

President's Message

Be smart. Be safe. Vote early.

It is hard to believe August is here and summer is almost over! It continues to be a journey adapting to the new norms of social distancing, hand-washing and wearing masks. As we continue to see outbreaks in the Tri-County area, it is more important than ever to be aware of our surroundings and make smart decisions about attending events or gatherings.

The LWVGP is gearing up for our educational program series starting in August. Our format will be virtual, using Zoom, beginning with Criminal Justice Reform on August 19. There will be a social time prior to the program so watch our Facebook page and website lwgvp.org for more details!

As promised at our Annual Meeting in May, the LWVGP has incorporated and is now a 501(c)3 organization. We owe many thanks to Tim Howard for working diligently to make this happen. Our new by-laws can be found on our website.

By now, most of you have received a mailing about vote-by-mail and how to request a ballot for the November election. Mailing the ballots begins September 24. Early voting also begins on September 24 at the Peoria City/County Election Commission offices. Early voting at other locations will start on October 19. Take advantage of these options to reduce your exposure to the general population. Plan to vote early!

———— Constance Romanus, LWVGP President

IMPORTANT DATES:

5:30 p.m. Mon., Aug. 3. Election 2020: What Do I Need to Know?

12:30 p.m. Mon., Aug. 10. LWVGP Board Meeting, via Zoom.

5:30 p.m. Wed., Aug. 19. Drinks & Dialogue, via Zoom.



ELECTION 2020: What Do I Need to Know?

August 3
5:30 p.m.

Watch the Live Q&A Forum
at [facebook.com/lwvpeoria/](https://www.facebook.com/lwvpeoria/)

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF GREATER PEORIA

FONDULAC
District Library

EDUCATE YOURSELF

We are excited to partner with the Fondulac District Library to host a live stream Facebook event answering questions about the November 2020 election and all the different ways you can vote. At 5:30 p.m. Mon., Aug. 3, we will be broadcasting on East Side Community Media (public access television) and live streaming on the LWVGP Facebook page(<https://www.facebook.com/lwvpeoria/>), a forum with Tazewell County Clerk John Ackerman and Peoria County Election Commission Executive Director Tom Bride.

League members and others are invited to submit questions via Facebook either prior to the event or during the event so we can cover everyone's questions. Because of the COVID 19, the public is not invited to attend in person. Please join us! Request a vote by mail ballot from your election authority now to be sure you get a ballot and have adequate time to return it by mail.

———— Roberta Parks

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

A priority interest identified by members of LWVGP is and has been “Criminal Justice Reform.” The issues that are involved, how the issue will be studied, and how the League will take action is the topic of the August 19 virtual Drinks & Dialogue meeting.

Those familiar with the LWVIL process of studying issues know that it is transparent and thorough. Recommendations to change the current position are made only after consensus has been reached by local Leagues and approved by the LWVIL Board and then approved by LWVIL convention delegates. This process gives extreme credibility to the LWVIL positions to influence legislation effecting Criminal Justice Reform.

At the August 19 Drinks & Dialogue the following will be presented and discussed:

- o The 14 Consensus Questions that are to be evaluated will form the update for the LWV position on Criminal Justice Reform. These questions cover the entire spectrum of the Criminal Justice System from policing to arrest to detention to adjudication to incarceration to release. (Complete list of questions and their descriptive narratives can be found on the LWVIL website https://www.lwvil.org/uploads/1/2/3/7/123745968/background_information_6-15.pdf)

- o You are invited to participate on our LWVGP study committee. The role of the committee and the schedule of the committee’s activity from August to December will be discussed. (c_budzinski@hotmail.com)

- o Community Experts in the Criminal Justice System will be asked to provide their uniquely qualified opinions on specific Consensus Questions. This panel of experts will provide League members and interested community members first-hand knowledge, both pros and cons, on the issues effecting Criminal Justice Reform and on updating our position. (Nov or Dec virtual meeting)

- o A schedule will be presented, detailing key dates for study, presentations and consensus meeting.

Don’t miss your invitation to the Aug. 19 Zoom meeting. Also, look for follow up articles in The Voter on the progress we are making to take consensus-based action on Criminal Justice Reform. There are still a few spots open if you want to join. Contact me at c_budzinski@hotmail.com or Connie at president@lwvgp.org.

———— Cheryl Budzinski

DRINKS & DIALOGUE

After a brief hiatus during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Drinks & Dialogue is back!

To respect social distancing guidelines, we will host a Virtual Drinks & Dialogue from 5:30 to 7 p.m. Wed., Aug. 19. A Zoom link will be sent out in advance of the event. Social time begins at 5:30 p.m. Cheryl Budzinski will lead a 20-minute presentation on Criminal Justice Reform, then field questions.

Cheryl and Ron Budzinski are heading up LWVGP's Criminal Justice study group over the next few months. There are still a few spots open, if you want to join. For more information, check the criminal justice update study at <https://www.lwvil.org/criminal-justice-position-update.html>. (Details below.)

In September, Drinks & Dialogue welcomes Ann Courter and Jean Pierce to discuss the Fair Tax Proposal that will be on the ballot Nov. 3. This is our chance to fix the state constitution to finally allow a Graduated Rate Income Tax, something the League has been trying to do for almost 50 years. Learn more about what is wrong with Illinois' current tax system, how to change it, and what you can do to help. With the fair tax proposal, only people earning more than \$250,000 will pay higher taxes, while everyone else will pay lower or the same taxes — and the state will gain billions in revenues for education and health care.

Click here for a fun teaser: <https://youtu.be/GvC-zlkgNQY>

————— Katie Kelly

A NEW NAME FOR OUR NEXT-LEVEL MEMBERS

LWVGP executive board members approved a change to our membership levels at the July meeting. The membership level once called Susan B. Anthony has been renamed for African American journalist, abolitionist and feminist Ida B. Wells. Wells has Illinois connections. She edited The Chicago Conservator, the city's first Black newspaper. After brutal assaults on the African American community in Springfield in 1908, Wells took action: The following year, she attended a special conference for the organization that would later become known as the NAACP. In 2020, a year which underscores the importance of both voting rights and the LWVGP's desire for diversity, the decision to include Wells was unanimous.

————— Terry Bibo Knight

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Alas, the social had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 rules of Phase IV and the slowly increasing number of cases in the Tri-County area. Thank you to Cheryl and Ron Budzinski for agreeing to host this event and to all who worked to make it happen. Someday we will be able to meet in person.

The Membership Social Committee met via Zoom to conduct the drawing for the raffle prizes. Congratulations to the following:

Tim Howard won the television donated by Bill and Terry Knight.

Cheryl Sanfilip won the 19th Amendment Commemorative Coin and bottle of champagne donated by Sherry Hillman.

Lori Hanson won the Global Village Basket donated by Nancy Long.

Sharon Maule won the Wine Basket donated by Jan and Emil Deissler.

Ginny Schindler won a Gift Card for Basta East Peoria and a bottle of wine donated by Connie Romanus.

Zach Oyler won a gift card for Longhorn Steak House and two bottles of wine donated by Kathie Raiborn.

A huge thank you to those who purchased raffle tickets and to those who donated the prizes. Those funds are clear profit for the League.

We have 80 members as of this time. E-mail reminders have been sent to all. After August 1, those people who have not renewed will be contacted via phone to determine their intention of continuing with the League. Please, please, please, if you are reading this and have not responded to the mail or e-mail reminders please renew now to help the Membership Committee with its work. Thanks to all who have renewed.

Welcome to new members or to members who took a hiatus and then are back in the membership:

Allan Hedeman, Susan Hillabold, Maria Kief, Beth Koch, Andrew Rand, Carolyn Shepherd, Maria Sierra, Lorri Winchester, Victoria Winn.

Eleanor Roosevelt — 1

Rita Kress

Carrie Chapman Catt — 3

Cheryl & Ron Budzinski

Elliott Murray

Ida B. Wells — 32

Joyce Blumenshine & David Trachtenberg

Carolyn Close

Farrell Davies

Jan & Emil Deissler

Tracy & Rick Fox

Joan French
 Joyce Harant
 Mary & Alan Harkrader
 Alan Hedeman
 Sherry Hillman
 Tim & Patricia Howard
 Ray Keithley
 Bill & Terry Knight
 Judge Michael McCuskey
 Zach Oyler
 Roberta Parks
 Irene Pritzker
 Andrew Rand
 Joy Rennich
 Connie Romanus
 Sid Ruckriegel
 Chris Schmitt
 Carolyn Shepherd
 Sandy Stemler
 Jim & JoAnn Thomas

Dues Invoice
The League's Membership Year is July 2020 – June 30, 2021
2020/2021 League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Membership Form

Please select and circle your desired membership category and fill out the following:

- Name(s) _____
- Mailing address: _____
- Primary phone (s) & email address(es) _____
- **Make check payable to LWVGP for the circled membership amount, and mail this form and check to LWVGP, P.O. 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786**

Category	Individual	Household
Regular	\$62	\$93
Student/ Young Professional/Scholarship	\$31	n/a
Defenders of Democracy		
• Ida B. Wells	\$100	\$150
• Carrie Chapman Catt	\$200	\$300
• Eleanor Roosevelt	\$300	\$450

Membership categories:

- *Household = 2 members living at the same address. Student = full-time student. Young Professional = member 30 or younger*
- *Scholarship = limited income, contact Membership Co-Chair Jan Deissler 309-635-1872 or Linda Millen 309-635-2542*
- *Defenders of Democracy = increased level of support acknowledged in Voter.*

Thank you. Your membership makes democracy work!

—— Jan Deissler

The League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria strives to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization. To measure our progress towards these goals, the LWVGP collects demographic information on its membership. All questions are optional but answering as many as you feel comfortable answering is encouraged. Thank you for your participation!

You can also take this survey anonymously online at bit.ly/lwvgp2019

LWVGP sends out a membership survey once a year every summer. This is the survey for 2020.

1. AGE: Which category below includes your age?

- 18 or younger
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 or older

6. SEXUAL ORIENTATION: What category best describes your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual or straight
- Homosexual
- Bisexual
- Other: _____

2. RACE/ETHNICITY: What is your race or ethnicity? (Select all that apply.)

- White
- Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish
- Black or African American
- Asian or Asian Indian
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Middle Eastern or North African
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Other: _____

3. GENDER: What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other: _____

4. EDUCATION: What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than high school degree
- High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree
- Bachelor degree
- Graduate degree

5. INCOME: How much total combined money did all members of your household earn last year?

- Less than \$20,000
- \$20,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$59,999
- \$60,000-\$79,999
- \$80,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$149,999
- \$150,000 or more

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL, July 28

Wow. The Consent Agenda passed with no one removing an item. Of course there were only four items on that agenda. Short meeting – an hour and 17 minutes.

Recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission and Staff to adopt an ordinance Amending Appendix A, the Unified Development Code, relating to short term rentals in all residential zoning was deferred until Aug 11.

Recommended 2020-2021 budget restructuring as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. The Council has provided direction to reduce capital programs by \$26.7 million and restructure January 1, 2021 debt payments of approximately \$10 million and the issuance of a \$20 million line of credit and/or working cash bond. At the May 12 Council meeting, Council directed City Manager Patrick Ulrich to come back with a recommended \$10 million in operational cuts.

A total debt service package of \$30 million would require additional resources to repay the debt. The additional \$2 million needed to restructure debt could be absorbed by existing revenues, however the \$20 million of working capital would need a repayment source. Assuming that source was property taxes, the increase would cost the owner of a \$100,000 an additional \$66.66 per year.

The recommended operating reductions which will result in service reductions include staff reductions of 94 employees, contractual and supply reductions of \$3.3 million. The position reductions include 37 vacant positions across the organization and 57 positions that would be reduced by layoff.

Voluntary separation for firefighters with 20 years of service was deferred to Aug 11 (\$25,000 incentive toward health insurance premiums for early separation if processed in August.)

The 50-year storm last week created havoc in Councilwoman Denise Moore's district. Homeowners have had issues of water backup into their homes.

—— Cheryl Budzinski, Observer

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT, July 8 & 22

The July 8 Peoria Park District meeting was cancelled.

The July 22 meeting was held both in person and through streaming ZOOM on the Peoria Park District Face Book Page. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by President Robert Johnson. Trustees Joseph Cassidy, Joyce Harant, Jackie Petty, Nancy Snowden, and Johnson were present.

Executive Director Emily Cahill noted that July is National Parks and Recreation Month. To celebrate, PPD highlighted members of the staff on Facebook. Trustees discussed a public hearing to be held on August 5 about the removal of the

Christopher Columbus Statue in Laura Bradley Park. A Facebook live meeting will be held. An in-person option will be explored. The Planning Committee will discuss results on Sept. 1 and the Trustees will receive a recommendation at the Sept. 23 meeting.

During other business, Trustee Harant shared that the Peoria City/County Board of Health declared racism a public health crisis. She asked the Trustees to consider a position statement about the impact of racism. Following discussion, they decided to get additional information, including checking with other park districts' statements. Trustee Harant also shared that a task force is being formed to address racism.

——— Farrell Davies, Observer

PEORIA HOUSING AUTHORITY, July 6

The Board of Commissioners of PHA held their regular monthly meeting on July 6 via Zoom. The meeting started on time and a quorum of members were present.

Tim McCall, Security Administrator from Pinnacle Security, was introduced. Pinnacle is the company that provides security for PHA properties.

The hot topic for this meeting was the security measures that were implemented at Taft Homes over the July 4 weekend. While Chairman Carl Cannon and CEO Jackie Newman stated that the same security measures used since 2012 were in place, community comments regarding lack of communication by PHA to residents was a concern.

The main issue was that some access gates into Taft were locked to control car traffic and limit parking to residents only. Friends and family members had to detour to open access areas on foot to visit residents, bring food or groceries, as well as residents without cars, having to walk farther to leave or enter the complex. On-street parking was a concern, as well.

Approximately, five members of public spoke on this issue. Most agreed that ongoing communication was important to residents and families regarding the security measures over the holidays. Some suggestions for communication were notices or newsletter updates on security measures, and door to door communication. One speaker reminded the board members that there may be new residents over the year who had not been aware of the precautions.

Another individual asked where police presence was during an altercation at Taft. Chair Cannon acknowledged more communication with residents would have been positive despite the fact that these measure have been in place since 2012 for resident safety. Prior to this, there were many instances of disruptive and unsafe

behavior by non-residents at some of the housing developments over the July 4th holiday.

The rest of the meeting proceeded without controversy. Of note, the approval of a resolution for intergovernmental agreement with Springfield Housing Authority for management services was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned for Executive Session to review closed session minutes from past six months. This meeting was covered by local news reporters.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION, July 14

Peoria County Election Commission held its July meeting with all commissioners present except for Ms. Burke.

There was discussion, followed by approval, of bids for two pieces of equipment that would be needed for the anticipated increase in mail-in voting. First was a system for ballot packing, sorting, and scanning. The one chosen will hold 500 at a time, time stamp them, and verify signatures by a ranking system that will aid election judges. The chosen vendor, Digital Copy Systems, was considered to be the cheapest and the best. An additional license can also be purchased for approximately \$16,000. The system as approved costs \$49,512. The other approved purchase was for ballot packet printing and mailing services. The commission staff recommended Rumbach because it had good references and a lot of experience. Printing 40,000 ballots and envelopes and mailing them will cost \$33,120.

Further expenditures needed to comply with SB1863 include on line ballot tracking for both the office and voters (app. \$2500), PPE and cleaning supplies (\$20,000), four ballot drop boxes for the office and early voting sites with infrared cameras, postage and extra judges (\$312,000-315,000). Peoria County has received a grant of \$335,000 which must be used for vote by mail. It will cover the extra expenses.

The Commission's attorney told the members that she had been contacted by the Attorney General's office about problems arising from the Open Meetings Act and the May and June meetings. They had not had proper notification, and a complaint had been filed by a member of the media. There would be no penalty, but things would have to change going forward.

—— Irene Pritzker, Observer

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM HISTORY

Criminal Justice 1972, 1973, 1976, 1979, 1982, 1983, 1989, revised 1995

LWVIL Position: The League has positions on the following aspects of criminal justice.

Pretrial Release The League supports a bail bond system to ensure court appearances, but opposes a system of bondsmen who provide bail monies for fee. Financial ability should not be a criterion for pretrial release. Thorough evaluation and investigation should precede the use of release on recognizance (R.O.R.)

Courtroom Procedures The League supports improvements in courtroom procedures that serve to minimize confusion and delay and increase fairness and efficiency. Trials should be prompt, with a limit on the time the accused can be held in jail prior to trial. Sufficient numbers of well-paid and well-trained judges, assistant state's attorneys, public defenders and other court personnel are essential. Uniform standards should be used for appointing public defenders.

Sentencing Laws and Procedures

- The League believes that judges should retain the discretion to choose between imprisonment and probation for most offenses and opposes the proliferation of non-probationable offenses.

- The League believes that there should be strict penalties and enforcement for all crimes committed with a handgun or an assault weapon (see LWVIL Gun Violence Prevention position).

- The League supports reduction in time served as an incentive for good conduct by inmates. Such credits should be incorporated into the sentencing structure and should not be revoked without due process.

- The League believes that a body, free from political influence, should make recommendations that promote certainty and fairness in sentencing, develop guidelines that provide greater uniformity and monitor the fiscal impact and effect on prison populations.

Alternatives to Incarceration The League supports the expansion of prevention and treatment programs to ease the burden on the criminal justice system. The League supports the concept of pretrial diversion. The League supports the increased use of a range of intermediate sanctions in the community and the development of screening and supervision standards to ensure their appropriate use. The community must be educated regarding these alternatives.

The League supports a **statewide probation system**. Probation, the underlying element of most alternatives, must be professionally staffed and removed from political influence. Probation officers should be required to meet uniform professional standards and receive pre-service and in-service training. The number of probation officers should be adequate to make comprehensive investigative reports

to the court, supervise categorized, manageable caseloads and provide social services.

Jail Standards The League supports the development and enforcement of standards for local jails and detention facilities. The Illinois Department of Corrections is an appropriate agency to carry out this function.

Illinois Department of Corrections

The League supports correctional services that conform to national professional standards.

- The League believes that offenders are entitled to mail, telephone calls, visits from relatives, extended family visits, furloughs, the opportunity to voice grievances, and access to information in their case records.
- Education and job training for inmates should be provided in conjunction with the boards of education, private industry and unions.
- The League supports pre-release planning to bridge the gap between prison and the community.
- The League supports mandatory supervised release and the provision of community services to offenders, particularly when first released. Technical violations of mandatory supervised release need to be carefully defined and uniformly reported.

Citizen Involvement The criminal justice system should make use of professionally directed volunteers who have been carefully screened and trained. The League supports citizen involvement in monitoring court proceedings and assessing the needs for improved court facilities. An independent citizen's committee should monitor Illinois correction facilities.

Funding The League believes that the criminal justice system must be adequately funded in order to carry out its goals. Funding of specialized programs for offenders, such as mental health services, programs for female offenders and substance abuse treatment, is essential. The League supports funding to guarantee humane prison conditions and to provide programs and services that offer the opportunity for self-improvement. The League believes that state funds should emphasize community sanctions over the construction of more prisons.

In 2014, the General Assembly created a Joint Criminal Justice Reform Committee and Governor Rauner created a Criminal Justice Reform Commission.

Collaborative Activity: These organizations, through their advocacy efforts, informative conferences, other gatherings, and communications have been essential partners: Cabrini Green Legal Aid, Chicago Appleseed Fund for Justice, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Chicago Jobs Council, the Community Renewal Society, Heartland Alliance, the Illinois Justice Project, the John Howard Association, Juvenile Justice Initiative, Northwestern Law, the Safer Foundation, the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, and Uptown Peoples Law Center.

The Final Report of the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Report was released in January 2017, but the General Assembly still has not addressed a number of important recommendations.

2017-19 At 2017 convention, LWVIL voted to update the criminal justice position which was last revised in 1995.

In October 2017, the League signed on in support of a letter from the Cook County Public Defender to the members of the Illinois Supreme Court Rules Committee to adopt a new rule to eliminate wealth-based pretrial detention.

LWVIL signed on to a White Paper distributed by the Illinois Justice Project in support of legislation calling for the reclassification of simple possession of a personal use quantity of a controlled substance from a felony to a Class A Misdemeanor. This was recommended by the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform. The bill, however, failed to pass out of the House. With the passage of a bill legalizing marijuana, over 315,000 Illinois residents (770,000 cases) are eligible now to have their cases expunged. In addition, the Act creates the Restore, Reinvest, Renew Program, which will direct investments to the communities most negatively impacted by the war on drugs and will fund substance abuse treatment and prevention and mental health care. LWVIL successfully advocated for this legislation which was enacted during the balance of the 100th General Assembly and during the 101st General Assembly

PA100-0512 reforms Civil Asset Forfeiture Law to protect innocent parties and to require law enforcement to report assets seized;

PA100-0947 provides a lactation room in courthouses;

PA100-0999 expands alternatives to incarceration;

PA100-1025 provides deflection from arrest for substance abusers;

PA101-0020 bars state and local governments from contracting with private prison companies to run any kind of detention center in Illinois;

PA1010-0086 eliminates the \$5 medical co-pay in IDOC;

PA101-0176 assists people with records in obtaining health care employment;

PA101-0235 repeals the provision that IDOC can seek reimbursement from those incarcerated for their expenses;

PA101-0440 enables people in prison for serious offenses to earn time off of their sentence by completing rehabilitative programming;

PA101-0441 provides civics education for those returning from IDOC to society;

PA101-0442 allows voting in jail and gives voting information to returning citizens;

PA101-0471 and PA101-0480 direct judges to weigh the impact of incarceration on dependent children and provide other protections for these children.



League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria

413 W. Lawndale Ave., Peoria, IL 61604

ON THE WEB: www.lwvgp.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

IMPORTANT DATES:

5:30 p.m. Mon. Aug. 3. Election 2020: What Do I Need to Know?

12:30 p.m. Mon., Aug. 10. LWVGP Board Meeting, via Zoom.

5:30 p.m. Wed., Aug. 19. Drinks & Dialogue, via Zoom.

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2020-2021**

Constance Romanus, President
309.264.9113
president@lwvgp.org

Terry Kohlbuss, 1st V-P & Treasurer
Kathie Raiborn, 2nd V-P
Sandy Stemler, Secretary

Cheryl Budzinski Jan Deissler Kirsten Hall Tim Howard Kathleen Kelly Terry Bibo Knight Sean Koors Roberta Parks Jamila Wilson

Newsletter

terry.bibo.freelance@gmail.com