(Sonja Schuyler; photos by Audrey Grant)

The Washington Senate Candidate Forum on Friday, October 18, at Northfield High School, closed out the League's 2024 Candidate Forum season. We held five forums in all and worked with several partners.

The first forum was for the Orleans Senate seat held in partnership with the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum on August 29. Veteran Senator Jane Kitchell was not running again so the race was competitive between Scott Beck, a former State Representative, and Amanda Cochrane, endorsed by Senator Kitchell. It was a standing room only audience. KATV streamed the forum live and the recorded forum was available afterward.



The second forum was for Gubernatorial candidates on September 21 at Fletcher Free Library in Burlington. Governor Scott did not participate nor did Eli "Poa" Mutino, an Independent from Barre. However, the three other candidates: Democrat/Progressive Esther Chalestin; June Goodband, Peace and Justice; and Kevin Hoyt, Independent, provided a thought-provoking forum. It was recorded by CCTV. A last minute change in room made live streaming impossible – lesson learned to verify internet access!!



We partnered again with the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum for the Lieutenant Governor Forum on September 26. Both John Rodgers and sitting Lieutenant Governor David Zuckerman provided a lively forum. Ian Diamondstone, the Peace and Justice candidate was not able to participate due to a family emergency. This forum was streamed live by KATV.



We were contacted by Senator Rebecca White to see if we would cosponsor a forum with Windsor on Air for Windsor Senate seats. We agreed and worked with Paula Wehde, Executive Director of Windsor on Air. The forum was held at the Windsor Welcome Center on October 3. Six candidates, three Republicans and three Democrats, participated. Windsor on Air streamed it live and recorded it.

The final forum for the Washington Senate district was co-sponsored by the Political Science Club at Norwich University. The three incumbent Democrats and three challenging Republican candidates provided for a very interesting forum.

Tom McKone masterfully moderated all five forums. Tom is a writer and commentator and former Director of the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Jez Harrington acted as the question screener at four of the forums. This is a tough job which requires reviewing audience questions, combining similar questions, and some times editing a half page question down to something the Moderator can present. The hard working Elections Committee included Anne Mixer, Audrey Grant, Chase Empsall, Marguerite Adelman, Susan Kuecker, and Sonja Schuyler.

Health Care Reform: Act 167

(Lila Richardson)

The League has been involved for over two years in efforts to improve community engagement in discussions and decisions about health care reform in Vermont.

In 2022, the Vermont legislature passed Act 167: “An act relating to health care reform initiatives, data collection, and access to home- and community-based services.” That Act called for healthcare delivery reform in Vermont and input from community members has been a central part of this legislation. The League worked with other health care advocates to ensure that Act 167 included a robust community engagement process.

In 2023, The Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) hired management consulting firm Oliver Wyman to develop and carry out a Community engagement plan headed by Dr. Bruce H. Hamory.
https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/sites/gmcb/files/documents/2023_Act_167_Engagement_Plan_Web.pdf

In late October and November 2023, the Oliver Wyman project leaders held a “listening tour” to hear directly from Vermont community members about their current “lived experiences” with the healthcare system and their suggestions for future system changes.

As part of the process of discussing solutions to the problems with the existing health care system, the project held a second series of community meetings in each of the 14 hospital service areas and a statewide virtual meeting during July and early August 2024.

The GMCB has also accepted written public comment on the issue of hospital sustainability as part of the Act 167 community engagement work. Comments received to date from many members of the public and provider community are included on the website:
<https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/board/comment>

Members of the League’s Health Care Committee submitted comments on behalf of the League:
<https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/sites/gmcb/files/documents/Public%20Comment%20-%20Hospital%20Sustainability%20-%20League%20o%20Women%20Voters%20-%202009.03.2024.pdf>

The final report for the Community Engagement project can be found at
https://gmcboard.vermont.gov/sites/gmcb/files/documents/20240911_Act%20167%20Community%20Engagement_OW%20Exec%20Summar%20Report_v01.pdf

The report contains many recommendations including “major restructuring” of four hospitals in rural areas. The League’s Health Care Committee believes that such change should only happen with a very careful transition plan to ensure that patients continue to have access to necessary services.

A key finding of Hamory’s report is the urgent need for Vermont to “build housing and other facilities and fix transportation.” Lack of adequate and affordable housing and necessary transportation affects patients in many ways and makes it difficult for the state to attract and retain health care workers.

The League has decided to increase advocacy work related to the housing crisis. We have joined the Housing & Homelessness Alliance of Vermont (HHAV) and will be following that coalition’s legislative and administrative work (<https://helpingtohousevt.org/>). The League will also be monitoring the work of the GMCB and legislative action in response to the recommendations in the Hamory report.

League members interested in working on health care and related housing issues should contact league@lwvofvt.org.

Notes from the Ed Fund

At its meeting on October 17, the LWVVT Education Fund elected the following board:

Chair, Kate Rader (2-year term ending Oct. 2026)
Secretary, Kate Rader (2-year term ending Oct. 2026)

Remaining board members' terms ending in 2025:

Scholarship Coordinator, Audrey Grant (completing Becky Miller's term)

Members at large: Chris Abrams, Becky Miller, Sue Racanelli, and Maisie Wood

The LWVVT Education Fund was established in 1997 with seed money from the generous bequest of long-time League member Elizabeth (Niki) Keyes. In 2000 it was officially recognized as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization by the IRS.

The mission of the fund is to publish educational materials related to the political process; recognize student achievement by Vermont high school students with a cash award; support candidate debates and forums conducted by the LWVVT.

In 1998, many contributions were made to honor the memory of League leader Winona Smith. The Board decided to use those funds to establish the Winona Smith Scholarship for the benefit of three or four Vermont high school seniors who exemplify the League's mission of encouraging civic engagement.

For several years, the Ed Fund was dependent upon the League's Keyes Trust to finance our scholarships. Beginning in 2021 however, thanks to Development Chair Chris Abrams, we have been able to cover scholarship costs, and to increase our stipend to \$2000.

At this time, we are looking to supplement our board with new members.

The board meets four times a year, with the most intense activity in May, when the board reviews the applications and chooses scholarship recipients. Criteria for the scholarship are: financial need; teacher (or mentor, in the case of home-schooled students) recommendations; and two essays, addressing voter rights and current events.

Library Series Update



Plans for the 2024/25 program series with Kellogg-Hubbard Library are proceeding.

We will be discussing the impact of several of the most important recent Supreme Court decisions as follows:

November 13: Trump v. United States – Presidential Immunity (Rod Smolla, Pres., VT Law School)

December 11: City of Grants Pass, OR v. Johnson – Homeless camping on public property (Frank Knaak, Housing and Homeless Alliance VT; Falko Schiling, ACLUVT)

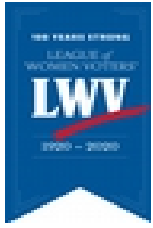
January 8: Loper Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo – Chevron Doctrine overruled; limits the power of regulatory agencies (Speaker(s) TBD)

February 12: Carson v. Makin – public funds for religious schools (Speaker(s) TBD)

March 12: Garland v. Cargill – Bumpstocks: to include historical background and VT law (William Clark, Gifford Law Center; Cabot Teachout)

This season we are going back to Zoom-only. The programs will be live online from 7:00-8:30 pm, with Q&A through Chat. They will be recorded and available for later viewing on the Library's website.

Go to our website, <https://lwvofvt.org/education-fund/> to learn more about the Fund. If you find yourself interested in serving on the board, contact Kate Rader, raderca2015@gmail.com for more information.



GREEN MOUNTAIN CITIZEN

League of Women Voters of Vermont

P.O. Box 1391

Montpelier, VT 05601-1391