

THE *Leaguer*

WINTER 2022



THE ABC LEAGUE IS GOING TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

ACTUALLY, WE ARE GOING TO GO BACK ABOUT 10 YEARS AND BRING BACK SOMETHING OLD.

We are going to reinstitute Unit Meetings where members can see each other more frequently and have a regular forum to discuss issues. With our large membership and geographic spread it makes sense for the LWV/ABC to revisit this

structure to strengthen work in our immediate backyards as well as regionally. Our goal is to have a unit for Bayfield, Washburn, Ashland and Cable/Hayward.

From its inception, and until about 2013, our ABC League had a monthly daytime and an evening membership meeting (as did many Leagues across

the country). These were called by the unimaginative term Unit Meetings (national LWV lingo). They had an important purpose to build membership solidarity and to give each Leaguer an opportunity to use their voice in planning League policy and actions. Since many ABC Leaguers served on school boards, city councils, county boards, zoning commissions, library boards, you name it, Unit meetings were a vital way membership learned what was going on in their communities. As our strong Committees (Voter Services, Natural Resources, Economic Inequality) absorbed more of members' time in the past decade, Units became hard to sustain and kind of shriveled and died.

Nationwide civic engagement has dwindled. The imperative for two-income households, compounded by the demands of child care and elder care, has made it hard for families to find time for community involvement. Add on increased economic and social divisions and constant media focus on crises and polarization, and

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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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HIGHLIGHTS

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- 10 **Protect Your Right to Vote!**
- 11-12 **Youth - The Future Depends on Them!**





Greetings from our President

Sue Niemi
President

president@lwvabcwi.org

contributing member.

During this presidency we have had to quickly move from in-person to online meetings. This has made it difficult for many in our League to engage the way they like to engage. I look forward to the day that we can enjoy each other's company and contributions in person. I want to thank all the people who serve on our board presently and have served on our board and committees in the past. Our board and committees are run completely by volunteers. Each time you see a candidate forum, rally, voter registration event, public testimony, position study, and all the other great work from the League, that is done by our volunteers-- people feeling strong enough about our mission that they gift democracy with their time, talents and contributions.

We are still looking for people to serve as officers and board members in the upcoming year. We really need more people to serve in these critical positions. If you are looking to focus more on giving back to the community over the next year, I hope you seriously consider becoming an officer or board member. If you are interested, please contact me, Gail Syverud or Bev Lindell. We would be more than happy to talk with you and answer any questions.

With that, I want to thank you again for the opportunity to serve you over the past two years and I look forward to the time we can meet in person!

~Sue

Dear Members,

I find winter is a good time for reflection. This year it is increasingly more important to me. See, we have been working so hard on protecting democracy and it feels like we are encountering a constant barrage of activities to undermine democracy. It's important work and we need to carry on, even when we feel weary. I wonder how the women before us kept going when facing overwhelming odds.

I come from a long line of formidable, Finnish women. My grandmother emigrated from Finland to the U.S. when she was a mere 17 years old. I can only imagine the fear, anxiety and hope that she brought to her new world, one where she and my grandfather would homestead in Mason, Wisconsin and produce 10 children. I never knew her, but what I learned from my father and his seven formidable (yet kind) sisters, is that she was a woman who walked miles in the snow to attend church, raised ten children without modern conveniences, had her three sons go to war, and she died too young. I look at the Singer sewing machine in my living room which was originally a pedal machine that my grandfather had converted to electric, a month before she died. I wonder

if she ever was able to use it. I don't know. But what I do know is that my grandmother was an extremely strong woman and instilled that in her children who passed that down to her grandchildren.

Whether they were Finnish or not, I believe the women who led the fight for over 70 years to pass the 19th amendment to the U.S. constitution, had what the Finnish call "sisu". There is no direct English translation, but the one I've heard that I like best is stubbornness beyond reason. But that doesn't quite fit because what the women before us fought for was reasonable. The odds were just unreasonable which was proven over time. And, we continue to fight for the reasonable – making democracy work.

As I reflect on serving as President for the League of Women Voters of Ashland and Bayfield Counties for the past two years, I am in awe with all that our chapter has accomplished. What a tumultuous time to be the president of our chapter! I am deeply honored for having the opportunity to serve this great organization. Now it is time to pass the torch to another and I look forward to serving the League as a

Enbridge Line 5 Draft Environmental Impact Statement Available for Comment

NATURAL RESOURCES ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS) FOR THE ENBRIDGE LINE 5 EXPANSION AROUND THE BAD RIVER RESERVATION HAS BEEN RELEASED.

The purpose of an EIS is to inform decision-makers and the public about the anticipated environmental and socioeconomic effects of a proposed action or project and alternatives to the proposal.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) held a virtual public hearing on February 2 that lasted for 10 hours. Written comments will be accepted through Friday, March 18. See details at:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/EIA/Enbridge.html>.

The Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) also has regulatory authority over particular aspects of the pipeline project, specifically activities conducted in wetlands and waterways, under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbor Act of 1899 (Section 10) for work under a navigable water of the United States and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (Section 404) for discharges of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States.

The public can submit written comments to the ACE through March 7. Details can be found at: https://www.mvp.usace.army.mil/Enbridge_Line5-WI/

Enbridge's track record regarding oil spills is poor. In 1991, the nation's largest

inland oil spill--1.7 million gallons--occurred along Line 3 near Grand Rapids, MN. In 2010, Enbridge Line 6B spilled an estimated one million gallons of oil, contaminating 40 miles of the Kalamazoo River; \$1.2 billion was spent on cleanup attempts. In 2009, WDNR fined Enbridge \$1.1 million for wetland and stream crossing violations.

Enbridge recently completed reconstruction of Line 3 in Minnesota with disastrous consequences. During that project, Enbridge ruptured a regional aquifer, which gushed 100,000 gallons of water per day for months (as of this writing unconfirmed reports indicate the breach has been plugged). Enbridge was required to put \$3.3 million in escrow until the breach is fixed. There were also 2 other aquifer breaches and 28 inadvertent leaks of drilling fluid. Most jobs went to out-of-state workers and lasted less than a year.

This is very disturbing for the Northern Wisconsin Line 5 project. The same horizontal directional drilling method used in Minnesota is proposed for several of the 187 stream crossings in our area. The Copper Falls Aquifer, from which many private wells draw water, could potentially be contaminated or breached. The proposed route of the Line 5 Expansion passes through two recharge areas for this aquifer. Not a comforting thought!

The Line 5 expansion is part of a "shortcut," which takes oil from Canada to Canadian refineries, and passes through environmentally sensitive areas in the Great Lakes Basin. No Line 5 fuel is delivered in Wisconsin. In short, this Canadian company sends 23 million gallons of tar sands oil diluted with a toxic chemical mix through our region every day, putting us at risk.

Granting permits to Enbridge for Line 5 is fiscally irresponsible. The risks to our economy and jobs, which rely so heavily on clean water, are too great. We will be left "holding the bag" for this stranded asset as global markets move away from fossil fuels. Enbridge recently shortened the depreciated life of its pipelines from 30 to 20 years.

Speak your mind to both the DNR and the ACE!

Send written comments regarding the draft EIS to the DNR: dnroeeacomment@wi.gov

or U.S. mail to "Line 5 EIS Comments, DNR (A/7)," 101 South Webster Street, Madison, WI 53707

Send written comments regarding Army Corps regulatory oversight: CEMVP-L5WSR-PN-Comments@usace.army.mil

For further information regarding Line 5, visit the League's website at <https://www.lwvabcwi.org/issues-advocacy> or <https://retireline5.org>

LWV / ABC CALENDAR 2022

FEBRUARY BLACK AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

- 1** - Lunar New Year - Year of the Tiger
- 12** - Founding of the NAACP
- 14** - Fredrick Douglass' Birthday
- 15** - Spring Election Primary Day
Nirvana Day
- 21** - Presidents' Day


MARCH WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

- 1** - Maha Shivaratri
- 5** - Rosa Luxemburg's Birthday
- 7** - Deadline for Enbridge Line 5 Expansion commets to Army Corps of Engineers
- 8** - International Women's day
- 17** - Purim
St. Patrick's Day
- 18** - Deadline for Enbridge Line 5 Expansion dEIS written comments to DNR
- 20** - Ostara
Spring Equinox
- 21** - Farmworker's Awareness Week (21-28)
Norouz
- 22** - World Water Day
- 24** - Matilda Joslyn Gage's Birthday
- 31** - César Chávez birthday


APRIL SEXUAL ASSAULT AWARENESS MONTH NATIONAL POETRY MONTH GENOCIDE AWARENESS MONTH

- 3** - Ramadan
- 5** - Spring Election Day
- 6** - Rose Schneiderman's Birthday
- 7** - World Health Day
Rwandan Genocide Against the Tutsi Memorial Day
- 8** - Hanamatsuri
- 10** - Palm Sunday
Ram Navami
Humane Day
- 15** - Passover - 1st Day
Good Friday
- 17** - Easter
- 21** - Ridván
Cultural Diversity Day
- 22** - Earth Day
- 24** - Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day
- 27** - Day of Holocaust Remembrance - Yom HaShoah
- 28** - Workers Memorial Day
Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day
- 29** - International Dance Day

Draft Environmental Impact Statement:
Proposed Enbridge Line 5 Relocation Project
Ashland, Bayfield, Douglas, and Iron Counties, Wisconsin



December 2021
Volume I - Draft EIS



LWV / ABC CALENDAR 2022

Spring Elections 2022

MAY

ASIAN-PACIFIC AMERICAN
HERITAGE MONTH

- 1 - May Day
International Worker's Day
Beltane
- 3 - World Press Freedom Day
Eid Ul-Fitr
- 5 - Cinco de Mayo
- 8 - Mother's Day
Buddha Day
- 9 - LWV/ABC Annual Meeting
- 14 - World Fair Trade Day
- 16 - Vesak Day
- 27 - Rachel Carson's Birthday
- 30 - Memorial Day

JUNE

LGBTQ2IA+
PRIDE MONTH

- 5 - World Environment Day
- 10/11 - LWVWI Annual Meeting
- 19 - Juneteenth
Father's Day
- 20 - World Refugee Day
- 21 - Summer Solstice
Litha

OUR VOTER SERVICES

COMMITTEE HAS CONTINUED TO MEET VIRTUALLY THE THIRD FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH. In between, League members and partners have engaged in numerous activities designed to Make Democracy Work!

We are very fortunate that Fred Haueter and Roger Aiken are embarked again on their valued efforts with local information for Vote411.org, the League's online voter guide. Area candidates are invited to upload answers to questions about their reasons for running and their plans if elected. Their responses are posted verbatim and can be a great source of information as voters decide whom to vote for. We hope participation will increase over time. The website is available for candidates at all levels nationwide. Unfortunately, not all choose to participate.

With the help of experienced members and enthusiastic recent recruits to the important work of organizing candidate forums, we have been able to organize virtual and hybrid opportunities for voters to get to know candidates before casting their ballot. Community members submitted questions for candidates before and during the events.

Prior to the February 15 primary we held two virtual forums: The first on February 7 for Ashland mayoral candidates, in collaboration with the Vaughn Public Library ; the second on February 9 for Washburn school board candidates, at the request of a teacher. Our profound gratitude goes out to Joyce Kiel for serving as moderator for both forums, along with Kate Miller and Carolyn Pare who screened questions for Ashland and Washburn respectively. Gary Sherman, now a seasoned timer, served as such for the mayoral forum. With additional member and community involvement we may be able to offer more forums. Do let us know if you would like to join forces with this awesome committee!

We are delighted to have been able to engage two Washburn students, Ellyn Suske-Funk and Sophie Filipczak, to participate as timers for the Washburn school board forum. Neither is eligible to vote yet, but could belong to the League, along with other students, at no cost starting at age 16.

The spring primary election will take place on April 5. If you haven't already, it is possible to request at myvote.wi.gov that absentee ballots be mailed to you throughout the year. The website is also a great place to confirm your registration and to locate your polling place if voting in person. When in doubt, contact your municipal clerk. We thank them for overseeing fair and secure elections!

2021-22 LWV/ABC Board & Committee Members

League of Women Voters Websites:

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

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

Our Website: <https://www.lwvabcwi.org/>

COMMITTEES

Executive Committee

Sue Niemi
President

Roger Aiken
Treasurer

Open
President-Elect

Gail Syverud
Membership

Kate Siegler
Secretary

Communications Committee

Kate Bortell
Website and Social Media

Matt Oestreich
G Suites

Sue Niemi
Email Blasts

Jack Ring
Newsletter

Liz Seefeldt
Bottom Line Liaison

Anne Chartier
Diane Koosed
Editors

Membership Committee

Gail Syverud
Chair

Voter Services Committee

Anne Chartier
Diane Koosed
Co-Chairs

Natural Resources Advocacy Committee

Joan Elias
Chair

Civic Engagement Committee

Bev Lindell
Chair

Inequality Action Committee

Jan Penn
Linda Jorgenson
Co-Chairs

Program & Events Committee

Open Chair

BOARD

Contact the Board at:

info@lwvabcwi.org or

PO Box 175, Ashland, WI 54806

Sue Niemi
President

Open
President-Elect

Roger Aiken
Treasurer

Kate Siegler
Secretary

Barb Bell
Anne Chartier
Joan Elias
Linda Jorgenson
Diane Koosed
Bev Lindell
Jan Penn
Faith Smith
Dee Sweet
Gail Syverud

Finance Committee Open Chair

Roger Aiken
Treasurer

Nominations Committee

Gary Sherman **Chair** Bev Lindell
Board Liaison

Gail Syverud Kay Saari

Something Different cont. from pg. 1

the goal of individuals talking and working together to find common ground to govern ourselves looks imperiled. Now with the threat of an authoritarian national movement to reinterpret our US Constitution as a state's rights document and voter rights under attack, the LWV/ABC feels it is vital to use our rich history of individual and collective civic leadership to fight to hold our communities together and responsibly address our crises – climate change, public health, quality public education, public safety, affordable housing, and economic justice- at the grassroots.

SO, the LWV/ABC Board has voted to restart Unit Meetings this spring. While we hope to meet in person, we are also going to meet virtually when called for. Unit meeting programming will be multi-purpose – for information, for deeper involvement in community affairs, and for socialization. Members and non-members will be welcome to attend; individuals would decide their own level of involvement. Units might choose to invite outside speakers; Units might collaborate on organizing League-wide events. Unit members would be encouraged to attend their local school boards, city councils and county boards to monitor issues. Each Unit would have a member serving on the LWV/ABC Board for oversight and coordination. Unit advocacy activities will require Board endorsement.

If you would like to help, please contact Linda Jorgenson (715) 373-2948 or Bev Lindell (715) 779-5869. Linda has volunteered to put out an invite for a Washburn meeting for February and Bev likewise for Bayfield for early March. Keep your eyes on your Email Inbox.

Voting as Usual Through 2022 Spring

VOTER SERVICES

Voter suppression efforts in our state have included the attempt to limit use of drop boxes for absentee ballot return, and the prohibition of anyone returning someone else's completed ballot. As reported by the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, a stay from a Circuit Court reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Wisconsin will have guaranteed voting as usual at least through February 15.

You can call the Wisconsin Voter Helpline at (608) 285-2141 if you have any questions about voting.



The first batch of bilingual Ojibwe/English Biinjwebinigen/Vote yard signs are available for purchase! The cost is \$15. Please let Anne know at achartiercoates@gmail.com if you would like one delivered to your doorstep!

Fair Courts for Fair Maps

VOTER SERVICES

ON FRIDAY, JANUARY 21, OUR LEAGUE ORGANIZED, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE NONPARTISAN WISCONSIN FAIR MAPS COALITION, ONE OF AT LEAST 16 FAIR COURTS END GERRYMANDERING! GATHERINGS AT COURTHOUSES THROUGHOUT THE STATE AND THE CAPITOL IN MADISON.

We gathered at noon to send a message to the Wisconsin Supreme Court, responsible for deciding what map will be used to determine legislative districts, that we the people of Wisconsin count on them to pick the fairest and least gerrymandered map. You may have seen the small color ad we placed in the Ashland Daily Press and the Northwoods Shopper that week.

Two bullhorns, one purchased for the event and future outdoor gatherings and another lent to us, made it possible to speak out loud and clear in front of the Ashland County Courthouse where we congregated for almost half an hour. President Sue Niemi gave welcoming remarks before a dialogue that explained gerrymandering in simple terms was read.

Over 30 members of our communities withstood that day's frigid temperatures to bear witness to this important issue. The shining sun reflected on the snow-covered lawn as we first formed a circle and then marched up and down the block holding signs and calling out our plea to end gerrymandering.

Attendees were invited to pledge their commitment to vote for candidates who will advocate for fair maps and voting rights in the upcoming elections. We encourage you to do the same!



Speaking Out to End Gerrymandering!



FAIR COURTS END GERRYMANDERING!

RALLY

Friday, Jan. 21, 2022 @ Noon

Outside at
Ashland County Courthouse
201 Main St W, Ashland, WI

Learn more: fairmapswi.com/JanRally

Local contact: koolake@gmail.com

END GERRYMANDERING
EVERY VOTE MUST COUNT



Protect Your Right to Vote!

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?

- Must be US citizen/WI resident
- 18 years of age on election day
- Lived at current address at least 10 days
- Felons: can vote when served term “off paper”

YOU NEED TO RE-REGISTER IF

- You have never registered in Wisconsin
- Address changed since the last time you voted
- Legal name change: go to social security office
- You have not voted in 4 years

ARE YOU STILL REGISTERED TO VOTE?

Online: myvote.wi.gov: “my voter information”

Contact: your municipal clerk

Contact: the WI Election Commission:

866-868-3947 (toll free)

608-266-8005 (direct)

ADDRESS ON DRIVER LICENSE/WI STATE

ID CURRENT?

Update your current address with the DMV

- Update online: [Wisconsindot.gov](https://wisconsindot.gov)
- Go to your local DMV service center (*check hours*)

HOW DO I REGISTER TO VOTE?

Online: myvote.wi.gov

- You need current/valid DL or State ID
- Address problem: contact: Election Commission

Municipal Clerk’s office: (*call them for an appointment*)

- Correct address with DMV prior going to clerk
- If no DL/State ID: take proof of residence
(*All proof of residence must include name and current address:
utility bill, paycheck, bank/credit card statement,
phone bill, etc.*)
- provide last 4 numbers of social security number

Wisconsin State Voter Helpline

(608) 285-2141

Will Return Your Call Within 24 Hours



We Demand Fair Maps!



**Gathered for Fair Maps
Around the Ashland
Courthouse Flagpole**



Youth - The Future Depends on Them!

VOTER SERVICES

LAST FALL we applied for a grant offered by the League of Women Voters Education Fund to engage youth in the voting process. Early this year we were glad to learn that we were awarded \$700 to support our work. We had already decided that our efforts, with or without the grant, would be devoted to reaching out to area students. We know the future of our Democracy depends in great measure on our youth.

It is common knowledge that Civics has been given short shrift in many of our classrooms. This deficiency dates back long before the pandemic, which may explain the lack of participation among so many potential voters and the worrisome efforts to curtail voting rights we are experiencing throughout our country.

We would like to reach

out to students attending Ashland, Bayfield and Sawyer County high schools and colleges. Several principals from area institutions have already granted permission for us to coordinate activities with teachers and their students to organize voter registration drives and candidate forums.

As mentioned in a separate article in this issue, we have already involved a couple of students in a school board candidate forum for the February primary. And fellow students in the Government class they are both taking submitted questions for the candidates. There are many ways of participating civically in our local communities, our states and our nation. One essential way is voting. We plan to engage student leaders in creating their own schools' voter

registration drives. It is our hope that students will inspire their peers to register to vote as soon as they are eligible.

Understanding how school board members, city councilors, county board supervisors, mayors, sheriffs, and all the other nonpartisan and partisan elected officials who make decisions affect our wellbeing is essential to recognizing the value of each and every vote. It is both our right and our responsibility to make sure we elect the best possible candidates. We hope to help area students become engaged in making our democracy work.

We welcome involvement and support from all League members and friends in each community. Please get in touch with either of the Voter Services co-chairs if you would like to participate. If you know students and/or parents of high school students in your area who might like to be part of this project, please check in with them and then share with us their contact information.

Youth cont. on pg. 12

One example of cooperation with other nonpartisan organizations is that we hope to collaborate with League member Dee Sweet, who works with Native Vote and is the current Bayfield Poet Laureate, as we reach out to potential voters in area schools. It is through partnerships that we can help build strong and informed communities!

Related to students of any age in the democracy space, we are particularly pleased that in order to eliminate age bias, the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin, as part of its efforts to implement measures to expand diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) within our organization, is proposing a change to by-laws so a person of any age can become a member.



Ellyn, Timer for Washburn School Board Forum



Sophie, Timer for Washburn School Board Forum