

# THE VOTER

MARCH 2023

**TODAY!**



## What is the Equal Rights Amendment - and - Why Do We Still Need It?

We are honored to have Suzann Willhite as the guest speaker at Tuesday's Member Meeting

TUESDAY, MARCH 7, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

Social hour from 6:00-6:30 p.m.

Bloomington City Plaza

McCleod Conference Room (on the main floor)

1800 W. Old Shakopee (turn south on Logan Avenue; it will be on your left)

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## About Suzann Willhite

In January 2020, I took early retirement from a 30+ years career in natural resources. It was a choice I made so that I could be more active on issues I value. My focus is to be an activist for securing equal legal rights for all persons through passage of the ERA as the 28th amendment. I volunteer with organizations such as [ERAMN](#), [Equal Means Equal](#) and [ERA Coalition](#).

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## NEW EVENT NEXT TUESDAY



Join us for the mid-season **Senate District 50 Town Hall** featuring Senator Alice Mann, Rep. Heather Edelson, and Rep Steve Elkins. Hosted jointly by the Edina and Bloomington League of Women Voters. Tuesday, March 14th 6-7pm at the Edina Community Lutheran Church, 4113 West 54th St, Edina.

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## MORE ABOUT THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMMENDMENT

One of LWVB'S 2023 goals is "DEMOCRACY". We will have a special emphasis on the Equal Rights Amendment.

[ERA Minnesota](#), a nonprofit volunteer organization, is working to add an Equal Rights Amendment to the Minnesota Constitution through a ballot measure passed by popular

vote. In addition, it joins efforts nationwide to enact the ratification of the ERA as the 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

**The ERA Minnesota is a partner of the LWV Minnesota.**

Neither the U.S. Constitution nor the Minnesota Constitution mandates gender equality. The fight to add an Equal Rights Amendment has lasted one hundred years.

The Equal Rights Amendment was first drafted in 1923 by two leaders of the women's suffrage movement. For women's rights advocates, the ERA was the next logical step following the successful campaign to win access to the ballot through the adoption of the 19th Amendment.

[The Equal Rights Amendment](#) reads:

*Section 1: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.*

*Section 2: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.*

*Section 3: This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.*

ERA Minnesota has an excellent 2-page overview of ERA, its history and status.

See a more detailed overview on [www.brennancenter.org](http://www.brennancenter.org)

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In 1972, both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate passed an ERA and states began to ratify, stalling ten years later short of the required number.

More recently (2017-2020), a renewed push earned the needed ratification by 38 states. And state ERAs have been adopted in four more states.

*“The ERA will empower Congress to pass laws that protect against discrimination and give people the power to fight discrimination in the workplace. Those are not radical ideas. They are popular ones.”*

[Newsweek](#) Magazine

Neither the U.S. Constitution or the Minnesota Constitution mandates gender equality. The fight to add an Equal Rights Amendment has lasted 100 years.

In 1923, just three years after the 19th Amendment guaranteed most women the right to vote, the first Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was proposed in Congress. In 1972, both the U.S. House and U.S. Senate passed an ERA and states began to ratify, stalling ten years later short of the required number.

More recently (2017-2020), a renewed push earned the needed ratification by 38 states, and four additional states have adopted ERAs.

## **Raising the ERA From the Dead? | Opinion**

EXCERPTED FROM ARTICLE BY INEZ STEPMAN, SENIOR POLICY ANALYST, NEWSWEEK, 2/27/23.

A substantial majority of eligible voters today have had no opportunity at all to weigh in on the ERA, considering they were either not born or were under the age of 18 when the nation weighed its passage 50 years ago. Only three states have ratified the ERA with the current electorate. Even one of the ERA's most fervent advocates, the late [Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg](#), told activists they needed to "put [it] back in the political hopper" and start over.

In 1923 suffragists whose work helped women get the right to vote in 1919 developed what became known as the ERA, a movement to enshrine full equality in the U.S. Constitution regardless of sex. After a long campaign, in 1972 the ERA was passed by both the Senate and the House in 1972. All that was left was for the states to ratify it.

In 2020, Virginia became the 38th and final state required by our Constitution to ratify the ERA. There was a roadblock, though: a decades-old poison pill imposed when Congress passed it in the 1970s, setting a seven-year time limit for ratification. The time limit has no constitutional basis, and recent lawsuits are making that case. While the courts remain locked in debate about the validity of the time limit, one thing is clear: they left the door open to congressional action to lift it.

## LOOKING AHEAD

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# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Marilyn Kelly

Karen Lundquist

Lori Rasmussen

Thank you for donating your time and talent!

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## The League of Woman Voters Minnesota State Convention

June 2-3, 2023, New Ulm, MN

It is exciting to have an in-person conference again. This one will not be livestreamed.

Why consider going? Excellent presentations and subject matter experts, some of which also build skills useful in your non-LWV life. It is a lot of fun to share ideas with members of other leagues. You can also go on a guided historical walk.

Registration opens March 3

Not everyone who attends is required to be a delegate, but Bloomington still has openings for delegates for those who wish to be one. Let Corinne know if you want to be a delegate. Don't hold back, just let her know. It is a good way to get involved.

For detailed information, and to register go to <https://www.lwvmn.org/convention-2023>

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## RECENT EVENTS

### Voting rights restored to 50,000 under new Minnesota [law](#).

Surrounded by dozens of formerly incarcerated Minnesotans, advocates and faith leaders, Gov. Tim Walz signed into law a measure restoring the right to vote to felons who have



served out their prison or jail sentences. The law is expected to make 50,000 or more people convicted of felonies but still “on paper” — serving out probation or parole — eligible to vote beginning right away. It is the largest voting rights expansion the state has seen in decades.

### The MN House passed the “[Driver’s Licenses for All Bill](#).”

01/31/2022 [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.

The same day, [Gov. Tim Walz will sign into law legislation protecting reproductive freedom and abortion access](#).

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## UPDATES FROM THE BLOOMINGTON LEAGUE



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

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

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## **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)

## **CONNECT WITH LWVB!**

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

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

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

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

