

LWW LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE HUNTINGTON AREA

January 2025 E-Mail Bulletin

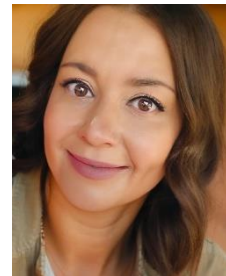
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The Library – A Place for Everyone!

Breana Bowen,
Cabell County Public Library
Executive Director



The Cabell County Public Library is a cornerstone of our democratic society and a vital resource for our community. With eight libraries across the county, we proudly serve everyone, and welcome individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Our mission is to provide spaces, resources, and programs that meet the diverse and ever-changing needs of our community.

In Cabell County, our community has historically demonstrated an overwhelming commitment to its libraries through program attendance, usage of resources, and advocacy work. This was most recently demonstrated when voters overwhelmingly renewed the excess levy, ensuring the future of our libraries. To the voters of Cabell County, we are deeply grateful for your belief in and investment in your libraries and community.

The Cabell County Public Library takes pride in being a hub of opportunity, offering critical services such as free Wi-Fi, printing, notary, and access to social work resources. Individuals visit the library to learn to read, to secure basic necessities like food and shelter, to complete homework, to apply for jobs, to access technology, to attend programs, to hear authors speak, and so much more. Thousands of people walk through our doors each year, reflecting the growing demand for the wide range of services we offer. Last year alone our public computers were used by thousands of individuals, and almost 500,000 materials were checked out in print and electronic formats. We hosted thousands of programs for children, teens, and adults, and our library cardholders now number nearly 140,000. In total, 233,000 individuals visited our libraries last year--an increase of 35,000 visits from the previous year.

This local trend is mirrored across West Virginia. According to the 2023 State Statistical Data Report prepared by the West Virginia Library Commission, libraries statewide are thriving. People are reading, attending programs, accessing technology, and using resources more than ever. To all individuals who are in positions of decision, power, and change, I urge you to take note of what the voters of Cabell County have recently demonstrated: libraries are essential. Our community not only wants us to exist, they want us to thrive. Libraries are not just places where people access books, but spaces where education, opportunity, and connection flourish. As you make decisions affecting our communities, I ask you to remember the vital role libraries play and the countless individuals who rely on their services. Also, please remember those who recently used their voices and votes in support of the library.

Thank you to everyone reading this column. I encourage you to visit our libraries, attend a program, tell a friend about our services and resources, check out a book, and continue advocating for the library. Together, we can ensure that our libraries thrive for generations to come.



There's a New Sheriff in Town

Nyoka Baker Chapman

As anticipated and expected, the agenda of West Virginia's new governor is everything that he said it would be. From rooting out Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, to offering new vaccine exemptions and cutting the WV budget wherever possible, he has made a number of his goals clear. This article from WTRF-TV in Wheeling did a good job of summarizing them. <https://www.wtrf.com/west-virginia/new-west-virginia-governor-issues-executive-orders-day-one-actions-fentanyl-as-a-weapon-of-mass-destruction-men-are-men-and-women-are-women/> His initial Executive orders can be read below and found listed on the governor's website <https://governor.wv.gov/executive-orders>

[EO establishing economic Backyard Brawl](#)

[EO setting School choice as a priority of the administration](#)

[EO ordering cessation of DEI](#)

[EO reviewing past, present, and projected spending decisions](#)

[EO directing agencies to develop a plan for more efficient government](#)

[EO plan to reduce rules, regulatory review](#)

[EO allowing religious exemptions for school vaccines](#)

[EO reviewing outdated Executive Orders](#)

With West Virginia being in the bottom rankings in the nation in healthcare and education, and with one in four of our children living in poverty, we need a plan to rise up. WV is in no position and has no time to waste on actions that may hurt the most vulnerable among us. From strengthening fossil fuel permitting regulations to increasing our minimum wage, to cleaning up legacy pollution and creating a strong and healthy public school system, there must be ways to improve the quality of life for WV citizens as soon as possible.



DEI Made Null by Executive Order?

Nyoka Baker Chapman

On day one of his administration, the 47th president of the United States signed an executive order to end the policy of diversity, equity and inclusion in the government work force. (The easiest way to address this could be to just end the requirement to check boxes about race, sex and age on employment and college applications, but there is no mention of it here.) The referenced order can be read here: [Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferecing – The White House](#)

The US Supreme Court overturned affirmative action in the case of *Students for Fair Admissions, Inc. vs. President & Fellows of Harvard College*, on June 29, 2023 after 45 years of precedent. Following this decision, many lawsuits were filed by different entities to end DEI as its petitioners claimed reverse discrimination. This article from the Guardian gives a good explanation of how this case opened the gates to anti DEI lawsuits. <https://www.theguardian.com/law/article/2024/sep/06/dei-affirmative-action-lawsuits>
<https://www.oyez.org/cases/2022/20-1199>
<https://www.scotusblog.com/case-files/cases/students-for-fair-admissions-inc-v-president-fellows-of-harvard-college/>



**“WE NEED
LEADERS
NOT IN LOVE WITH
MONEY
BUT IN LOVE
WITH
JUSTICE.
NOT IN LOVE WITH
PUBLICITY BUT
IN LOVE
WITH
HUMANITY.”**

-DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



A Grain of Salt

Nyoka Baker Chapman

As to who wrote all of the executive orders signed by the new president it is unknown (probably the Project 2025 folks), but there was clearly a failure to understand what a president can and cannot do and what orders are even legal under the constitution and current law. For instance, although there is a proclamation to release

American energy and pull back funds for green energy projects (or any other congressionally appropriated funds and programs) there is no executive authority it appears to do so without congressional review.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/unleashing-american-energy/>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2025/01/20/us/politics/trump-executive-orders-list.html>

Per the US Government Accountability Office (GAO):

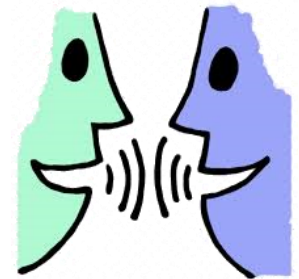
<https://www.gao.gov/products/095406>

The Impoundment Control Act of 1974 created the procedural means by which the Congress considers and reviews executive branch withholdings of budget authority. It requires the President to report promptly to the Congress all withholdings of budget authority and to abide by the outcome of the congressional impoundment review process. Although the basic framework of the act is sound, there are several refinements that could be made to the law and the way it is administered. Administratively, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) should: specify the duration of proposed partial-year deferrals, identify all impoundments of congressional add-ons to executive branch budget requests, note whether there have been previous impoundments proposed for each program in which withholdings currently are proposed, and improve the timeliness of presidential impoundment reports. Legislative recommendations include repeal of the requirement to report routine impoundments in the form of budgetary reserves, providing a means to reduce the 45-day period during which funds can be withheld pending rescission requests, requiring a statement of the exact duration of proposed partial-year deferrals, elimination of the 25-day waiting period before the Comptroller General can initiate legal proceedings to compel the release of impounded budget authority, and specifying when impoundments may be proposed after prior impoundments for the same program have been rejected by the Congress.

Member Speaks

Laura Deveny

In the November newsletter, members were invited to share feedback on the election, which was a good suggestion because I know we've all got thoughts. This is what I've been thinking.



The LWVHA set a goal this election cycle to increase voter participation. We designed and printed signs and a billboard, distributed information at local events, and talked to lots


of people. We came away feeling that we had done our part, and turns out, our goal of increasing the number of participating voters was achieved.

The result of all those votes shows that Americans are unsettled. They want change. And now change will come.

We've arrived here together. Going forward we know who we are and what is important to us. Should governmental policy - whether local, state, or national - contradict LWV positions, we as an organization can challenge it with one voice.

Recently, the editorial board of the New York Times posited, "America can stand strong as long as people stand up for it."

In unity, the League of Women Voters will hold our ground.

 "Your Mission Should You Choose to Accept It..."

Nyoka Baker Chapman

Defending Democracy is an assignment that may sound impossible, but we won't be giving up now. Our operation will require common sense, stealth, calm and doing as many good deeds as possible. Overcoming fear in the face of autocratic overreach may test us, but we need only remember that the United States Constitution is still there for us. We know that those articles are more than a just a resource, they are a recourse and an answer to any needed line of defense in the name of Democracy and our pledge to Justice for All.

We have always assumed that our government and its elected officials are obligated to honor and ethically uphold our Laws. Yet, how is that supposed to work if they don't do what the law says? Well, that is yet to be seen. Now is the time for a strong revival of constitutional literacy. When citizens are aware of the protections given to their fundamental rights, there is a greater chance that those articles can be enforced.

The content that follows is a LWV roadmap for our organization to champion Democracy in the days ahead and was copied directly from the league website. <https://www.lwv.org/fighting-voter-suppression/women-defend-democracy> Our all in affirmation: <https://www.lwv.org/blog/our-oath-democracy>

"Women Defend Democracy" is the new programmatic focus for the League in 2025, centering people power and moving our country towards a stronger, multi-racial democracy.

For 105 years, the League of Women Voters has worked to provide voters with election information, safeguard voter access, uphold election integrity, and defend against efforts to undermine democratic principles. Today, the organization is stronger than ever, with a growing, vibrant membership of activists tackling the challenges to our democracy in every corner of our country. As the League continues to build a membership that reflects America, we recognize the continued challenges our democracy will face.

Stay Up to Date with Women Defend Democracy

Through the “Women Defend Democracy” campaign, the League will work to:

- Provide Democracy Education & Election Administration Support
- Restore and Defend Voting Rights Protections
- Abolish the Electoral College
- Protect Democracy Organizations & Institutions
- Fight for Reproductive Freedoms

This campaign kicks off for the first 100 days of the new administration and beyond. The League of Women Voters is well positioned to defend attacks on democracy in the coming months and years. Together, we believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

The Role of Advisory Committees in Government Efficiency

Nyoka Baker Chapman

Three Lawsuits were filed on 1/20/2025 in the US District Court of the District of Columbia that allege that the proposed Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) violates the *Federal Advisory Committee Act*. Per Bloomberg Law, *‘a law that requires groups advising the president to hold open meetings and include members with varying points of view. The complaints highlight the absence of federal workers within DOGE.’*



As cited by Bloomberg Law: The cases are [Public Citizen, Inc. v. Trump](#), D.D.C., No. 25-cv-00164, complaint filed 1/20/25, [Am. Public Health Ass’n v. OMB](#), Dist. Ct. D.C., 1:25-cv-00167, complaint filed 1/20/25, and [Lentini v. Dep’t of Gov’t Efficiency](#), Dist. Ct. D.C., complaint filed 1/20/25.

<https://news.bloomberglaw.com/daily-labor-report/federal-union-sues-trump-mid-inauguration-over-doge-plan>

The Federal Advisory Committee Act: <https://eca.state.gov/files/bureau/faca.pdf>

*OMB is the acronym for the Office of Management and Budget.

A Bit More...

Though the *Federal Advisory Committee Act* does not apply to states, there are state advisory commissions/councils for their respective departments, including WV, that are responsible for oversight, recommendations and general guidance. Though there are established instructions regarding who is to serve on those committees, WV has had a history of not filling vacant positions that are intended to reflect equal representation of opinions on issues of public concern.

Here is an example of criteria set forth under WV code for the Dept of Human Services. <https://code.wvlegislature.gov/9-4-3/> §9-4-3. *Advisory council.* The influence of an advisory council cannot be ignored in its power to steer government operations. The code cited is alphabetically itemized. See a referenced section under §9-4-3. *(f) The advisory council shall assist the state Medicaid Agency in the establishment of rules, standards and bylaws necessary to carry out the provisions of this section and shall serve as consultants to the state Medicaid Agency in carrying out the provisions of this section.*

Efficient advocacy must put advisory councils under scrutiny to make sure that all voices are being heard at the table when important decisions are being made, especially ones like budget cuts.

How to Contact...

Marcia Daoust



WV LEGISLATORS 2025

WV Legislature has a detailed website: www.wvlegislature.gov

It will list the complete details on how to reach legislators at the Capitol, committee assignments, etc. only AFTER the 2025 Legislature convenes on Feb. 12, 2025. The legislature has a helpful staff that provides Legislative information:

Phone: **(304) 347-4836.**

To locate the name and available information about your legislators, use the following link: <https://joint.wvlegislature.gov/lawmaker-search/>

WV'S U.S. CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE, FIRST DISTRICT

Representative Carol D. Miller:

Phone **(202) 225-3452**

Website: <https://miller.house.gov/>

WV'S U.S. SENATORS

Senator Shelley Moore Capito

Phone: (202) 224-6472

Website: <https://www.capito.senate.gov>

Senator James C. Justice

Phone: (202) 224-3954

Website: <https://www.justice.senate.gov/>

U.S. PRESIDENT

President Donald J. Trump

Phone: (202)456-1111 (comment line M-Thursday)

Website: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/>

The Only Constant in Life Is Change



Marcia Daoust

The League of Women Voters is making some changes in the way that dues will be collected in 2025. Nationally, we are going into the digital age, based on a majority decision at the latest LWWUS Convention. This will not change the importance or power of our local Leagues.

SUMMARY:

In 2025, LWW dues will be paid directly to the LWWUS and on a pay-as-you-can basis (minimum \$20). Members will be asked by email to set up a digital LWW portal account. There they will manage their dues payment and provide their contact/personal information. Donations to local Leagues should be made separately from payment of dues.

DETAILS & LOGISTICS:

Dues will be requested, via email, a year after your dues were previously paid.

From now on, dues will be paid directly to the national LWWUS, instead of to the LWW of the Huntington Area (LWWHA). The LWWUS will then distribute a percentage of these dues collected from our local members to assist the LWWHA and LWW of WV, with their activities.

The dues can be paid digitally through the LWWUS website (lww.org) “member portal,” or by checks that are mailed directly to LWWUS. This is similar to how many other national nonprofits manage their membership. You will be asked to pay your dues on-line, using an email address provided to LWWUS. (Note: Those members who told LWW of the Huntington Area that they do NOT want their email addresses shared with National LWWUS, will be contacted by our local Huntington League directly.)

The LWW of the Huntington Area has always paid a percentage of our dues to support the work of the LWWUS and LWW of WV. This was labelled “Per Member Payment.” Under the new system, local leagues will be relieved of time-consuming work, such as

maintaining a database for LWVUS with local member information and keeping dues payment records.

Hopefully, this digital system will encourage more voters to join, especially those who enjoy spending time on-line.

There will no longer be a fixed rate for dues. It will be a “pay-what-you-can” rate from a minimum of \$20/year, to the nationally recommended rate of \$75/year. Last year, LWVHA dues were \$50/year and our members are welcome to continue paying at that level. It will be up to each member to determine how much they want to pay, based on their personal discretion. (Note: There will no longer be the option of free memberships for students.)

Our local League members will receive an email requesting they set up an account on the LWVUS portal, with password protection. There, you will find a form where you can provide as little or as much personal information as you wish to share with LWVUS. You do NOT have to set up a digital account in order to be a member.

If you have two members in your household, the first one is encouraged to pay what they can, and the second member to pay ½ that amount (no lower than a minimum of \$20.)

If you wish to make a donation to your local League, you need to do so through a separate check indicating it is a donation. (LWVHA, c/o Carolyn Bagby, 79 N. Bradley Foster Dr., Huntington WV 25701.)

We are still learning about national LWV changes and will share more information with you in the future.

Changing can be uncomfortable, but hopefully, beneficial.

May you stay safe and warm this winter and remain engaged with the important work of the League of Women Voters.