

# LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF IOWA

# THE VOTER

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## NEW LEADERSHIP FOR THE LEAGUE'S CRIMINAL & JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Myrna Loehrlein (left) has stepped up to chair the LWVIA Criminal & Juvenile Justice Committee. In the photo above, Karen Person (middle) accepts an orchid as a thank you from the committee for her work. Jo Ann Finkenbinder (right) and Person co-chaired the 2003-5 LWVIA study on sentencing and corrections, and then co-chaired the Criminal & Juvenile Justice Committee until Finkenbinder stepped down about a year ago. Behind Loehrlein is Joanne Smith who is the new communicator for the group. The emphasis for the group for the 2019 Legislative Session will be:

- **Automatically enfranchise people with felony convictions upon release from incarceration**

If you would like to receive emails from the group or participate in planning and action on criminal & juvenile justice issues, contact Loehrlein - [myrnaloehr@gmail.com](mailto:myrnaloehr@gmail.com) - and/or Smith - [jmariesm@msn.com](mailto:jmariesm@msn.com).

## LWVIA CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS

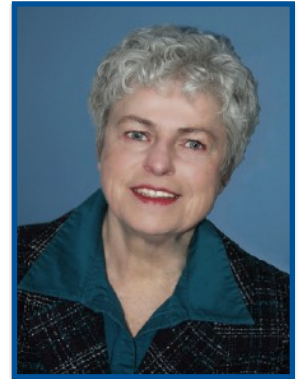
Dec 3, 1 pm, UMMR meeting with Isaak Walton, Coralville Public Library  
 Dec 13, 10 am, CJJC meeting, Toledo State Bank Community Room  
 Jan 19, 2019, 10 am, Board Meeting, Cedar Rapids Human Resources Bldg.  
 Feb 20, 2019, Capitol Day, Des Moines  
 March 16, 2019, 10 am, LWVIA Board Meeting, Iowa City  
 May 18, 2019, 10 am, LWVIA Board Meeting, Iowa City  
 June 8, 2019, 10 am, LWVIA Convention, Ames

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

from Mary Rae Bragg, LWVIA President

It's almost eerie the way that it's gotten so quiet now that the mid-term election is over. No political ads or telephone calls. Even coffee clutches are more relaxing! But while political rants have ebbed, you can be sure that your League of Women Voters is just getting started, warming up for 2019.

We'll continue to celebrate an election that (finally!) brought gender equity to Iowa's congressional delegation. At long last, Iowans elected women to two of the four seats it has in the U.S. House of Representatives, which combined with the one woman who serves as a U.S. senator from Iowa makes it a gender-balanced delegation.



And the 2019 Iowa Legislature will feature more women members than ever before in history. We can only hope they will show the strength and persistence to guide their political parties back to the center. The League will be there with them, watching the bill-making, making our values known and encouraging bipartisan cooperation.

While some national election results were still in question weeks after Election Day, there was one vote that is not in question but may reverberate for years to come. That vote took place in Florida, a state known more for hanging chads than precedent-setting voting rights initiatives. And yet Florida voters made American jaws drop when they said it was time to restore voting rights to most felons when they complete their sentences or go on probation.

However, when it comes to voting, Iowa continues to be one of the two states that holds former felons as needing serious vetting before being restored their rights at the polls. We love worker bees, but voter bees? Not so much. Our LWVIA's Criminal and Juvenile Justice Committee has recently turned a spotlight on the issue and is busy drawing up a plan to shine the light on Iowa's lamentable system of denying voting rights to convicted felons. CJJC has an outstanding record of speaking on behalf of those who aren't being heard, so keep your ears perked up for what they will be saying in the coming months.

At their meeting November 17, your state board of directors reviewed the 2019 priorities suggested by our lobbyist, Amy Campbell, and approved them as the framework for our lobbying efforts in the coming session. The priorities are broken down into two tiers and they cover all those issues that are consistently near and dear to League hearts, but one issue that Campbell is concerned about stands out as being a "newcomer" to the pack and for me is a particularly chilling specter.

That issue addresses Iowa's judicial selection process and would reverse it by calling for election of the state judiciary. If you think gerrymandering is detrimental to democracy, electing judges is its evil twin! The idea that Iowans would consent to putting our judiciary process up for sale is repugnant to anyone who believes in the rule of law, but remember, if you will, what happened after the Iowa Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of gay marriage in 2009.

Three of those judges on the 2010 ballot were not retained after their opponents accused them of "not listening to the public." Rather than basing their rulings on what the law says, those judges were expected to "go with the flow." Selecting judges by popular ballot puts them up for sale to the biggest contributors, destroying any balance that ordinary people hope for when they go to trial. Just like what happens when contributors can select their lawmakers by spending unlimited funds, and we all know how that works against the ordinary citizen.

So, yes, the coming legislative session will be one to watch and your League of Women Voters will be right there with you!

*Yours in League,*  
*Mary Rae*

# A FAIRER WAY TO HANDLE REDISTRICTING

by Jean Lloyd-Jones, former LWVIA president, OpEd reprinted from *The Hill*, printed on 9/17/2018

*The Hill* is a political newspaper and website published in Washington, D.C. since 1994



Fair representation should be the first tenet of any redistricting effort.

I believed that nearly 50 years ago when I played a key role in persuading the Iowa League of Women Voters to join the ACLU, Iowa Federation of Labor and Iowa Democratic Party in a challenge of Iowa's reapportionment plan following the 1970 census. I believe it just as strongly

today as I read daily news reports of severely gerrymandered districts and efforts by citizens to address issues within their own states.

At a time when residents in Colorado, Michigan, North Carolina and other states across the country are considering ways to address redistricting challenges and inequities, Iowa stands as a model for its nonpartisan method of drawing representative congressional and legislative boundaries.

Our fight for fair districts occurred nearly a half century ago, and the success we have seen since serves as an inspiration for those facing the same battle today. The Iowa League of Women Voters began studying reapportionment in 1955. In the 1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court issued several rulings that had a profound impact on the reapportionment process nationwide.

In 1968, the Iowa Constitution was amended to fulfill the court's mandate to draw district lines based on population. Our dedication to the issue found the League paying close attention when Iowa's new map was released in 1971. By all accounts, it appeared to be a good map with only a slight deviation in population between districts. However, League members learned that when the map was drawn, greater priority was placed on protecting incumbents than protecting the rights of Iowans to have fair and representative districts.

After a great deal of internal debate, The Iowa League of Women Voters agreed to join a lawsuit challenging the state's redistricting proposal. Not only that, we attempted to draw a fair boundary map using the same census data and same requirements outlined by the Iowa Legislature. We rented the use of a computer at a local

community college to run models and managed to create a district map with a lower population deviation than that created by the Legislature.

The Iowa Supreme Court sided with the League and other complainants, noting that our plan proved that it was possible to create a plan with districts more equally apportioned by population when not considering incumbent residency in redistricting. As a result, the court ordered the state to create a new redistricting plan.

When the process began again, following the 1980 census, Iowa had enacted new legislation that established a statutory process for drawing districts. By this time, I had been elected to the Legislature and was fortunate enough to help create these new guidelines. The process approved by the Legislature in 1980 has since been cited as one of the best in the nation.

What makes it such a success? For one, the process is led by the state's nonpartisan legislative services agency and has a strict timeline for when it must be approved. This is critical to providing voters with the time they need to research candidates and educate themselves ahead of an election.

Iowa law requires that individual counties cannot be split into multiple legislative or congressional districts. Iowa's process also requires that districts be nested. There are two state house districts within each state Senate district and state Senate districts follow the same boundary lines as congressional districts – no state districts are divided into multiple congressional districts.

What's more, Iowa law specifically highlights what factors should not be taken into consideration, including favoritism for a political party, incumbent legislator or member of Congress. Data about the addresses of incumbents, voter registration by parties, previous election results and most demographic data are not to be considered when establishing districts.

In many ways, our ability to protect our rights in the United States is incumbent on our ability to vote, and more importantly cast a vote that has equal weight as those of our neighbors and fellow Americans across the U.S. Perhaps the Court said it best in *Wesberry v. Sanders*: "Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined."

**OpEd continued on next page**



## A FAIRER WAY TO HANDLE REDISTRICTING

**OpEd by Jean Lloyd-Jones, former president of LWVIA - continued from previous page**

For many years, Iowa has had a reputation for good government – legislative processes and a judicial system that are fair, efficient and free of corruption. That has not come easy. It took careful deliberation and compromise. It took lawmakers agreeing to hand over the boundary-drawing power to a nonpartisan group.

All of that was necessary to create a process fundamental to Iowans' rights to fair representation. Of course, this right isn't exclusive to Iowans, and as I look at the challenges facing other states, I am hopeful they can learn from the path Iowa took and implement fair, non-partisan representative districts of their own.

*Jean Lloyd-Jones was president of the Iowa League of Women Voters in 1972 when the organization challenged Iowa's redistricting map. She went on to serve in the Iowa Legislature for 16 years. Lloyd-Jones recently participated in a panel discussion about Iowa's redistricting model at the National Press Club hosted by The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement and the Cook Political Report on Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2018.*



League gives thanks to our members  
our volunteers  
our contributors  
and all those who help League stay vibrant!



## GROW ME - GROW THE LEAGUE

**by Mary Ann Nelson, LWVIA Board Director, Chair of Grow Me (formerlyMLD)**

We, individually and together, are the League. Join us all in growing the League, growing our membership, growing our leadership.

As members, we provide the energy behind making democracy work. We offer the expertise, the relationships, the communication, the motivation, the spirit, the civility, the sharing of information, the awareness and advocacy to help make democracy work. Yes, we need the members, and these will grow as we include and encourage others in our mission. Leadership will grow from the members as they share their experience and desire to move forward with other members. Encouraging and training those with the ability to lead should come from peers as well as those in leadership positions as they grow in the areas mentioned above.

The name, 'Membership, Leadership Development' (MLD) seemed too "text book" to me. Many people were asking what it meant. It was hard to be enthused. However, I can get inspired by exhilarating actions, sharing of ideas, and energy that leads to growth. That's where I feel the focus should be, Grow Me. If I think about all the ways we, as individuals and as a group, can grow, it comes naturally to think about membership and leadership development. Thus the name, Grow Me (MLD).

In order to help the League grow and to develop its membership and leadership, the National League puts out a guidance on its website under MLD. These are concise and time appropriate as well as archived on the national website. I encourage all of you to look at these well thought-out papers on multi-subjects and use them as is or be inspired by them for your own purposes or programs. Click here to access the LWV "[Guidances](#)." Once a month the state does have a phone call that all are invited to join which will focus on the guidance of the month. Please contact me if you would like more information on Grow Me or our monthly phone calls, [mrsmanelson@yahoo.com](mailto:mrsmanelson@yahoo.com).

# LWVIA JOINS THE IOWA ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL

by Karen Person, Liaison to the IEC from LWVIA

The LWVIA Board recently voted to join the Iowa Environmental Council, Iowa's largest and most comprehensive environmental coalition. The IEC is a nonpartisan alliance of diverse organizations and individuals working together to protect and preserve Iowa's environment. IEC works to unify Iowans to advocate for clean water and land stewardship, clean energy, and a healthy climate.

The Iowa Environmental Council had their 2018 conference, "*Environmental Justice: An Iowa Value*," on Thursday, September 27, at the Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport. A visitor to the LWVIA table is shown above receiving information on League's environmental positions from Bonnie Pitz (middle) and Karen Person (right).



LWVIA is proud of our history of advocacy for environmental issues and early involvement with passage of Iowa's bottle bill. Additionally, we are one of four state Leagues that have formed the LWV Upper Mississippi River Region Inter-League Organization that is working on reducing nutrient pollution in the Mississippi River watershed. LWVIA has had environmental issues as part of its legislative priorities for many years. For the 2018 Legislation Session, we had the following as one of six areas of priority:

## **Water Quality and Environment 2018 Legislative Priorities:**

- Protect Iowa's water resources and soil for future generations by fully funding the Iowa Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Fund and the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program.
- Provide funding to help Iowa's communities update their water and wastewater infrastructure and adopt meaningful and long-term nutrient reduction strategies.
- Build on the success of Iowa's landmark bottle bill by expanding it to non-carbonated plastic bottles and increasing the handling fee to retailers and redemption centers. Unclaimed refunds should be used to enhance the redemption system.

LWVIA will continue to work with the Iowa Environmental Council to protect land & water resources.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO LEAGUE MEMBER MARY ELLEN MILLER

Recently Mary Ellen Miller retired as the Executive Director for **50-50 in 2020**. Founded in 2010 by former state senators Jean Lloyd-Jones and Maggie Tinsman, **50-50 in 2020** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, issue neutral organization dedicated to achieving political equity for women in Iowa by 2020. We thank Mary Ellen for helping improve the balance of women in public office over the years of her leadership. She continues on the **50-50 in 2020** Board of Directors, and will also be assisting with the coalition working to commemorate passage of the Nineteenth Amendment and women receiving the right to vote.

# LWV UMRR-ILO\* REGIONAL WORKSHOP: IKES & LEAGUE COLLABORATE ON WATER ISSUES

by Sue Wilson, LWV Upper Mississippi River Region - InterLeague Organization Board Member

## **“Partnership to Support Absentee Landowners”**

**Monday, December 3, 1 - 2:30 pm**  
**Coralville Public Library - Room A**  
**1401 5th Street, Coralville, IA 52241**

### **Speakers:**

**Mike Delaney**

Izaak Walton League Upper Mississippi River Initiative Field Organizer

**Lonni McCauley**

League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region Action Chair

### **Agenda**

1:00 - Gather at the Library for light refreshments

1:25 – Introductions

1:30 – Speakers

2:15 – Audience questions and discussion

2:30 – Adjourn

Throughout the Midwest, absentee landownership of farmland is common. In some places, more than half the farmland is rented. The management of this land is critical - land owners must work with their renters to develop contracts that reward good stewardship and build soil health. How should these discussions be framed? How can the renter protect both the rented land and his bottom line? What will be the farming legacy of these rented lands?

The Izaak Walton League (aka "the Ikes") received a grant from the McKnight Foundation and is developing workshops to provide landowners with this information. The LWV UMRR (League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region InterLeague Organization) is working with the Ikes in our four-state area, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois, with a goal of finding member Leagues to work with local Ike chapters put on these workshops throughout the watershed. Both organizations extend the invitation to this meeting in Coralville so we can meet each other and set up the groundwork for local workshop planning.

The Coralville Public Library is close to I-80 just west of Iowa City. It offers free parking and a large, comfortable room for our use. Click [Upcoming Events](#) for further information and a map.

**\*UMRR-ILO:** The League of Women Voters Upper Mississippi River Region InterLeague Organization was established in 2015 by Leagues in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois to pursue protection of the Upper Mississippi River Basin.



# 2020 CENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION

by Doris Kelley, LWVIA Board Member

The calendar year 2020 offers an unparalleled opportunity for the League of Women Voters of Iowa and a multitude of partners to commemorate America's 19th Amendment Centennial; women's right to vote. Since the fight to get states and Congress to recognize women were as competent to vote as men and the battle lasted for eight years (1913-1920), "Hard Won . . . Not Done" is the theme Iowa's citizens will become quite familiar with in 2020 through a multi-media campaign and plethora of activities.

The League of Women Voters of Iowa alone would be hard pressed to conduct the 26 planned-to-date activities and are appreciative that 12 other like-minded organizations have stepped up for LWVIA's initiative. They include: 50-50 in 2020, American Association of University Women, Business Professional Women of Iowa, Department of Human Rights/Iowa Commission on the Status of Women, Iowa State Education Association, Iowa State University's Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, Iowa Women's Foundation, Iowa Women Lead Change, National 19th Amendment Society, NEXUS Executive Women's Alliance, University of Iowa and University of Northern Iowa.

Doris Kelley, LWV of Black Hawk-Bremer County, is chairing the statewide endeavor and started working with Iowa's LWV locals and partners in 2017. Contributions from philanthropic individuals and many LWV members and partners have already been received for Amperage Marketing, an Iowa-based ad agency firm, to develop the campaign theme, campaign logo and campaign case statement. The four-color multiple page campaign case statement going to press will be used to seek funds from corporations, foundations and individuals to fund the positioning, promotion and advertising of the 2020 endeavor. The 26 planned activities will be funded by sponsoring groups and grant, with no expenditure from LWVIA. Des Moines Metro LWV member Mary Ellen Miller, who also serves as board secretary for 50-50 in 2020, will chair the fundraising effort, with Amperage's guidance and support.

The official kick-off event will occur on Feb. 14, 2020 on Iowa State University's campus and is being hosted by ISU's Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics. The Iowa Women's Foundation annual luncheon on Oct. 9, 2020, will be the closing event of the 19th Amendment Centennial Commemoration and will be hosted by the Iowa Women's Foundation.

## WOMEN WIN IN IOWA!

- On November 6, Iowans elected their first female governor.
- With the election of 2 women to the US House of Representatives, the Iowa delegation to Congress will be 50% female.
- There is a record 44 women serving in the upcoming Iowa Legislature. The most previously was 35 female legislators.
- 33 of the 100 members Iowa House will be female.
- 11 of the 50 member Iowa Senate will be female.



Former U.S. Congressman Jim Leach was the speaker for the newly organized Quad Cities League of Women Voters. He spoke October 25 on, "*Holding Government Accountable: Measuring the Past and Challenging the Present*" at the meeting held at St. Ambrose University. The new Quad Cities LWV is operating as a geographic unit for the Johnson County LWV as they get their legs to become an independent local League. **Congratulations Quad Cities LWV!**

# NEW LOGOS FOR LWVIA & LOCAL LEAGUES

With the release of LWV's new brand standards document, LWVUS is retiring the "box" logo. While this is a soft roll out and LWVUS is not asking Leagues to get rid of printed materials that have the old logo, for all LWV materials created moving forward—both digital and printed—Leagues must adhere to the new Brand Standards document. All logo files can be found on the League Management Site at <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/brand-standards/lwv-brand-standards-and-logo-files>. All state-specific logos have been created - see Iowa's new logo below - and the LWVUS Communications Team is working diligently to provide all local Leagues with their customized logos as soon as possible. As there are just two individuals on the Communications Team, they are unable to provide a hard deadline at this time—but they will be rolling them out state-by-state and will be sure to share when they have been created. Leagues should not attempt to build their own logos.

Forgot about the new brand standards? This is your reminder to update local League materials to show:

## **OUR MISSION**

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

## **OUR VISION**

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

## **OUR VALUE**

We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.



League of Women Voters of Iowa - [lwvia.org](http://lwvia.org)

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