

Our Mission...

The League of Women Voters of Ashland & Bayfield Counties (LWV/ABC) is a nonpartisan political organization whose main objective is to promote political responsibility through the informed and active participation of all in government at all levels, especially locally.

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The Leaguer

Winter 2020 / 2021



RESPONDING to the INTERLOCKING CRISES

By Linda Jorgenson and Jan Penn, Co-Chairs

Repeatedly these days the news refers to the “interlocking crises”: economic inequality, the pandemic, structural racism and the impending climate catastrophe. What policy responses will be the right ones? Where does the LWV/ABC start?

These crises can be seen in our own Chequamegon Bay backyard. For 40 years many Ashland and Bayfield County residents have experienced stagnant income growth, their health insurance became unaffordable, and defined pensions disappeared with the exit of unionized industries.

Small businesses struggle valiantly to compete against the big monopolies like Walmart and Amazon. Our many small farms are often calling it quits. Families struggle to find affordable childcare. Most people still lack paid sick leave. Alcohol and drug addiction plague us.

Where do we begin? Our LWV/ABC Economic Inequality Action Committee found some helpful direction from the LWVWI’s November 14 Issues Briefing segment on the “Impact of the COVID Pandemic.” The presenters itemized fallout in three areas:

CRISES continued on page 9



Sue Niemi, President

president@lwvabcwi.org

Happy Winter Leaguers!

I believe we all feel some sort of relief that the election is done. Many of you worked tirelessly to ensure voters could register and vote, safely. Thank you!

I've been doing a lot of reflection. Having staffed the polls at my own small township, it was an amazing experience to see democracy at work. One observation that really stood out was the number of people who risked their health and came out to the polls to vote, while there were perfectly safe options to vote absentee or via early voting. In addition, we registered a record number of people to vote, again something that could have been done more safely prior to the election. This didn't just happen at my small township, it occurred across the state and nation.

Greetings from our President

The point of reflection to me is this: We at the League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield counties have spent an extraordinary amount of time getting the word out to register to vote early and to vote early and my fear is that we missed a large portion of the population. While we are a non-partisan organization, the one fear weighing on my mind is that there is a segment of the population that has bought into misinformation about our election process and the League itself. We've been fighting voter suppression from so many angles this year that it was difficult to keep up with what the rules were on absentee ballots, early voting, and now some would like us to believe that there was large scale voter fraud. This form of chaos is intentional and now our work is to right the course and figure out how to get the right information out to voters.

We need to approach this differently to get a better outcome. How can we embrace a good segment of the population that believes this misinformation and help them understand that we are non-partisan, and our goal is to get voters registered and able to vote safely, regardless

of which candidate or political party he/she/they support? It's a question I don't have answers for right now, but I welcome your thoughts on how we get this done. Are we only getting the message out to those who already believe the way we do? Where is our bias and filter set? What would it take to help correct this situation? Those are the questions I am contemplating, and I'm sure you have plenty more. If you are interested in having a conversation about this, please let me know. You can reach me at:

president@abcleaguevoters.org

or by calling

(612) 805-8575

If there is enough interest, I will set up a virtual meeting so we can discuss collectively.

With that, I encourage you to review all the wonderful work our committee chairs and committees have been doing over the past several months. There is a lot of movement that continues within the League even past election time.

In closing, I want to inform membership that it saddens me to say that Margie Braun, our Voter Services Committee chair has resigned as of this month. Margie will be moving to Appleton and will

be missed tremendously! We cannot thank Margie enough for her tireless effort to engage voters in voter registration and voting safely. She made significant progress in building relationships with the organizations that serve the disenfranchised. Under her leadership, she set up a structure where we have sub-committee chairs in Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer counties. Now, we are looking for someone to step up and lead this critical committee overall. If you, or someone you know are interested, please let us know. Thank you, Margie, – you will be missed!

Thank you, Margie Braun!

by Dianne Judd

Margie Braun – You will be missed!

Margie joined our League and took a position on the board in May of 2019. She was committed, passionate, energized and brought a whole lot of enthusiasm with her to her new position as Voter Services Chair. Her enthusiasm radiated to several other people in Hayward too as Margie connected and encouraged 20 other members from Hayward to join our League

Thank You continued on page 5

LWV / ABC CALENDAR

December

Chanukah Begins	10
Chanukah Ends	18
Winter Solstice	21
Christmas Day	25
Kwanzaa Begins	26
New Year's Eve	31

January

New Year's Day, Kwanzaa Ends	1
Orthodox Christmas	7
Voter Services Meeting	8
Carrie Chapman Birthday	9
Martin Luther King Jr's Day	18
LWV/ABC Board Meeting	26

February

The People's Maps Commission

7th Cong. Dist. Hearing	11
Lincoln's Birthday, Chinese New Year	12
Valentine's Day, LWV Founded	14
Susan B Anthony's Birthday, President's day	15
Spring Primary Election (TBA)	16
Washington's Birthday	22
LWV/ABC Board Meeting	23

March

International Women's Day	8
Daylight Savings Time begins	14
St. Patrick's Day	17
Spring Equinox	20
LWV/ABC Board Meeting	23
Passover	27

April

Easter	4
Spring Election	6
Ramadan	13
Earth Day	22
LWV/ABC Board Meeting	27

2020/2021 LWV/ABC Board & Committee Members

BOARD

Contact the Board at:

info@lwvabcwi.org or

PO Box 175, Ashland, WI 54806

Sue Niemi

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Lynn Bigboy

President-Elect

Roger Aiken

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Sue Niemi

Email Blasts

Liz Seefeldt

Bottom Line Liaison

Matt Oestreich

G Suites

Jack Ring

Newsletter

Anne Chartier

Dianne Judd

Editors

Natural Resources Advocacy Committee

Joan Elias

Chair

Inequality Action Committee

Jan Penn & Linda Jorgenson

Co-Chairs

Civic Engagement Committee

Bev Lindell

Chair

Program & Events Committee

Sheila Mitchell

Chair

Finance Committee

Open Chair

Roger Aiken

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Linda Jorgenson

Nominating Committee

Jo Bailey

Chair

Kay Saari

Our Numbers Are Increasing!

We are thankful for the record keeping and communication carried out by Membership Chair Gail Syverud who reminds us to pay our dues and updates information for the rosters. Gail informs us that our ranks are growing, and we are pleased that members have taken advantage of the Dunne Scholarship Fund.

Our goal is to have all of us be local, state and national Leaguers, which guarantees that we receive all the information and action alerts that come from our League leaders in Washington, D.C. and Madison. Boards and Staff at every level are committed to addressing the issues and concerns that contribute to protecting and enhancing Democracy and wellbeing.

Membership continued on page 5

League of Women Voters Websites:

LWV/ABC: <http://www.lwvabcwi.org/>

LWV or Wisconsin: <https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin>

LWV National: <https://www.lwv.org/>

As of October 31, 2020,
we have:

- **Ninety-eight (98) active local, state and national members.**
- **Twenty-seven (27) local members.**
- **Twenty-eight (28) new members or members who reactivated their membership: five (5) local and twenty-three local, state and national.**
- **During 2020 seven (7) scholarships were awarded.**

We would like to remind you that any student who is at least 16 years old can join the League of Women

Voters for free. Also, our State League waives the portion we would pay for any member receiving a scholarship.

Since 1974 men have been welcome to join the League. And any couple can join for a rate lower than two memberships! All members and friends are welcome to join one of our committees!

You will find open chairs listed on the previous page (Page 4).

You will find a membership application/renewal form on our LWV/ABC website:

Click
[GET INVOLVED & JOIN US!](#)



and work with Voter Services.

Voter Services is the foundation stone of the League of Women Voters. Months before the 19th Amendment was ratified, the League began as a “mighty political experiment” designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters.

Margie continued in true suffragist style and energy to work to help all eligible voters in our area to know the ins and outs of our election process. She took this committee deep into the How-Tos of registration and organization and wide to

include groups of voters that are often less likely to vote and expanded our volunteers from Hayward to Cornucopia. She taught us all and infected us with her energy and passion.

Lucky Appleton! Best wishes on your move. We know you will be connected and busy as ever working to make Democracy Work for all.

**Thank you from
all the members of
the League!**

Natural Resources Advocacy Committee

By Joan Elias

In September, members of the committee stood along Highway 2 holding signs in opposition to Enbridge Line 5 across from the outdoor gathering Communities United by Water, hosted by the Penokee Hills Education Project. We received many positive responses from passing cars, as judged by horns beeping and people waving or giving us a thumbs-up.

In October, we submitted comments on two water quality protection related decisions. The first was to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on proposed rule changes to nonferrous mining legislation. We included specifics about bulk sampling, as well as urging WDNR to hold public hearings on prospecting and mining pre-applications, and designating Areas of Special Natural Resource Interest as unsuitable for mining.

We also submitted comments to the Mashkiizibii (Bad River) Natural Resource Department regarding anti-degradation decisions surrounding an application by Enbridge to conduct horizontal direction drilling under the Bad River where Line 5 is

threatened with exposure as the river meanders intensify due in part to recent extreme rain events. We voiced concerns over destruction of wetlands and other sensitive habitats, increased sedimentation, and interruption of water flow among other potential environmental consequences. If our concerns cannot be addressed adequately, we urged the Tribe to deny the permit, and ultimately we support them in their determination to enforce anti-degradation policies as described in their Water Quality Standards.

On November 9th, committee member Shari Eggleston spoke at the virtual LWV-WI Issues Briefing, providing a

summary of Enbridge Line 5 and our history of involvement in opposing the pipeline. On November 18th, the committee was presented with the "good citizen" award by the John Muir Chapter of the Sierra Club for our work in opposition to Enbridge Line 5. We are honored to have our work appreciated by others!

We anticipate the draft Environmental Impact Statement for Enbridge Line 5 to be released by WDNR sometime in the new year. WDNR will hold a public hearing to accept comments on this draft before preparing a final EIS. The Natural Resources Advocacy Committee expects to prepare comments at the appropriate time.



Anne Chartier, Linda Jorgenson, Jan Penn, &

Joan Elias on 9/26/2020

Post-Election Voting Machine Audits

By Anne Chartier

The Wisconsin Elections Commission (WEC) is responsible for overseeing voting in all our municipalities, but the local clerks perform all the necessary tasks to ensure a safe and secure election process. Every two years after federal elections the WEC randomly selects municipalities in every county for a voting machine audit. Several types of machines are used throughout the state, and all models are checked for accuracy.

Over one hundred municipalities were selected this time around. In Ashland County the City of Ashland's

Wards 1-5 were audited. In Bayfield County it was Ward 1 in the Town of Bayview and Wards 1-2 in the Town of Russell. In Sawyer County Wards 1-5 in the Town of Bass Lake and Wards 1-8 in the Town of Hayward were also randomly picked.

For the first time this year the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin (LWVWI) participated in audit observation by recruiting and providing training materials for volunteers among its ranks and other Wisconsinites committed to Making Democracy Work®.

LWVWI Voter Education Manager, Eileen Newcomer, oversaw the effort and identified county leads who participated in and/or oversaw the observation in one or more municipalities.

All LWV/ABC municipalities selected in our three-county area were observed by Joan Ackerman, Mark Eggleston, Mary Hassett Gabrys, Peggy Haueter, Carolyn Pare, and Renee Midthun. We are grateful for their participation.

The audit is not a recount, although it involves a lot of counting. The process requires evaluating each ballot as the machine would, making note of any anomalies including undervotes, when the bubble isn't filled in, or overvotes, when the ballot shows two candidates selected for one office. They also make note of any write ins.

Every ballot was verified at least twice by pairs of counters, and the tallied results were then compared carefully for accuracy. Municipalities were required to post notices about the proceedings, and results had to be sent to the WEC by the afternoon of November 27.

The care and diligence

Audits continued on page 8

Get involved! Join our work! 
We are stronger and more powerful together.

Voter Services _____ Anne at **715-682-9418**

Civic Engagement _____ Bev at **715-209-6813**

Economic Inequality _____ Linda at **715-373-2948**
or Jan at **715-274-2942**

Natural Resources _____ Joan at **715-893-2358**

StoryCorps stories _____ Email [**SuperiorWatersStoryCorp@gmail.com**](mailto:SuperiorWatersStoryCorp@gmail.com)

President's question about forming friendly conversations across the divide _____ Sue at **612-805-8575**

Help with Fair Maps in Ashland _____ Diane at **715-979-1723**

Join our League _____ Gail at **715-682-8419**

Sierra Club Good Citizen and Torchbearer Awards

Congratulations are in order because the League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties received the 2020 Sierra Club John Muir Chapter **Good Citizen Award** in recognition of the extensive work our Natural Resources Committee has devoted to protect the Bad River Watershed and Lake Superior from Enbridge Line 5. Joan Elias proudly accepted the award during a celebratory ceremony on Wednesday, November 18. Also, Bad River Chairman Mike Wiggins was also honored that evening with the **Torchbearer Award** for his outstanding leadership in safeguarding the bountiful reservation and ceded territory lands we all live on. The link below leads to our website where you can see all or part of the program, including their acceptance statements, and a captivating video premiered by Chairman Wiggins that masterfully reveals the cherished beauty of our area.

<https://www.lwvabcwi.org/latest-news/2020/11/21/john-muir-chapter-of-sierra-club-2020-awards-to-lwv-abc-and-mike-wiggins-bad-river-band-of-lake-superior-chippewa>



SIERRA CLUB



**Joan Elias &
Bad River
Chairman Mike
Wiggins, Jr.**

Audits continued from page 7

with which the audit tasks were performed is truly impressive. Our observers were welcomed and able to see the process at a safe distance, but within earshot of the exchanges, and thus able to follow the audit. It is important to also thank the amazing clerks, deputy clerks and poll workers who did the audits.

- 1) damage to education especially to children and families with the least resources;
- 2) disproportionate health impacts on indigenous communities and people of color; and
- 3) economic impact of job loss, health insurance loss, lack of childcare for working people, lack of paid sick leave on individuals and families in WI and the tremendous squeeze on small businesses and farms.

All three presenters recommended local Leagues:

- **Increase** public education so the community can connect the dots that the already large economic inequality gap is being forced even wider by the pandemic, contributing to increased fear, resentment and possible maladaptive responses (e.g., increased opioid/meth use, domestic violence, joining militia-type groups, etc.)
- **Build** on the voices/assets of each community - join with partners and work together
- **Advocate** for an agenda based on equity and pursue it at the local/state and federal levels

Reflecting on these recommendations the LWV/ABC Economic Inequality Action

Committee met via Zoom on November 19 and generated these beginning practical steps to address our fragile economic picture:

- **Support** all local efforts to encourage people to “buy local.” We are a small business economy and without our support many small businesses/farms will disappear, further diminishing our tax base for our schools and roads. Right now, the Committee is ramping up support for efforts like those of the Ashland Chamber of Commerce selling gift certificates for online purchases and the Chequamegon Bay Arts Council initiating Authentic Superior, an artist’s consortium, advertising on FB to buy local artwork online. We will also look to publicize ways to buy from local growers.
- **Advocate** with WI’s Congressional delegation to pass a solid COVID-19 Relief bill.
- **Prepare** for upcoming opportunities to have input on the new State budget. Specially to find ways to 1) reduce healthcare costs, expand access for affordable health insurance; 2) increase minimum wage; 3) adequate funding for public schools.
- **Identify** local/statewide non-partisan partners to

organize for a Workers Bill of Rights and a Small Business/ Small Farmer Bill of Rights to put pressure on the WI Legislature to raise the minimum wage, expand affordable healthcare, require paid sick leave and other essential benefits.

If these are issues you would like to work on please contact the committee Co-Chairs:

Linda Jorgenson
jorgensonla@gmail.com
(715) 373-2948

Jan Penn
janmmpenn@yahoo.com
(715) 274-2942



Snowy Saturday morning at the Ashland Area Farmers Market

SUPERIOR WATERS STORY CORPS

Celebrating nature's bounty and our connection to the land and waters of Gitchigumi/Lake Superior

SHARE YOUR STORIES WITH US!

We are collecting stories and poems from Tribal members, residents and visitors to the Chequamegon Bay & Apostle Islands region, around Lake Superior's south shore. Storytelling is the oldest art known to humanity and serves to reinforce values and beliefs that unite us. We are looking for stories and poems that will answer the following questions.

- * What can we learn from your ancient roots here?
- * What do you treasure about living or vacationing in this region?
- * How do the land and water provide for you and your family, and enrich your lives?
- * What do you remember of your youth in this area?
- * Why did you choose to live your life, spend your leisure time, or retire here?
- * How could this place be ruined?
- * What would you do to protect the land and water that nourish you?

We are people who cherish this very special place that we call home. We see the water, plants, animals, air and land all threatened by the existing and proposed versions of Enbridge's Line 5, a crude oil pipeline that passes through our communities and along the bottom of the Straits of Mackinac. (For more info, visit RetireLine5.org.) When this line ruptures (as they all do eventually) the entire Copper Falls Aquifer could be contaminated. We seek to alert our friends and neighbors to the threat, and to the opportunity to protect the complex and diverse landscape that provides us with so much.

Your stories, collected and published, will let our leaders know how many people find this area precious. They will show us that none of us stands alone. With our stories as inspiration, we will stand as the resource protectors for future generations.

To **SUBMIT** or to **JOIN OUR EFFORT**, email us at SuperiorWatersStoryCorps@gmail.com

Voter Services Work in Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer Counties

Due to the importance of this election and our LWV/ABC area being so distanced, we moved our Voter services to a new model of having three leaders, one from Ashland, one from Bayfield and one from Sawyer, meet as a steering committee. Those leaders organized a group in each community to determine what works best and what talent we had in our areas. COVID was the overarching menace to our work as well.

Before we get to individual group work, we have all seen that VOTES MATTER! There was a record high turnout in WI. 11 counties and 3 municipalities had the Fair Maps Referendum on the ballot and Bayfield had the largest percent voting Yes! at 77.1%. All 14 passed the referendums. Getting information out about absentee ballots and early voting as well as safe procedures for Election Day voting helped with our turnout.

Thank you all so much for the ton of work you did to register voters, get election information out, place yard signs, posters, and to help develop ways that we can work and connect with our community. This election is over but our work continues as we Make Democracy Work into the future.

Voter Services continued on page 12



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

by Bev Lindell

“Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community through both political and non-political processes.” -[New York Times]

We have come through a hard-fought contentious election that has left our country divided. This isn't a new experience for our country, but it does seem that the depiction of the other side as “evil” is more entrenched and therefore damaging to our democracy. Democracy only works if enough citizens believe it works. If there is distrust in the process, or a loss of faith in our democratic system the power and effectiveness of our form of government becomes impotent and cracks set in. It is crucial that we make the effort to find ways to reconnect as citizens; to understand the tenets of democracy; and to find opportunities to work together to improve our communities. Sitting together practicing civil discourse including listening and being heard creates a clearer path to accepting the concept of our shared future as citizens.

The civic engagement committee of LWV-ABC is inviting members to join our committee to work together on projects that may include such topics as; civics education, civility skills, and formation of groups to identify shared values and needs of the community.

We have already spoken with other community organizations that have similar interests and goals so we see this as an opportunity to work together using community resources to meet those goals.

*If you are interested in knowing more or to participate in our committee discussions and planning, please contact **Bev Lindell***

bjlindell8@gmail.com

The following is the work each community has been doing:

Sawyer County Area Voter Services Work Report 2019-2020

by Margie Braun, outgoing voter services chair.

- Vote411.org got off the ground thanks to Fred Haueter and Roger Aiken.
- Registration Events were held at MarketPlace, Hayward Food Shelf, and Sherman Ruth Weiss Library until COVID forced shutdowns of these events.
 - Outdoor registrations began in the garage at the library in Aug 2020 on Wednesdays 10-2
 - Hayward Food Shelf - September Mondays 8:30-noon weather permitting
 - Indoors began in Oct until Oct 28 at the library 10-2 Wednesdays
 - LCO Country Grocery Store - 3 times weekly Noon-6 until Oct 30
- Training for volunteers was provided at the events by experienced members.
- Various Election Posters were distributed to Coffee shops, post office, MarketPlace, laundry mats and other spots as members determined
- A Pamphlet was created for voter info and placed in Food Shelf boxes Mar-Oct. Thanks Barb Schweig who ran it off at no cost. Pamphlet was also used for public distribution.
- Public service announcements were sent weekly beginning in Aug to the Sawyer County Record and Gazette newspapers and WOJB and WRLS radio stations via volunteer Joan Ackerman
- Five paid ads in the Sawyer Co Record, Ashland Daily Press and county shoppers' guides.
- In person High School Registration twice a month at Hayward - Kerry Myra/Jane Mandli Drummond Jackie Kruse, Kay Rowe. Emailed letters to area high schools providing QR codes for Voter Registration information to be put on websites.
- Statewide Helpline was available to Sawyer Co residents via local volunteer Suzie Ulmer. All 3 counties had a rep.

Bayfield County Area Voter Services Work Report 2019-2020

by Dianne Judd

- Registration events were held through March and then in a more socially distanced and masked manner through September.
- Handouts for election information: Two major flyers "Get out the Vote" and "Your Voice Your Vote," included how to contact your municipal clerk for entire Bayfield County, were developed and distributed through Food Boxes through CORE and the Food Shelf at Red Cliff as well as any bulletin boards available to us.
- The Ashland Daily Press published seven articles written about voting by Cindy Dillenschneider. Also, weekly notices about voting were included in the Bayfield Blast.
- First Nation Organizers from Conservation Voters partnered with our committee. Their work focused on Red Cliff and Bad River.
- Basically, this Bay/Wash VS group works with our area from Washburn to Cornucopia. But we also signed up to help with the Helpline organized in Dane County for any questions to be answered locally. This is for the entire Bayfield County. Members called all municipalities to learn of contact info and drop boxes.
- Election materials distributed and posted – handouts, fair maps brochures, lawn signs, magnets, door hangers, and more information.

Voter Services Report continued from page 12

- Fair maps Referendum in Bayfield County – put posters in most municipalities. Shari Eggleston wrote articles for the Bottom Line and a Letter to the Editor for the Ashland Daily Press. Colene Lee also wrote an LTE for ADP.
- Mary Hasset Gabrys and April Stone developed a native coloring project that was copied and delivered to Red Cliff, Bad River, Bayfield & Vaughn library as well as BRICK and CORE Food boxes.
- Cindy Dillenschneider arranged a presentation for the Washburn HS senior class on Registering and Voting procedures. Sarah Szymaniak the Deputy Clerk for the City of Ashland presented to approximately 18 students, and two High School staff (Ms. Peacock, Special Education, and Mr. Grimm, Social Studies), and Cindy Dillenschneider.
- Kate Miller visited with Barb Flynn, Bayfield County Criminal Justice Coordinator regarding ACLU information (toolkit) and Incarcerated Voters.
- Joyce Kiel moderated a Candidate Forum in Bad River.

Ashland County Area Voter Services Work Report 2019-2020

by *Ginger Quay*

- As already indicated, and guided by the LWC/ABC Voter Services Steering Committee headed by Margie Braun, the three geographic area sub-committees chose differing ways to turn out the election vote this fall.
- The Ashland committee chose to assist the Dane County League in spreading news of their statewide Voter Helpline phone number.
- Perhaps you heard the WPR public service announcement (PSA) about the Helpline. The committee's PSA about the need for patience with vote counting also made the airways.
- Additional examples of our efforts were the distribution of non-partisan voter information flyers in both The Brick's food distribution boxes and with food delivered to participants of Meals on Wheels.
- In conjunction with the Bad River Tribe, and assisted by League members of our larger group, we shared our skills and experience setting up and conducting a highly successful Zoom voter forum for the Tribal Council election.
- With the election over, we turn our attention to other voting issues critical to making democracy work. One issue is an Ashland County referendum on Fair Maps as the state gets ready to redraw voting district lines that will be in place for the next ten years. LWV/ABC President Sue Niemi submitted on our behalf an informational packet to the County Administrator, requesting that first the Executive Committee and then full Board place a Fair Maps referendum on the April ballot. Shari Eggleston provided helpful guidance.
- Governor Evers' People's Maps Commission has scheduled a hearing for our part of the state for February 11. See link: <https://govstatus.egov.com/peoplesmaps/hearings-meetings>.
- Consideration of the Electoral College and the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact are also selected for our focus. What is your hot button issue? We urge you to join us and perhaps bring along a friend of the League. We each contribute what we can—no effort is too large or too small. All contributions are valuable! We propose a new meeting structure for January-March. Open for discussion, we will meet Friday mornings on Zoom.

You are invited to a virtual meeting with participants of all LWV/ABC areas the morning of January 8 at 10:30 on Zoom. We will share support, ideas and resources.

Will you join us? If you have questions, please contact Ginger Quay at giner.way@gmail.com

Fair Voting Maps Referendum

by Shari Eggleston

The advisory referendum on creating a non-partisan redistricting process passed with flying colors in eleven counties and three municipalities on November 3, but Bayfield County led the way, with 77% of its voters backing the measure, the highest margin in the state. This brought the total to 28 counties that have passed the referendum (it has not failed anywhere).

The ABC League was instrumental in securing this victory. We helped get the referendum on the ballot, providing information and testimony to the County Board, and we provided publicity and information to bring it to voters' attention.

Referendums like this are not legally binding, but they do influence legislators. According to Common Cause, bipartisan legislative support for a redistricting reform bill grew this past session, "partly as a result of the passage of county referendums in the past two years."

What's next? The Governor's People's Maps Commission will be taking (virtual and written) comments over the next several months. For more information, including a complete hearing schedule, and/or to register to testify, check the Commission's website: <https://govstatus.egov.com/peoplesmaps/hearings-meetings>. After that, it would be great to see a referendum on Ashland County ballots next spring. If you would like to work on that effort, contact League member Diane Koosed, koolake@gmail.com, 715-979-1723.

**Shari was one of the presenters during the LWVWI Issues Briefing presentation on November 14 devoted to Natural Resources. She gave an overview and update on our efforts to decommission Enbridge Line 5.*

There is a link to the program on [page 15](#)

The 7TH Congressional District Hearing will be held on February 11.



LWVWI 2020 Virtual Issues Briefing Series

During the week of November 9 - 14, 2020 the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin organized the traditional day long opportunity to learn about current topics important to our state in virtual format over four sessions. The webinars in chronological order covered Natural Resources, Social Policy, Government, and the Unequal Impact of COVID on Wisconsin Communities. The gathering which until this year had required a registration fee, was free and open to the public. Links to the webinar recordings appear below.

Empowering Voters. Defending Our Democracy. Our work is to empower voters and to be active in using our developed positions for advocacy. It is through participating in democracy that we defend democracy. We have national positions called "Impact on Issues" and in Wisconsin we have positions that are in agreement with the national positions applying more directly to the state of Wisconsin. We invite you to check out our policy positions which have been carefully crafted over 100 years by our members who have studied and come to agreement. We invite you to respond to National and State Advocacy Alerts to help build our effectiveness and impact.

The first session's panel dealt with Water Quality and Health-Related Issues and included four presentations that centered around environmental issues. LWV/ABC member Shari Eggleston spoke about the work our Natural Resources committee has done in opposition to the Enbridge Line 5 pipeline. Other topics were PFAs, lead in water supplies, and infrastructure and economy.

Watch: <https://youtu.be/x7R2xM41JGU>

The second session's panel dealt with building capacity for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in League. Since 2018, LWVWI determined we must include DEI in everything we do from the smallest to the biggest from bylaws to planning to events; DEI has become part of our Social policy position. The Community Alliance Committee of the League will ask each of us to be deliberative in considering what are our current barriers (race, sex, class, age, more...) for self-introspection and for organizational introspection.

Watch: <https://youtu.be/eeRNJbx5>

The third session's panel was focused on Voting Rights, Voting Maps, and all involved with voting on Election Day. To have our right to vote and determine who represents us is key to our democracy. Senator Tammy Baldwin talked about the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act. It is the right of every citizen to vote. This event also covered redistricting and included an election summary.

Watch: <https://youtu.be/VtpCSVKpg18>

The final webinar covered The Unequal Impacts of COVID on Wisconsin Communities. We heard calls for health justice for the excluded and marginalized in WI whether children or adults in schools and minority communities and those working and exposed to COVID or not working at all. We heard calls to advocate for all directly involved with our children in public schools whether the children themselves the teachers, school boards, people in communities, parents helping their children learn at school. We heard calls to stand together with communities to generate a collective impact to address the impact of COVID on our economy in communities suffering disparities, people in low wage jobs, and women. COVID intensifies this impact all across WI regardless where people live

Watch: https://youtu.be/O-qXd_VZJMI



LWVWI 2020 Post-Election Messaging

Voters across Wisconsin showed up in record numbers - by absentee ballot, early voting and at the polls on Election Day. Election officials worked tirelessly to process absentee ballots and stand up early voting and Election Day polling locations with appropriate safety precautions. Election officials also counted

every vote, and the canvassing - or triple-checking of votes - certification of votes is almost completed. And the recount is done!

Election officials continued to work until the results in Dane and Milwaukee Counties were recounted. Together, we need to portray the elec-

tion as it has been declared: clear and decisive. Voters are moving forward together and focusing on a shared future. We must continue to emphasize that we are standing with and for each other, pulling together, pursuing our agenda and tackling shared challenges with these **key talking points**:

-
- For democracy to work for all of us, it must include us all.
 - People across Wisconsin have stood with and for each other, marching to demand liberty and justice, pulling through this pandemic by pulling together, and rejecting attempts to divide us based on what we look like, where we come from or where we live.
 - Despite COVID-19, the economic crisis and deliberate barriers set to silence the voices of people struggling to make ends meet, Black people and new Americans, we turned out in record numbers to pick new leaders who will care and govern for all of us.
 - And now we will hold our new government to account — to not merely tackle the crises the last government created — but to make this a place where all of us can thrive.
-

Communities in Wisconsin have maintained hope, positivity and confidence in the voting process throughout this election, and we are not going to stop there. We have so much to celebrate and embrace as we move forward together.

Thank Your #ElectionHeroes!

As the statewide canvass comes to a close, we are vocally supporting local election clerks, election staff, poll workers and postal service workers for their diligence, integrity and courage in making this pandemic election the most secure in our history. **Send a Note!** of thanks and encouragement to your local election workers as they continue to serve us in this historic election.

Move past the election and onto enacting economic, racial justice, climate change and care agenda;

a. Focus on economic well-being (not “the economy”)

b. COVID relief (generally), tackling the spread and treating COVID

Position this as a win for all Wisconsinites — of every background, zip code and political persuasion.

Remind people what we voted for — a set of shared values and a future where we can make ends meet, get the care we need and make a better life for our families.

Make our people the lead actors: standing with and for each other, swearing in a new government that will care and govern for us all, pulling together, pursuing our agenda, tackling shared challenges.

When it comes to allegations of fraud, the threat of no democratic transfer of power, lawsuits, we must focus on **the people** and the decisive election results. Here are some key reminders:

1. **Do not repeat their accusations**, even to refute, and even if we know we are right
2. Emphasize that the **voters decided**
3. Remind audiences about history and legacy of the **democratic transfer of power**
4. Pivot to the clear, decisive will of the people
5. Shift attention to the desirable future and governing agenda.

We can claim the following:

- Americans agree that the basis of our democracy is that we pick our leaders — our leaders do not pick their voters.
- The United States has always held elections and conducted a democratic transfer of power. We have upheld the will of the people in presidential elections through the Civil War, Great Depression, previous pandemics and both World Wars.
- Americans young and old, rural and urban, Northern and Southern, turned out in record numbers, and our election officials have counted and verified these votes applying the laws, customs and safeguards used in every election.
- It's time we come together to ensure the will of the people prevails and demand that the leader the people have chosen is sworn in as our next president to ensure we can make ends meet, tackle this pandemic, and care for our families.

Contact your representatives

US Senator Tammy Baldwin, <https://www.baldwin.senate.gov/feedback>, (202) 224-5653

US Senator Ron Johnson, <https://www.ronjohnson.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/> (202) 224-5323

US House Representative Tom Tiffany, <https://tiffany.house.gov>, (202) 225-3365

WI State Senator Janet Bewely, <https://www.bewleyforsenate.com/>, (608) 284-8874

WI State Representative, Beth Meyers, (608) 266-7690

<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/2019/legislators/assembly/>