

September 2025

STATE BOARD LETTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND



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THE LEAGUE'S FALL FORECAST

Fall is here, and with it comes a busy season for the League! Whether it's LWVMD's Fall Workshop, our upcoming book talk with Elaine Weiss, or getting involved in our new local advocacy meetings campaign, there are plenty of ways to stay connected and take action this season.

"Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education." - Franklin D. Roosevelt

UPCOMING LEAGUE EVENTS

SEPT 27	Fall Workshop
OCTOBER 7	Book Talk: Author Elaine Weiss
OCT. 24	Advocacy Training #1
EVERY FRIDAY	In-District Advocacy Trainings



THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Linda Kohn, LWVMD President

VOTER REGISTRATION TO VOTER EDUCATION

September is National Voter Registration Month, and September 16th is National Voter Registration Day. A nonpartisan civic holiday that began in 2012.

All Leagues in Maryland are very active in registering voters at a variety of sites, from high schools to farmers' markets to naturalization ceremonies to jails. Whenever there's a local event in the community, I know that the League has a presence. Thank you all!

At the LWVMD Convention in June 2025, a breakout session considered how to extend League efforts in voter registration to voter education. While the League plays an important role in registering voters—and always will—people are increasingly registering to vote online. So the session at the Convention was a wide-ranging discussion on how to connect with voters to prepare and encourage them to vote after they've registered. Here are some of the ideas that were put forward (in no particular order):

- Engage with people on topics they are concerned about, not just how to vote and key dates. Help them connect their issue to a state or local office they will face on the ballot.
- Build relationships with other organizations so they also talk with their clients and constituents about voting. Go to their activities and meetings (staying nonpartisan).
- Exploit social media "to the max."
- Work now to allay voters' fears. Assure them that Maryland's elections are safe and secure. Share the facts!
- Don't leave out municipal elections. All elections matter.
- Practice how to approach different types of people when you're at events. For example, the busy person who will only give you a few seconds, the grumpy person who makes it hard to break the ice, or the apathetic person who is hard to engage.

You can probably add more ideas to this list. If the current news is predictive, I expect we will face election challenges in 2026 that we have never seen before. People look to the League and trust us. We have to live up to that trust.

"Whenever there's a local event in the community, I know that the League has a presence."

UPCOMING EVENTS

Get Involved with The League!



2025 FALL WORKSHOP

SEPTEMBER 27TH

VIRTUAL - 9:00 AM

FALL WORKSHOP

September 27th 9:00 AM

LWVMD's Annual Fall Workshop is almost here! This year's theme is *National Policies, Local Action*.

During this virtual event, we'll explore the impacts of recent Medicaid cuts, and dive into a skills session on advocating at the local level. More details and agenda items coming soon!

Register Here: <https://www.lwvmd.org/fallworkshop2025>

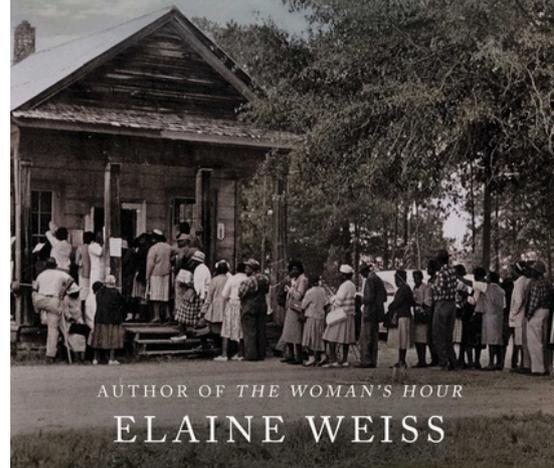
BOOK TALK: AUTHOR ELAINE WEISS

October 7th at 7:00 PM - Virtual

Join LWVMD for a special evening with **award-winning author Elaine Weiss** as she discusses her new book *Spell Freedom: The Underground Schools that Built the Civil Rights Movement*. This virtual event will be **moderated by Dr. Karsonya Whitehead**, Founder of the Karson Institute for Race, Peace, & Social Justice.

Register Here: www.lwvmd.org/book_talk_spell_freedom

Spell Freedom



AUTHOR OF THE WOMAN'S HOUR
ELAINE WEISS

ADVOCACY TRAINING

October 24th 3:30 PM

Join us on Friday, October 24th for the **first session** of LWVMD's **3-part Advocacy Training Series!** In this first session, we'll cover *Everything You Need to Know About The Maryland General Assembly*.

Register Here: www.lwvmd.org/advocacy_training_1



NEW ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

Committee Updates: Action Committee

ADVOCACY HAPPENS EVEN WHEN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY IS NOT MEETING

LWVMD is launching a new advocacy effort to bring our work directly to all 47 legislative districts in the state. You can help us by meeting with your local Maryland legislators before the General Assembly session starts in January to get our top priorities on their radar.

We ask that you meet with your own State Senator and Delegate(s), share LWVMD's top priorities and why they matter, and speak with confidence about the League to support democracy.

LWVMD will provide you with fact sheets and material to leave with your legislators, sample scripts and email templates, and training (by Zoom). We are going to focus on 3 priorities in these conversations:

- **Special Elections for Vacancies:** Support a constitutional amendment requiring special elections to fill legislative vacancies — not insider appointments.
- **Plain Language on Ballot Questions:** Advocate for legislation that ensures all ballot questions are written in clear, easy-to-understand language.

- **Local Issue:** Your local League may include an optional, additional issue relevant to your community. LWVMD will provide a one-pager template and guidance.

We're hosting a **standing training every Friday at 10:00 a.m.** through October 17th. If that time can't work for you, just let us know.

Whether you've done advocacy before or are new to it, there's a place for you in this effort.



JOIN THE CAMPAIGN

Fill out this survey to let us know you're interested: bit.ly/InDistrictAdvocacy

Join us for a virtual training, hosted every Friday at 10:00 AM via Zoom! Join Here: bit.ly/4nnp6xb

FALL WORKSHOP 2025

NATIONAL POLICIES, LOCAL ACTION

NATIONAL POLICIES, LOCAL ACTION FALL WORKSHOP, SEPTEMBER 27, 2025

The annual Fall Workshop will be held on Saturday, September 27, 2025, via Zoom, starting at 9:00 a.m. and ending at 12:30 p.m. Our theme is "National Policies, Local Action."

The first half will focus on the changes made to Medicaid under the recently passed federal legislation. Medicaid is a joint federal/state program that provides health care coverage for the most vulnerable populations. In 2024, about 1.5 million people were in Medicaid, and yearly spending is about \$17 billion. Medicaid covers about 40% of all births in Maryland, but many people do not realize that it is also a major funder for long-term care, and almost half of Medicaid money in Maryland supports people in nursing homes and people with disabilities. The passage of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" at the federal level imposes significant changes to the program, including cuts to funding for states and adding work requirements to those enrolled in the program. In addition to creating burdens on people, it also creates a larger administrative burden on the state.

We have a dynamic panel lined up. We have confirmed Julie Rovner, chief Washington correspondent for KFF Health News and former health policy correspondent for NPR, and also Jonathan Dayton, Executive Director of the Maryland Rural Health Association (rural areas will be particularly affected by the changes). We are in the process of confirming a speaker from the State to discuss the impact on Maryland specifically.

Whereas the first half focuses on federal policy, the second half of the workshop will focus on local action and what you can do to support change at the local level. We will hear from an organizer on how federal policy inserts itself locally. While federal policy can feel disconnected sometimes, it trickles down to our everyday lives. We will review an approach on how to engage at the local level, using League positions and staying nonpartisan. Finally, we will hear from a local elected official on why local action matters.

National policies, local action. Be there!

BOOK TALK W/ ELAINE WEISS

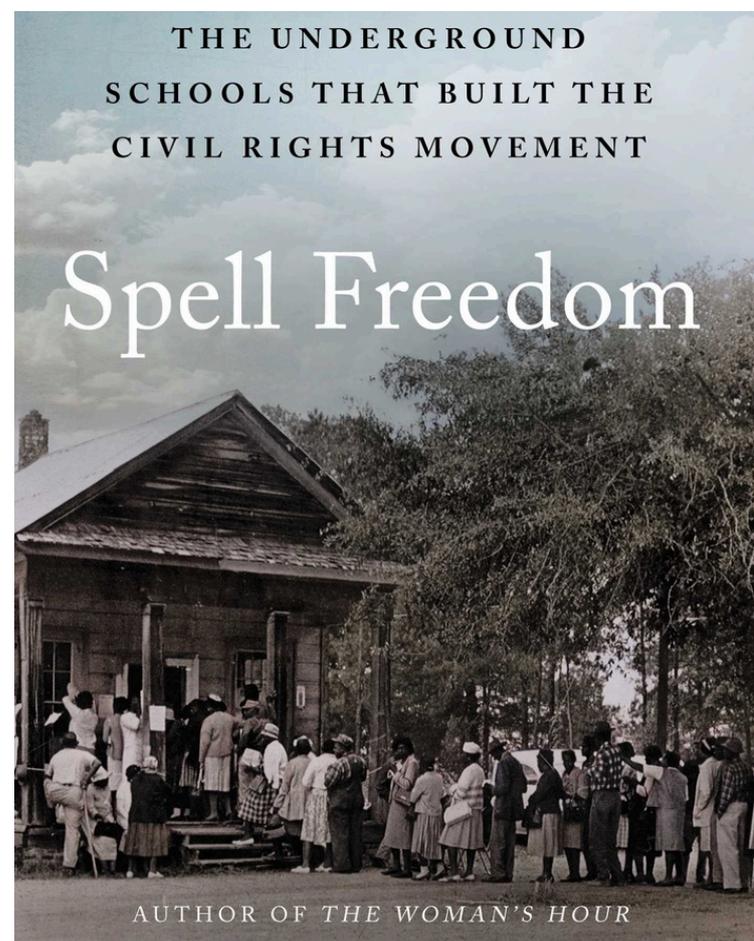
Committee Updates: Speaker Series

A CONVERSATION WITH ELAINE WEISS ON OCTOBER 7, 2025, 7:00 P.M.

It's the 1950s. Jim Crow South. Black citizens are being denied their constitutional right to vote due to unreasonable (ridiculous?) rules imposed by state governments. A group of "ordinary" people decides to take it on. If you've never heard the name Septima Clark, you will never forget it and the remarkable movement that she and others created.

Hear this inspiring tale when Elaine Weiss speaks to LWVMD members about her new book, "Spell Freedom, The Underground Schools That Built the Civil Rights Movement." Some of you may recall her prior excellent book, "The Woman's Hour," about the passage of the 19th Amendment. In her newest work, she tells the story of four activists who worked during the 1950s to prepare Black citizens to pass the Jim Crow requirements that were imposed on them when they tried to register to vote. Through the course of their efforts and in the face of significant dangers, they established hidden schools across the South, registered thousands of people, and enabled them to exercise their right to vote. It is a moving and inspiring story of how ordinary people, working at a grassroots level, stepped up and made a difference.

Be sure to join the conversation on October 7, 7:00 p.m., via Zoom, when Elaine Weiss will share her latest work. She is an exceptional writer and storyteller, so we are very fortunate to be able to hear from her directly. This will be a "do not miss" event!



In conversation with Dr.
Karsonya Wise Whitehead,
founding executive director of
The Karson Institute for Race,
Peace & Social Justice

MISSION AT WORK

Membership

LWVMD CONTINUES TO GROW!

LWVMD is continuing to expand in Maryland with a new local League forming on the Lower Eastern Shore that includes Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester counties. Many years ago (up to the late 1990s), there was a league in that part of Maryland, which disbanded. It is very gratifying to see a new League forming again for the residents there. When a new League forms, it comes together first as a “Member-At-Large Unit” and its members join as LWVMD members. In just a couple months, the group already has about 30 members and is planning to prepare a Voters Guide and conduct a candidate forum in 2026. Its members can also participate in all other LWVMD activities. At the last LWVMD Board meeting, the Board agreed to recognize the League of Women Voters of the Lower Eastern Shore (LWVLES) and to request an official logo for them from LWVUS. A member-at-large unit may retain that designation for as long as desired. If they choose, they may apply to become a recognized chapter in the future (but that is a longer process!). Congratulations go to Nancy Rogers, Debbie Krause and Candice Rettie for their outstanding work in making this happen. And a warm welcome to all members who have joined LWVLES. We look forward to seeing everyone at events in the future.



LWVMD also continues to add members across the state, in part due to the new dues structure which allows people to join with a minimum dues payment of \$20. Since it went into effect in early 2025, Maryland has added over 30 members. LWVUS reports that they have gained 10,000 new members across the country. This is an “all hands on deck” time, especially for the 2026 elections. Find a way to get involved that fits you! Talk with the leadership in your local League and/or contact Nikki Tyree, LWVMD Executive Director, to learn more about the opportunities. Members can get involved at all levels of League simultaneously depending on your interests so find what works for you.

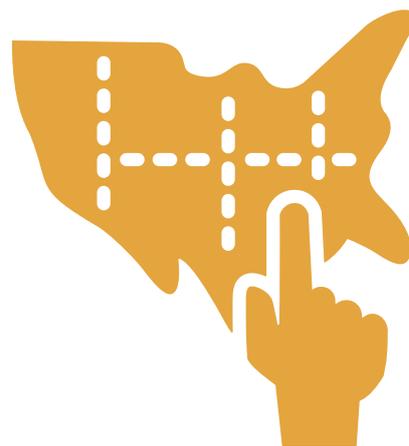
MISSION AT WORK

Redistricting

MID-CYCLE REDISTRICTING IS HAPPENING ACROSS THE COUNTRY—WILL IT HAPPEN IN MARYLAND?

As this is being written, Texas has just passed legislation to re-draw its legislative district lines, and California is pursuing a similar effort. Typically, districts are redrawn after a census, which means this process should not be happening until data from the 2030 census is available. When it is done mid-cycle, it has the potential to be very disruptive. Candidates are uncertain about where their district is, and voters get confused when they see different candidates on a ballot than they expected. It also creates confusion for voters on which precinct to go to on Election Day (“I voted here last time, why can’t I vote here again?”). Furthermore, the mid-cycle redistricting efforts are being done for political reasons to sway elections in 2026 and 2028.

Both LWVUS and LWVMD have positions on redistricting. LWVMD’s position directs that redistricting efforts promote fair and effective representation in the state legislature and House of Representatives with maximum opportunity for public scrutiny, preferably conducted by an independent commission. It should be done every ten years after the census.



Because of the controversy, LWVUS issued the following statement on August 6, 2025:

“State legislatures redrawing their maps mid-cycle reflects political gamesmanship that erodes public trust in our democracy. Redistricting must be fair, transparent, and rooted in the voices of voters — not partisan retaliation....Manipulating maps for political gain is a disservice to the people. The League stands for maps that reflect communities, not political calculations. Voters deserve stable, fair representation — not to be used as pawns in a power grab. When politicians rewrite the rules mid-game to protect their control, democracy loses.”

This is a very dynamic and fast-moving issue that is being closely watched by LWVMD.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION



Welcome To The League!

New Member Orientation

First Monday of Every Month
10:00–11:00 a.m.
Virtual



Join us to learn all about your new membership with the League!

Please RSVP for this event to receive the Zoom link for joining.

Next Orientation Dates:

- Monday, October 6th, 2025
- Monday, November 3rd, 2025
- Monday, December 1st, 2025
- Monday, January 5th, 2026
- Monday, February 2nd, 2026
- Monday, March 2nd, 2026

REALIZING FULL CITIZENSHIP: THE AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Wednesday, September 17

12:00 p.m. | Ceremonial Courtroom

Paula Monopoli



Monique Dixon



Cori Alonso-Yoder

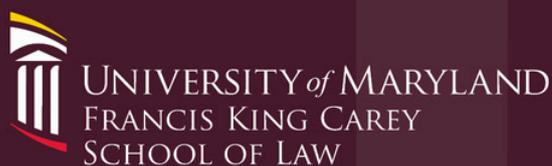


Join us for this Constitution Day panel to examine historical and contemporary understandings of citizenship in the United States. Panelists will explore the scope of who has been included in that status, the differential rights afforded those deemed citizens, and the limits of citizenship. Recent challenges to the traditional understanding of birthright citizenship under the Fourteenth Amendment have once again raised these important questions in our civic discourse.

Paula Monopoli is Distinguished University Professor and Sol & Carlyn Hubert Professor of Law at Maryland Carey Law where she founded its Women, Leadership & Equality Program. Professor Monopoli's scholarship focuses on feminist legal history and the intersection of gender and constitutional design.

Monique Dixon is the Executive Director of the Gibson-Banks Center for Race and the Law at the School of Law. An experienced civil rights attorney, Dixon joined the School of Law after serving as the deputy assistant secretary for policy at the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR).

Cori Alonso-Yoder is Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the Immigration Clinic, an affiliate of the Chacón Center for Immigrant Justice at the School of Law. Professor Alonso-Yoder's scholarship focuses on immigration legislation and the impacts of state, local, and federal laws on immigrant communities.



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