



Green Mountain CITIZEN

Spring 2025

Federal Judiciary Study Moves to Consensus

The LWVVT will hold its Consensus meeting on Wednesday, April 9, at 7:00 p.m. If you have not pre-registered, you will receive the Zoom link by email on the 9th. We encourage you to participate.

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 in time for a position to be announced at the LWVUS 2025 Council in June 2025.

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.

Study Resources

Preliminary Background Information:

[Understanding Federal Courts](#): This publication is from the Administrative Office of the United States Courts. It provides an introduction to the federal justice system, including how it is organized and how it relates to the legislative and administrative branches of government.

[US Code of Conduct for U.S. Judges](#): This document includes the ethical principles that apply to federal judges and provides guidance on the official duties and engagements related to outside activities for federal judges.

[Congressional Research Service Paper, *The Supreme Court Adopts a Code of Conduct*](#): This document was published following the announcement of the US Supreme Court's adoption of the Code of Conduct and provides a legal sidebar with background information on federal judicial ethics rules before the adoption of the code and briefly outlines the substance of the code adopted.

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Message from the President Spring 2025

On June 7, at the close of Convention, I will officially have completed my final term as President of the League of Women Voters of Vermont, six years of satisfying work.

My appreciation of the League of Women Voters began in the eighties in San Diego, when I pored over the Voter Guides and was so impressed by the balanced point of view. I have since learned that the word used by the League is “non-partisan.” Every election, I looked for this guide, read it thoroughly, and, although I could not vote, gave recommendations to family and friends, based on the information the League provided. I could not vote because I was not yet a citizen of the United States.

I did not know about joining the League until I moved to Vermont in 2010 and my neighbor Kate Rader asked if I would like to join. I remembered my respect for this organization, and, unhesitatingly, my answer was yes. The more I engaged with the League, the more I understood and appreciated the value of this organization and what it stands for.

Over the years I have been involved in many League events, but one stands out, year after year – the September 11 Naturalization Ceremony at the State House in Montpelier and the registering of new American citizens by League members. I identify with each new citizen taking the oath, understanding the gravity of pledging allegiance to a new country as I, too, had done in 2008. Because of you, our members, the League is renowned for voter registration and voter education across the United States.

In 2018, during the planning of the suffrage centennial that was derailed by Covid-19, I learned some hard truths about the League’s origins; how winning the right to vote did not guarantee all American women the vote, particularly women of color. I knew about the 72-year multi-generational struggle by suffragists to win the vote for women, but did not know the role race played in the movement. Today, the League is committed to building a stronger, more inclusive democracy.

As an organization we can only be as strong as the talents and contributions of our members. There is much work to be done in the face of ongoing attacks on voting rights and elections. I urge you to stay involved and engaged! Give us your ideas, time, energy, and expertise. We are here to defend the right to vote.

The 59th Convention of the League of Women Voters of Vermont will be held on June 7 in Montpelier. We hope you will join us as we extend a warm welcome to our incoming President, Pelin Kohn and our new board, who will bring a fresh perspective to our League.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you, and especially to:

- Our board of directors for their commitment, time, and hard work to ensure we stay true to our mission.
- Our committees and committee chairs for doing the grinding work of the League.
- Kate Rader and Sonja Schuyler, my mentors, whose ears I bent over and over, and who may be exhausted by my continual calls and emails. I learned from the very best as they guided me, always sharing the depth of their knowledge and experience

Thank you again for the great honor of serving as your president. Best wishes to all.

Sue Racanelli

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Kate Rader, Editor

Membership in the League includes a subscription.

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

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P.O. Box 1391
Montpelier, VT 05601-1391
e-mail: League@lwvofvt.org

Legislative Advocacy Update

At the beginning of the Legislative session, the Board identified seven key priority areas for advocacy: elections/voting, ethics, health care, housing, education, environment, and gun safety.

At this point, the Legislature has passed its “crossover” deadline dates, the dates by which bills must pass out of committees in one chamber to be considered by the other chamber. Bills that have not met crossover may still be discussed and voted on but will probably not be passed this year.

For an explanation of how bills are passed, the *VT Digger* 2025 Vermont Legislative Guide is a helpful resource:

<https://vtdigger.org/2025-vermont-legislative-guide/>.

To track bills related to League priorities, review agendas and written testimony for House and Senate committees, or view House and Senate sessions or Committee hearings live or recorded, visit the Vermont Legislature website: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/>.

Housing

In the words of a member of the LWVVT Health Care Committee, “Housing is 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/meeting-basic-human-needs>.

The League joined the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont (HHAV) in the fall. This group is a merger of the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition and the Vermont 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. A summary of the HHAV legislative priorities is at <https://tinyurl.com/2025LegPriorHHAV>.

During this session, the Governor and the legislature have continued to fight over whether/how the General Assistance Emergency Housing Program winter rules, providing housing in motels/hotels for unhoused Vermonters, will be extended past March 31. The legislature has passed a new Budget Adjustment Act, H. 489, which would continue the program through June 30, 2025 without any additional funding. On March 28 the Governor signed an Executive Order that extends the winter rules for families with children and those who are especially vulnerable due to certain severe medical needs. Other households that have received 80 days of benefits under the motel voucher program began to lose eligibility beginning on April 1.

The legislature continues to work on: the FY 2026 Budget; S.127 - An act relating to housing and housing development; H.479 - An act relating to housing; and H.91 - An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program. A side-by-side comparison of the Senate and House committee bills is at <https://tinyurl.com/housingsidebyside>. The Governor vetoed the second Budget Adjustment Act on April 4.

Ethics

H.1 -- An act relating to accepting and referring complaints by the State Ethics Commission, has been passed by the House and is now in the Senate Government Operations Committee. The League opposes this bill, which exempts the House and Senate Ethics Panels from the requirement to consult with the Exec. Director of the State Ethics Commission on any complaint referred to the Panels by the Commission. We will continue our efforts to strengthen the Commission by opposing this bill.

Voting Rights Committee Formed



The Board of the LWVVT has established a new committee to defend voting rights and accessibility in Vermont, as well as the nation. Dottye Ricks is chairing this new committee, and we'll be working to educate Vermonters about the threats we are facing at the national level to our state voting rights and accessibility. The work of our Non-U.S. Citizen Voting committee will now be absorbed under the new committee.

We've written about the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (the [SAVE Act](#)) that is before Congress. This legislation would require all Americans to prove their citizenship status by presenting documentation *in person* when registering to vote or updating their voter registration information. Specifically, the legislation would require the vast majority of Americans to rely on a passport or birth certificate to prove their citizenship. While this may sound easy for many Americans, the reality is that more than 140 million American citizens do not possess a passport and as many as 69 million women who have taken their spouse's name do not have a birth certificate matching their legal name.

The legislation would, in practice, prevent Americans from being able to register to vote by mail; end voter registration drives nationwide; and eliminate online voter registration overnight—a service [42 states](#) rely on.

Trump has made it clear, through a [Jan. 20 executive order](#),* that the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) will no longer help election officials monitor social media for false claims about elections. Erin Buechel Wiczorek, acting chief of external affairs officer for CISA wrote in a March 3 email, that the administration

stopped funding the Election Infrastructure Information Sharing and Analysis Center, or EI-ISAC, which alerts state officials of active election threats in other states, because it “no longer supports Department priorities.” CISA is part of the Dept. of Homeland Security.

CISA has also taken “appropriate actions” against employees who under the Biden administration had helped states monitor false information about elections posted on social media, Wiczorek wrote, adding that those actions were “ongoing.”

[The changes at CISA](#) unravel a long-established partnership between the federal government and the states, which have long relied on the agency to help secure their electronic and physical infrastructure. Election officials say the EI-ISAC, which was established in 2018 during Trump's first term following an investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, will not be easy to replace. The rest of CISA's election security activities are on pause, Wiczorek wrote, as the agency conducts a “broader internal assessment” of funding, products, activities, and personnel.

If you are interested in joining this new committee, contact [Dottye Ricks](#) or [Marguerite Adelman](#). We hope to meet monthly, starting in April.

****[Addendum: LWVUS Sues](#)***

It's alarming that in just these last two weeks, we've seen blatant and unlawful attacks against voting rights, starting with the Trump Administration's latest executive order on voting. This order is a dangerous attempt to silence American voters and yet another example of the administration's executive overreach. **[T]hat's why we're suing!** On Tuesday, the LWV Education Fund (LWVEF), LWVUS, and LWV of Arizona filed a lawsuit challenging this harmful executive order. Read our statement on www.lwv.org.

Spring Naturalization Ceremonies Held

The League has been registering new citizens to vote throughout the Fall and Winter. The next Naturalization Ceremony is 1 PM, April 10th, at Milton High School. There is one May 13, 1 PM at Barstow Memorial School. So far this year we have registered new citizens from 28 countries. The most were from Canada and the second most were from Congo (Kinshasa). It will be interesting to look at the full year.



March ceremony in Burlington

“HERVermont” Founded by HS Students



Dottie Ricks, LWVVT Voting Services Director was one of several speakers at the opening of the HERVermont (Health, Education, & Rights) Reproductive Justice Mural on Saturday, March 29th at the Montpelier Performing Arts Center. **HERVermont**, a new activist organization founded by five U32 sophomores and their mentor, created the mural to educate the community about the important but often hidden history of reproductive justice. To learn more about HERVermont, visit <https://hervermont.weebly.com>.

HANDS OFF!! MONTPELIER, APRIL 5, 2025



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Policy Briefs

The Federal Judiciary Study Committee has prepared a series of briefs on particular, specific topics designed to help spark discussion among League members as we work toward a LWVUS position on the federal judiciary. By providing information on these very specific topics, our intention is to help develop a long-lasting position based on the principles of judicial independence, transparency, accountability, and ethics (and possibly others). Our goal is a position that outlines the values – the standards and norms – the League of Women Voters should use in evaluating proposed changes to policies, laws, and regulations about the federal judiciary.

We hope League members find these briefs useful to read and promote discussion in order to discuss then what principles we want the League of Women Voters to use when acting on these issues and on whatever other issues arise in the future.

The briefs can be found at

<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/advocacy-litigation/2024-2025-federal-judiciary-study-process-committee-and>

Topics

[Financial Disclosure](#)

[Judge Shopping](#)

[Judicial Ethics and Enforcement](#)

[Legitimacy and the US Supreme Court](#)

[Key Terms for the Federal Judiciary Study](#)

[Recusal](#)

[Representation](#)

[Shadow Docket](#)

[Stare Decisis and Binding Precedent](#)

[Structural reforms for the US Supreme Court](#)

Please join us for this most important aspect of League advocacy on issues (see p.7)

★★



LWVVT 59th STATE CONVENTION

Saturday, June 7, 2025

10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Vermont History Museum, Snelling Room
109 State Street, Montpelier



REGISTRATION

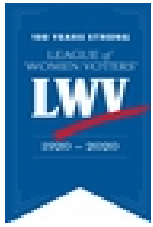
The registration fee of \$40 includes lunch. Send the form below with a check payable to the LWVVT to:

Chase Empsall, Treasurer
99 Underclyffe Road
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Name_____

Address:_____

Phone_____ Email_____



GREEN MOUNTAIN CITIZEN

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