

THE VOTER

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

CO-PRESIDENT'S REPORT: KEEP ON KEEPING ON

By Terese Grant



I have been struggling to know what to say in this message at this time. Like many of you, I have been trying to understand the implications of the national elections, as well as the results of the elections here in Iowa.

We will face even greater challenges in the future to promote the issues and values that we know are important for the future of our state and of our democracy.

As members of the League of Women Voters, our organization was formed over 100 years ago by Suffragists who fought for years to gain the right to vote for all women. They also fought for equal rights for all. We must be reminded of the struggle of our founders and then be inspired to do everything necessary to continue fighting for ALL of our fellow citizens to continue keep our democracy strong.

Going forward, I ask all of you fellow League members to remember the words of our past President, Dr. Deborah Turner, and remind everyone to “Keep on Keeping On.”

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Terese Grant
tag.lwvia@gmail.com

Holly Oppelt
hoppelt@me.com

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2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



★ VOTING

Promote equal access to voting and ensure all votes are counted. Adopt automatic voter registration. Enact ranked choice voting. Pass a constitutional amendment allowing Iowans with felony convictions to vote after time served. End electoral college.

TRANSPARENCY & CITIZENSHIP

Demand government accountability and transparency by requiring all amendments and bills discussed in committee to be available to the public prior to a vote. Demand timely processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. Encourage direct citizen participation by continuing virtual committee and subcommittee meetings. Reinstate gender balance requirements for appointed boards and commissions.

EDUCATION

Provide oversight and track public funds being used for non-public schools. Require any non-public school receiving public funds to meet the same standards as public schools. Fully fund public schools and reinstate all AEA functions. Continue to expand access to affordable childcare and free four-year-old preschool.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Guarantee access to the full range of women's reproductive health services. Repeal the six-week abortion ban. Make contraception available without prescription and promote programs that help prevent unplanned pregnancies. Ensure Medicaid services are comprehensive and accessible. Set policies that attract maternal health professionals and address the state's OB/GYN deserts.

2025 Public Policy Priorities

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Increase state funding for victim services; develop strategies to prevent human trafficking, domestic violence, and sexual assault; and enact "Safe Harbor" legislation to protect victims from criminal prosecution.

ENVIRONMENT

Recognize the need for and fund water quality initiatives. Fully fund REAP. Develop state climate change strategies.

GUN SAFETY

Enact comprehensive common sense gun safety legislation. Ban assault rifles and military-grade weapons. Enact background checks on all gun sales, close gun show loopholes, require gun safety locks, repeal "stand your ground" law, and oppose legislation that allows the carrying of guns in schools.



DONATE A PORTION OF YOUR IRA TO LWV OF IOWA EDUCATIONAL FUND

Dear League Members:

If you have an individual retirement account and you are 73 or older, you know that you must take your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) before the year ends.

But did you know that you can avoid paying some taxes by giving a portion of your IRA savings to League of Women Voters of Iowa Educational Fund to help enrich the lives of Iowa citizens when voting?

Just remember, you must request the transfer around December 15th to give your IRA custodian enough time to complete your charitable distribution before the year ends. Donate here: <https://lwvia.org/contact-us/donate/>

Timing is important. So please don't hesitate to contact your broker or financial consultant directly or our LWV of Iowa state treasurer if you have any questions. And please remember us again next year!

From the Fundraising Committee:

Linda Hagedorn

Holly Oppelt

Jennifer Ramaeker

Martha Wolf

DONATE

USE YOUR VOICE

Election Day is over, some votes are still being counted, democracy is working, making sure every voice is heard.

The League of Women Voters of Iowa will have our eyes on what is expected to happen in Des Moines this upcoming session. Please use your voice beyond the ballot box. Let our legislators know where we stand on election policy, criminal justice, reproductive rights, and gun violence prevention.

We must continue to hold our representatives accountable for representing us – which means we must let them know what we want.

I want to extend my best wishes to you and your families during this upcoming holiday season. It's quickly upon us!

Happy Holidays!

Holly Oppelt



CRIMINAL AND JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE PREPARES FOR LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Getting Ready for Session

The Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee is offering two question suggestions for your next legislative forum or conversation:

- Court debt obligations are very often the start of a cycle of poverty. What is one thing you would do to set reasonable, achievable guidelines for court debt payment and set citizens on a path to being productive, tax-paying citizens?
- Right now, people who have been charged with a crime who cannot afford a lawyer are appointed one. However, the Iowa Code then requires they be charged for their own indigent defense, which they cannot afford. Are you in favor of changing this law so that this does not happen?

No justice-related legislation is expected to be on the forefront this session. One issue likely to be introduced because it always seems to be, is the death penalty. You might want to keep an eye out for it. CJJC will alert you if action is needed on this topic. Members who are interested in contacting a legislator about Justice issues may want to contact Meghan Jones or Tom Moore. They have shown some interest in these topics.

By Myrna Loehrlein, Chair CJJC

UPDATED 19TH AMENDMENT CENTENNIAL CURRICULUM ADDED TO CATT CENTER EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

This summer, the 19th Amendment Centennial curriculum, originally developed in 2019 by Judy Dirks and Sue Johannsen, members of the Iowa 19th Amendment Centennial Commemoration Committee was updated by Karen M. Kedrowski, director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics. The updated curriculum, which focuses on suffrage in Iowa, is now available on the Catt Center's educational resources website. The revisions add more detailed information on Iowa's suffrage history and other related topics. Kedrowski described the update as a "labor of love," highlighting the Catt Center's commitment to providing women's history resources to Iowa educators.

Other educational materials from the Catt Center include a high school curriculum on the Equal Rights Amendment, a traveling exhibit celebrating African American women's contributions to Iowa's suffrage movement, and the Archives of Women's Political Communication, an online resource featuring speeches and campaign materials from women political leaders. More details are available on the Catt Center's website at <https://cattcenter.iastate.edu/education>.

Save *The* Date

SAVE THE DATE

Defending Democracy Award Dinner

Thursday, April 17, 2025

5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Jasper Winery, Des Moines, Iowa