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STATE, LOCAL LEAGUES OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED

By MaryLee Moulton & Toni Monette, Co-Presidents

Happy 2022 everyone! The Legislature is back in session, and our directors and action teams are following bills. Special thanks to Rachel Gibson, education policy director, for tracking the bills this year. We have already testified at numerous hearings and submitted letters to various committees. You can see our testimony/letters [here](#). There is still time to join an action team.

Legislative Day will be held Tuesday, February 15, in person at the State Capitol in Lincoln. We will meet at 9:30 a.m. in the Capitol cafeteria. We will visit senators to discuss our priority bills and will be introduced from the gallery of the Unicameral. We hope you will consider joining us.

Please mark your calendars for two more events. On Saturday, April 23, we will meet at 10 a.m. in person in Seward for our annual state meeting. While we will offer a virtual option, we hope to see you in person in Seward. The LWWUS annual convention will be in Denver June 23-26. You can find information [here](#). A virtual option will be offered. If you are interested in attending the national convention, please contact your local League president.

Finally, we'd like to reiterate our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy adopted by the LWWUS, found [here](#) and in the box below. DEI should not just be a committee, but should be threaded through all of our work, meetings and events.

We encourage you to share your local League events so we and our membership can support you and attend. Also, please share community events, especially those that amplify the voices of people of color and women, as many events are now virtual. Representation matters, and it is all of our responsibility to ensure diverse voices are included in our LWWNE work and beyond.

With the primary election on May, 10, 2022, and the general election on November 8, 2022, the state and local Leagues will offer lots of opportunities to get involved in our efforts to register voters, get out the vote, and defend democracy. Contact your local League or feel free to reach out to us at tmonette@lwwnebraska.org or marylee@lwwnebraska.org.

LWV is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities, and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, language, accent, ability status, mental health, educational level or background, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, political perspective or affiliation and/or any other characteristic that can be identified as recognizing or illustrating diversity.

HELP LWVNE ADVOCATE FOR PRIORITY BILLS ON LEGISLATIVE DAY

By Sherry Miller, Vice President for Action & Legislative Day Chair

Thank you to League members and guests who joined our Zoom training on Saturday, February 5, in preparation for an in-person Legislative Day on February 15.

February 2022 marks the 102nd birthday of the League of Women Voters and we proudly continue the tradition of making our mark on democracy.

Everyone is welcome to join us at the State Capitol in Lincoln on Tuesday, February 15, to lobby our state senators on the following priority bills:

We support:

LB890 (Walz) Make permanent revisions to the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Act

LB976 (Wishart) Enable implementation of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics

LB925 (Gragert) Resilient Soils and Water Quality Act

LB920 (Lathrop) Enact strategies to reduce inmate populations and lower recidivism

We oppose:

LB1181 (Groene) Require photo ID return in separate envelopes with early ballots

LB1086 (Geist) Chemical Abortion Safety Protocol Act

February 15 will be an action-packed day of talking to senators and their staff, observing debate from the north balcony, ducking out for a quick lunch, and then returning for hearings in the Education Committee (if desired).

Please plan to pick up your folders and yellow roses in the Capitol cafeteria between 9:30 and 10 a.m. and hit the halls to make a difference in government!

Please email your plans to attend to kitty66hawk@aol.com promptly. If you cannot attend in person and would like to participate with phone calls or emails to your senator, please let me know and I'll be happy to share the resources you will need by email.

Thanks to our Legislative Day Action Team members – Carol Dennison, Linda Duckworth, Rachel Gibson, Toni Monette and MaryLee Moulton

We look forward to seeing many League activists on February 15!

**LWVNE LEGISLATIVE DAY
February 15, 2022
State Capitol, Lincoln
PRELIMINARY AGENDA**

- 9:30 a.m. – Pick up folders and refreshments in Capitol cafeteria (ask information desk for directions)
- 10 a.m. – Welcome by LWVNE co-presidents and review of folder contents by Sherry Miller, LWVNE vice president for action
- 10:30 a.m. – Lobby your senator by distributing letters and talking points to their offices, encouraging support or opposition based on our League positions
- 11 a.m. – Observe debate from north balcony; Senator John McCollister will introduce us
- 11:20 a.m. – Resume visits to senators' offices
- 12 noon – Dismissed to lunch on your own
- 1:30 p.m. – Return for committee hearings on bills of interest



REGISTRATION OPEN FOR CAMPAIGN SCHOOL
By Dianne Bystrom, Director of Communications

Registration is open for Part II of “Represent! Running for Political Office in Nebraska,” which will be presented via Zoom from 10 a.m. to noon (CST) on Saturday, February 12.

Registration is available at this [link](#).

The program is designed for those interested in running for elected office in Nebraska and serving as campaign managers and workers. It is nonpartisan and free to anyone interested.

The training program was proposed by Rebecca Gonzales, coordinator of outreach and GOTV for the LWVNE. The need for such a training program is based on her discussions with members of communities of color across the state. The program is funded through a grant from the LWVNE Education Fund.

Part II will focus on elements of a winning campaign. Roger Garcia, Douglas County Commissioner, will discuss fundraising strategies, including making the ask; direct voter contact through letters, online appeals and events; how much money to raise for different races; and how to keep motivated after a close loss. Political consultant Jeff Hall, who has managed several successful campaigns, will discuss campaign strategies, including getting out the vote through phone banking, door knocking and other methods; how to identify and target voters; and the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission. Inonge Kasaji, president of the League of Women Voters of Lincoln-Lancaster County, will discuss volunteer recruitment and management, including what motivates people to volunteer.

Part I of the virtual campaign training program was presented on Feb. 5 with 20 participants. “We were pleased with the turnout as well as the engagement of those who attended,” Gonzales said. “Our speakers presented a lot of great information and the questions asked by our participants indicated their interest in running for office or working on a campaign.”

The Feb. 5 program began with information on the basics of filing and running for elected office in Nebraska – including a review of the state’s candidate guide and other resources – by Gonzales. Next, a panel of people of color discussed why they ran for political office in Nebraska, the challenges they faced, how they overcome those challenges, and their advice for those interested in running for political office. Panelists were Karina Perez, executive director of Centro Hispano in Columbus; Edison Red Nest III, founder of Native Futures and secretary/treasurer of the Alliance School Board; and Luis Sotelo, vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion at Doane University in Crete.

Following the panel, Lancaster County Commissioner Christa Yoakum discussed making the decision to run; how to choose an office to run for; and the disadvantages and advantages of aligning oneself with a political party, or not. She also gave advice to those not ready to run yet.

The Feb. 5 session concluded with a presentation on the elements of campaign messaging led by Kelly Winfrey, assistant professor of journalism at Iowa State University and coordinator of its Ready to Run Iowa campaign training program. She discussed how to create a message, stump speeches and candidate forums, social media, and media interviews. In addition to leading a nonpartisan campaign training program, Winfrey ran successfully for the Ames (IA) School Board in 2021 on a platform that emphasized a commitment to advocacy, equity and community.

A recording of Part I of “Represent! Running for Political Office in Nebraska” can be viewed [here](#).

UPCOMING L WVNE MEETINGS & EVENTS

- February, 12 – Part II: “Represent! Running for Political Office in Nebraska,” 10 a.m.-12 noon, via Zoom
- February 15 – Legislative Day, 9:30 a.m., State Capitol, Lincoln, NE
- March 12 – Board Meeting, 10 a.m., L WVNE Office, Lincoln, NE
- April 23 – Annual Meeting, 10 a.m., Seward

HELP LWVNE OPPOSE PROPOSED VOTER ID AMENDMENT

By MaryLee Moulton, Co-President

The LWVNE is represented on the steering committee in the effort to oppose a possible voter ID constitutional amendment. We meet bi-weekly to work on communication and action strategies for the *Decline to Sign* campaign opposing the petition and are preparing to fight a constitutional amendment if it qualifies for the ballot.

Here are two ways you can get involved:

- The committee is looking for people to share their stories on how implementing voter ID requirements in Nebraska would negatively impact or disenfranchise them. The proposed amendment to the Nebraska Constitution to implement strict photo ID requirements would severely restrict voters via lengthy repetitive steps and disqualify otherwise eligible voters with unnecessary technicalities.

We are particularly looking to lift up stories from members of rural, elderly or BIPOC communities who would be hit the hardest by the restriction. These stories would be shared through social media, websites, and email communications to support the work of the *Decline to Sign Nebraska* coalition and fight against the dangerous voter restrictions being proposed. If you are interested in sharing your story or know someone who would be a good fit, email guadalupe@nebraskatable.org for more information.

- The committee is beginning a campaign to call voters on the issue. If you would like to join the team that will be taking this action, contact marylee@lwnvnebraska.org

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: GIBSON POURS PASSION FOR EDUCATION INTO LWV

By Dianne Bystrom, Director of Communications



Leaving her position at Creighton University in 2020 to juggle her sons schooling from home during the pandemic also led Rachel M. Gibson to the League of Women Voters of Nebraska, where she now serves on the state board as director of education policy.

“Although I enjoyed the time with my kids, I missed engaging with people, collaborating as part of a group, and working to make the world a better place,” she said. “I began exploring options of what I could do next.” Gibson studied for the Law School Admission Test, took online classes, and volunteered on a campaign – “but none was quite the right fit,” she said.

“As I began researching the candidates for local office ahead of the 2020 election, I found myself thinking ‘I just want a nonpartisan place that tells me what these folks think and their background without all the spin!’ Through the magic of Google, I found the League’s VOTE411. I fell down the rabbit hole of all the things the League did locally and nationally and I was hooked.”

Gibson began her volunteer work with the LWVNE as a member of its Social Policy Action Team, researching and writing letters to legislative committees on such issues as limits to property tax revenues, paid family and medical leave, and broadband in the first session (2021) of the 107th Legislature. She was elected as the LWVNE's director of education policy at its April 2021 annual meeting.

In 2022, during the second session of the 107th Legislature, Gibson has already testified at four committee hearings for the LWVNE to support bills that would include early childhood programs in the Nebraska Farm-to-School program, changing the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act, and adopting the Student Loan Repayment Assistance for Teachers Act and to oppose the Adopt the School District Property Tax Limitation Act.

Serving as the LWVNE's director of education policy is a great fit for Gibson's background and interests. "I am a learner and educator at heart," she said. "Whether it is learning about history, national trends, policy or people, I love gaining new information and find a particular joy in using that information to make folks lives better."

Driven by this curiosity, Gibson earned a bachelor's degree in psychology and a master's degree in higher education administration. Over the next 10 years, she worked as an academic and career counselor, program director, and data coordinator at Wichita State University and Creighton University. "My partner's medical training brought us to Omaha seven years ago and we loved it so much we not only stayed, but also convinced my parents to move up after they retired," Gibson said, noting that "they also probably wanted to be closer to their grandkids, our sons who are five and nine years old."

The couple quickly became active in the Omaha community. "Whether it is through my partner's work as a pediatrician and public health advocate at Methodist or our volunteering through Westside Schools, the Open Door Mission, and Lutheran Family Services, we have made Omaha our home and being part of the League of Women Voters is one the most important ways to keep our community one that we love," Gibson said.

She left her job at Creighton University in fall 2020, "shortly after the world turned upside down with the pandemic. When the entire country shut down in March 2020, my job at Creighton moved online as I tried to juggle my two sons' schooling from home," Gibson said. "After the last month of the semester online, I knew it would not be possible to juggle it all for another school year and left my position at Creighton."

Over the next few months, Gibson repurposed their "basement to be a school room and attempted to create a slew of preschool lesson plans. I have always known we do NOT pay educators enough, but this really drove home that point," she said. Her work with the LWVNE provides another outlet for her interest in education.

"Education, especially K-12 public education, is something that is so engrained in our collective experience that sometimes it is easy to forget how important and foundational it is," she said. "Even as a civically engaged parent who deeply values my kids' school experience, when I started working in this area with the League, I realized how little I actually knew about how the system worked. Couple this with the complexity of the system; sound bite culture warfare; and

most people's lack of time and ability to tune in due to work, kids, caregiving, etc., and the success of kids in our system can easily get lost," Gibson said.

The goal of the LWVNE's Education Policy Action Team is to "become a trusted source of nonpartisan, factual, timely, and Nebraska-focused education-related information," she said. "We hope to do this through Schools 101, a public awareness campaign, both social and traditional media presence, and engagement with policy makers and advocates."

Reflecting on her work with the LWVNE, Gibson said one of her favorite things is that "how, how much, and when you contribute is completely self-driven. Even more, when you decide to jump in, the support and encouragement from such a great group of folks makes the work a joy."

Gibson adds that she tweets a lot, "almost exclusively about the #NELeg. Honestly, it has been one the greatest ways to stay up to date and meet folks across the state working on these issues. You can find me at @RachelMGibsonNE or sometimes driving the @lwnve account. Join the conversation – it's an important one."

She uses "M" in her name "because there are a lot of 'Rachel Gibson's in the world – one of whom is a romance novelist. I hope you won't be disappointed to find out that I am not her."

LWVNE THANKS ITS 2021 DONORS

By Terri Rittenburg, Treasurer

The League of Women Voters of Nebraska garnered \$7,503.82 in 2021 through donations, most of it from League members.

A total of \$6,229.30 was donated to the General Fund, \$974.52 to the Education Fund, and \$300 to the Endowment Fund. The incredible generosity of our members and benefactors provides much-needed resources to keep our office running and provide staffing, host our website and send communications, and to carry out an ambitious agenda of voter service and action projects to further our mission.

Thank you to our amazing 2021 donors:

General Fund: Mary Anna and Clyde Anderson, Eleanor Biederman, Beatty and John Brasch, Margaret Brown, Dianne and Keith Bystrom, Melina Cohen, Sylvia Cohn, Nancy Comer, Carol and John Dennison, Linda Duckworth, Lynne Elwood, Lilia Franciscony, Beth Furlong, Stephanie Gardella, Janet Gauger, Eunice Goldgrabe, Dorris Heaston, Diping Huang, Carolyn Kesick, Elayne Landwehr, Joanna Lindberg, Amy McGaha, Megan Mikolajczyk, MaryLee Moulton, Patricia Neid, Judith Puncochar, Janet Raybould, Judy Reimer, Terri Rittenburg, Debra Romberger, Lynn Roper, Claudia Stevenson, Mary Ann Sturek, Katie Wadas Thalken, Earlene Uhrig, Barbara Wagner, Jean Wampler and Sheryl Wright.

Education Fund: Marilyn Abariotes, Benivity Community Impact Fund, Annette Conser, Elisa and Drew Davies, Claudia Deeb, LeEllen Haynes, Dorris Heaston, Omaha Community Foundation, Judith Paine, Barbara and Ryan Soderlin, and Alice Timm.

Endowment Fund: Elisa Booth.

We also thank Sharon Nemeth, our former office administrator, for the large amount of in-kind contributions she has made as well as sharing her wealth of knowledge. She has been very generous with her time and expertise, and we appreciate it.

If you donated in 2021 and your name does not appear here, please contact LWFNE treasurer Terri Rittenburg (treasurer@lwfnebraska.org) so we can correct any errors.

To donate to the LWFNE, click [here](#) or send a check (made out to LWFNE) to League of Women Voters of Nebraska, 4600 Valley Road, Suite 306, Lincoln, NE, 68510.

IN MEMORY: CARYL GUISINGER LIVED LIFE TO THE FULLEST



It is with much sadness that we share the news of the passing of our friend and former League of Women Voters of Nebraska board member, Caryl Guisinger. She was suffering from an aggressive form of cancer and passed away on October 23, 2021.

Remembrance ceremonies have not yet been scheduled, but will likely take place between March and June of 2022. A notice will be posted in Caring Bridge and also shared via a LWFNE communication platform.

“Caryl was so stoic about her diagnoses and so positive about living her life to the fullest,” according to LWFNE co-presidents, MaryLee Moulton and Toni Monette. “She approached her work for the League in the same way.”

Both Moulton and Monette met Guisinger when she served on the 2019-2020 LWFNE board as co-director of voter services. “I was so impressed by her enthusiasm,” Moulton said. “Caryl’s work for the League was important to her, and even with everything going on in her life, she prioritized making sure Nebraskans had the right to vote and the information they needed to make their decisions.”

She added that Guisinger was the “force” behind the LWFNE’s new website, which was launched in August 2020. “She committed to creating the website and immediately got to work even though she was undergoing cancer treatment,” Moulton said. “I was her apprentice and she taught me so much about web design and how to create a first-rate site. It was a COVID partnership – we met mostly over Zoom, but I grew close to Caryl and we became friends in spite of the circumstances,” she said.

“I was lucky enough to see her in person while she was in Omaha for treatment, and I went out to her lovely home in the country and got to have a nice visit with her after she left the board. She taught me so much about grace and I will miss her terribly,” Moulton said.

Monette worked with Guisinger when they served as co-directors of voter services in 2019-21. “Working with Caryl could not have been a more fulfilling experience, as we had a similar work ethic and go-getter attitudes about the League’s work,” Monette said. “While our ideas for enhancing voter education and accessibility most likely seemed daunting to others, we made a plan during a pandemic to update the Know Your Voting Rights information and most significantly produced the first statewide guide TOGETHER. And I mean that wholeheartedly,” she said.

“Caryl taught me many things about budgets, websites and design, but taught me many things about myself as well,” Monette said. “She always believed in me and I cherished her friendship. I will miss her and hope to institute an LWFNE award or scholarship in her honor in the near future for all the tireless and selfless work she did alongside me.”

If you would like to send a card to her husband, Roy Guisinger, his address is 45150 State Highway 52, Belgrade, NE 68623. He said she would like any memorials to support research for liposarcoma. The Sarcoma Foundation of America provides grants to study the treatment of liposarcoma. Information on donating to this organization in Guisinger’s memory can be found [here](#).

REPORT: COMMUNICATIONS ACTION TEAM

By Dianne Bystrom, Director

Members of the Communications Action Team have been busy promoting the programs, events and activities of the League of Women Voters of Nebraska. Here are our updates:

1. Website – MaryLee Moulton recently completed a major update of the website, including the homepage and information in drop-downs from About LWFNE, Legislative Advocacy 2022, Voting/Votantes, Get Involved and Local Leagues. She removed the section and drop-down information on Redistricting. She also trained Dianne Bystrom on how to add content to the website in addition to her proofing duties. Member highlight stories on Inonge Kasaji and Ellen Beck have been added to the Inspire drop-down from About LWFNE. Stories on Rachel M. Gibson and Caryl Guisinger will be added after the publication of the Winter 2022 Nebraska Voter newsletter.

2. Social Media – As of February 6, the LWFNE has 783 followers on Facebook, 1,098 followers on Twitter, and 290 followers on Instagram.

3. MailChimp – As of February 6, 441 people subscribe to the LWFNE’s MailChimp emails. In 2021, 24 emails were sent via MailChimp. Open rates ranged from a low of 37.2% (registration for annual meeting) to a high of 56.3% (Winter 2021 Nebraska Voter). In 2022, three LWFNE emails have been sent to date via MailChimp with open rates from 53% to 57%.

4. Communication Campaigns – In 2022, communication campaigns to date include posting a series of redistricting facts on Twitter with content provided by Gibson and promotion of “Represent! Running for Political Office in Nebraska” on Facebook, Twitter, the LWFNE website, and via MailChimp. Members of the Communications Action Team post regularly on

Facebook, Twitter and Instagram on state and local League events, including Legislative Day and Lunch and Learn and Dine and Discuss programs; legislation before the Nebraska legislature; and other news stories of interest to LWNNE members. Gibson often live tweets for the LWNNE from legislative hearings.

We welcome your ideas and information for postings on social media and via MailChimp.

5. Winter 2022 Nebraska Voter will be published February 8, 2022, on the LWNNE website with a notice sent via MailChimp to LWNNE members.

Members of the LWNNE Communications Action Team are Bystrom, chair; Katie Wadas Thalken, vice chair; Charlyne Berens; Aimée Folker; Rebecca Gonzales; Toni Monette; and Moulton.

REPORT: EDUCATION POLICY ACTION TEAM

By Rachel M. Gibson, Director

For the Education Policy Action Team, 2022 started out with a bang! Our little team grew by one student intern as we welcomed Taylor Sterba, a junior at Creighton University studying public policy.

Our other three members – Elizabeth (Lolly) Konecky, Jane Skinner and Sarah Smolen – were busy with the start of the Legislative session. We reviewed more than 40 education-related bills before identifying 10 that we will monitor and selecting three as our primary bills of focus through the 107th Legislature (Second Session). See list below. Since the session began, we have written position letters and testified in person on four bills:

- LB758 (Expanding Farm-To-School Program),
- LB890 (Overhaul of School Funding Model),
- LB986 (School Property Tax Limit), and
- LB1128 (Teacher Student Loan Repayment Program).

We kicked off a yearlong public awareness campaign, Schools 101, with a presentation at the LWV of Greater Omaha's Dine and Discuss program on January 24. A special thanks to Sarah Smolen who brought her expertise and experience as a Nebraska teacher to both the creation of the slides and the presentation itself. The purpose of the campaign is to educate the public in an accessible, easy to understand format about how public schools in Nebraska work from funding to curriculum. Through presentations, social media and traditional media, we aim to become a trusted source regarding education policy as the misinformation surrounding K-12 schools increases during this election year.

If you have suggestions or belong to organizations that would be interested in a Schools 101 presentation, please email me at rachel@lwnnebraska.org. We love talking about schools and would welcome the opportunity to share with any and all in our community!

LB/LR	Introducer	Description	LWVNE Stance	Legislation Status as of 2/4/22
LB281	Albrecht (Senator priority)	Require child sexual abuse prevention instructional programs for school students and staff	Monitor	Enrollment & Review
LB721	Hilkemann	Appropriate funds for the University of Nebraska Medical Center Rural Health Complex	Support (Priority 1)	Hearing Scheduled
LB758	Brandt	Change provisions relating to the Nebraska Farm-to-School Program Act	Support	General File
LB890	Walz (Committee Priority)	Change the Tax Equity and Educational Opportunities Support Act	Support (Priority 2)	Hearing Completed
LB945	Linehan	Adopt the Teach in Nebraska Today Act and provide for adjustment to income for income tax purposes for student loan repayment assistance	Monitor	Hearing Completed
LB986	Briese (Senator priority)	Adopt the School District Property Tax Limitation Act	Oppose	General File
LB987	Briese	Adopt the School District Property Tax Limitation Act	Oppose	Hearing Completed
LB1077	Hansen, B.	Prohibit public schools, public postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities from training or teaching certain concepts relating to race and sex and provide for withholding of state funds	Oppose	Referred
LB1237	Brewer	Adopt the Opportunity Scholarships Act and the Nebraska Child Care Contribution Tax Credit Act	Oppose	Hearing Scheduled
LR278CA	Linehan	Constitutional amendment to eliminate the State Board of Education and provide for the Governor to appoint the Commissioner of Education	Oppose (Priority 3)	Referred

REPORT: GOVERNMENT ACTION TEAM
By Joanna Lindberg, Director

Below are government-related bills before the Nebraska Legislature and the LWVNE's positions to support, oppose or monitor.

LWVNE SUPPORTS:

LB1263 (Clements) - Provides for uniform rules for secure ballot boxes statewide.

LB269CA (Hunt) - Creates an independent redistricting commission, citizen-run process, subject to final legislative approval.

LB861 (McCollister) - Requires candidates running for office to provide an email address to their contact information. This would reduce the time it takes to find a candidate's email so they can complete the VOTE411.org online questions.

LB158 (McKinney) - Allows felons to vote once they have completed their sentence.

LWVNE OPPOSES:

LB1181 (Groene) - Makes voting by mail more difficult. Counties are required to use an envelope that has a separate sealable pocket compartment that the voter would place a photo ID (valid and current) or a government document received in the last 60 days. This complicates the voting process because of access to copying the ID and would especially impact young people and the elderly.

LWVNE IS MONITORING:

LB843 (Brewer) – Changes provisions related to elections.

- States for any person or organization distributing voter registration applications, the form shall contain on the top of the first page in bold type, the identity of the organization with the following statement: "This application was not sent from the Secretary of State or your county election official, you may submit this form if you wish to register to vote or update your voter registration. You do not need to complete this form if you have already registered to vote. (Would the LWVGO have to do this?)
- If a vote by mail ballot gets returned, the election office may take them off VR records.

REPORT: NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY
By Megan York Lyons and Janelle Stevenson, Co-Directors

As the only state in the nation served solely by publicly owned utilities, Nebraska's locally-owned public power utilities provide reliable, affordable and safe electricity. Public power boards ensure the needs and desires of the customers are met, and consumers can stay actively involved by attending board meetings in person or online. LWVNE members can take action by offering public input in matters of shifting energy production to renewable sources and reaching decarbonization goals. Multiple meeting location dates are listed below.

2022 Nebraska public power board meetings:

- Omaha Public Power District board meetings: In-person meetings occur at 5 p.m. in the legislative chamber at the Omaha-Douglas Civic Center, 1819 Farnam St., Omaha, NE, or online (which is encouraged). The schedule for OPPD's board meetings can be viewed at this [link](#).
 - Meetings are set for January 20, February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16*, July 21*, August 18, September 22, October 20, November 17 and December 15. Meetings marked with * may be cancelled.
- Nebraska Public Power District board meetings: Meeting are held in-person at the Columbus, NE, general office and are live streamed at this [link](#).
 - Meetings are set for February 9-10, March 9-10, April 13-14, May 11-12, June 8-9, July 13-14, August 10-11, September 7-8, October 12-13, November 9-10, and December 7-8.

- Lincoln Electric System board meetings: For in-person meetings, enter the LES Operations Center off Rokeby at the 91st Street gate and park in the lot on the west side of the building. Virtual access may be accessed via Microsoft Teams or phone, using the details provided [here](#) prior to each meeting.
 - The LES Administrative Board meets the third Friday of every month at 9:30 a.m.

Another way LWVNE members can advocate is to OPPOSE LB1046: “Change provisions relating to selection of the board of directors and chief executive officer of certain public power districts.” The purpose of the bill is to change the make-up of the board of directors for OPPD and NPPD. Directors of these two public power districts are elected by the voters they will represent. The bill changes that to a total of nine directors, four being elected and five being appointed by the governor. Appointed directors would be accountable to the governor and not to voters and would have veto power over those who are elected.

COP26 EXPERIENCE REVEALS STARK REALTIES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

By Toni Monette, Co-President



As I flew into Glasgow, Scotland, for the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) – the United Nations Climate Change Conference – I realized both my airplane travels contribution to the global climate change problem and the United States lens by which I had been filtering my perspective. I also realized the privilege that I had to be present at an international conference as a Black woman in 2021. Throughout my weeklong journey at COP, which met October 31-November 13, I understood both the complexity and dire urgency of climate change in completely new ways and that a shift is needed in our thought process here at home if we wish to be useful in eradicating climate change altogether.

One of the first dynamics that was abundantly clear was that the global perspective on climate is unavoidable and how the Global North and Global South view the environment and the issue of climate change in varying, but all necessary ways. A key takeaway was the lack of accessibility to the party negotiations themselves that would decide the collective path forward on climate change. As an observer to the process from the League of Women Voters of the United States, the policymaking process was largely from a bird’s eye view – even as I walked the streets of Glasgow.

The path to addressing climate change is not one size fits all – and this was illustrated by the many calls for more capacity building tools for developing countries, specifically in the area of climate financing. As mentioned in one session, “Climate Change is a political matter and should have a political solution.” It is not merely about adapting to the Paris Agreement, but about holding governments accountable. The question came up in various conference sessions – how do we gain technical knowledge and financial capital to address mitigating climate impact and adapting to new climate realities? No one had any concrete answers – and yet, the developing world is responsible for 80% or more of climate change carbon emissions in the areas of energy,

transport and buildings. It is time for us to utilize our privilege and address the colonialism that has gotten us here in the first place.

At the same time, as you will see in the final COP26 decisions, the concern of reparations for the loss and damage already experienced by developing countries due to climate change's ravaging effects went almost completely ignored. This leads me to another element of the intersectionality of it all – a poignant demand by Indigenous people to be provided a seat at the table in what is now a climate crisis. The “ambitious” goals to reduce emissions and address climate change by 2030 and “Net Zero” by 2050 respectively across all countries that provided national plans at COP26 were largely void of Indigenous perspectives. And if we look at the science, these plans are not strong enough to meet our 1.5-degree goal.

Why is this so important? Indigenous peoples have inhabited this land since the beginning of creation and are uniquely connected to the land and its sacred spiritual nature – we can all learn a lesson from them in how to preserve the land on an individual basis through our daily behaviors.

Lastly, the concept of gender responsive policies resounded as the LWVUS aligned with the Women and Gender Constituency specifically at COP26. Our westernized view of gender pay gaps and other discrepancies is an extremely relevant sounding board when it comes to climate change. When we think about the damage caused by climate change, we can easily identify that farmers, food security, and other functions maintained by women are most disrupted. Globally, 80% of women are displaced because of climate change. A strategy for climate mitigation is to educate women on good climate use and include them in both the decision making and implementation processes.

All in all, my experience at COP26 revealed a stark reality about the way in which the United States narrates about and addresses climate change. There are still naysayers who believe climate change does not exist, even though our current climate reality is that per NASA's Global Climate Change Data, the industrial activities that our modern civilization depends upon have raised atmospheric carbon dioxide levels from 280 parts per million to about 417 parts per million in the last 151 years. The research also concluded there's a better than 95% probability that human-produced greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide have caused much of the observed increase in Earth's temperatures over the past 50-plus years.

This is a global problem with multi-faceted solutions that will take collaborative action and people power, transparent information, and accountable policy and government regulations to address. To those who believe climate change is a hoax or who are content with the status quo; to them I simply respond with the chant from the Women and Gender Constituency:

*“The People Have the Power;
Tell Me Can You Feel it;
Getting Stronger by the Hour;
Climate, Gender, Justice #ClimateJusticeNow!”*