

THE VOTER

News for League of Women Voters Minneapolis Members and Friends



LWVMpls Publishes Reimagining Public Safety Study

BY REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

In the early summer of 2020, the LWVMpls Board of Directors added Policing in Minneapolis to our programming plan for 2020-2021. Part of this plan was to establish a study committee on the issue with the intent of updating the LWVMpls positions on policing. Its work resulted in the report, Reimagining Public Safety.

Since last September, this committee not only worked to understand and define the complex issues involved in public safety, but also to clearly present these to the public on the LWVMpls website. This work provides history, context, insight into reform activity needed and currently underway, an overview of the roles and players in the public safety landscape, and tips for your personal engagement.

The committee also developed six study questions that were sent out in a survey to all members at the end of May. Those responses will allow us to develop consensus and update our LWVMpls positions. Public safety is a critical issue to Minneapolis residents. In the November elections, public safety will be a ballot issue as we make decisions on amendments and candidates who will shape this evolving landscape. We encourage all Minneapolis residents and friends to read the material and become an active and informed voter on this important public policy issue.

See the study on our website: lwvmpls.org/rps-main/

Many thanks to the committee members who brought us this study and website: Susan Gray, Jennifer Wilson, Jane Lansing, Carolyn Trevis, Catherine Shreves, Ellen van Iwaarden, Mary Katherine Johnson, Ming-Yee Li, Pat Kovel-Jarboe, Polly Keppel, Susan Reinhart, Katie Heit Gardner, and Pam Telleen.



To see the study, visit lwvmpls.org/rps-main

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From the President COLLEEN MORIARTY, PRESIDENT



This is a tremendous time of transition. Many of us who are vaccinated are returning to a more normal life. Children are returning to school, we can ease our use of masks outdoors, and more opportunities are available to gather and enjoy each other's company.

Despite the challenges of this past year, we have moved forward as an organization and accomplished a great deal of meaningful work.

By now you have seen the new website additions of the *Reimagining Public Safety* study, and you may have had

time as a unit to consider some of the thought-provoking questions raised by this study.

The resources that are compiled will inform our work in the future. I cannot thank the committee enough for this commitment to informing and educating us on these issues.

The Voter Services Committee has developed a full-scale movement that includes outreach opportunities galore.

We are excited to have Attorney General Keith Ellison join us as the keynote speaker for our annual meeting on June 21. We will be online via Zoom again this year. Reserve your spot! I will see you there.

All the best, Colleen

2020 Election Impact Report Issued

BY DEBORAH JINDRA

In a recent message to all members, LWVUS President Deborah Ann Turner announced a new report about the 2020 election. You can find it on [LWV.org](https://www.lwv.org)

Unfortunately, the results of the election continue to be disputed by some people and elected officials. However, LWV has taken a strong stand on protecting voters' rights and joined in several lawsuits to that end at both state and national levels.

Here is part of Dr. Turner's message for those who may have missed it: "The 2020 election saw the greatest voter participation in our nation's history. That's in no small part because of your support. In the middle of a global pandemic, with abundant mis- and disinformation about our elections and unprecedented attempts to disenfranchise voters or push anti-voter reforms, we as a League found new and innovative ways to impact voters.

"Along the way, we carefully measured and analyzed the impact of our efforts so that we could recognize our victories and identify growth areas for the century to come.



Here's just a snapshot of what we found

"These are just a handful of the findings we've compiled into our 2020 Election Impact Report. [Read the full report here.](#)

"Your support and advocacy ensured millions of voters had the information and the access to make their voices heard in the last federal election. I'm immensely proud of the work we've done together and can't wait to see what we accomplish next."

Now more than ever, LWVMpls work to ensure free and fair elections is essential to making democracy work. Those of us who volunteer countless hours to serve as election judges, work to get out the vote, and register new voters are well aware of the dedication of election officials and the security of ballots. Our role is also to get the word out to those who may not be as aware of the procedures in place to ensure all eligible voters' voices are heard.

Voter Services Committee is Busy

BY MARILYN CANTISANO

The Voter Services Committee has been very busy preparing for the 2021 Minneapolis municipal elections.

Here is a quick summary of what is happening—

2021 Voter Guide. The guide will be available in print and pdf form in September. It will have information on the November election including a list of candidates and amendments on the ballot.

A Series of Articles on the 2021 Municipal Elections.

The first article *Register to Vote — Again?* has been distributed to neighborhood associations, other LWV partners, and social media; it is available on our website www.lwvmpls.org. The May article describes the duties of the mayor and city council. Articles to follow are *Park Board and Board of Estimate & Taxation*, *Rank Choice Voting*, *Make a Plan to Vote*, and the proposed amendments.

Candidate Forums. These events are being planned with neighborhood associations and other LWV partners. We anticipate several wards will be presenting forums for City Council candidates that will be hosted by LWVMpls. We need moderators, question sorters and timekeepers. Please consider volunteering!

Voter Registration Training. Whether you're experienced with voter registration and engagement or want to try it out, join us for an online training (via Zoom) to learn about this year's elections. Key deadlines, eligibility requirements for registering and voting, tips on responding to questions and/or hesitation from voters, as well as an overview of the volunteer sign up process and responsibilities will be included. We expect to schedule voter registration events beginning in May and continuing up until Election Day, November 2. Many voter registration opportunities will be outdoors due to COVID, weather permitting, but some may be indoors with masks required. You can pick and choose opportunities based on your availability and preferences for settings. Please check our emailed updates and the LWVMpls website for details.

Neighborhood Elections. The Voter Services Committee is assisting in in the Little Earth and Whittier Alliance communities. Helping to monitor voting and counting votes are rewarding experiences. Contact Marilyn Cantisano (see below) if you want to help.

The Voter Services Youth Engagement Team. This group works to engage, register and educate high school and college students. We have Zoomed into a high school class to register new voters online and hope to do more of this. Another goal is to develop a student ambassador program.

Coming soon: There will be opportunities to help with our GOTV (Get Out the Vote) efforts, become an election judge, and help with the election night project.

Contact Marilyn Cantisano marilyncantisano@gmail.com to become involved. The Voter Services Committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7 PM. We welcome new members.



From top to bottom: Ward 3 City Council Candidate Forum on May 10, Ward 5 City Council Candidate Forum on May 26

Redistricting Explained

BY KITTY WESTIN

The State of Minnesota, the City of Minneapolis and cities across Minnesota are beginning the redistricting process based on the 2020 Census. LWVMN and LWVMpls are committed to making certain that every voice is heard and every vote counts equally. In order to achieve this, we urge members to learn about the issues, participate in the discussion and take action to ensure that legislative boundaries are drawn fairly and the process is open and honest.

The following explanation of redistricting can be found on the LWVMN website:

What is redistricting? What is gerrymandering?

Redistricting is the process of redrawing the boundaries of legislative and congressional districts. This process happens every 10 years to adjust for population changes. Currently, legislators must draw new maps like they pass any other legislation. In other states, politicians have engaged in gerrymandering.

Gerrymandering is the manipulation of district boundaries to draw a map that is not representative of the community. Sometimes this is done by unfairly favoring a political party or diluting the vote of racial or ethnic minorities.

What is the process now?

In Minnesota, the legislature controls the redistricting process. In theory, a set of district maps would be approved by the Minnesota House of Representatives and the Minnesota Senate, then signed into law by the governor. But sometimes those parties cannot agree. They might think a map has been gerrymandered or puts their party at a disadvantage.

When those parties cannot agree before their deadline, they rely on a court to draw the maps. Usually, a court appoints a panel of retired judges to create a final impartial map.

Could there be a constitutional amendment?

Yes! The Minnesota Legislature could implement both a constitutional amendment and statutes to achieve full reform. However, the amendment would need to be very well written to ensure it gets enough support from voters.

Why not a judges-only model?

A panel of retired judges would not necessarily be as open to the public as a panel that included citizens.

Retired judges in Minnesota also are almost exclusively white and male. We want to ensure that the redistricting commission has an opportunity to be at least somewhat representative and reflective of Minnesota's voters. There should also be the opportunity for voters to directly participate in the process by applying to be part of the special commission.

But the Minnesota Constitution requires the legislature to draw maps, doesn't it?

Yes, the Minnesota Constitution requires that the legislature provide the final approval of the maps. However, Minnesota could create a special commission to provide draft maps to the legislature. The legislature retains the final authority to approve or reject a map. Or Minnesota could pass a constitutional amendment so that the legislature does not have the final authority to draw the maps.

How does redistricting work in the City of Minneapolis?

The Charter Commission and [the appointed Redistricting Advisory Group](#) work together to set the boundaries of the 13 council wards and 6 park districts.

1. The Charter Commission holds at least four public hearings. The timeline for redistricting in Minneapolis: US census is complete and the State of Minnesota redraws its boundaries – September 30, 2021.
2. Redistricting Group prepares a draft for Minneapolis.
3. Public is invited to comment on the draft.
4. Maps are finalized based on public input.
5. Redistricting Group holds public hearings on each of the maps.
6. After the Charter Commission approves a ward map, the Commission files it with the city clerk. The Minneapolis City Council cannot change these adopted ward boundaries. The Council then adopts new election precinct boundaries and polling places using the ward boundaries.

Under the Charter, the Redistricting Group must send proposed park district maps to the Park Board for review and comment before the last two public hearings. The Park Board cannot change the proposed park district boundaries. The Park Board must use the map adopted by the Charter Commission.

The final redistricting plans must be adopted by March 29, 2022.

AG Ellison Keynote Speaker for Annual Meeting

BY DEBORAH JINDRA



Save the date! Monday, June 21, 2021 will be our virtual annual meeting. Join other members via Zoom (link to come). We'll start at 6:30 PM and wrap up at 9 PM.

As usual, our annual meeting includes an opportunity to hear from a special speaker. Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison has agreed to address us via Zoom! Mr. Ellison is serving as the 30th Attorney General of Minnesota. A member of the DFL Party, Ellison was the U.S. Representative for Minnesota's Fifth Congressional District from 2007 to 2019.

His management of the successful prosecution of the Derek Chauvin case highlighted the shift in emphasis of the state's top lawyer. According to the *StarTribune*, Ellison is reshaping the Office of Attorney General: "Long focused on consumer protection, the office is rapidly becoming a major player in criminal justice in the state — a shift that is attracting national attention." We look forward to hearing his address to our group.

This has been a year filled with opportunities for activism. Despite many challenges presented by the pandemic, LWVMpls has used programs like our *We the People* and

Civic Buzz to bring big issues to members and the public. Last May, we witnessed the murder of George Floyd on our streets, worldwide civil unrest, and calls to activism. LWVMpls created a study committee to examine policing in Minneapolis that led to the report, *Reimagining Public Safety*. Join us at the annual meeting to help shape what's next.

Your voice is important as we tackle the hard issues regarding policing as well as attacks on voters' rights and equal access to democracy.

At the meeting, we will also:

- Recognize our 50-year members, new members, and the 2020-2021 Board of Directors
- Review and approve our 2021-2022 plans for program
- Review and approve our 2021-2022 budget
- Approve nominations for the 2021-2022 board of directors and off-board positions
- Share opportunities to get involved with the work of LWVMpls

Look for an agenda and background materials in email and on our website. [To register, click here](#)

Accountability, Justice and Healing

BY KITTY WESTIN

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was murdered by former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin. In 2022, three other former Minneapolis police officers will go on trial for participating in the murder.

Something palpable and profound happened that day; the earth seemed to shift. People in the street witnessed the events that unfolded in front of Cup Foods on that mild Minnesota evening. A young woman had the foresight to take a cellphone video that clearly showed Mr. Floyd pinned to the ground with a knee on his neck for 9 minutes and 29 seconds. That video woke up millions of people across the globe. Mr. Floyd tried to communicate his increasing distress as he was unable to breathe. As horrified bystanders tried to get the officers to stop, it became apparent that Mr. Floyd knew he was dying. Shortly before he stopped moving, he called; "Mama! Mama!.... I'm through." Those words were a call to action.

After seeing the video, hearing the bystanders, and listening to Mr. Floyd's pleas, it was not possible to ignore what the world witnessed. It was time to confront police brutality towards black and brown people and to address systemic racism.

On April 20, 2021, former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was found guilty of murder and manslaughter. Again, something profound happened. The conviction is certainly not the end, but a beginning. George Floyd's death sparked massive protests across the United States and around the world. His death and Chauvin's trial have led to demands for justice. Healing has begun, and measures to address racial bias in policing, the use of excessive force against Black Americans, and the history of systemic racism in the United States, have finally begun. Rest in peace, George Floyd. You changed the world.

Be Involved! Opportunities Await You.

BY BARB KIMER & DEBORAH JINDRA

“One of the great ironies of life is this: He or she who serves almost always benefits more than he or she who is served.”

- Gordon Hinckle

According to an article by Mark Horoszowski for MovingWorlds.org, there are five surprising benefits of volunteering:

1. Volunteering time makes you feel like you have more time.
2. Volunteering your skills helps you develop new skills.
3. Volunteering your body helps you have a healthier body.
4. Volunteering your experience helps build your experience.
5. Volunteering your love makes you feel more love. Volunteering builds empathy, strengthens social bonds and makes you smile — all factors that increase the feeling of love.

LWVMpls relies on volunteers to help us in our mission to promote informed civic participation and to sustain the organization. In addition to helping LWVMpls accomplish these goals, there are many opportunities where volunteers can share their passion, contribute their experience, build new skills, and learn about public policy issues and the workings of local and regional government. Perhaps the best of all is the opportunity to interact with an amazing group of intergenerational women.

We encourage you to consider becoming involved in one (or more!) of the following ongoing or short-term opportunities. More information and opportunities can be found at www.lwvmpls.org/volunteer.

Communications Committee — Be part of a group that writes press releases and social posts and designs promotional and educational materials to keep our members and the public informed of LWVMpls activities and the vital work we do on public policy issues. Experience with social media and technology will be especially helpful.



League volunteers at a voter registration event at People's Center Clinic in Cedar-Riverside

Program Committees — Be part of a group to help plan the 2021-2022 calendar of monthly topics for LWVMpls study and discussion. Members will discuss and vote on potential topics at the annual meeting. Help research and prepare materials for unit discussion. Assist with planning and arranging speakers for *Civic Buzz* events or *We the People* presentations. Help is also needed with technology to set up virtual meetings and events.

Study Committees — Work with other LWV members studying issues and suggesting member action. Committees are currently working on Diversity/Equity/Inclusion, Reimagining Public Safety, and Parks. Committees to be organized include Education, Housing, or a need you may see.

Action and Advocacy — Be part of a group to assist in monitoring and disseminating action alerts especially on a local level.

Candidate Forums — Volunteer to serve as a time keeper or question sorter on site for a virtual forum. Volunteer to take moderator training to serve as a forum moderator for future service. Please contact Voter Services Chair Marilyn Cantisano at marilyncantisano@gmail.com.

To volunteer for any of these or other opportunities, please contact Barb Kimer, Nominations Committee chair, or vote@lwvmpls.org. Thank you in advance for your service.

“Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.”

- Muhammad Ali

Why is DEI important to LWVMpls?

BY ALICE MOORMANN, PAST PRESIDENT

Diversity, equity and inclusion is a League of Women Voters policy, principle and practice. Especially diversity. Why is this important to LWVMpls?

Currently the most active members are white, older, middle class, progressive women, who have become friends in their discussion units. As a volunteer organization we need people to do the work. The 2020 election did attract many younger women to join and volunteer in Voter Services, but will they continue?

Minneapolis has a reputation of being a hard city to belong to if you were not born and raised here. Our neighborhoods tend to be homogeneous. We may differ in age but not very much in race. Most of our close friends look and think just like us.

When I worked at a senior center, I got to know Black co-workers. I learned more about racism but was still colorblind. We didn't talk about how different our personal experiences were because of race. We worked together but we didn't become friends. I never thought of suggesting they might be interested in joining LWV.

Building relationships with others who are different from us can be uncomfortable, challenging and not always successful. It will not be easy to have more diversity among LWVMpls members but it is important. Our process for forming our positions depends on good research, discussion among our members and consensus before advocating a position.

We must welcome diverse voices to improve our work and the impact of LWVMpls on the community.

OUR DEI POLICY:

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

Thank You to Donors (February - April 2021)

Individual Contributions:

Dave Alderson	Monica Eischen	Jennifer Johnson	Sharon McLaughlin	Schoenberger	
Kathy Anderson	Sharon Emery	Mary Katherine Johnson	Karen Michael	Catherine Shreves	
Susan Anderson	Wendy Farrar		Jan Midtbo	Chris Sigurdson	Grants from foundations, corporations, etc.
Leroy Barnhart	Arlene Fried	Veronica Johnson	Alice Moormann	Susan Steffen	
Jean Beccone	David Flannery	Anne Jones	Colleen Moriarty	Pam Telleen	
Robin Block	Katie Fournier	Ellen Joseph	Donn Mosser	JoAnne Tomczak	
Joanne Broady	Katie Gardner	Polly Keppel	Joan Niemiec	Carolyn Trevis	Arthur, Chapman,
Marilyn Cantisano	Paula Goldberg	Barb Kimer	Kirsten Ragatz	Parker Trostel	Kettering, Smetak & Pikala, PA
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MISSION

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

2020-2021 LWV Minneapolis Board of Directors

- Colleen Moriarty, President
- Alice Moormann, Past President
- Lisa Reed, Secretary
- Carrie Lichtenberg, Treasurer
- Kitty Westin, Advocacy and Action Director
- Nancy Albrecht, Membership Director
- Rebecca Thoman, Development Director
- Marilyn Cantisano, Voter Services Director
- Anne McLaughlin, Program Co-Director
- Dyan Venters, Program Co-Director
- Katie Heit Gardner, Communications Director
- Saralyn Romanishan, Community Engagement Director

Welcome New Members (February - April 2021)

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Robin Block | Meg Riley |
| Joanne Broady | Elizabeth Ryan |
| Monica Eischen | Mary Ann Schoenberger |
| Nancy Hammond | Whitney Larson |
| Anne Jones | Kirsten Ragatz |
| Ellen Joseph | Kathleen Todd |
| Marcia Marshall | Patricia Wagner |
| Kim McCoy | |

Important Dates

LWVMN Annual Convention

June 11-12

LWVMpls Annual Meeting

Monday, June 21, 2021, 6:30 – 9 PM

Juneteenth June 18

First Annual Sweet Potato Pie Jubilee

LWVMN will register voters at the event.

Key 2021 Election Dates

Early voting period Sept 17 - Nov 1

Early registration deadline Oct 12

(You can also register on Election Day or through the mail voting process.)

Recommended deadline to apply for a ballot Oct 19

Deadline to return your mail ballot Nov 2

Election Day Nov 2

(Polls open from 7 AM - 8 PM)