

# The Voice



*The newsletter of the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County*

*Spring 2025*

*Edition*

---

LWVofLC @ gmail.com

860-294-9383

[www.litchfieldlww.org](http://www.litchfieldlww.org)

---

Hello members:

Indulge me while we go back to some basics.

We are a nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering voters. Our members come from all political backgrounds, and while we don't always agree on everything, we are united in our mission to encourage informed participation in our government. We do not endorse candidates, but we advocate for policies that align with our national, state, and local goals.

These national, state and local "positions" come from a process called consensus. After study, the membership reviews the outcome of the study and engages in a meaningful discussion.

Our national League has taken on a yearlong Judicial Study and is now looking for and counting on feedback from Leagues across the county. As part of the study, we are to watch a video before considering and discussing 12 statements presented to us from the Judicial Study group. Our response enables the LWVUSA to develop a position.

We will undertake a Judicial Consensus meeting on April 2 at 7pm in Christ Church Hall in Bethlehem. Come to this meeting to participate and learn about how your local League informs our national parent organization. We'll also consider where we are to put our energies in the year ahead, especially regarding municipal elections.

Hope to see you there, or at another one of the events coming up.



Democracy Is NOT a Spectator Sport,  
Denise Butwill, President

---

**Monthly Planning Meetings, 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month**  
**Litchfield Community Center**  
**9:30 am, in person and on Zoom**  
**Watch your email for agenda and zoom link**

---

## Opportunities for education and socialization

---

Please join us for one or both of these events!

**RSVP to [LWVofLC@gmail.com](mailto:LWVofLC@gmail.com)**

Thank you!

Both events will be a chance to learn & socialize. No homework for the first program - some prep work requested for the Judicial Study (a very worthwhile Youtube video to listen to - see link below). Wine, tea, seltzer & snacks provided.



### **Ben and Deborah Reed Franklin!**

*Not your typical love story.*

**Thursday**

**March 27th, 2025**

**7:00pm**

Patti Hamaguchi will give us an intriguing presentation  
on our Founding Father and his wife.

**MEMBERS & GUESTS ONLY**

Location will be determined by the number of people that respond. This may be in a member's home, or at the Christ Church Hall in Bethlehem. We will send the location to all that **RSVP** to [LWVofLC@gmail.com](mailto:LWVofLC@gmail.com)



**Wednesday, April 2nd at 7:00pm**

Christ Church Hall in Bethlehem

All members are encouraged to attend.

This is the process our LWVUSA uses to come up with positions.

**Your homework: Watch the National Town Hall on the Federal Judiciary sponsored by LWVUSA here:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o0gEKqafpg4>**.

Everything you ever wanted to know about a League study

**<https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2025-01/STUDY%20GUIDE%20FOR%20LEAGUES%20FINAL1.pdf>**

Our national League has taken on a yearlong Judicial Study and is now looking for and counting on feedback from Leagues across the county. As part of the study, we are to consider and discuss 12 statements presented to us from the Judicial Study group. Our response enables the LWVUSA to develop a position.

---

## 2025 Elaine Landau Memorial Scholarship

---



The league is sponsoring a \$1000 scholarship, with the purpose of encouraging the active participation of youth in the American political process, and in service to their community, both now and in the future. This year our scholarship will be given in memory of Elaine Landau, a founding member of the Litchfield League of Women Voters.

**Award:** \$1000 to be used towards the cost of a post secondary education or career training program.

The winner's essay will be published on the League website and they will be invited to read their essay at our annual meeting in June. A written essay on **what it means to be an informed voter, and why you believe it is important**. The essay should be under 500 words, solely written by the applicant, and should not include any content generated by artificial intelligence tools.

**Eligibility:** Any senior student, enrolled in a Litchfield County public high school, who has been accepted into a post secondary education or training program

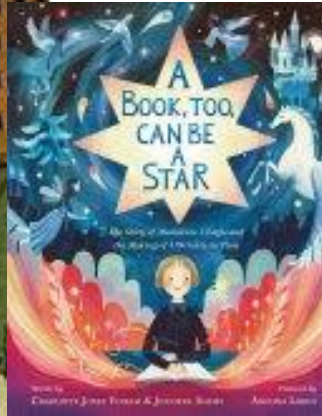
**The 2025 application deadline is April 20th, 2025**

All applications will be reviewed and winners chosen by a committee composed of members of the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County. The full application can be found on the front page of the website and [here](#).

---

## Save the Dates

---



### ***A Conversation with Charlotte Jones Voikli***

*A League member, a local author  
and the granddaughter of local  
author Madeleine L'Engle, author  
of "A Wrinkle in Time"*

**Saturday, April 26th 2025**

A Fundraiser for our  
Education Fund

Details to Come!



### **Annual Meeting Wednesday, June 2025**

Litchfield Community Center  
6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

An opportunity for current and  
potential new members  
to connect and learn about  
the League of Women Voters



---

## Our Most Recent Program and Events

---

### Light 4 Our Democracy



The LWV USA and LWV CT encouraged League across the county to participate in MARCH 4<sup>th</sup> rallies.

Our League sponsored an event on the Litchfield Green at 8:30 on Tuesday, March 4, 2025. We had approximately 125 concerned citizens from across Litchfield County gather on the Litchfield Green.

Each demonstration was asked to start at 8:30pm, to include candle light, and a moment of silence at 9:00pm.



Thank you [The Kent Dispatch](#) for this coverage. It was an honor to gather with voters of different political parties, or with no party affiliation. All voters that are concerned that our Republic is not living up to its democratic ideals and that our U.S. Constitution and system of government are being abused.

[#Light4Democracy](#)

This event was covered by the [Kent Dispatch](#).

---

# 2025 Legislative Breakfast

---



A few highlights from the discussion

## Energy Costs & Related Issues

- Jay Case wants to remove public benefit charges from Eversource bills, funding them through the state budget, and supports a solar energy bill (HB 5536).
- Joe Canino advocates for increased reliance on natural gas and nuclear energy as reliable power sources.
- Paul Honig shared that the \$600 million Millstone expenses will be paid off in April, leading to lower utility bills in May. He also supports performance-based regulations for utility

companies and exploring geothermal energy.

## Housing

The state's housing shortage, including the need for low-income housing and shelters, should be addressed by local zoning boards rather than state regulations. The state can help by offering incentives to towns and cities near mass transit to build affordable housing. With state funds—potentially \$300 million—available for affordable housing and wrap-around services, this could help attract workers and retain young families.

## Other Key Issues

- **Early Childhood Care:** Focus on addressing challenges faced by ALICE families and funding gaps in emergency shelters.
- **Early Voting:** Shifting costs to municipalities, with discussions about reducing the voting period from two weeks to one.
- **IDD Funding:** Increased support needed for group homes serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

## Additional Highlights

- Joe Canino supports creating a special needs school in Torrington to reduce transportation costs for out-of-district students.
- Paul Honig is working on legislation (HB 6909, HB 687) to protect veterans from scams.
- Jay Case emphasized prioritizing people over projects.

Visit the CGA website to watch bills at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/>

This event was covered by [LitchfieldBZ](#)

**Thank you to everyone that helped make our 2025 Legislative Breakfast a success**

In the words of Judi's grandsons – *Team work makes the dream work.*



---

## Winter Breakfast Meeting

---

Jackie's Restaurant in Bantam  
Friday, January 10, 2025, 9:30am



Left – right: Diane Ryan, Kris Durante, Christine Horrigan, Denise Butwill, Faye Tway-Grant, Margorie Hubbard, Marie Pettibone, Meredith Penfield, Erin Strouse (our photographer, inserted)

### Winter Breakfast at Jackie's What did we learn? One of these ladies:

- Wants to get arrested for a cause
- Just returned from a solo cruise
- Is a math teacher and an artist
- Found herself unexpectedly president of a Florida League
- Discovered the League while working at the public library
  - Was recruited by Judi Armstrong
  - Lived in Boston
- Is often babysitting her grandson during our meeting times.
- Moved to the area because it was affordable! ... many years ago!



## Election Season Wrap Up

**Yes for Absentee Voting!**

This fall, Connecticut voters will see a question on the ballot:

"Shall the Constitution of the State be amended to permit the General Assembly to allow each voter to vote by absentee ballot?"

YES	NO
A "yes" vote supports authorizing our State Legislature to make absentee voting available to ALL eligible CT voters for any reason.	A "no" vote opposes any changes, keeping language in the Constitution that requires a voter to list a specific reason (out of 6) to qualify for an absentee ballot.

**Your vote matters**

Early Voting: Oct. 21- Nov 5  
Election Day: November 5

Visit [MyVote.CT.gov](http://MyVote.CT.gov) to register and find your polling place.

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CONNECTICUT

- **200 Postcards Sent** to newly registered voters to encourage a **Yes** vote for No Excuse Absentee balloting. This measure passed!
- **Over 100** College Students **registered** at 6 Voter registration drives/ Naugatuck Valley Community College / EdAdvance / Northwest Community College



- **Debate - Canino and Cook** – 200 in attendance and 479 Youtube views.
- **Debate - Harding and Potter** – 150 in attendance – 74 Youtube views.
- **No Excuses!** A voter education program held in partnership with the Litchfield Community Center and the Secretary of the States Office  
<https://lakevillejournal.com/fate-of-no-excuse-absentee-voting-to-be-decided-on-november-ballot>
- **Vote Today** / Early Voting **signs** out in Litchfield/Milton/Torrington/ Goshen

- LWV of LC - ***Don't Get Wrapped Up in Excuses*** – Mummy Scarecrow visited the Tapping Reeve Meadow in October.

- **Voter Information**

**Regions 20, Tuesday, December 3 referendum**

[Circulated fact sheet](#)

Contacted Superintendents office to have the Referendum added to the school calendar.

- **Advocacy**

Thanks in part to letters and other communications from CT League members our US Congresswomen Jahana Hayes, removed her support for H.R. 9495, the *Stop Terror-Financing and Tax Penalties on American Hostages Act*

[CT insider article](#)

---

## **Remembering Ella Grasso**

---

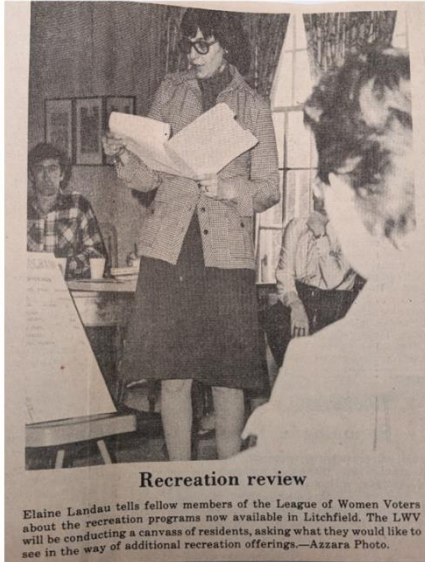
Denise Butwill and Kris Durante attended the ceremony celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the inauguration of Connecticut Governor Ella Grasso. This event sponsored the League of Women Voters of CT highlighted:

- Ella Grasso was a member of the League of Women Voters before becoming Governor
- The Freedom of Information ACT, FOI, signed into office by Governor Grasso early in her term, was ground breaking legislation that passed both chambers unanimously! Remember this was on the heels of Vietnam and Watergate.
- First Female Governor in the State, First Female Governor in the country elected to office without replacing her husband.

---

## Saying Good-Bye

---



Founding member, **Elaine Landau** died in November of 2024 at the age of 94.

Elaine was a founding member of the Litchfield League of Women Voters in 1969.

During this time when we were still a provisional

league, she served on the membership committee. In 1971 she served as the Vice President and on the Voter Service Committee. Pictured here in 1976 reporting on the finding of the Recreation Study Group which she and Tina Bernacki served on. More recently Elaine was the gracious host of our Annual Old Board/ New Board meetings where we would finish the meeting with a swim in her pool. Marie Wallace (white shirt) and Elaine (green shirt) are pictured here at such a meeting.

This year our scholarship will be given out in Elaine's memory. Please consider making a donation to the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County Education Fund in Elaine's memory. Donations can be made online <https://litchfieldlwv.org/donate> or by mailing a check to League of Women Voters of Litchfield County, P.O. Box 899, Litchfield, CT. 06759



A dear friend and member of our League, **Kathy Thompson** died on Friday, 3/7/25.

Kathy and her husband Walter joined the League in 2011. Kathy was an active participant of the Voter Services team, working with Kerry, Laura and Pat to register voters at various community events over the years. Kathy and Walter were also frequent donors to our Education Fund.

These two fine ladies will be missed.



---

## AP STRINGER

---



Thank you! Because you travelled to polling locations at 8pm on election night and called in the numbers to the Associated Press we have earned \$1,015

Wonderful!

---

## Member Spotlight

---

----- Welcome to our New Members -----



**Mimi Madden** (New Hartford) - I've been grateful to live in beautiful Litchfield County for over 35 years, raising my kids in Barkhamsted and then living more recently in New Hartford. I've worked in the nonprofit sector for 25 years, mainly in the arts, first at Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, and currently for many years at the American Mural Project in Winsted. I'm delighted to get involved with LWV as a way to bring more awareness to the value of our democracy in this country. Thanks for suggesting it, Charlotte!



**Erika Hofgesang** (Litchfield) - I'm a creative writer working in advertising, and my husband's job brought us to Litchfield just over a year ago. While I've always been politically-inclined, it was my husband's six-year journey to citizenship and our work raising guide dogs for folks with low vision that opened our eyes further (no pun intended) to the stark inequalities that exist in the US today. When I'm not writing, reading, or playing with puppies, you can find me painting, snuggling our cat Noodle, or desperately trying to keep my sourdough starter alive.

**Jeannine Lupo** (Litchfield) - **Carolyn Casey** (Kent) - **Jennine Lupo** (Litchfield) -  
**Kay Ellen Consolver** (Litchfield) - **Deborah Rodenberg** (New Hartford) - **Jennifer Judge** (Roxbury) -  
**Theresa Kujawski** (Goshen) - **Sarah Nasshan** (Torrington) - **Anita Holmes** (Norfolk) - **Sunday Fisher** (Sherman) - **Angela Palner** (Waterbury) - **Renee Betar** (Litchfield) & **Tonya Vitti**

**We come from all over Litchfield County and beyond!**



---

## Thank you

---

- to everyone that donated to the Education Fund:  
Denise Butwill, Kay E Consolver, Christine Horrigan, Kerry McKeon, the Neag Family, Candy Perez and Diane Ryan
- to new member Kris Durrant for texting new voters that wanted reminders on election day.
- to Margret Hunt, Renee Betar for taking photos at the Light4Democracy rally.
- to first year member Jeff Boyd for scheduling 5/7 voter registration drives this past fall.

---

## A Call for Helping Hands

---

If you have read this far you are more informed and dedicated to our League than most.  
Our Board / planning group needs your help.

**Membership:** response to emails from new members. Sets up registration tables at events. Helps plan a gathering of members to get to know the League each year.

**Newsletter Editor:** collects information from emails and news articles and creates a newsletter three times a year to capture what we're done. Fall / Winter / Spring

**Voter Services Debate Coordinator:** helps determine what races we will follow in the fall. What debates we should host?

**Voter Services Registration Coordinator:** Contacts the local community colleges and set up times and dates to the League to be on campus registering students to vote. Recruits' helpers from our ranks, and buys candy so our table will be popular.

**411 coordinators:** 411 is an online voter service guide provided to us by LWVUSA. Populating it requires us to get the cooperation of those running for office. This fall will be municipal elections. What races should we cover in your town?

**Advocacy:** Alerts club members to bills that we should contact our legislators about.

**Member at Large:** You are a voting member of the board with no responsibilities. Help out where you can as you learn more about how we work.

Please consider taking on one of these roles! Many thanks, Denise

---

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/LitchfieldLWV/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/lwvoflc/>

View our League Google Calendar, perhaps add it to your own calendar,  
<https://calendar.google.com/calendar/u/0?cid=bHd2b2ZsY0BnbWFpbC5jb20>

## Newsletter Feedback

We value your feedback! Please send any comments, suggestions, or contributions for the next newsletter to [LWVofLC@gmail.com](mailto:LWVofLC@gmail.com) If you found an error – Great! You may be the proofreader we’ve been looking for.

## About Us

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization dedicated to encouraging informed and active participation in government.

**Copyright © 2025 League of Women Voters of Litchfield County. All rights reserved.**

---