



# THE VOTER      FEBRUARY 2023 NEWSLETTER

## WELCOME TO LWVB'S FIRST NEWSLETTER!

The newsletter will supplement the web site with short updates for LWVB members.

**\*\*JOIN THE BLOOMINGTON LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2023! \*\***

The cost of membership has not gone up since 2020 and is tax deductible. The information you need is on the web site on the RENEW/JOIN page.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

LWVB is active all year. We have fun registering voters, creating, and distributing voter information, conducting candidate forums, and sponsoring events such as the Civics Bee contest for students. You can volunteer for a few hours, a few days, or join an even longer initiative.

The Voter Registration Outreach and Program Committees are looking for co-leads. If you are interested, please email us at [lwvbloomington@lwvmn.org](mailto:lwvbloomington@lwvmn.org)



LWVB – Empowering the Voter

### LOOKING AHEAD

**State-wide events: More detail is available at <https://www.lwvmn.org/>. Note that you need to register for each of these at EVENTS you wish to attend.**

**“Making Democracy Work,”** Professor David Schulz, Saturday, February 4, 8:45 – 10:30 on Zoom. Dr. Schulz is a national expert on election law, professional ethics, state constitutional law and eminent domain and land use law. He has multiple advanced degrees.

**“Citizenship Ceremony,”** Thursday, February 16, 9:30AM – 4:30PM. St. Paul River Centre, 175 Kellogg Blvd West, Saint Paul, 55102.

Citizenship ceremonies are the culmination of the naturalization process and are a momentous and celebratory time for all involved! For over 30 years, the League of Women Voters Minnesota, the US Federal Court System,

and US Customs and Immigration Services have worked together to host these milestone ceremonies for Minnesota's newest citizens, more recently swearing in 1000 people per ceremony. <https://www.lwvmn.org/>

**Restorative Justice – What Is It? Can a Restorative Justice approach break the cycle of repeat offenders in the justice system?**

Tuesday, February 21, 7:00PM to 8:00PM on Zoom. John Choi, Ramsey County Attorney, will define the concept and discuss restorable practices in Ramsey County. Two additional experts will discuss their work with adults and juveniles in Minneapolis and Hennepin County.

## RECENT EVENTS

**Member meeting January 3:** LWVB reviewed and provided feedback to a draft of the **LWVMN Firearms Position Consensus Report**. You may read the report on the state web site at <https://www.lwvmn.org/member-resources>

**Reproductive Rights.** January 12, Val Jensen, J.D. spoke on reproductive rights. **Jensen is an expert on leadership, diversity-related issues, and healthcare disparities nationally and international.**

**“Lobby for the Future: A Climate Day at the Capitol,”** January 24 and January 25  
Multiple organizations including the LWVB joined the 100% Campaign and grassroots leaders across MN in leveraging the opportunity to win a bold and equitable clean transition in MN. Participants received a brief training on how to lobby their legislators in support of the 100% clean energy bill.



LWVB members at Climate Day at the Capitol:  
Lois Norrgard, John Crampton, Marcia Wattson.



## **We Choose Us Pro-Democracy Agenda Launch:**

January 17 at the State Capitol Rotunda. Some members joined the We Choose Us coalition for a rally and press conference with elected and community leaders from more than a dozen partner organizations across Minnesota. This was an opportunity to establish relationships in our Democracy (not Democrat – we are non-partisan) priority, engage our legislators and implement our strategy to pass needed policies this session.

## **Bloomington's City-Wide Civics Bee**



The Championship took place in the City Council Chambers of Bloomington Civic Plaza. Nine 7<sup>th</sup> grade finalists from Oak Grove, Olson, and Valley View Middle Schools participated. During this final competition, Mayor Tim Busse moderated as student contestants were tested on a broad range of topics related to civics. After many rounds of questions, Zach Hodgson from Oak Grove Middle School won 1<sup>st</sup> place, Aidan Andrews from Olson Middle School won 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and Momo Hawkinson from Valley View Middle School won 3<sup>rd</sup> place. This city-wide competition was the result of a partnership of the League of Women Voters – Bloomington and Bloomington Public Schools with support from the City of Bloomington's Community Outreach & Engagement Division.

For more details on these and other events, see our web site [EVENTS](#) page.

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## **STATE'S MOST DIVERSE LEGISLATURE IS VOTED IN**

*(Excerpted from the Minneapolis Star-Tribune, November 20 & 26th, 2022.)*

Established and newly elected legislators are sounding a hopeful note after the recent election promised to deliver the most diverse Legislature in Minnesota history.

At least 35 of 201 members of next year's House and Senate identify as people of color, according to a Sahan Journal count verified by DFL and Republican Parties. LGBTQ representation will also expand. According to the LGBTQ Victory Fund, eleven of next year's Minnesota lawmakers belong to the LGBTQ community. That is a record what will more than double that representation in the Legislature.

## **"DRIVER'S LICENSES FOR ALL BILL" PASSES IN MN HOUSE**



01/31/2022 Today, the MN House passed the "Driver's Licenses for All Bill". It enables unauthorized immigrants to obtain a driver's license and requires that they carry insurance, which makes our roads safer for everyone. Opponents are concerned that the new licenses could be used for fraud, such as signing up for government benefits.

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## WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE LOCAL LEVEL?

1/24/2022 The Bloomington City Council voted to appoint Chao Moua to the vacant at-large council seat at its meeting on January 23. The vacancy was a result of Nathan Coulter's resignation from his position after being elected to the Minnesota House of Representatives.

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## CONNECT WITH LWVB!

Email: [lwvbloomington@lwvmn.org](mailto:lwvbloomington@lwvmn.org)

Website: <https://lwv-bloomington.com>

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

Email us if you know someone who would like to receive our newsletter "The Voter."