

President's Message

Mapping a way ahead

This month, LWVGP collaborates with Change Illinois and the Institute for Principled Leadership in Public Service on an event to spread awareness about the critical importance of meaningful redistricting reform in Illinois.

Damon Smith, Community Outreach Director for CHANGE Illinois, has spearheaded a speaking tour with funding from the Joyce Foundation and the McCormick Foundation. Our event takes place from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 15, in Westlake Hall at Bradley University.

Redistricting has been a major focus of the League at the national, state and local levels for a very long time, with varying degrees of success.

In California, it took five attempts over decades to accomplish reforms.

In Ohio, the League advocated for better legislative maps for years. They finally joined — and won — a lawsuit that challenged maps favoring Republicans.

In Michigan, the League challenged state and Congressional redistricting plans on First and Fourteenth Amendment grounds. A panel of federal district judges ruled in its favor in April 2019.

Sadly, while the LWV of Illinois has a strong position on fair maps, success has been elusive so far. Partisan dominance in the courts, the legislature and in the Governor's office has blocked every attempt to achieve meaningful change.

That doesn't mean we should give up. It is too important to our democracy. Please join me in this effort with an RSVP to bmcmillan@fsmail.bradley.edu.

——— Terry Kohlbuss, LWVGP president

Important Dates:

4 p.m. Mon., Sept. 12: LWVGP Executive Board via Zoom
5:30-7 p.m. Wed., Sept. 21: Electoral College discussion at Drinks & Dialogue



**CHANGE
ILLINOIS**



IMPROVING ILLINOIS TOWN HALL

Why Maps Matter

**WESTLAKE HALL
ROOM 116**

818 N. Glenwood Ave

7:30 p.m. Thursday

September 15th

FOR MORE **INFO@CHANGEIL.ORG**



register for event

Event presented by CHANGE Illinois, in partnership with

Institute for Principled Leadership at

 **BRADLEY** University

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS[®]
OF GREATER PEORIA

DRINKS & DIALOGUE: Sept. 21

Join us for a spirited discussion on the direct election of the president of the United States. The electoral college system is a relic from the 18th century that was a last-minute compromise. It has evolved in unexpected ways that allow for manipulation of the popular vote. Learn why it should be abolished in favor of a system that counts all votes in one total result to elect the President.

Our speakers are members of the League of Women Voters of Illinois Issues Committee for Direct Election of the President. Joyce Williams is a member of the LWV of LaGrange and Trish Crowley is from the LWV of Champaign County. This topic was recommended to be added to program by members at the 2022 LWVUS Convention as part of making democracy work.

Social time will be at 5:30 p.m. followed by program at 6 p.m. The meeting will be at the Lariat Steakhouse, 2232 W. Glen Ave., Peoria.

————— Connie Romanus & Cathy Molchin, D&D Chair

MEMBERSHIP

I can't believe that I am typing September into my report! Where has summer gone? It's darker in the mornings and it's darker in the evening. If we blink, it will be November and election time.

There is still time to join the League or renew your membership. Those who have not renewed by September 15 will be dropped from the Membership Roster and may lose any communications they are currently receiving. So: Please renew now. Stop whatever you are doing and get the checkbook or go online and write the check in the appropriate amount. See the website for options. Thanks for doing this – NOW!

We need your help in a variety of ways as we head into a busy fall election season. Please contact Rob Parks (robertamparks7512@gmail.com) or me (jan-deissler77@gmail.com) if you can help with candidate forums, represent the League at community events or just want additional information.

We are currently at 100 members. Looking to grow to 150, so if you haven't renewed, please do. If you have renewed, thank you, and do you have a friend or colleague to bring into membership?

————— Jan Deissler, Membership Chair

VOTER SERVICES

Voter Services is gearing up for the November 8th election. We're working on candidate forums in several races to allow the voters to hear directly from the candidates. Not all the following dates and times have been confirmed so please watch for emails or check the League's Facebook page before attending.

Date/Time	Location	Race	Candidates
September 20 th @ 6 p.m.	Chillicothe Library	Peoria County Board Districts 13 and 15	Antonacci v Ruhland Salazar-Zupancic v Rieker
September 24 th @ 11 a.m.	North Branch Library	Peoria County Board Districts 8, 10, and 11	Jones v Hoerr Reneau v Hoerr Droste v Daley
September 27 th @ 6 p.m.	Bone Student Center, ISU (this forum is hosted by the McLean County League, but a recording of the forum will be on our YouTube channel within a few days of the forum)	91 st Illinois House	Chung v Preston
September 29 th @ 6 p.m.	Fondulac Library	46 th Illinois Senate	Koehler v Anderson
October 3 rd @ 6 p.m.	Peplow Pavilion at the Hayden Clark Alumni Center at Bradley University (this forum will be broadcast on WCBU and streamed on their Facebook page. A recording will be on the League's YouTube channel)	17 th Congressional District	King v Sorensen
October 5 th @ 6 p.m.	Peoria Library, North Branch	92 nd Illinois House	Gordon-Booth v Watt
October 6 th @ 6 p.m.	Hult Center for Healthy Living	Peoria County Board District 2 and 4	Coates v Glass Bryant v Johnson

All forums will include a live audience, unless otherwise indicated, and will either be lived-streamed on our YouTube channel or recorded and rebroadcast on our YouTube channel. While a planned gubernatorial debate hosted by the League of Women Voters of Illinois and ABC 7 in Chicago is now not going to happen (and local station WEEK had agreed at our request to rebroadcast this debate) it appears that WMBD Central Illinois Proud, in conjunction with AARP of Illinois and Illinois State University will be hosting a debate on October 4th in Normal. I don't have any other details on this event at this time.

As a reminder, here are some key dates and activities:

- September 29** Vote By Mail and Early Voting at Election Authority Office Begins (you can request a VBM ballot before this date but that is the earliest date for accepting VBM ballots)
- October 23** Last day to register to vote online prior to the November election
- October 24** Early Voting at remote locations begins. For more information, check with your county election officials at peoriaelections.gov, woodford-county.org or tazewell-il.gov)
- November 8** **Election Day**

———— Roberta Parks, Voter Services Committee Chair

In March, Illinois LWV said: *"The public has a right to know about pollution levels, dangers to health and the environment, and proposed resource management policies and options ..."*

With this in mind, the Climate Change Committee of the LWVGP encourages League members to attend an informational meeting about the power plant at Edwards (Bartonville) Illinois at 7 p.m. Monday, Sept. 12, at Art, Inc., 919 NE Jefferson Avenue, just north of downtown Peoria.

The program includes an explanation of the long history of pollution at the Edwards site, how that pollution endangers our health and the environment, along with discussion of the lawsuit filed to reduce that pollution. The 25-minute documentary "Dangerous Neighbor" will be screened. Scott Allen, a Citizens' Utility Board community educator, will be on-hand to answer questions about high Ameren bills, and what has caused the increased energy costs consumers are paying.

While this program is not sponsored by the League of Women Voters, the Climate Change Committee believes that the evening will present valuable information that can be helpful to LWVGP members as they strive to become better informed, and use that new knowledge to "make democracy work".

Public hearings soon will be announced regarding what government regulations should be adopted to reduce the dangers from the tons of toxic coal ash that remain at the Edwards site. Informed public input will be an important part of the process. We encourage all LWVGP members to attend this meeting.

John Brady, Climate Change Committee Chair

CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE

The Climate Change Committee of the LWVGP is hard at work encouraging units of local government to address issues of climate change and sustainability.

On Aug. 24, with the approval of President Terry Kohlbuss, the committee sent a letter to the Peoria City Council encouraging the council to review its existing practices and establish new policies regarding trees.

Increasing the number of trees in a community removes carbon dioxide from the air and lowers temperatures in neighborhoods. (Who hasn't sought out a spot under a shady tree to escape this summer's heat?) It can help residents reduce their need for air conditioning and thereby save on utility bills.

In addition to these important advantages of trees, an under-appreciated benefit is their potential impact on reducing gun violence. Studies have shown that planting trees and otherwise enhancing green spaces in neighborhoods can reduce the levels of violence in those areas.

Reducing gun violence is a high priority for this council. The City of Peoria is receiving millions of dollars in federal funds to address gun violence. A great way to spend some of these monies would be to "kill two birds with one stone": address both gun violence and global warming by planting and nurturing trees, especially in areas of our community prone to violence.

If you agree, you can help.

Reach out to Mayor Rita Ali and one or more of the Peoria City Council members. If you're a resident of the city, say so, and concentrate on the councilor representing your neighborhood. Ask them to support this effort. (Contact information is available on the city website peoriagov.org.)

You might say: "Hello, I'm a member of the League of Women Voters. The League recently sent a letter to you asking the city to use some of the federal monies that it is receiving for planting and protecting trees in our community. This would help the environment, and reduce gun violence at the same time. I support these efforts, and I hope that you will, too."

Total time investment for one email? Probably less than 15 minutes.

Potential dividend? Reduce gun violence and lessen the impact of climate change . . . That seems like a major payoff.

Please take that time.

———— John Brady, Climate Change Chair

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: July 26

The council approved the communications from City Manager Patrick Urich and Chief of Police Eric Echevarria to purchase four solar-powered camera surveillance trailers for \$91,230. It approved an agreement for Public Safety analytics services upgrade to existing crime view analytics software for \$17,550. An inter-governmental agreement between Peoria Public Schools District 150 and City of Peoria was approved to employ and compensate District off-duty safety employees during special events in the city.

Under regular business, the council voted to approve the Peoria Equity Accountability Program (PeAP) to establish the first city of Peoria Minority Business Certification and build certified business directory for minority business enterprises and/or women business enterprises.

Director of Public Works Rick Powers' request to add ten full time maintenance workers was approved, bringing full time maintenance staff to 41 employees. This will reduce temporary maintenance staff from 15 to five employees during summer and will reduce temporary work staff from 22 to 12 during the winter season. Director Powers informed council this will improve productivity and have net savings of \$50,000 for the department.

For more detail of discussion on these issues and other business, go to www.peoriagov.org/city-council/meetings to view video and meeting minutes.

—— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA CITY COUNCIL: August 9

Council recognized retirement of Rhonda Guyton, Peoria County Undersheriff, for her many years of commitment to the community.

Consent agenda was approved with exception of a request by Councilor Denis Cyr to pulled for the unaudited financial report for June. Cyr opposed having negative line-item balances and recommended opportunity to pay down unfunded pension liability.

Finance Director Kyle Cratty addressed significant growth in personal property tax receipts; he anticipates this will not be recurring and has discussed how 2023 budget could be impacted with City Manager Patrick Urich. Cratty will bring recommendations to Council as it begins 2023 budget sessions. Mayor Rita Ali supported Cyr's recommendation; Urich affirmed the Council could set policy to not allow negative account balances.

Councilor Charles Grayeb discussed 15-year celebration of Peoria Next Innovation Center and the impact on economic diversity and success of goals and impact of the Peoria Next on economic and environmental growth of the program.

Joe Dulin, Community Development Director, discussed plan for Request for Proposal (RFP) as a result of the Council Policy session on July 19, 2022 on violence reduction funding. Once proposals selected and agreements made, the Peoria Police Department would administer process. If approved, the application would be released on Aug. 15 and has deadline for responses on Sept. 26. Urich clarified minimum award would be \$50,000 and maximum award would be \$250,000 See minutes of the meeting for more details at <https://www.peoriagov.org/citycouncil>.

Under new business, interim Corporation Counsel Chrissie Kapustka discussed laws related to use of red-light cameras; current legislation may allow the City of Peoria to be included. Grayeb discussed how cameras could be used in high impact areas to impact speeding issues. Council asked for more feedback on this issue, as well as community input. This will be on Sept. 23 agenda.

As always, you can view video, minutes and agendas on www.peoriagov.org/city-council/meetings.

———— Connie Romanus, Observer

PEORIA COUNTY BOARD: August 11

The Peoria County Board met August 11th with all present but Member Junior Watkins.

On a 15-2 vote the board approved placing a citizen's referendum on the November 8 general election ballot seeking to eliminate the Office of County Auditor.

Auditor Jessica Thomas and another citizen spoke against this move during Citizen's Remarks ahead of the board vote. Approved language for the referendum is: "Shall Peoria County eliminate the internal Office of County Auditor when Peoria County already has an external Auditor as required by state law? This would be a cost savings of approximately \$150,000 annually." (LWVGP has a similar position approved following a 2017-2018 study calling for the elimination of an elected county auditor position).

A lottery was conducted to determine term lengths for county board members following the recent redistricting. Members in even-numbered districts will serve an initial two-year term and those in odd-numbered districts will serve an initial four-year term. This permits staggered terms with half of the board elected at each general election.

Proclamations were read recognizing Sandra Burke and Mark Ketterer for their service as County Board of Elections Commissioners.

A presentation from the county's external auditor, Sikich, highlighted a clean audit and commented positively on the county's ability to prepare its own financial statements. Only 5% of Illinois counties have expertise in place to accomplish this.

The county refinanced the Heddington Oaks debt saving an estimated \$22 million to \$25 million in interest over the loan term.

The Consent Agenda passed on a vote of 17-0. Items included:

- o Budget revisions for PCAPS and the Peoria County Election Commission.
- o Engineering and repairs for the Heddington Oaks detention basin outflow.

The regular agenda consisted of few items and included.

- o Approval of a zoning request in Princeville Township.
- o Acceptance of an IDHS grant by the Peoria County Visitation Center.
- o Approval of the annual salary for the Peoria County Public Defender.

Member Sharon Williams announced a survey for those living in unincorporated Peoria County on expanded waste removal and recycling efforts. The survey is available at: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=uirPzcKD-BU24y_DgAATkBS5Zf4IWH5dIt6mObBhSKxRUMDVWM0ZCVzczQU-JRQlk2NzEyRTVLT0c2Ri4u

You can link to the agenda and video here: [Agenda & Video](#)

———— Jim Runyon, Observer

ELECTION COMMISSION: August 16

Peoria County Board of Election Commissioners held two meetings Aug. 16.

The first was a special meeting where Elizabeth Gannon was chosen to be the new Executive Director after the resignation of Tom Bride.

The second meeting was the Annual Meeting, which started with swearing in new Commissioners Ryan Brady and Valerie Timms. Election of officers included Jim Manning retaining the chairmanship, with Matt Bartolo elected vice-chairman, Valerie Timms the new treasurer, and Jeanne Williamson the new secretary.

Registration forms for vote by mail ballots were to be sent Aug. 22, to every registered voter except those already on the permanent vote by mail list. The commission anticipates 20,000 vote by mail ballots for the Nov. 8 election. This mailing will be done by Runbeck because the number is too large to handle in house.

With an Aug. 26, deadline for changes to the November ballot, as of the board meeting, there has been one change of a candidate in the County's District 8, and two referenda listed: 1) Dissolution of the Tuscarora Fire Department and its consolidation into an adjoining fire protection district and 2) a Fair Map question.

———— Irene Pritzker, Observer

PEORIA PARK DISTRICT: August 10

Director Emily Cahill reported 12,000 Summer of Fun redemptions were made by Peoria students this summer.

She also reported the budgeting process has begun and budget presentations are scheduled for November 2 and 9.

The Contributions Committee chair reported that six students, children of PPD employees, were awarded a total of \$4,500 in college scholarship monies.

A copy of the proposed revision to the Conduct Ordinance pertaining to statuary, artwork, and memorials was in each trustee's packet for review and will be voted on at the next meeting. All committee reports and consent items were approved. There were no public comments. All trustees were present in person or remotely. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. and adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

———— Melanie Anderson, Observer



**League of Women Voters
of Greater Peoria**

P.O. Box 9786, Peoria, IL 61612-9786

**League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria Board of Directors
2021-2022**

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Newsletter

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