

EMPOWERING VOTERS, DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

THE VOTER

May 2020 Membership 52

your vote matters. 

your voice matters.

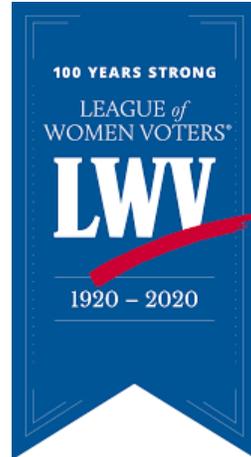
your census matters.

Let's stand together, stay safe, and complete the 2020 Census!

And vote in the June 30 Primary!

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Local League News



A Tribute to Margaret Edith Sortor Joseph

Mrs. Joseph, the mother of our new member, Doris McGuire, passed away on April 10 at the age of 96. Among her many admirable and loving qualities were an insatiable appetite for reading, history and current affairs and being a long-time supporter of the League. She was most proud of her tenure as the president of the Boone County League of Women Voters in Missouri. One of her last acts was to write a donation check to our local league. She was sorely missed on Mothers' Day!

Our Local League Leadership in the Coming Months

Normally, our League holds its annual meeting in May at which new officers (president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer) are elected and a budget approved. Because of Covid-19 that is not practical at this point, so the current officers recently agreed to remain in place through November, if that is agreeable to local members.

Our focus now is our mission of educating voters and getting out the vote in this crucial year and to celebrate and publicize the 100th Anniversary of women gaining the right to vote (August 26). To accomplish that it would be VERY helpful to the board if members would assist us in thinking of creative ways to reach out to our communities, if Covid-19 prevents us from holding ballot issues and candidate forums and our Suffragist march in the usual formats.

A survey will be sent to each member within the next week in order to get a pulse from the membership as to how the League should proceed in the coming months. **Please** ponder how you can step up in the months ahead. Share your ideas and opinions...

Your participation is crucial to keeping our League vital! You will find League more interesting when you are involved! Time commitments can be brief, moderate, or more involved. WE VALUE ANY LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION!

Our Focus for the Remainder of 2020

The Covid-19 epidemic has severely limited our League's community educational efforts, although Tanya Ishikawa has worked to ensure that information is available on our website and Facebook page. It is also extremely important to keep our local League members informed and engaged, so I'm hoping The Voter will play an important role in accomplishing that aim. There are four issues to keep in the forefront of our minds during this unusual time and here they are in chronological order:

#1: 2020 Census Reminder – Have You Taken It Yet?



To the League of Women Voters as a political organization – non-partisan--- with a motto "Empowering Voters/Defending Democracy", the census is extremely important because it impacts representation in Congress. To us as League members, Coloradoans, and Montrosians, the census is vital because **with a good response it is estimated that Colorado will gain an additional seat in the U.S. House of Representatives and will receive federal funding of about \$2,300 per person per year!!!** Also, the data from the census will help to avoid gerrymandering of the re-drawing of U.S. Congressional and CO General Assembly district maps that will last for the next 10 years. Colorado is ahead of most of the country: **as of May 7**, 61% of Colorado households have **self-responded**; **self-response from Montrose, Delta and Ouray counties is 59%, 57%, and 32%.** (%s are rounded up.) The national self-response rate is 58%. By the way, our 3rd Congressional District response is 48.7%, the lowest in Colorado.

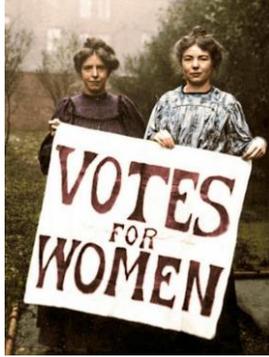
Census takers plan to conduct the non-response follow-up operation, which starts across the country on May 18. **However, households can still respond on their own during this phase (online and phone response is available through October 31).** The Census Bureau will closely follow guidance from public health authorities when conducting this operation. The Census does not ask for a Social Security number, bank account information, or information about political party affiliation, or questions about a person's religion or citizenship status. Want to avoid a census taker coming to your door? Respond!

Please spread the word to your spheres of influence! Every person in Montrose, Delta and Ouray counties counts! Questions? Be sure to check out 2020census.gov for more info.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT!

#2: 100th Anniversary of Women's Right to Vote

19th Amendment: "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation."



August 26 marks the centennial and the culmination of many decades of work by our dedicated, determined, and brave foremothers. We normally celebrate this historic date with a period costume march around the Montrose County Courthouse and up Main Street to Horsefly Brewing Company for Community Tap Night. This year, again due to the Covid-19 pandemic, our plans are uncertain; needless to say, but our fervent hope is to be able to hold that meaningful and fun event, and you will be kept updated in the months ahead.

Just as the Suffragists made their final push for the 19th Amendment in the midst of the Spanish Flu pandemic, we need you to advocate for policies that create a safe, efficient, and accessible election for all this November.

Some ideas to keep us safe but informed during these crazy times are:

1. Watch the 2004 movie "Iron Jawed Angels". It is available on Netflix and Amazon Prime Video.
2. Read "The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters" by Dr. Jefferson-Jenkins who was the first (and so far, only) African American woman to hold the position of President of LWV. Her book explores the ways women of color have been marginalized and recognizes how their contributions will positively influence the League as it moves into its next 100 years.
3. Colorado Encyclopedia Expanding Women Suffrage Pages. In honor of the centennial of national women's suffrage, the online Colorado Encyclopedia has a special section on the "19th Amendment." In it one can read articles on many individuals and groups who contributed to Colorado and national suffrage. More information is being added. These articles each come with a bibliography so readers can follow up on subjects of interest to them. <https://coloradoencyclopedia.org/article/19thamendment> ∞
4. Bold Women. Change History Transcription Project Would you like to help tell the story of women's suffrage in Colorado? History Colorado seeks help in transcribing documents and handwritten letters from the late 1800s to the early 1900s in the collection of Ellis Meredith. Meredith was a journalist and suffragist. It is easy to help transcribe the material. Just click the "get started" button. <https://www.zooniverse.org/projects/madebie/bold-women-change-history/transcribing-womens-suffrage-in-colorado>
5. Author a paragraph or two (or a poem) on your thoughts of the importance of this milestone at this moment in time and send it to the Voter editor, per page 11, and it will be published in the next edition of the Voter.

REMEMBER, EVERY TIME YOU VOTE YOU SHAPE HISTORY!

#3 - Colorado's Joining the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact is Being Challenged

You may remember the Colorado legislature passed and signed the state's national popular vote law in March, 2019, thus joining the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. That law is now being challenged as its opponents gained enough signatures to get a proposal on the November ballot. In November, voters will decide whether or not to repeal the bill. Colorado is one of a few states that allow citizens to force measures passed by the legislature onto a statewide ballot. It is a rare occurrence, however.

The referendum question will read as follows: "Shall the following Act of the General Assembly be approved: An Act concerning adoption of an agreement among the states to elect the President of the United States by national popular vote, being Senate Bill No. 19-042?"

Quite confusing verbiage, right? It is asking whether or not voters support the current Senate bill, with a "yes" or "no" answer. The League's Ballot Issues Pamphlet will help. Per Ballotpedia:

The **Colorado National Popular Vote Interstate Compact Referendum** is on the [ballot](#) in [Colorado](#) as a [veto referendum](#) on [November 3, 2020](#).

A "**yes**" vote supports Colorado joining the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, which would give the state's nine electoral votes to the presidential candidate who wins the national popular vote if states representing at least 270 Electoral College votes adopt the compact.

A "**no**" vote opposes making Colorado part of the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact (NPVIC), thereby continuing to give the state's nine electoral votes to the presidential candidate winning the most votes in Colorado.

The League supports passage of this ballot issue, and we will do our best to provide educational and support the vote materials to our communities over the next seven months given the current constraints of Covid-19.

For a bit of review:

The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact will guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. **The Compact ensures that every vote, in every state, will matter in every presidential election.** It is a state-based approach that preserves the Electoral College, state control of elections, and the power of the states to control how the President is elected.

Article II, Section 1 of the Constitution reads "**Each State shall appoint, in such Manner as the Legislature thereof may direct, a Number of Electors....**"; therefore, States are granted exclusive control over national elections and can chose ANY method of instructing their electors how to vote (in fact, two states, Maine and Nebraska, chose methods other than 'winner-take-all'). Thus, **only state legislation is required---not a Constitutional Amendment---**, and a growing number of states have and are passing such legislation.

Two-thirds of the 270 electoral votes needed to activate the national popular vote have been secured. The bill has been enacted by 16 jurisdictions possessing 196 electoral votes, including 4 small states (DE, HI, RI, VT), 8 medium-sized states (CO, CT, MD, MA, NJ, NM, OR, WA), 3 big states (CA, IL, NY), and the District of Columbia. Additionally, the bill has passed at least one chamber in 9 additional states with 88 more electoral votes (AR, AZ, ME, MI, MN, NC, NV, OK, VA). The National Popular Vote has passed in both Republican and Democratic controlled legislative chambers in both red and blue states: approximately 2,800 state legislators (1,000 are Republicans) have endorsed the National Popular Vote compact. **The bill will take effect when enacted by states with 74 more electoral votes.**

Two myths: Large states vs. Small State and Urban vs Rural

The fact is there is no coherent "small state" - or "large state" - interest that needs protecting by the Electoral College because even the smallest state has substantial diversity within it. It is a fallacy to suggest when a state goes "red" or "blue" that represents the interests of the entire state. Think Denver vs. Delta. The concerns of a computer programmer are likely to be very different from those of a farmer, whether they live in a small or large state. Most farmers live in states with large populations such as Texas, Florida, and California, and they share economic interests with farmers from smaller states all over the country. A vote cast in a big city would be no more or less valuable or controlling than a vote cast anywhere else---**all votes would be equal.** It is worth noting that about 15% of the population lives in rural areas, generally voting conservative; about 15% of the population lives in the 50 largest cities, generally voting progressive; and all other Americans live in the suburbs or small towns which are generally evenly split.

Why should states adopt the National Popular Vote? States should adopt the National Popular Vote for the same reason that we have voting for all other major public officials: the person who wins the most votes is elected to the office. In the case of the national election, the winner of the most votes in all 50 states and the District of Columbia should win the presidency.

The National Popular Vote would honor the will of the people, just as it does in every other public election, from mayor to governor to congressmen and senators. And do remember,

The League of Women Voters supports the direct popular vote method for electing the president and vice-president.

#4 – Access to the Ballot and Safe & Fair Voting in June and November

We are so fortunate to live in Colorado and have "no excuse" mail-in voting, plus the option of voting in person both early and on election days. Currently, a number of states are connecting with our Secretary of State and those of the other four states with similar systems to obtain information about their voting systems in hopes of making necessary changes that will protect their voters and make voting accessible. The League applauds those thousands of elections officials who are working overtime to accomplish those goals.

The League supports voting rights principles to ensure voters can safely participate in elections in 2020. Its [policy recommendations](#) were carefully crafted by LWVUS and reconcile its work with coalition voting rights partners in response to the current global pandemic.

DEMOCRACY IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT!

LWVCO News

President Ruth Stemler Resigns

"It's time to say farewell to all of you. It was a tough decision to step down after the first year of my 2-year term. I served 4 years in the leadership of my local League and now 3 years on the LWVCO Board. ...The board was determined to develop a strategic planning foundation to change, modernize, and move our organization forward and to enhance the working relationship between the state office and local Leagues. That Plan was developed in the Spring of 2018, and still guides our work. The board vowed that the LWVCO would become a 'force to be reckoned with'...it would become an outward-focused organization more relevant to the community." The board and countless members across the state "are committed to the mission of this organization, defending our democracy in a non-partisan manner. I applaud you!"

Council Registration Reminder



The LWVCO's video conference Council will take place on Saturday, May 30th from 10am-1pm. Council is a biennial event usually held in person, but because of the COVID-19 crisis, the format is changing this year and we are using Zoom.us videoconferencing technology. Our league is entitled to have two delegates with voting rights, and the board recently selected Jan Edwards and Gretchen Nicholoff. We are able to have two observers and the **deadline to register is May 18**. There is no cost. If interested, contact Nancy Ball.

Interested in Joining the LWVCO Board of Directors?

Qualifications: Passion for the League; Belief in Democracy for All; Energy & Enthusiasm
Applicants from outside the Denver metro area are encouraged to apply! Contact Ruth Nurenberg at nurenberg24@outlook.com for more information.

From Board Briefs of the LWVCO Board Meeting

Speaking with One Voice: Alternative Voting Methods:

Position in Brief - Voting Methods: Support authorizing and implementing alternatives to plurality voting that improve the election experience, encourage honest voting and consider ease of implementation (Positions for Action, p. 11). For the complete position, see Positions for Action, p. 19.

The League of Women Voters of Colorado supports implementing alternative voting methods but does not support or oppose one alternative voting method over another. Local Leagues are encouraged to use the above position and choose for themselves which form of alternative method to use. Local Leagues will need to study the alternatives to determine which is best for their jurisdictions, however, local Leagues must align their actions with state League position. Our local League plans to host a program on this topic in the coming months.

LWVUS NEWS

Although large numbers of Americans will vote by mail this year, in-person voting options remain essential for the 2020 elections to be truly fair and accessible. Not every voter has a street address and in person voting is a system people know and trust. For many voters, it is their preferred option. The League of Women Voters is committed to making in-person voting safe by working with election officials to ensure access and safety for voters and poll workers.

Voters should not have to choose between their health and their right to vote.

The next few months of preparation will be vitally important as election administrators across the country work to put policies in place that expand access to in person voting and vote by mail options so all voters can safely participate in our democracy. If we act together, we can win the funding that we need to protect our vote. [**Please contact your Senators today and ask them to include \\$4 billion in the next COVID-19 stimulus package to safeguard our elections.**](#)

Rise in Voter Purge Legislation

Leagues around the country have seen a rise in voter purge litigation over the past few years. State and local Leagues have joined litigation in response to actions filed by third-party think tanks seeking to force voter roll purges. Leagues have also initiated lawsuits to ensure that voter list maintenance practices are done reasonably and in compliance with the National Voter Registration Act. **The NVRA requires list maintenance be undertaken with due care and respect for the right to vote.**

Curb public expectations for immediate election results

- In this time of unprecedented circumstances, tallying votes will take more time.
- Voters should not expect all election results to be called or announced on Election Day as in previous elections, and that's okay. A delayed result with an increased number of mailed ballots means the system is working as it should.
- A surge in mailed ballots requires our election officials to adapt their ballot counting practices, and it is important for voters to be patient. An accurate ballot count is more important than a fast ballot count.
- With the increase of absentee voting in 2020, it is essential that every vote is counted and every voter's voice is heard. We should all prepare for many election results to be announced after Election Day.

Equal Rights Amendment

Let's use our stay-at-home time wisely and participate in a postcard-writing campaign asking Sen. Cory Gardner for a vote on removal of the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA). Postcards are pre-printed with messages and an address for Senator Cory Gardner, so all that is needed is an optional personal message and a signature. Postcard packets and instructions will be sent by LWVCO to local Leagues shortly!

Contact info for the Colorado U.S. Congressional Delegation

Sen. Cory Gardner | [303-391-5777](tel:303-391-5777)

<https://www.gardner.senate.gov/contact-cory/email-cory>

Sen. Michael Bennet | [303-455-7600](tel:303-455-7600) / [866-455-9866](tel:866-455-9866) <https://www.bennet.senate.gov/?p=contact>

Contact info for the Colorado U.S. Congressional Delegation

Rep. Diana DeGette (CO District 1) | [303-844-4988](tel:303-844-4988) <https://degette.house.gov/contact/send-me-an-email/email-me>

Rep. Joe Neguse (CO District 2) | [202- 225-2161](tel:202-225-2161) <https://neguse.house.gov/contact>

Rep. Scott Tipton (CO District 3) | [970-241-2499](tel:970-241-2499) <https://tipton.house.gov/contact/email>

Rep. Ken Buck (CO District 4) | [970-702-2136](tel:970-702-2136) <https://buck.house.gov/contact/email>

Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO District 5) | [719-520-0055](tel:719-520-0055) <https://lamborn.house.gov/contact/leave-a-comment.htm>

Rep. Jason Crow (CO District 6) | [202-225-7882](tel:202-225-7882) <https://crow.house.gov/contact/>

Rep. Ed Perlmutter (CO District 7) | [303-274-7944](tel:303-274-7944)
<https://perlmutter.house.gov/forms/writeyourrep/>

Contact Info for Colorado General Assembly

Rep. Marc Catlin (CO House District 58) [303-866-2955](tel:303-866-2955)
marc.catlin.house@state.co.us

Sen. Don Coram (CO Senate District 6) [303-866-4884](tel:303-866-4884)
don.coram.senate@state.co.us

Rep. Matt Soper (CO House District 54)
matthew.soper.house.state.co.us [303-866-2583](tel:303-866-2583)

Rep. Julie Mc Cluskie (CO House District 61) [303-866-2952](tel:303-866-2952)
RepMcCluskie@gmail.com

Sen. Kerry Donovan (CO Senate District 5) [303-866-4871](tel:303-866-4871)
kerry.donovan.sd5@gmail.com

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD!

2019-2020 LWV Community Support

The League of Women Voters of Montrose County, serving Montrose and Delta counties, thanks these local businesses, organizations and individuals who have donated financial and in-kind support.

Please **add your thank you** when you patronize these businesses or visit with these individuals.

**Alpine Archeological Bank of Colorado
Coffee Trader Horsefly Brewing Company
The Montrose Mirror**

**Dennis Olmstead Alicia Conroyd
Margaret Edith Sortor Joseph**

Calendar

D.M.E.A. Board Seat Candidates Forums to be held in Montrose and Cedaredge on May 18 and 19 have been cancelled because the seats are uncontested.

LWVCO's video conference Council will be taking place on Saturday, May 30th from 10am-1pm. See page 7.

The League of Women Voters of the Montrose County is pleased you are joining us in helping to Make Democracy Work for our community and our country!

Check out our Website:

<https://www.lwvmontrose.org>

Our webmaster, Tanya Ishikawa, keeps us updated on and linked to local, state and national activities, issues and websites.

Check us out on Facebook too:

<https://www.facebook.com/VoteMontrose>

Tanya has set up an LWV Instagram account too!

EMPOWERING VOTERS, DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

**Join League of Women Voters of Montrose County
serving Montrose & Delta counties – 2019-2020
Not for Women Only!**

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (H) _____ (Cell) _____

E-mail _____

___ **Individual \$60** - Of this amount \$32 goes to National League; \$20 goes to State League; \$8 is retained by the Montrose League

___ **Household \$90** – Two members in one household (National League receives \$48; State League \$30; \$12 is retained by the Montrose League)

___ I understand that I can join without being active, and this is my intent at the present time.

___ I would like to make a contribution beyond regular dues and understand it will go directly to our local League (Thank You!).

___ **Sustaining Member \$100** - Of this amount \$32 goes to National League; \$20 goes to State League; \$48 is retained by the Montrose League

___ I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Montrose League. Write a separate check to **League of Women Voters CO Education Fund. Write "Montrose" on the check's memo line.**

Please make checks payable to **League of Women Voters of Montrose County**. Mail to P.O. Box 3321, Montrose, CO 81402

2019-2020 Officers & Board

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janmsw96@icloud.com

Gretchen Nicholoff, VP/LWVCO liaison
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Nancy Ball, at Large & *Voter* editor
249-8963, nancyball@montrose.net

**The League of Women Voters, a
non-partisan political
organization, encourages
informed and active participation
in government, works to increase
understanding of major public
policy issues and influences public
policy through education and
advocacy.**



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MONTROSE COUNTY
SERVING MONTROSE AND DELTA COUNTIES
P.O. BOX 3321, MONTROSE, CO 81402

CREATING A MORE PERFECT DEMOCRACY