



CO-PRESIDENT'S LETTER

January-February 2022

More and more people are beginning to pay close attention to local government. Local government is nothing new to members of the League of Women Voters. The first woman to vote in a national election was Margaret Newburgh of South St. Paul in August 1920, who voted on a local water bonding bill. Now, raucous debates are going on at school board and city council meetings across America. We may know the importance of local government, but it's easy for us to get caught up in our everyday lives and not pay attention to when local government is meeting, and what's on the agenda.

As I have been doing some research in preparation for the March meeting on updating the position on Local Government for the Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL), I am realizing how out-of-touch I am with my own community's decision-makers. I have been relying on the local press to tell me what's going on. Admittedly, we have a very good local newspaper. However, I don't know what they're *not* telling me. I want to find out for myself. So, this week, I signed up to receive emails about upcoming meetings from my city and county.

Wait, I actually signed up to receive *more* emails to my already overstuffed inbox? Yes. I can easily swipe to delete the constant offers for 20% off the must-have, latest fashion or decorating item. But I don't want to miss the city council's or county commission's decisions that might affect how much I pay in local taxes, or on road work that might disrupt my commute. I'm "putting my money where my mouth is." If I belong to an organization that values citizen participation in government, I can be doing a better job of that myself. *(continued on p. 2)*

FIREARMS TO BE TOPIC FOR FEBRUARY UNIT MEETINGS

At our Zoom Unit Meetings in February, we will give a progress report on the update of our 30-year-old positions on Firearms. We will examine new issues and discuss two proposed new Consensus statements.

Wednesday, February 9th, 12:30-2:00 PM

Thursday, February 10th, 7:00-8:30 PM

See page 3 for more information on this program.

Save the Date

All Politics is Local: Evaluation of Metro LWV County Government Position

Thursday, March 10th, 7:00-8:30 PM

In This Issue

Co-President's Letter	1
News from Our League	2
Upcoming Programs	3
Advocacy	7
Get Involved!	8
Remembering Gloria Phillips	9

NEWS FROM OUR LEAGUE

Survey of Member Interests. Please help us to help you get the most out of your LWV membership and accomplish our mission to Empower Voters and Defend Democracy by completing the member interests survey. The survey was distributed recently by email. Your responses will be used to help committee leaders guide our upcoming work and provide ways for you to connect to the work about which you are most passionate. **Please complete the survey ASAP or by Feb. 14. Thank you!**

Membership Committee: Barb Memory, Chair; Stephanie McNamara, Mary Santi, Karen Suzukamo

Voter service committee is open for volunteers! We will begin planning for the 2022 election activities in February. Please contact Heidi at 6513297059 to learn more about how to support the leagues voter education and engagement work. *Heidi Boyd, Voter Service Chair*

Partnership with Many Faces of the White Bear Lake Area. In January, the LWV-WBLA board voted to join Many Faces, a collaboration of 19 organizations in the WBL Area. Other partners include Century College, City of White Bear Lake, Greater White Bear Lake Community Foundation, Lakeshore Players, Mahtomedi Public Schools, Northeast Youth & Family Services, Parkview United Church of Christ, Redeemer Lutheran Church, St. Andrews Lutheran Church, White Bear Area Chamber of Commerce, White Bear Center for the Arts, White Bear Lake Area Historical Society, White Bear Lake Area Schools, White Bear Lake Food Shelf, White Bear Lake Rotary Club, White Bear Lake United Methodist Church, White Bear Lake YMCA, White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church.



MANY STORIES

The mission of Many Faces is to strengthen community by providing opportunities to listen, learn, reflect, and engage in conversations and actions that promote equity, diversity and inclusion. Visit the web site: manyfaceswblarea.org to learn more about the group's work. Jane Schroeder will represent the League on the Many Faces steering committee. Contact Jane for more information: schroehergj@msn.com.

January Program: Minnesota End-of-Life Option Act. Dr. Rebecca Thoman, a member of the Minneapolis LWV and director of Doctors for Dignity, spoke about legislation that authorizes medical aid in dying, which allows terminally ill adults of sound mind to request and receive prescription medication they may self-administer. Ten states have passed either legislation or ballot initiatives to allow this. Dr. Thoman reviewed proposed MN legislation, who would qualify, the process, safeguards, research on the impact in states where it is allowed and polling data in MN. The Minneapolis League believes medical aid in dying aligns with LWV values and it and several other leagues in MN have voted to concur with a 2016 Utah League study. Materials were sent by Shannon Moore to all WBL members. You can watch Dr. Thoman's presentation on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpGFpKnfCzk>.

Co-President's Letter (continued)

I encourage all of you to visit your city's and county's websites, if you haven't done so already, and take the simple step of signing up to receive emails. For my county and city, I could choose what I wanted to receive. From parks and libraries to schools and

health care: there's an email for that! I may not be interested in everything I receive, but at least I will know about it. That's much better than a \$5 coupon for an oil change!

Liz Lauder, Co-President (lizlauder@gmail.com)

LWV-WBLA PROGRAMS

FEBRUARY: FIREARMS

Presenters: Mary Santi, Fern Panda, Susan Travis, Kathy Tomsich

February 9th, 12:30-2:00 PM

Zoom link:

<https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/2163752712>

Meeting ID: 216 375 2712

February 10th, 7:00-8:30 PM

Zoom link:

<https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/2163752712>

Meeting ID: 216 375 2712

At our Zoom Unit Meetings in February, we will give a progress report on the update of our 30-year-old positions on Firearms. The old positions are included on the following page.

Next fall we will take Consensus on changes to the old positions and consider some proposed new positions. At our coming February Units we will examine a few of the new issues around Firearms with discussion of two proposed new Consensus statements. Especially for our newer members, we will explain what the Consensus process involves.

In the next few months, to prepare for Consensus, every member will receive the full report of the Firearms Update Committee. Much has changed since 1990, including:

- New interpretations of the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by the U.S. Supreme Court.
- New federal and state laws: most notably in Minnesota those governing permits to carry guns outside the home. Since 2015, over 358,897 Minnesotans have acquired permits to carry firearms.
- New communication technology. Ninety percent of adults in U.S. are using the Internet compared to almost none in 1990. Web pages, social media sites, and cell phones with Internet access can quickly connect us to global markets to purchase firearms, many without background checks.
- New firearm technology making them more versatile, more accurate, more deadly and at the same time less expensive.
- Terrorism, both foreign and domestic, with domestic violent extremist groups now posing a greater threat.
- An increase in mass shootings.

Included below as background for the meeting are two documents: LWVMN Position (1990+amendments) and Possible Consensus Statement.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

February 9 @ 12:30 PM or February 10 7:00 PM

Which works best for you?

LWVMN Position on Firearms (1990)

LWVMN: Support restrictions on the sale, possession, and use of firearms by private parties in the state of Minnesota (1990)

Support:

- Licensing of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons
- Registration of long guns, hand guns and assault weapons
- A background check for the purchase of long guns, handguns and assault weapons
- A ban on the manufacture, sale and importation of assault weapons and assault weapon parts
- Mandatory firearm safety training before the purchase of a firearm
- The concept of gun owner liability when others are harmed due to the owner's negligence
- Stiffer and/or mandatory penalties for people who commit crimes with firearms
- The ability of local municipalities to regulate ownership and possession of firearms and ammunition more strictly than state law allows

Oppose:

- An amendment to the Constitution of the State of Minnesota granting an individual the right to bear arms.

LWV US Position on Firearms (adopted 1990, amended in 1994 and 1998)

LWVUS believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic assault weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens.

The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety. The League supports licensing procedures for gun ownership by private citizens to include a waiting period for background checks, personal identity verification, gun safety education and annual license renewal. The license fee should be adequate to bear the cost of education and verification.

The League supports a ban on "Saturday night specials," enforcement of strict penalties for the improper possession of and crimes committed with handguns and assault weapons, and allocation of resources to better regulate and monitor gun dealers.

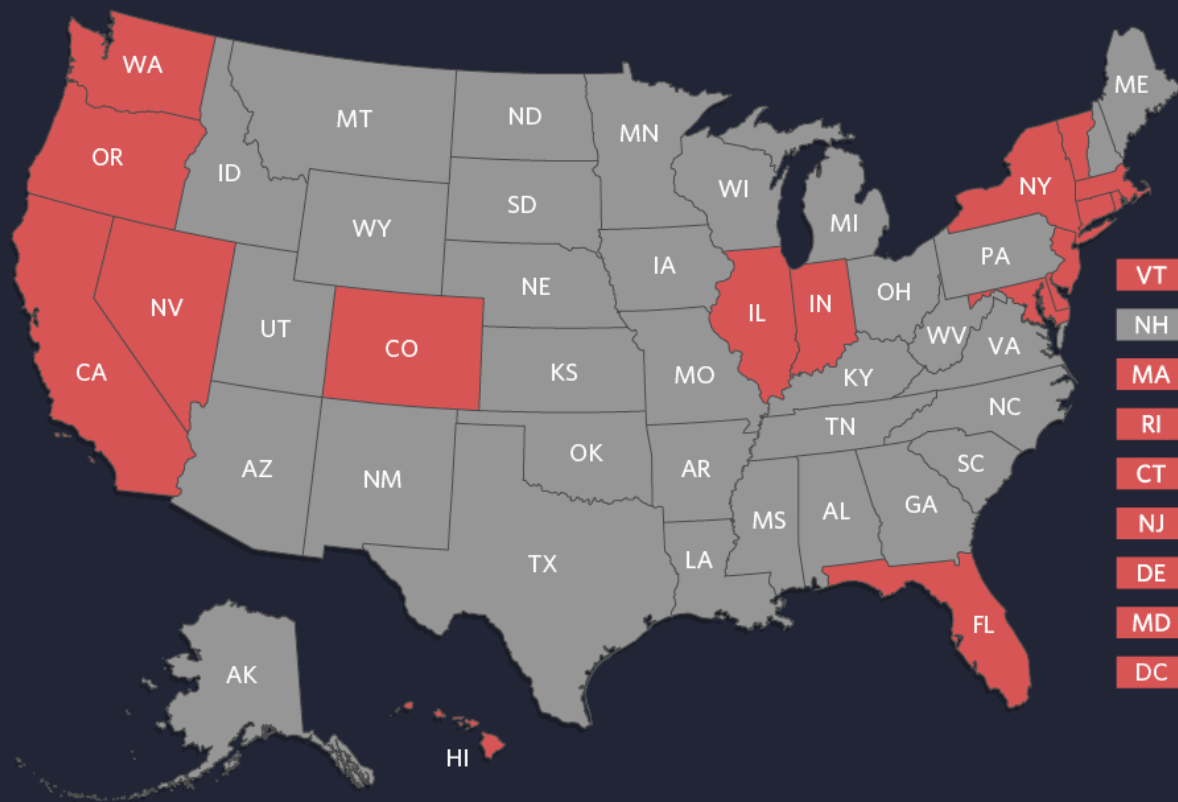
Possible Consensus Statement

Support the adoption of Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), also known as "Red Flag Laws."

At issue: Red flag laws give courts temporary authority to remove firearms from the possession of individuals deemed an extreme risk to themselves or others. They may be invoked by family, household members or law enforcement. Supporters point to lives that would be saved if firearms could be removed when danger from them seems probable. Opponents point to the potential danger to those charged with removal of the firearms, to concern for due process in determining appropriate removal and restoration of firearms to their owners.

Red Flag Laws in the States

In this past legislative cycle, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Hawaii, Indiana, Nevada, New York and Washington enacted or strengthened laws that allow law enforcement and courts to seize weapons from people who may harm themselves or others. Now, 17 states and D.C. have red flag laws.



Source: Giffords Law Center

© 2019 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Note: In 2020 New Mexico and Virginia enacted Red Flag laws.

Minnesota Legislature

An attempt was made in 2020 to pass an ERPO Law in the Minnesota Legislature but failed due to our divided legislature: it passed 68-62 in the Minnesota House, mostly along party lines, but died in committee in the Republican Senate. Companion ERPO bills, SF1431/HF1654, were re-introduced by Democrats in the 2021 legislative session. Passage in 2022 depends on what happens in the Republican Senate. The main provisions of this bill include the following:

- Empowers law enforcement to petition a civil (not criminal) court for an Extreme Risk Protection Order to temporarily remove firearms from a person who represents a serious threat to themselves or others.
- Family or household members who witness behavior indicating a risk of **gun violence** by someone in the family must go through law enforcement to petition the court. False petitions are subject to prosecution.

- Two types of Extreme Risk Protection Orders:
 - Emergency orders: if there is an immediate risk of harm, a court can issue a temporary ex parte order to seize guns from a person; firearms taken away for up to two weeks only.
 - Orders **after** a court hearing: a preponderance of evidence must be provided showing the person poses a significant risk of gun violence; firearms taken away for at least 6 months but no more than 24 months.
- Same due process protections as Minnesota's current Domestic Violence Protection Order law.

Arguments supporting ERPO Laws: An ERP Order must be approved by a judge with due process protections. Studies indicate that the 19 states and the District of Columbia that have adopted ERPO Laws have seen a reduction in suicides, homicides and mass shootings. [A 2019 study](#) found 21 cases in which ERPOs were used to remove guns from individuals who had threatened mass shootings in California. Connecticut's "Red Flag" law was upheld as not violating the 2nd Amendment. According to PEW, polls show that a large majority of Americans support "Red Flag" laws. Law enforcement officials believe these laws are effective in preventing gun violence.

Arguments against ERPO Laws: People opposed to ERPO Laws say they would violate protections in the Bill of Rights, including the 2nd Amendment right to bear arms, 4th Amendment right against undue search and seizure and the 5th Amendment right to due process. In Minnesota, a better way to deal with someone who is truly a danger to themselves or others is for law-enforcement officers to obtain a 72-hour psychiatric mental health hold.

Information obtained from: Session Daily, the Gifford Law Center, Protect Minnesota and the PEW Charitable Trust, and the Annal of Internal Medicine.

UP NEXT

March: All Politics is Local: Evaluation of Metro LWV County Government Position

Presenter: Liz Lauder

Thursday, March 10th, 7:00-8:30 PM

Zoom link: <https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/2163752712>

Council of Metropolitan Area Leagues (CMAL) delegates voted to review the metro area ILO's position on county government. A committee has been researching local government's visibility, transparency, accountability and inter-governmental relations. WBLA members will discuss findings and vote on consensus questions.

April: LWV-WBLA Annual Meeting

Speaker: Duchess Harris, Professor of American Studies, Macalester College

Annual Business Meeting

Thursday, April 21st, 6:30-8:00 PM

Boatworks Commons, White Bear Lake

ADVOCACY

Sign Up for Legislators' Newsletters Today

Most state legislators write newsletters in which they discuss their latest efforts in the legislature. The newsletter is a primary vehicle for your legislator to keep you informed about their actions at the Capitol – what they are doing and why they are doing it. It provides information about the bills they are promoting, trying to modify or change, and also the bills they oppose. As a constituent, you can use this information to write or email your legislator and express your opinion on actions he/she has taken at the Capitol: thank your legislator for supporting LWV Minnesota positions or ask that legislator to consider reasons to change/modify/oppose bills.

To subscribe to a Minnesota Senator, go to <https://www.senate.mn/subscription/senators>. Scroll down to your Senator and then click Subscribe.

To subscribe to a Minnesota Representative, go to <https://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/members/list>. Scroll down to your Representative and click on the Representative's name to get to the member's website. On that website you can click on Email Updates.

Legislators listen to their constituents, especially those who take the effort to contact them frequently. Make a difference by contacting them often so they are aware you are watching what they are doing at the Capitol.

As seen in the January 19, 2022 issue of the White Bear Press:

Thank you to local election officials

As we look forward to the new year and reflect on the past, let's take a moment to be grateful for the overlooked heroes in our American democracy, the citizens in every community that make the system work — our local election judges, workers and volunteers.

Many voters may be surprised to learn that the people most responsible for our elections are our own community members who serve as election judges. They are our friends, neighbors, co-workers and family members, and they solemnly swear to perform their duties "according to law and the best of my ability and will diligently endeavor to prevent fraud, deceit and abuse in conducting this election. I will perform my duties in a fair and impartial manner and not attempt to create an advantage for my party or for any candidate."

Every year, nearly 30,000 local election judges work together with state, county and city staff to provide fair, accessible and accurate elections. Minnesota can boast one of the highest voter turnouts in the nation, thanks to the dedication of those who serve to ensure we can all cast our votes freely and with confidence, knowing that they will be carefully counted. Let's let those who are serving to safeguard our voting rights and elections know that we greatly appreciate their work!

Community members can also add a personal thanks to their county election official by signing their name to our "thank you" letter on our website at lwvmn.org/elections411. Please join us in extending your appreciation.

Stephanie McNamara

on behalf of the White Bear Area League of Women Voters

GET INVOLVED!

Election 2022

Precinct caucuses will be held on February 1, 2022 at 7 p.m. LWVMN has updated its [precinct caucus powerpoint](#) that local Leagues and members can use to encourage voters to participate in their preferred party's precinct caucus. LWVMN also has [updated template precinct caucus resolutions](#) on certain policy issues if members are interested in advocating for these issues in their precinct caucus.

For more information about precinct caucuses, [check the Secretary of State's website](#) or contact your [preferred political party](#).

Apply to join one of your city's citizen advisory commissions!

Liz Lauder's letter reminds us of the importance of knowing what's happening at the local level. Another way to do that is to become an active member of one of the many city commissions that involve citizens in providing input and advice to their city councils. Examples for some of our local communities, including link to volunteer application form, follow:

White Bear Lake

(<https://www.whitebearlake.org/bc/webform/application-volunteer-commission>)

- Charter Commission
- Environmental Advisory Commission
- Park Advisory Commission
- Planning Commission
- Police Civil Service Commission
- Ramsey Washington Suburban Cable Commission
- Vadnais Lake Watershed District Technical
- Advisory Committee
- White Bear Lake Conservations District Commission

Mahtomedi

(<https://www.ci.mahtomedi.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/162/Advisory-Board-Application-PDF>)

- Environmental Commission
- Finance Commission
- Parks Commission
- Planning Commission

Stillwater

(<https://cityofstillwater.granicus.com/boards/w/23a45208c2d683ff>)

- Heritage Preservation Commission
- Human Rights Commission
- Joint Cable Commission
- Library Board
- Parks & Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission

North Oaks

(https://www.northoaksmn.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf5416/f/uploads/board_commission_application_form.pdf)

- Natural Resources Commission
- Planning Commission

White Bear Township (<http://www.ci.white-bear-township.mn.us/240/Boards-Commissions>)

- Economic Development Advisory Board
- Park Board
- Planning Commission
- Public Safety Commission
- Utility Commission
- Variance Board

LEARN

What are your interests? What would you like to learn about? Your answers to our Membership Survey will help us identify resources that meet your interests. Listed below are some upcoming programs that might connect with your interests.

Impact on Issues: Public Policy Positions of the LWV US 2020-2022 - February 5, 10:00-11:30 AM

Join LWV Rochester members for an informative morning designed to familiarize us with the policy positions of the LWV US. Register : <https://lwvmn-org.zoom.us/j/84060655932?pwd=242391#success>

“Shoot Suffrage to Death:” A Short History and of Race, Violence, and the Right to Vote - March 15, 7-8:30 PM

Dr. Yohuru Williams will explore the history of the use of violence to suppress voting in communities of color from the Reconstruction Era to Present. Dr. Williams is Distinguished University Chair and Professor of History at the University of St. Thomas and the Founding Director of the Racial Justice Initiative at the University. Co-sponsored by Roseville Area LWV and Ramsey County Library. [Advance registration required:](#)
<https://rclreads.bibliocommons.com/events/61cdd27e33f5d02800a4855b>

The Presidency of Barack Obama - January 26; February 2, 9, 23 at 12:30-2:00

Examine the life and political accomplishments of the nation’s first African-American president. JB Andersen, historian and the creator of the popular History of the Presidents series for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) will discuss what we can learn from the achievements and the complicated ongoing legacy of President Barack Obama. Co-sponsored by OLLI University of MN with financial support of the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries. Registration: https://rclreads.bibliocommons.com/events/search/local_start=2022-01-26%20TO%202022-02-02/event/619072c6ed5aae4100d981af.

Who is a Citizen? Our Nation’s First Racial Reckoning 1865-1924 – February 1, 8, 15, 22 at 12:30-2:00

Join James Stewart, Professor Emeritus, Macalester College, for a series on racial reckoning and its consequences. This series is co-sponsored by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute of the University of MN with the financial support of the Friends of the Ramsey County Libraries and Minnesota's Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Registration: <https://rclreads.bibliocommons.com/events/618c2bec77ad7928003308d1>.

LWVMN Council 2022: April 30, 2022

With Covid continuing to surge, this year's Council will be virtual. But as we learned from our 2021 Convention, we can still do great work, conduct our business, learn and have some fun together. Please plan to join us on Saturday, April 30. The cost is only \$25 for voting delegates. Stay tuned for more info coming your way soon!

January Jump Start: MN League of Women Voters

If you missed these January training sessions, they have been recorded and will be available on the state League’s web site: lwvmn.org. Topics covered include: Advocacy, Climate Change, Democracy, Leadership 101, LWV 101, Mini Databases, Racial Justice, Treasurers 101, Voter Service, Youth Civic Engagement.

Many Faces of the White Bear Lake Area
(<https://manyfaceswblarea.org/events>)

Visit the website of our new partner and
explore the list of upcoming events!

Remembering Lifetime LWV-WBLA Member Gloria Phillips

Long-time League member Gloria Phillips, age 94, passed away in December at the family home in Afton. Gloria was active in the League for many years, serving on the LWV-Minnesota board and in every capacity at the local level with the St Croix Valley League. She was appointed to the State Welfare Board and was one of the first women to serve on a county commission as a voting member. Gloria remained involved with the League until 2019 when the pandemic curtailed so many activities.

Friends have shared their memories of Gloria below:

What I remember about Gloria is that she always showed up; she would do what needed to be done, in best League tradition. Registering students at the high school, preparing for and attending candidate forums, welcoming new members – That was Gloria. And she did this for many years.

When I think of Gloria I think of politics and the League of Women Voters; although she would not like them said in the same breath. Gloria was a passionate, progressive woman of her time. She had strong opinions and was not afraid to speak her mind. She was civically engaged in her community and encouraged others to do the same. She was a mentor and an advocate to many of us in the Valley. She was a dear friend.



Being a newer League member, I didn't really have a chance to get to know Gloria until we found ourselves together on a bus to the Women's March back in 2017. While she was obviously pleased to be attending with her daughter and granddaughter, my recollection is that Gloria was a bit dismayed that we were still having to call attention to issues she had marched against decades earlier. Nevertheless, she was delighted when I asked if I could take her photo. She asked me to send her a copy – she was going to forward it to her brother out East, "so he would know what I'm up to!"

*Left to right: Former state legislator Pam Neary, Gloria Phillips
Gloria's granddaughter Sarah, and daughter Anne.*

(For more information on Gloria, see the April-May 2021 issue of Bear Facts for an article honoring her as a 50-year member of LWV, written by Janet Grochowski.)

CONTACT INFORMATION LWV WBLA

- Email: lwvwbla@lwvmn.org
- Website: <https://lwv-wbla.org/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LWVWBLA>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/lwvwbl?lang=en>
- You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDAYMf5Slgb0EcYiWd-X3YQ/videos>

CONTACT INFORMATION LWV MN

- Website: <https://www.lwvmn.org/>

WBL BEAR FACTS

Jackie Reis, editor jreis.wbl@gmail.com

Deadline for next issue: February 18, 2022