

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF LITCHFIELD COUNTY

THE VOICE



Newsletter for the LWVLC Fall 2025 Edition

Edited by: Erika Hofgesang

A Note from our VP, Charlotte Jones Voiklis:

What Does It Mean to Be “Local” in the League of Women Voters?

“At our League meeting in October, we found ourselves in a spirited discussion about whether our local League should promote the **“No Kings” protests**, which the state and national Leagues have endorsed.

The conversation was not about whether the League is political—of course it is. That is the very reason we exist. For more than a century, the League has worked for voting rights, civil rights, fair representation, and enfranchisement. These are political goals. The fact that some people today might mislabel them as “partisan” does not make them any less central to the health of our democracy. If anything, it reminds us why we must remain forthright and energetic in defending them.

The question for us locally was different: what is the role of a small-town League? Many of us see our primary responsibility as being a **trusted organization**—one where neighbors across the political spectrum can come for accurate information and honest dialogue. Others feel strongly that our presence should always align directly with League positions, even when that means standing shoulder-to-shoulder in protest. The truth is, some of our members will choose to attend the “No Kings” protests. And that’s as it should be.” (continued page 2)

(con't) “There are other civic groups in town whose mission is more squarely focused on activism; **Our particular local League’s mission is to encourage informed participation in our democracy.**

This tension isn’t unique to our chapter. At the national level, League leadership has been criticized for both sponsoring “No Kings” and declining to support Governor Newsom’s redistricting proposal in California. To some, these decisions seem contradictory; to others, they reflect the challenge of leading a movement that is both political and nonpartisan.

What matters most to us locally is that we don’t shy away from these debates. Wrestling with questions of role, strategy, and identity is part of our democratic DNA. And the richness of our League is that we can do so while also rolling up our sleeves for the work at hand:

- **Hosting candidate forums** so voters can hear directly from those seeking to represent them.
- **Leading voter registration drives** at schools, libraries, and community events.
- **Studying local issues**—from education to land use to environmental policy—and sharing what we learn.
- **Exploring new programs** to engage younger voters and broaden civic participation.”

There is much more we’d like to do—and this is where you come in. Our League’s work depends on the time, ideas, and energy of members and neighbors who care about democracy in practice, not just in principle



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Right now, we're especially looking for:

- **Town Ambassadors** – members who help us stay connected with towns across our county, local boards, and candidates running for office. They put up fliers for events, Vote Today signs, and share events on town's social media forums. They also assist with Vote411 in odd number years.
- **Voter Services Committee members** – help organize community college registration drives, candidate forums, and public information sessions.
- **Program Planners** – members to help track down speakers, locations and community partners for our programs.
- **Regional School Board Study Coordinator** – our League is going to take a look at how the state statutes define how regional school boards operate. Answering questions like: Why is there no need for minority representation, when are elections held, who can run, how do they declare themselves, and more.
- **Publicity** – members to help us design fliers, create press releases, and coordinate with our social media team.

Because democracy is not a spectator sport—it depends on participation. And every one of us has a role to play.”

— **Charlotte Jones Voiklis,**
LWVLC Vice President

Opportunities for Involvement

2026 Legislative Breakfast

Are you interested in volunteering or bringing a dish to share? This message is for you! Please reach out to Diane Ryan or Denise if you are interested in helping organize or working with hospitality.

We hope to see you there, don't forget to bring your coffee cup!

Thank you to Kris Durante for inviting our state legislators.

Annual Legislative Breakfast



Open League Positions



An easy way to get more involved in your community in 2026: **take on a LWVLC role!**

Giving your time and talent is a direct way to fight for democracy, at a time when it is being challenged. **Our league is looking for support in publicity, social media, and membership.**

Please reach out to Denise if you are interested.



Renewal Reminder!

Anyone that joined the League more than a year ago is due to renew their membership.

Starting in January 2025 we went to rolling membership.

Log into the LWV portal to check on your expiration date, or to renew your membership. If you would rather renew by check there are directions on our website.

Upcoming Events

Register for all upcoming events, buy tickets, and find more information at <https://litchfieldlww.org/upcoming>.

The U. S. Constitution, a community read and discussion **Wednesday, December 3rd at 6:30pm**

In celebration of America's 250th anniversary, the LWVLC and the Litchfield Historical Society are excited to invite the community to read and reflect on the U.S. Constitution. Join moderators Ben Solnit and Richard Quay for a facilitated conversation to provide historical context, answer questions, and engage in respectful dialogue about our nation's founding document.

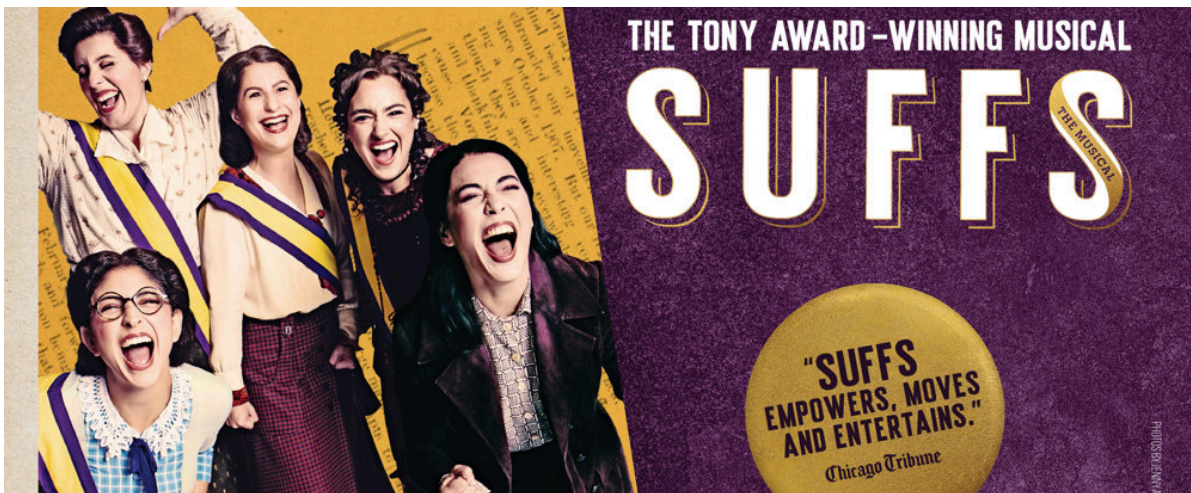
See SUFFS the musical at the Bushnell in Hartford **Saturday, January 31st 2026 at 2pm**

Direct from Broadway, comes the Tony Award-winning musical Suffs about the brilliant, passionate, and funny American women who fought tirelessly for the right to vote. We have 20 front mezzanine tickets available for \$150 each. Tickets are first-come-first-served, and we are working on organizing group transport.

2026 Legislative Breakfast

Saturday, February 28th 9:30- noon at Camp Coch

Join our local legislators in showing how bipartisan cooperation and dialogue are the bedrock of CT's functioning democracy. Tickets are free but registration is requested.



Past Event Recaps

Voter Registration Drives

As local elections approached, we held registration drives in August and September at Naugatuck Valley Community College. We celebrated Constitution Day, educated voters on local election dates and processes, and helped folks register to vote.



Scarecrows in the Meadow

Did you catch us at the Litchfield Historical Society's 6th annual Scarecrows in the Meadow? We joined families, businesses, and other local organizations in creating scarecrows for display in the Tapping Reeve Meadow. **Our "Unsinkable Maggie Brown" was a joy to create!** Special thanks to our board and Faye Tway-Grant for her artistry!





A bit more on The Unsinkable "Maggie" Brown...

After a trip to visit the Molly Brown House and Museum in Denver, CO our board member Erika returned with stories and photos that inspired this year's scarecrow. Check out some of the exhibit photos above!

Read our entry for Scarecrows in the Meadow:

You might know her as the "Unsinkable Molly Brown" but Margaret "Maggie" Brown, born 1867, was a hero of the Titanic, prolific suffragette, philanthropist, and avid writer during the time of the gold rush. In 1912 when the Titanic hit an iceberg, Maggie jumped into action. She saved lives by organizing lifeboat evacuations and after being thrown overboard into a lifeboat herself, was one of the only women who knew how to row to safety.

Maggie spoke French, Italian, German, and Russian (and possibly some Gaelic) and loved entertaining with stories of her travels. Her education helped her speak out against unjust systems and inequalities, and after the Titanic sinking, she advocated and raised money for victims and their families.

Colorado was the first state to pass women's suffrage in 1894 and as a voter with progressive views on equality, Maggie joined the fight for national suffrage and even ran her own campaign for Senate in 1914! We honor her fighting spirit by protecting and expanding voting rights and ensuring everyone is represented in our democracy.

2025 Debates and Forums

Goshen Forum

On October 2, the candidates for Goshen First Selectman Seth Breakell and Todd Carusillo answered questions submitted by voters on topics ranging from speed cameras to affordable housing to Library Board administration and more.



Litchfield Debate

On October 14, the candidates for Litchfield First Selectperson Denise Raap and Bill Zampaglione debated the best approach to address affordable housing and public safety, among other issues. Special thanks to our moderator Dale Jones from WZBG.



Torrington Forum

On October 21, the Torrington Mayoral candidates answered questions submitted by voters on a range of topics. Special thanks to our TorringtonHS student timers Jack Messenger, Kailyn Castllo, Nathan Pepler, and Ella Le for their assistance.



Don't miss a minute of the action

All debates and forums were streamed live on Youtube and are publicly available on our channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@LWVofLC/streams>

Thank you Litchfield County!

We'd like to extend our thanks to all who attended and submitted questions for this year's forums and debates. At the top of every event we make it clear: candidate participation isn't easy, and we require respect. We truly appreciate all of our wonderful audience participation and commitment to remaining quiet and polite! Thank you!



Vote411

This year we collected data for 15 of the 26 towns in Litchfield County! Vote411 is a digital platform that creates easy-to-use voter guides. League members collected information on candidates for local elections, and candidates were then invited to update their profile. Even if candidates don't add information to their profile, voters still get to see who is running for local office by simply inputting their address.



We each have the power to increase voter turnout. Make sure your friends and family are registered to vote.

VOTE 411
ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED



And a final, huge thank you to all of our community volunteers, but especially board member Patti Hamaguchi!

Patti was instrumental in organizing the run of show, collecting questions, and moderated both the Goshen and Torrington forums. She ensured each event was equitable and enjoyable for all!

Newsletter Feedback

We value your feedback! Please send any comments, suggestions, or contributions for the next newsletter to Erika at ehofgesang@yahoo.com or our club email, LWVofLC@gmail.com

Follow us

Website: <https://litchfieldlwv.org>

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>

About Us

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

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