

THE VOTER

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

RECAP OF THE BIENNIUM CONVENTION: A COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING DEMOCRACY

By Holly Oppelt, Co-President

Every two years, the League of Women Voters of the United States convenes a convention of delegates from every League to elect officers and directors for the national board, adopt a program and budget for the next biennium, and conduct other business that advances our mission. This year I was fortunate to attend.

The 56th Biennial LWVUS National Convention, “Turn Up and Turn Out,” took place in Washington, DC from June 27 to 30. Over 1,200 League members, board members, and staff from all 50 states, DC, and the Virgin Islands participated in person and virtually. This was the first time the League hosted this biennial event in the Nation's capital since 2016.

The League has long opposed the Electoral College. This spring, LWVUS launched the One Person One Vote campaign to achieve a new system for electing future presidents by direct popular vote. It only made sense to kick off Convention with an all-woman expert panel discussion about the movement to abolish the Electoral College. Moderator Celina Stewart, LWVUS chief counsel and senior director of Advocacy and Litigation, was joined by historian and author Carolyn Dupont, program director Keesha Gaskins-Nathan, and advocacy and policy strategist Na'ilah Amaru. This can be viewed on YouTube at LWV - Turn up for One Person, One Vote.

Convention was the perfect time to celebrate the life of former LWV President Dr. Deborah Ann Turner and, of course, an important member of LWV of Iowa. League members were honored that members of her family could attend in person as we paid tribute to our beloved Dr. T.

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Recap of Biennium Convention

[Save the Date: Virtual Meeting about the LWV Transformation Journey](#)

[Unlocking the Power of VOTE411: Your Guide to Informed Voting](#)

[Report from Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee](#)

[Webinar: August 15, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. - A View from Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin on SaltWise and SaltSmart Practices](#)

CONVENTION RECAP, CONTINUED

League members were on their feet to cheer and celebrate the announcement of the League's next CEO, none other than the League's current chief counsel, Celina Stewart. In selecting the next CEO, League president Sania Irwin made clear that the Board was unanimous in their decision, citing Celina's proven vision, leadership, and credibility to lead the League through transformation. Celina shared her vision of leadership in the next era of the League's story.

Newly elected Board President Dianna Wynn kicked off her presidency, saying, "A bigger, bolder, more powerful League of Women Voters can shape the future of our democracy."

Many other events occurred in the four-day convention including many workshops. Tam Prenosil, John Olsen and I tried to cover as many as possible. It kept us busy!

I encourage everyone to try to attend the next Council Meeting and/or Convention if possible. The dates and locations will be announced once plans are made. It was a wonderful experience and I've made some great friends across the United States!

SAVE THE DATE: VIRTUAL MEETING ABOUT THE LWV TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

On Tuesday, August 20 at 7:00 pm, there will be a virtual meeting to learn more about the LWV Transformation Journey. Nora Pullen, LWV Membership Manager, will share information about the new membership system that will begin in 2025.



The goal is to grow the League and stay financially strong. Nora will give a presentation and will be able to respond to questions from those in attendance. A Zoom link will be shared at a later date. This session will also be recorded for those who cannot attend on August 20. We hope to see everyone on August 20th at 7:00 pm!

UNLOCKING THE POWER OF VOTE411: YOUR GUIDE TO INFORMED VOTING

By Linda Serra Hagedorn, Ph.D.



The League of Women Voters of Iowa is excited to participate in VOTE411, an essential tool designed to empower voters with the information they need to make informed decisions at the polls.

What is VOTE411?

VOTE411 is a nonpartisan website that offers personalized voting information. It was created by the League of Women Voters Education Fund to help voters navigate the voting process and understand the issues and candidates on their ballots.

What does VOTE411 do?

1. Candidate Views: Learn what the candidates promote on the key issues that are important to you!
2. Election Information: Find key details about upcoming elections, including dates, polling locations, and registration deadlines.
3. Personalized Ballot: View your personalized ballot, including candidates and measures specific to your area.
4. Candidate Information: Access detailed profiles of candidates running for office, including their positions on critical issues.
5. Check your voter registration
6. Voting Guide: Learn about the voting process in your state, including options for absentee and early voting.

The Role of the LWV of Iowa

The League of Women Voters of Iowa is enhancing VOTE411 by providing tailored insights for the U.S. House of Representatives election across Iowa's four districts. As the coordinator, I have developed a comprehensive questionnaire for candidates, focusing on the critical issues important to our state: agriculture, climate change, immigration reform, the criminal justice system, and healthcare. Additionally, candidates share their personal passions in public policy and the reasons behind these interests.

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WHAT IS VOTE411, CONTINUED

Why Should You Use VOTE411?

Using VOTE411 ensures you are prepared to vote with confidence. By providing comprehensive, up-to-date information, it helps demystify the voting process and encourages informed participation in democracy. Whether you are a first-time voter or a seasoned participant, VOTE411 is your go-to resource for making your vote count.

Visit <https://www.vote411.org> and take the first step toward informed voting. Together, let's strengthen our democracy by making sure every voice is heard, and every vote is counted.

REPORT FROM CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

As we move further into election season, the committee suggests that interested League members view a movie available on Amazon titled "Bad Faith." (99 cents to rent.) It is an account, from a left-leaning political perspective, of the rise of Christian Nationalism. It traces the movement from the 1970s starting point to today. A fuller account of the rise of this political movement will be available in August from 2 Iowa authors. We will let you know of that publication date.

Lettie Prell may soon appear on the blog, Fallon Forum, to discuss the cost of being incarcerated. We will let local presidents know the date.

The committee is taking an in-depth look into Project 2025. We believe that even if it is not adopted nationwide, its effects are already being felt in Iowa. If you would like to be a part of this discussion or would like summaries of what we find, please let me know. As always, there are many ways to participate in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee. Contact Myrna Loehrlein at myrnaloeher@gmail.com

WEBINAR: AUGUST 15, 2024 AT 7:00 P.M. - A VIEW FROM ILLINOIS, MINNESOTA AND WISCONSIN ON SALTWISE AND SALTSMART PRACTICES

Salt is a big problem for streams, lakes and rivers in the Upper Mississippi Basin. Salt breaks down into sodium and chloride, which moves freely through soil and builds up in water bodies. Chloride pollution is a serious threat in the Upper Mississippi Basin - what can be done? On August 15, LWV UMRP will host panelists from Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin talking about programs in these states in a Zoom event at 7:00 pm.

Click below to register for the meeting.



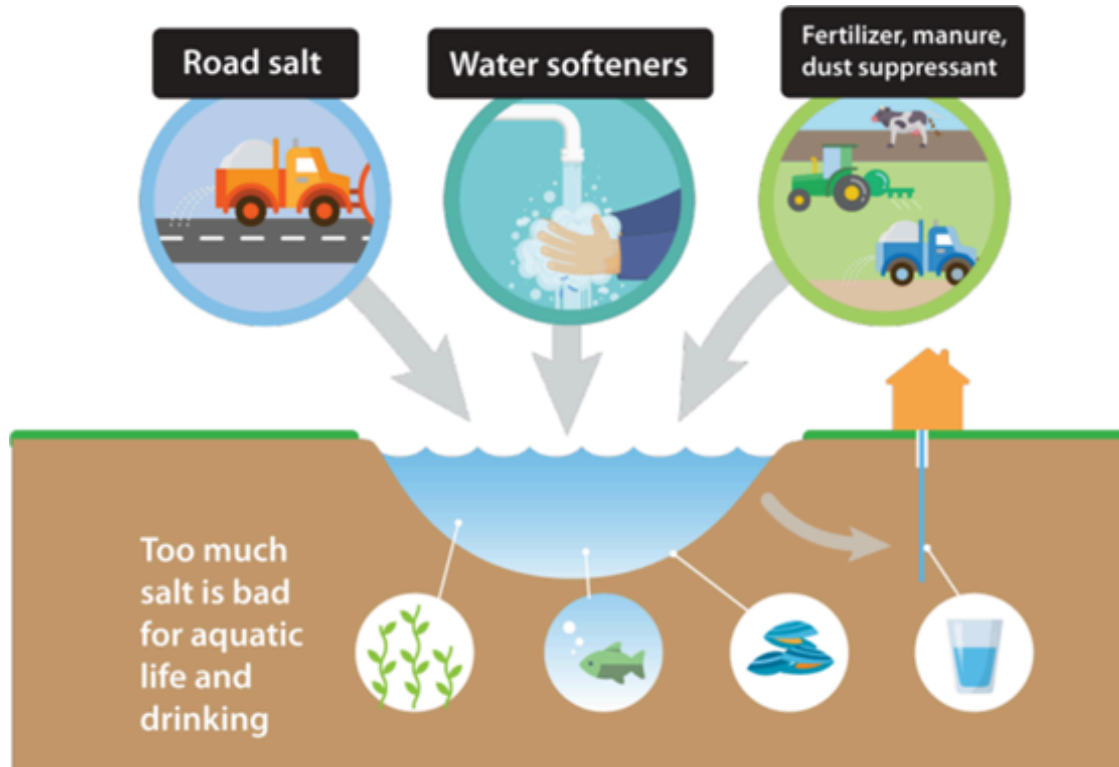
Once salt goes down on roads or sidewalks, it does not go away. Salt levels are rising in lakes, streams, and rivers in Illinois. Overuse of salt during the winter can damage our built and natural environments. We can protect our natural resources and reduce road salt without sacrificing safety. Working towards better practices is a multi-faceted endeavor. Programs like the Salt Smart Collaborative, a program of The Conservation Foundation, encourage the use of Salt Smart practices in winter maintenance operations. Salt Smart practices are the best practices for winter maintenance operations that reduce salt use and provide safe surfaces. Resources (like workshops and trainings, the Salt Smart Certified program, and targeted outreach materials) are made available through the Salt Smart Collaborative to transportation agencies, municipalities, park districts, and private contractors to encourage and support the adoption of the best practices for salt use.

This event on August 15 will help us to build our understanding on this important topic in water quality!

Our speakers will be Hannah Miller, Watershed Program Manager with The Conservation Foundation in Illinois; Allison Madison, Manager of the Wisconsin Salt Wise Program; and Brooke Aslesen, Watershed Specialist with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This panel will share information on salt management programs in their respective states, which will provide a background for understanding this topic.

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SALTWISE AND SALTSMART PRACTICES, CONTINUED



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Both the Minnesota and Wisconsin legislatures had bills on salt management in the 2024 sessions. The Minnesota bill (HF3565 and SF3954) died in the 2024 legislature, and Governor Evers vetoed the Wisconsin bill (Senate File 52). It is important for advocates to understand the background of current practice as we move into the 2025 session.

Speaker bios and additional background information can be found on the LWV UMRR Blog [at this link](#). Of particular interest is a link to the recording from LWV Duluth with a panel from New Hampshire talking about how they have implemented their Green SnowPro program including a discussion of how their law limiting liability for trained salt applicators has aided implementation.