

TheVOTER

 **writers
& BOOKS**
bringing readers and writers together
presents

Voice the Constitution



A vocal reading of the Constitution followed by a discussion
led by knowledgeable Constitution enthusiasts

Saturday, November 15, 2025

3:00 – 5:00 PM

**Writers & Books Building
740 University Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607-1259**

Recommended by



See details P. 5.

**"There's no such thing
as a vote
that doesn't matter."**

—BARACK OBAMA



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President's Letter

What Do You Do in a Constitutional Crisis?

That's the question that League members are grappling with. I'm going to share some of my thoughts. My brilliant insight is that we as citizens and as the League need to keep doing things we've always done, do some things we haven't always done, and support groups doing things we in LWV-RMA cannot do.

THINGS WE'VE ALWAYS DONE

Make politics work better

- **The League's bread and butter** is helping foster an engaged and informed electorate, via voter registration, Vote411, candidate debates, educational forums, and Get Out the Vote. This agenda is more important than ever and we must do it better than ever by working in new coalitions. There are certain emphases we should add.
- **Elect candidates who will use the power of the legislative branch** to resist the unprecedented usurpation of power by the executive branch. We have checks in the Constitution but they're only as real as the legislative branch makes them. We can't survive too many cases like Senator Bill Cassidy, MD, who voted to approve RFK Jr., despite suffering obvious discomfort at the idea of a Secretary of Health who doesn't believe in vaccinations. Rating candidates on their willingness to stand up to bullies should become a new thing.
- **Keep pressure on already-elected officials** to carry out their sworn Constitutional commitments even if it means standing up to the president. The cuts to healthcare written into the budget last spring will obviously hurt a large swath of Americans. Citizens have made their feelings known. So far, the main effect has been the end of town hall meetings where people could speak out. We need other creative tactics to keep up the pressure.
- **Build civic engagement at every level.** Citizens must pay attention to how well our elected officials and our governments serve us, all the way from the supervisor of highways who hires his friends for plowing contracts, through the mayor's office who hid killer police, and the county exec who used county employees to remodel the homes of her friends. We all need to practice paying attention and reject malfeasance, always, without delay.

See pages 3 and 4 for my ideas on what we need to start doing that we have not always done. If you have other ideas on how LWV-RMA should respond to this crisis, please share them with me or one of the Board Members.

Barbara Grosh president@LWV-RMA.org



What Do You Do in a Constitutional Crisis?

Support organizations using the courts to fight executive overreach

There are so many abuses of power going on, it takes a website to keep up with people suing the president or various government agencies. Fortunately there is one such web site: <https://www.lawfaremedia.org/projects-series/trials-of-the-trump-administration/tracking-trump-administration-litigation>

On the day I wrote this, there were 222 active cases. Last week it was 190. Mostly the plaintiffs win, which is good. The Supreme Court has weakened the interim measures of the lower courts, but few cases have made it through the appeals process to be fully argued and I remain optimistic. We owe a huge debt to those willing to sue over issues such as:

- Federal override of state election powers
- Elimination of birthright citizenship
- Cutting of departments and programs created and funded by Congress
- Federalizing of state national guards
- Setting of tariffs without Congressional action
- Cancelling of grants & contracts retroactively
- Firing of people from independent agencies such as the Federal Reserve



The link above lists the organizations that are forcing the courts to deal with these issues. If you cannot support them financially, consider sending an encouraging Thank You note.

THINGS WE HAVEN'T ALWAYS DONE

Participate in mass uprisings

We've learned from Erica Chenoweth's work that if we can get 8.5 million people to actively participate in rising against the wannabe-dictator, we're sure to win. The No Kings protests show that we're well on the way. In Monroe County, we need 26,327 people actively and visibly involved in resisting the constitutional crisis. I think we can do it. After all, an estimated 10,000 people attended October No Kings rallies in Monroe County. This is more than a third of our goal and we are just getting started.

Resist

My new favorite author is Srdja Popovic, one of the leaders of the Serbian uprising that defeated Slobodan Milosović. See his book, *Blueprint for Revolution*. Here are a few insights I've picked up from this page-turner:

Continued on P 4.

Continued from P 3.

- People are afraid to stand up to power, but no oppressive regime has enough power to put down resistance if enough people are resisting.
- We must not self-censor or self-repress, which is the only way we can lose.
- Start with something small. Protests are an easy entry point, but postcarding to districts with voter purges is good and so is donating to candidates willing to stand up to the President, or boycotting companies that don't.

Encourage defections

The way we defeat the would-be king is to erode his support..

- All over the world, dictators have fallen when the police refuse to shoot into crowds because they see the crowds are full of people who look like their own families.
- Help the people who prop up the regime realize that their interests aren't truly aligned with a proto-dictator. Members of the Texas National Guard who have spent weeks in Washington probably thought they were signing up to save Texans from floods and tornadoes.
- For examples of a soft-power erosion of the power of the carceral system, rewatch *Iron-jawed Angels*, the movie about the Suffragists as they survived hunger strikes in jail.

Demoralizing the employees of the machine of state who didn't envision our current Constitutional crisis when they signed on is not difficult. A dictator needs them to maintain his control, so they are crucial.

Refuse to cooperate and thank others who refuse

- Thank our Mayor and City Councilors for standing up for Rochester's sanctuary status. Lend your support when you hear of deportation raids in-process. Ask questions of the Locust Club. Why are they trying to help ICE and the DHS with illegal sweeps? Six state Secretaries of State (including our own) have refused to turn over voter lists to the Department of Justice. Thank you, Letitia James, for protecting New Yorkers' sensitive personal information from federal witch-hunts.
- Kudos to teachers for resisting orders to implement school curricula that violate the Constitution. Schools should not be doing religious indoctrination and teachers know it.
- Learn about the origin of the boycott (<https://www.irishamerica.com/2025/03/the-boycott-origination-story/>). Captain Charles Boycott was a land agent who collected rents from tenant farmers in Ireland and evicted those who could not pay. Supporters of a nonviolent resistance movement refused to help. Workers would not bring in his harvests, shops would not sell him food, and workers would not work in the manor house. Captain Boycott left Ireland, never to return, but the tactic spread worldwide.

Support electoral reforms to reduce the power of parties to punish

Much of our current predicament arises from the power parties have to threaten members of Congress via primaries. Of the ten Republicans who voted in the President's first term to impeach him, the careers of nine of them ended with that vote. The sole survivor is Lisa Murkowski, who benefited from the Final Four election system Alaska first used in 2022. Learn more here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQuL9g1Nnf0>.

If we were to free our Republican Congressional Representatives to vote their consciences, it could shift outcomes in Congress. The LWVNY is planning to make those reforms better known.

Voice the Constitution

Saturday, November 15, 2025 3:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

Writers & Books
740 University Avenue
Rochester, NY 14607

Free or a donation to support Writers & Books.

[Register Here](#)

Rediscover America's founding document at this collaborative reading and celebration. A multi-vocal reading of the Constitution in its entirety will be followed by a lively, welcoming, and entertaining discussion of the text, with knowledgeable Constitution enthusiasts on hand to offer answers and perspectives. If you've ever heard a news story and wondered: "Is that constitutional?" Or: "Is that really what the Constitution says?" If so, this communal recitation and accessible conversation is the crash course you're looking for.

Julian S. Taylor is the founder of [The Great Collaboration](#) and host of "Voice the Constitution," a communal recitation that has traveled to libraries throughout Colorado and Western NY since 2007.

In Memoriam: Ann Weintraub



With sadness, LWV-RMA notes the passing of longtime member Ann Weintraub. In her 60 years with the League, Ann held many leadership roles from committee chair to board member to informal historian to hostess at events celebrating League activities.

Ann graduated from the UR and was a gifted teacher and administrator in the Rochester City School District. She shared her leadership skills not only with our League but with many local and statewide organizations.

In retirement, Ann was a voracious reader and followed current events and League activities closely. Her keen interest in and support for her community never grew old.

Her passion for education, civil discourse, democratic ideals, and lifelong friendships will continue to inspire those who knew her or knew of her.

LWV-RMA joins the entire Rochester community in gratitude for Ann's generous contributions. Truly, hers was a life well-lived.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, November 8, 2025, at the University of Rochester Interfaith Chapel, 1045 Wilson Blvd., Rochester, NY 14627, at 2:00 P.M.

In Ann's memory, the family suggested gifts to LWV-RMA among other organizations.

<https://www.crawfordfuneralhome.com/obituary/Ann-Weintraub>

Submitted by Katherine Smith

Voter Services Update

During the past month, our Voter Services volunteers provided voter registration services at a variety of venues. We thank everyone who participated and appreciate their dedication.

In September, we were at the Wilmot Warrior Walk and Run, which is a yearly event to raise funds for the Wilmot Cancer Center at the University of Rochester Medical Center. We were also at an event in Penfield organized by The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention as well as the Clean Sweep Resource event held at the Cameron Communities Teen Center.

Lush Cosmetics is a privately-owned company that supports and campaigns for human rights, environmental justice, and DEI among other issues. The company has an ongoing partnership with the League of Women Voters to promote voter education and registration. Lush stores across the country hosted LWV voter registration tables during the week of National Voter Registration Day. Our chapter tabled at the store in Eastview Mall for the second year. In addition, Lush Cosmetics has partnered with [VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org) to provide information on voting and elections on their website and in digital campaigns.

We will be joining in the fun at Rochester's Halloween at the Market, which is a dress-up/trick-or-treat event for local families. Dozens of community organizations participate and it is a great opportunity for us to connect with families about our services. Volunteers wear their favorite costumes and enjoy all of the excitement of seeing so many smiling faces.

We invite anyone interested in hearing more about our work to contact Deb Gordon or Cathy Kane at voterservices@lwv-rma.org. If you are interested in joining the team, please consider attending a monthly meeting, held on the last Thursday of each month from 5:00 P.M. to 6:30 P.M. via Zoom.

Submitted by Deb Gordon

LWVUS Suggested Action

In a letter to League Leaders, LWVUS has suggested that members take the following action:

Tell your members of Congress to protect the freedom to vote and support the passage of the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act (JLVRAA)

Every day, the freedom to vote is under attack. Since the 2013 Supreme Court decision in *Shelby County v. Holder* gutted the Voting Rights Act (VRA), at least [31 states have enacted 114 voting laws](#) that make it harder to vote, with the burden falling hardest on Black voters and other voters of color.

We need a fully restored VRA to defend our democracy and protect the freedom to vote. That is why the League is proud to support the reintroduction of this vital legislation that is needed to fully restore and modernize the VRA and ensure that discriminatory voting policies are stopped in their tracks.

Equality — and our democracy — cannot wait.

(The key message to our representatives is above, but members should put the message in their own words.)

Vote for Your Neighbors: The Importance of Local Elections

Voting in local elections is an act of caring for our village, town, and neighborhood. It is a way of choosing who will make decisions about our schools, public safety, local taxes, community programs, infrastructure, and the overall quality of daily life.

Local officials control a surprising amount of our everyday experiences. School board members determine educational policies that shape our children's learning environments. Town supervisors and city council members decide how to allocate funds for road repairs, libraries, community centers, and emergency services. Even seemingly small decisions—whether a crosswalk is added near a park or how community policing is implemented—are made at the local level. These choices are not abstract. They affect how safe our streets feel, how supported our youth are, and how welcoming and functional our community becomes.

When we choose not to vote locally, we leave these decisions to a handful of people rather than engaging in the collective care of our community. Low voter turnout in local elections means that a small fraction of residents are shaping policies for everyone. In some cases, decisions that impact thousands are made based on the votes of just a few dozen people. This imbalance does not reflect apathy alone; it reflects a misunderstanding of how powerful local elections truly are.

To vote in local elections is to say, “I see you” to our neighbors. It is a commitment to shared responsibility and a recognition that democracy begins on our own street. Just as we would speak up if a decision affected our household, voting ensures that our household—our village—is heard.

In nurturing our community through local voting, we are not just participating in democracy; we are practicing care. Like family members who look out for one another, casting a ballot for local candidates is a way of investing in the well-being of those closest to us. In uncertain times, it is an act of hope and solidarity. To vote for your neighbors is to believe that what happens on your street matters—and that your voice does too.

Submitted by Julie Burns

Outreach to New Americans Committee

The Outreach to New Americans Committee has been busy as we approach Election Day 2025. The committee's activities included:

- Mailing 70+ postcards to newly naturalized citizens congratulating them, providing information, and encouraging them to get out to vote in this fall's election.
- Giving presentations on voting to three online English language classes through Catholic Charities Family and Community Services of Rochester.
- Attending one citizenship class offered through the Maplewood Public Library.
- Distributing posters in English and Spanish that provided information on voting dates and sites to local community centers, churches, and libraries.
- Connecting with the Rochester Refugee Resettlement Services to explore collaboration to help some of their clients pursue citizenship and become voters.
- Tabling again with the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) members at Strong Memorial Hospital for their FUNDS Day on October 23rd.
- Finally, tabling at International Plaza's Market Day on September 28th and returning to the Plaza for their Trunk and Treat celebration on October 25th.

If you wish to be a part of a very active team working to help new Americans vote, please contact me at newamericansoutreach@LWV-RMA.org

Submitted by Evelyn Jennings

LWVUS Joins Amicus Brief Submitted to US Supreme Court

In September, the League of Women Voters (LWV) and Common Cause, alongside Campaign Legal Center (CLC) submitted an [amicus brief](#) to the US Supreme Court, which urges the Justices to uphold party coordinated spending limits in the *National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) v. Federal Election Commission* case.

Below is the the joint September 30th press release:

"The National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) is challenging critical, long-standing limits on how much money political parties can spend in "coordination" with federal candidates. The US Supreme Court upheld these limits in 2001 as an important barrier to preventing donors from funneling massive amounts of funds to the candidates of their choosing through political parties.

A key principle of campaign finance law, reinforced by the Court, is that an expenditure that is "coordinated" with a candidate is functionally the same as a contribution given directly to the candidate. Therefore, limits on both are important to preventing quid pro quo corruption in our federal elections.



"What's at stake in this case is the very integrity of our elections," said Celina Stewart, CEO of the League of Women Voters. "Lifting limits on coordinated party spending would open the door to more corruption that ultimately allows big money to drown out the voices of everyday Americans. In a time when money already plays an outsized role in our politics, removing this safeguard would be yet another step towards total deregulation of campaign finance. The League proudly supports this limit as a crucial protection for fair and accountable elections."

CLC first filed an [amicus brief](#) with Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (CREW) in support of federal limits back in 2024 in the US Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit. That court [upheld](#) these limits last year.

Now the Supreme Court will decide whether to maintain its own 2001 ruling in *FEC v. Colorado Republican Federal Campaign Committee* — known as the "Colorado II" decision — that affirmed the constitutionality of these limits. At that time, the Court expressed concern that removing these limits would provide donors with the opportunity to bypass individual contribution limits by funneling larger sums through the parties in order to buy influence with candidates and officeholders.

Voters need to have confidence that wealthy special interests cannot simply buy influence and political favors by routing big contributions through political parties. Our nation's highest court should affirm the limits on coordinated spending by political parties in order to protect our democracy."

Antoinette Brown Blackwell Society

LWV-RMA President Barbara Grosh spoke at the Antoinette Brown Blackwell Society on October 16, 2025.

She explained LWV's mission, "Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy."

She shared current issues surrounding voting, promoting registrations, and educating voters.

Addressing the country's current Constitutional crisis, she recommended that we be optimistic and involved, and prepare for a marathon.

Submitted by Pat Willis

Calendar

The best way to be informed about various League events is to use the online calendar. You do not need to sign in to access the calendar. The calendar is updated frequently; it is more current than a monthly newsletter can be.

On the calendar, you can click on an event to obtain information, you can add it to your personal calendar, and you can register for an event. You can see future (or past) months' activities easily by using the < > buttons.

Access the calendar [here](#).

First Friday

Join First Friday for social time at I Square in Irondequoit - 400 Bakers Park, Rochester, NY 14617 - at 11:30 A.M. on the first Friday of each month.

We gather in the space behind the partition (look for our sign) for lunch and discussion. Come when you can, leave when you must.

We share ideas for how the League can make democracy work and discuss the news to parse what it all means. It's always comforting to be surrounded by League friends who are committed to empowering voters and protecting democracy. Join the fun!



2025 Candidate Debates

In October, LWV-RMA presented online debates for candidates in five area elections, as shown here. LWV-RMA members served as moderators and timekeepers for these discussions. Recordings can be found on the LWV-RMA YouTube channel [Here](#).



Discussion: Making the Most of Our Voting Rights

At the invitation of the Religious Sisters of Mercy of Rochester, on October 23, LWV-RMA President Barbara Grosh made a presentation at the Mercy Center on How to Make the Most of Your Right to Vote. Barbara reviewed why we vote, voter registration, ways to vote, new voting machines, what is on this year's ballot (Vote411.org), and ballot measures.

Seen are Barbara Grosh with Sr. Edwardine Weaver who introduced the program, and some of the program's 40 participants.





Voter Services & New Americans Events

No Kings Signs

Thank you to all volunteers!



LWVUS Rise Event



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If you have comments, article suggestions or pictures to
share please send them to micketeditor@gmail.com

League of Women Voters

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan,
political organization which encourages the informed
and active participation of citizens in government and
influences public policy through education and
advocacy.

The League does not support or oppose any political
party or candidate.

The League of Women Voters is an organization fully
committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in
principal and in practice.

League membership is open to any person who
subscribes to the League's purposes and policies.

Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

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Dues are payable to LWVUS. The link on LWV-RMA will
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Suggested dues are \$75, but you may choose any
amount of \$20 or more.

Choosing more than \$75 allows LWV-RMA to fund
programs while subsidizing membership for those
who cannot afford the full \$75.