



THE VOICE



Newsletter for the LWVLC Summer 2026 Edition

A Note from our President Denise Butwill:

What do the Connecticut Secretary of the State's Office, Third Act, Out in the Corner, the Torrington Schools Theater Arts Program, a concerned Torrington citizen, and Professor Lindsay Cormack all have in common?

Each has partnered with the League of Women Voters of Litchfield County to help strengthen our democracy by increasing voter participation—especially among young voters.

This issue is front and center in this newsletter. I encourage you to read the essay by this year's scholarship winner, Mia DiRocco, who thoughtfully explores the connection between low youth voter turnout and the limited number of young people serving in elected office. Her essay reminds us that participation matters and that today's young voters are tomorrow's leaders.

At our Spring Tea, political science professor Lindsay Cormack, author of *How to Raise a Citizen (And Why It's Up to You to Do It)* spoke about the decline of civics education in our public schools and the important role families and communities play in preparing engaged citizens.

She more recently shared her newest initiative, the podcast Government That Doesn't Suck, which encourages thoughtful, respectful conversations about civic life.

Our community partnerships continue to grow. Third Act member Jeff Boyd joined the League to access resources that would help register students at community colleges. The Connecticut Secretary of the State's Office is partnering with our League to promote its America 250 civics education initiative, Flat Roger. Out in the Corner invited us to register voters at its annual Pride Preview event in Torrington. The Torrington Schools Theater Arts Program welcomed us to partner during its dramatic reading of the Declaration of Independence, where we will register voters and introduce attendees to Flat Roger.

Most inspiring of all, a concerned Torrington resident recently contacted us to ask whether, if they organized a voter registration drive at Northwestern Connecticut Community College, the League would be there to help. The answer was an enthusiastic yes! Like so many of us, this community member recognizes the importance of engaging young voters and is willing to take action.

These partnerships and shared commitments reflect both the League's mission and our local priorities for 2026–2027. We are grateful to have so many organizations and individuals working alongside us—and we are grateful to have you as part of this journey.

Together, each of us can help foster informed, active civic participation in our communities. Healthy democracy depends on citizens who are engaged, informed, and willing to participate. That work has never been more important.

Democracy Is Not a Spectator Sport.

Thank you for all you do.

Denise Butwill
President, League of Women Voters of Litchfield County



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We've defended democracy for
106 YEARS



We're not stopping now. **LWV**



YOUR 26-28 LWVLC BOARD



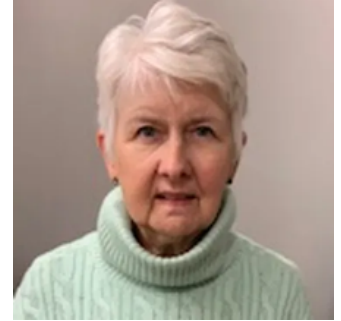
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**Beth Whalen, MD,
Director-at-Large**

**Welcome to our
newest members!**



**Kay Ellen Consolver,
Director-at-Large**

Looking to get involved? Look no further!

We are always looking for additional support, especially in small and specific ways.

If you are interested in learning more about the following, reach out to charlottejv@gmail.com

Voter Services
Town Ambassador
Membership & Outreach
Advocacy

Upcoming Events

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



Voter Registration Drives

Primary and midterm elections are just around the corner, and we will be busy registering voters, making VOTE TODAY signs, and hosting candidate forums. Please reach out if you're interested!

Wednesday July 8th at 6pm

Coe Park, Torrington

Live Declaration of Independence reading

Saturday August 8th 10am- 1pm

Litchfield Farmer's Market

League of Women Voter's National Day of Action

Wednesday August 26th

Naugatuck Valley Community College

Wednesday October 7th

Naugatuck Valley Community College

Upcoming Events

[Election Night AP Reporting](#)
[August 11 and or November 3](#)
[Sign up here](#)

[This is both a fundraiser and a way to make sure election results get reported quickly to the Associated Press.](#)

[Election Volunteer duties:](#)

[Arrive at your polling places by 8pm. Identify yourself as a stringer for the AP and wait until the election numbers are ready. The numbers are then read out and posted. As an AP stringer, you will call our contact and report the numbers.](#)

[The League earns \\$75 for each polling place that we cover!](#)



New General Member Meetings

Join us at the Litchfield Community Center from 7-9pm for NEW General Member Meetings! We'll have fun chatting, snacking, and discussing plans.

- September 9, 2026
- December 9, 2026
- March 10, 2027

Past Event Recaps

Spring Tea & Scholarship Fundraiser

In March, Dr. Lyndsey Cormack presented at our Spring Tea fundraiser, sharing the research and themes covered in her book "How to Raise a Citizen" and why civics education is so crucial in America today. Thanks to our hospitality team, we enjoyed tea and delicious nibbles. And thanks to your generosity, we donated 19 copies of Dr. Cormack's book to local libraries in Litchfield county! PC: North Star Photography



Donated in 2026 by the
LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS'
OF LITCHFIELD COUNTY

in an effort to protect and expand voting rights by supporting a well-informed community.

Democracy is not a spectator sport. Here's to raising the next generation of empowered voters.



<https://litchfieldlwv.org/>

Spring Tea & Scholarship Fundraiser



Our Trip to Hartford

In the spring, members of our club visited the capitol for a presentation of "She's Got to Make This Work: Ella and the Constitution".



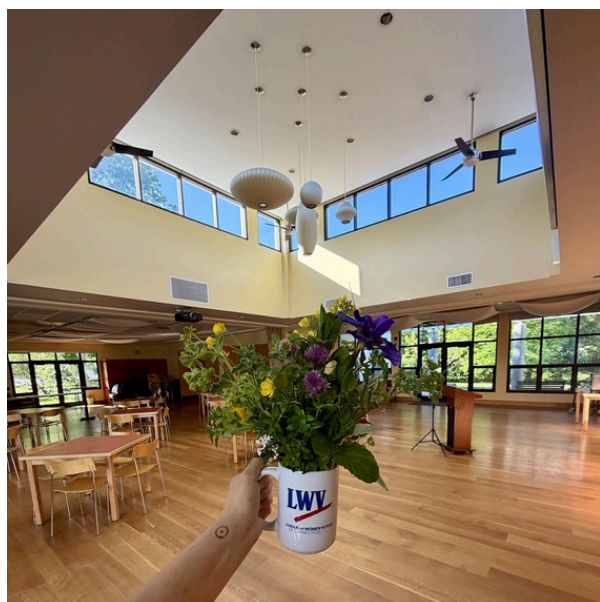
Steal This Story, Please!



Over the summer, a group of league members gathered for a screening of "Steal This Story, Please!" a documentary detailing the life and work of Amy Goodman, and the media landscape today. We enjoyed the film, as well as supporting local nonprofit, Bantam Cinema.

Annual Meeting and Scholarship Announcement

During our Annual Meeting in June we welcomed three new Directors-at-Large, shared our scholarship winner's essay, played civics trivia, and planned our year ahead. Special thanks to Diane Ryan and all who supported the hospitality spread!

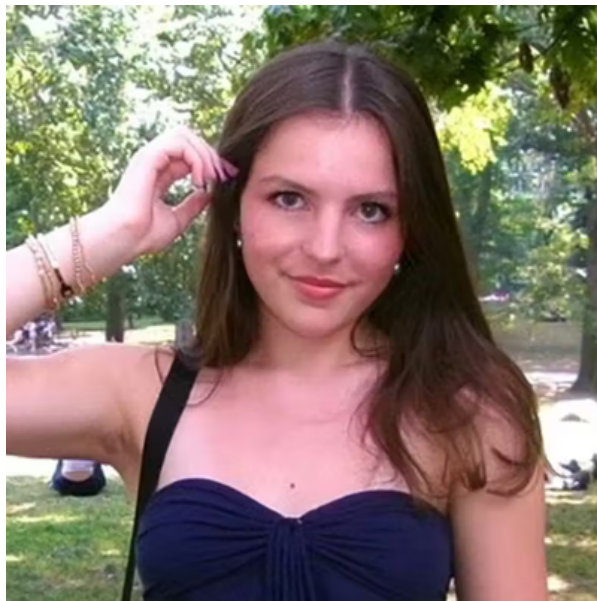


Annual Meeting and Scholarship Announcement

At our Annual Meeting we announced our 2026 scholarship winner Mia DiRocco. Mia's essay "The Case for Voting" was selected after careful review of dozens of entries, and we were thrilled to award the \$1000 prize to this talented Housatonic Valley Regional Highschool Senior! Mia will be heading to Northwestern University this fall and we wish her luck in this exciting new adventure.

Read a small excerpt of Mia's essay below, and [find the full piece in our website here.](#)

"My generation is under the impression that our votes do not matter, but that could not be farther from the truth. As I prepare to register to vote this summer, I have begun to understand that this choice is much bigger than myself."



"It Wasn't That Long Ago..."

One of the interesting aspects of our local League is the age diversity amongst our members. We are multi-generational with folks in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s and beyond! At a recent meeting, our longstanding members shared that many of the rights and privileges we enjoy today (and even take for granted) didn't exist in their adolescence and adulthood.

We were inspired to **invite members to share their "it wasn't that long ago when.." stories** to pay homage to the hard-fought and hard-won progress.

Women in the Workplace

Job discrimination tactics are not new; they are deeply woven into the fabric of our culture. As we mark 250 years since this country first fought for freedom, nearly 160 years since the Civil War ended the evils of slavery, and over a century since women won the right to vote, the scales of equality remain out of balance.

My own journey in the workforce has seen its share of unjust practices. I came of age during the era of feminism championed by figures like

Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. Their momentum carried me forward; I truly believed I could do anything, go anywhere, and "have it all." However, looking back reveals a starker reality of how much work remained (and still remains) to be done.

I married at eighteen, just days before my husband reported to the draft office. It was 1963; the war in Vietnam was intensifying, JFK was campaigning for a second term, and the era of "Camelot" was about to reach an abrupt, tragic end.

As a newlywed, I knew we both needed to work hard to achieve the American Dream. Though I was still a college student, I had good credentials and excellent references. I confidently applied for a lab technician role at a local pharmaceutical company. The interview proceeded perfectly until the head scientist looked me over. Without hesitation, he told me he would not hire me because, as a newly married woman, I was "likely to get pregnant." He claimed he would be wasting his time training me.



I was stunned. (It would not be until the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 that such a dismissal became unlawful.) I left feeling humiliated and angry, but at the time, there was no recourse. I wasn't just denied a well-paying job with benefits; I was categorized as an "undesirable hire" simply because of my gender and marital status. In those years, most women who became pregnant were forced to leave their jobs with no hope of being rehired.

Numerous factors continue to hinder women in the workforce: ageism, racial bias, financial inequity, and pay disparity. I have felt these obstacles personally. I was once told I appeared "too feminine" for a role because I wore a pink dress to the interview. Later in my career, I sensed the cold shoulder of ageism when I found myself significantly older than the rest of a prospective staff.

Notable legislative milestones include:

- 1963 Equal Pay Act: Mandated equal pay for equal work.
- 1964 Civil Rights Act: Prohibited discrimination based on gender, race, religion, or national origin.
- 1965 Griswold v. Connecticut: The Supreme Court ruled that banning contraceptives violated the right to marital privacy.
- 1972 Eisenstadt v. Baird: Extended the right to birth control to unmarried individuals.
- 1974 Equal Credit Opportunity Act (ECOA): Granted women the right to obtain loans and credit cards in their own names without a male co-signer.

I remember the sting of that last one personally. When my husband and I bought a house in 1965, I couldn't have my name on the deed or mortgage because I was under 21. It took a reminder from my mother once I "came of age" to finally get my name legally attached to my own home!

Times remain tough, and the labor market is shifting. While we have come far since that lab technician interview in 1963, women still have many "firsts" to accomplish and many scales yet to balance.

Current statistics as of 2024/2025:

- Women still earn approximately 84 cents for every dollar earned by men.
- For Black women, that gap is wider, at roughly 69 cents, and for Hispanic women, it is approximately 57 cents.

Progress moves slowly, but the wheels of justice do grind forward.

— Marie Pettibone

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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