



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Winter 2025

State Board Sets Legislative Priorities for New Biennium

At its January meeting the LWVVT board chose the issues we will be following in the 2024/25 action in the Vermont General Assembly. The following list includes the name of the point person identified by the board for that issue.

Elections/Voting (Betty Keller)
Ethics
Healthcare (Tom Derenthall)
Housing (Lila Richardson)
Environment (Marguerite Adelman)
Education (Chase Empsell)
Gun Safety

The following bills of interest have been introduced as of January 21. Our focus will change as new bills are introduced and our capacity to be effective is evaluated. When the title of the bill is not self-explanatory, the stated purpose of the bill is included.

- H.1 An act relating to accepting and referring complaints by the State Ethics Commission
This bill proposes to exempt the House and Senate Ethics Panels from the requirement to consult with the Executive Director of the State Ethics Commission on any complaint referred to the Panels by the Commission.
- H.8 An act relating to a tax credit for home modifications for safety and livability
- H.13 An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home- and community-based service providers and designated and specialized service agencies
- H.20 An act relating to establishing a voluntary firearms storage program for persons in crisis.
This bill proposes to establish a voluntary program in which persons in crisis would have the opportunity to temporarily relinquish their firearms to federally licensed firearms dealers.
- H.35 An act relating to unmerging the individual and small group health insurance markets
This bill proposes to unmerge the individual and small group health insurance markets. It would also repeal outdated language regarding implementation of the Vermont Health Benefit Exchange.

(cont'd on p.6)

Message from the Board Winter 2025



Beginning in February 2025, joining and renewing membership with the League will be a nationally standardized process for all state and local Leagues.

ChapterSpot is the new League membership platform where any person can join the League or renew their membership. Here are some of the major differences in this new standardized process for joining or renewing with League of Women Voters of Vermont:

- Individuals will be encouraged to pay a standard rate of \$75. There will also be a “pay-what-you-can” option, where members can choose their own dues amount, at a minimum of \$20. LWVVT may choose to subsidize the \$20 for students and other individuals who may not be able to pay this minimum. Membership fees are split 33% to National and 67% to LWVVT
- There will no longer be a household membership fee. Everyone in a household will need to join.
- There will no longer be a student membership fee.
- Individuals will not be able to be members of more than one League.
- Members will be able to make a separate donation to LWVVT when joining. These donations will go exclusively to our state league.

Below is information about the renewal period, how to join/renew through the LWV Member Portal, and how to join/renew offline.

Renewal Process

Reminding a member to renew is a collaborative process between National and our state League here in Vermont.

Below is a list of steps in the renewal period:

- Members will receive a renewal reminder email 60 days before their expiration date.
- Members who do not renew in response to the first email will receive a second renewal reminder email 30 days before their expiration date.

- After the second email, the LWVVT will reach out directly to the members to remind them to renew.
- If members do not renew before their expiration, they will receive another reminder email on their expiration date.
- Members who still haven't renewed will receive another direct and personal reminder for the LWVVT.
- Unrenewed members will receive a final reminder email 45 days after their expiration date.

Joining/Renewing Online

Members will be encouraged to join and renew online. This [video gives a step-by-step overview of the join/renew form](#). The process of renewing is like that of joining, except some of the fields will be pre-filled with the information we already have about a member. LWVVT will add a new link to the join/renew form on our website.

Adding a Second Member

When a member joins or renews, they can also join or renew on behalf of a second member. Some important things to note about this process:

- The member can specify if the second member lives in a household with them or not. This function can be used for gift memberships, in addition to replacing what was formerly household membership.
- When the member chooses their dues amount, that will be the dues amount for each member, e.g., if they select the recommended dues amount of \$75, the total transaction will be \$150.
- Each member is identified by their unique email address. If one member is renewing on behalf of another, they need to ensure that they are entering the same email address as the one already associated with that member.

Offline Join/Renewal

Members are encouraged to join and renew through the online join/renew form, when possible, but members can still join and renew offline. The LWVVT will have a form online that can be printed and mailed in with your dues payment.

If you have questions about the new membership process, please don't hesitate to contact Marguerite Adelman, Membership and Roster Manager for LWVVT at madel51353@gmail.com.

Voter Registration Work Recognized by LWVUS

LWVVT received funding for three voter registration programs from the National League. Applications had been submitted in November 2024.

Youth Voter Registration, \$500.

Anne Mixer and her team of volunteers will reach out to 16 high schools, colleges and career technical centers registering young voters. Their involvement has led to increased interest in voting, elections, and civic engagement. This year they hope to connect with youth transitioning out of foster care and homeless shelters.

New Citizens Voter Registration, \$750.

Sonja Schuyler and her team will register new citizens at all naturalization ceremonies held across the state. They plan to work with local organizations providing services to immigrants and translate the League's *Voting In Vermont* brochure to Spanish. *Voting In Vermont* is currently available in Chinese, Nepalese, Somali, and Swahili.

Current and Formerly Incarcerated Voter Registration, \$750.

Madeline Motta and Sybil Schlesinger will be coordinating efforts with the Vermont Department of Corrections and prison Volunteer Coordinators to schedule voter registration drives at the six state correctional facilities by the mid-term elections. Prior to visiting, they will provide each facility with informational brochures about voting. The League has been registering inmates since 2018.

If you are interested in any of the League's voter registration programs, send an email to league@lwvofvt.org.



New Citizen Registration

Library Series Update



We're approaching the end of the 2024/25 LWV/KHL program series, looking at the potential impact of recent Supreme Court decisions. Still to come are:

February 12: *Carson v. Makin –Public Funds for Religious Schools*. Rep. Rebecca Holcombe and Harrison Stark, senior staff attorney at ACLU Vermont will discuss the June, 2022 decision that Maine's nonsectarian requirement for the otherwise generally available tuition assistance payments violates the Free Exercise Clause, thus requiring public funding for religious schools.

March 12: *Garland v. Cargill – Bumpstocks*. Speakers William Clark, Gifford Law Center; and Attorney Cabot Teachout. The Court ruled that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives exceeded its statutory authority by issuing a rule that classifies a bump stock as a "machine gun."

The programs will be live online, from 7:00-8:30, with Q&A through Chat.

This year's earlier programs can be found at: <https://www.orcamedia.net/show/presidential-immunity-trump-v-united-states-11132024> (presidential immunity); <https://www.orcamedia.net/show/presidential-immunity-trump-v-united-states-11132024> (homeless camping on public property: and <https://www.orcamedia.net/show/lecture-series-chevron-doctrine-overruled-loper-bright-enterprises-v-raimondo-182025> (Chevron doctrine overruled).

LWVUS Federal Judiciary Study

At the LWVUS 2024 Convention, delegates voted to proceed with a study on the federal judiciary. The study will be completed on a fast-track timeline so a position will be announced at the LWVUS 2025 Council in June.

Process

The process for a League study is the same at every level: Define the scope of the study, appoint a committee, gather and present information to the membership, the board schedules a consensus meeting, the results of these meetings are compiled and a consensus position is developed, to be ratified at the next Annual Meeting or Convention

The LWVVT board will soon schedule our consensus meeting, sometime between February and mid-April. At that meeting the membership will discuss materials provided by the national study committee, and send the results to the committee. They will collate our results along with those of Leagues across the country into an advocacy position. Strong member participation validates our positions.

Scope

“To develop a LWV position on the federal judiciary as an essential component of US democracy.

The study's purpose includes, but is not limited to, addressing concerns and clarifying judicial accountability, transparency, independence, and ethics.

The scope addresses the Supreme Court as well as the other Article III federal courts.”

Available Resources

Information for members about the study can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/lwvjudiciarystudy>.

Timeline

January:

Information on how to prepare for consensus meetings sent to Leagues

February:

Town Hall Meeting, 2/4/25, 7:00 pm EST

Study Guide and Consensus Questions sent to Leagues by Feb. 7

Leagues hold consensus meetings, 2/7/25 – 4/14/25

April:

Consensus submission deadline for Leagues, 4/4/25

April-May

Proposed position presented to LWVUS Board for vote and final approval

June:

Federal judiciary position announced at Council, June 26-28, 2025

Meet HCAUS

League members from across the country come together monthly on the fourth Sunday evening to share resources, develop strategy, and support each other in their advocacy and education efforts to improve access, equity, and affordability of health care in the United States. There are at least 175 members in 35 states who have joined the healthcare reform group. You are welcome to join them!

Their mission is to educate and mobilize League members to work toward legislation and other reforms that enact the goals of the LWVUS health care position,* with a strong focus on expanded and improved Medicare for all (a single payer system).

In addition to monthly meetings, they host a website lwvhealthcarereform.org, and produce a newsletter ([current](#) and [archives](#)).

They share a Google group, to which subscribers can post articles, links to online meetings, and other news that might interest members. In a typical month you would get two to 4 emails from this group, so it is not onerous.

With all the work they are doing and resources they provide, they qualify to become a national “interest group” of the LWVUS as soon policies to guide interest groups are developed.

Some members are in states that are very actively trying to achieve a state-based single payer healthcare system, like New York, California, or Washington. Others may be in a state where there is no movement toward a state-based system, and no support in the congressional delegation for a national plan.

The meetings, emails, newsletter, and website provide support and resources to all regardless of where they are in their journey for educating about and advocating for a functional healthcare system that efficiently uses funds to provide quality, equitable care for all.

The interest group provided awesome resources and support to our LWVVT Health Care Committee when we were creating our position on Privatization and proposing it as an update to the national position on Privatization. Other members of the interest group, in other states, learned from our work and are writing their own positions on Privatization. We are hopeful that they can craft a position that passes muster at the 2026 Convention. And our work started the education process for reaching delegates across the US so that we can achieve a national position that protects public goods in the future.

You can fill out [this form](#) to indicate how you’d like to get involved.

***The League’s Position:** “The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost should be available to all US residents. Other US health care policy goals should include the equitable distribution of services, efficient and economical delivery of care, advancement of medical research and technology, and a reasonable total national expenditure level for health care.”

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

- H.37 An act relating to the consolidation of Vermont’s school districts to align with career and technical education service regions
This bill proposes to consolidate the number of school districts in Vermont to align with the career and technical education service regions.
- S.1 An act relating to providing Medicaid-equivalent coverage to all Vermonters
This bill proposes to provide Medicaid-equivalent coverage to all Vermonters by age regardless of household income.
- S.2 An act relating to establishing the Office of Health Equity within the Department of Health
- S.8 An act relating to eligibility for Dr. Dynasaur for young adults up to 26 years of age
This bill proposes to expand eligibility for coverage under the Dr. Dynasaur program to all Vermont residents under 26 years of age with incomes at or below 312 percent of the federal poverty level.
- S.14 An act relating to expanding Dr. Dynasaur income eligibility for pregnant individuals and exploring eligibility expansions for other populations
This bill proposes to expand eligibility under the Dr. Dynasaur program to pregnant individuals. The bill would also direct the Agency of Human Services to report on the feasibility and costs of expanding eligibility for Dr. Dynasaur coverage to all Vermont residents up to 26 years of age and of expanding eligibility for Medicaid to Vermont residents between 26 and 64 years of age with incomes up to 312 percent of the federal poverty level.
-

Housing and Health Care

In the report he submitted under Act 167 (An act relating to health care reform initiatives, data collection, and access to home- and community-based services), health care consultant Bruce Hamory emphasized that adequate affordable housing is tied to health care needs in many ways. An emphasis on housing issues is also consistent with the League position on meeting basic human needs:

<https://my.lwv.org/lwvus/position/meetingbasic-human-needs>.

In order to work with other groups with experience in advocating for housing needs, the League joined the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont (HHAV) last fall. This group is a merger of the VT Affordable Housing Coalition and the VT Coalition to End Homelessness. HHAV and its 80+ member organizations have the goal of ensuring that all people living in Vermont have safe, stable, affordable homes, and that if homelessness occurs, it is brief, rare, and non-recurring. HHAV is interested in the full spectrum of the affordable housing landscape,

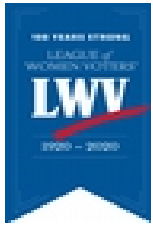
from rentals to home-ownership, from shelter to subsidies.

The Alliance has issued its legislative priorities for 2025: <https://tinyurl.com/2025LegPriorHHAV>. These have been presented to the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing, and General Affairs.

The League is especially interested in efforts to expand SASH® the Support and Services at Home program. SASH supports the health and well-being of Medicare recipients -- typically adults 65 and older and people with disabilities. It is a free, voluntary program funded in Vermont by OneCare Vermont and the Vermont Dept. of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living. It is part of the State’s initiative to reform health care by investing in wellness and addressing the social determinants of health, including housing. SASH is based in affordable-housing communities throughout Vermont, providing care and programming right where people live. The support services offered by SASH would be helpful to individuals living independently as well as those in congregate housing settings.

**“We can have democracy in
this country
or we can have great
wealth
concentrated in the hands
of a few,
but we can't have both.”**

--Louis Brandeis



GREEN MOUNTAIN CITIZEN

League of Women Voters of Vermont

P.O. Box 1391

Montpelier, VT 05601-1391