

LWVUS Convention 2022 - Anchorage Delegate Report



Convention Overview from Olivia Tafs - Anchorage Delegate:

The following is a list of actions proposed and/or adopted by LWVUS that stood out as especially important this Convention:

- Bylaw amendment to change the structure of dues-paying to go through the National League passed very narrowly— i voted for it, but it definitely was not unanimously supported and there was some significant opposition
- Bylaw amendment to remove the age requirement for full membership came very close to a majority, but not close to the $\frac{2}{3}$ required to pass. We were disappointed, but felt that the work we did in conjunction with the Wisconsin League, who brought forth the amendment, made a big impact on people's opinions
- The convention coincided with the overturning of Roe v. Wade by the Supreme Court, and the Convention overwhelmingly passed a resolution in support of reproductive healthcare access and women's rights.
- We adopted concurrences on Criminal Justice from California and Healthcare Access from NY
- A motion to recognize the ongoing crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women passed overwhelmingly— seemed very relevant to Alaska and our League and community. Is there anything we can do to partner with the LWV of Wyoming who brought forward this issue?

I really enjoyed getting to connect with other young people from across the country, and I felt like we made a big difference in people's perceptions of the role of young people in LWV. It was also very meaningful to me to be in community with a huge group of people who all care about reproductive rights on Friday, and to be able to take action together right away.

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Convention Impressions from Tuan Graziano - Anchorage Delegate:

As always, the entire Youth Vote team wants to thank our local league for all of the support and encouragement in sending us to National Convention.

Due to this continued support, we have built a strong reputation among the many other delegations that attend. It is a reputation that continues to grow. Just on our first day we were called out to and greeted by various other attendees who knew us as the League members from Alaska or as the Youth Vote members. We were also recognized on several occasions due to our Youth Vote shirts. This was something we really noticed as a mark in how Youth Vote and the League of Women Voters of Anchorage have really made a mark at Convention and on other leagues. Another example that reinforced this were the marked increase of youth focused or youth included caucus presentations. There seemed to be at least one every day. Other league members frequently showered us with encouragement, admiration, and stories of how they have been inspired and taken action to follow in the footsteps of the Anchorage League and Youth Vote. Some league members even expressed interest in flying Youth Vote members to their communities and their own leagues to share our expertise. I think this culminated into a very positive Youth Vote presence.

Plenary was quite a dramatic experience. It was plagued with time overruns and delays. It seems that LWVUS did not properly plan to include enough time to fully discuss the various business items that were required. This was a frustration that became quickly and increasingly apparent. The bylaw amendment on eliminating PMP was the clearest example of this, as there was less than an hour of total time spent on debate and motions. The vote was close, and there were several attempts throughout the day to bring debate back on this amendment. This constriction was not limited to just this amendment, and became a common theme for the other bylaw amendment discussions, budget votes, resolutions, studies, etc. Valuable time was taken up by various guest speakers, not all of whom were on the original agenda, and a surprise “hype man” who also took up time. It led to the originally scheduled final reports, awards, and ending keynote speaker to be moved to a recorded version after plenary. However, through this Olivia and I gained incredible first hand experience in interacting with other delegations, including our own fellow Alaskan delegates, on discussing the merits of each business item we voted on. As Olivia stated, we passed motions on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women (MMWI) as well as a motion on fully including passing the ERA on our program; both of critical importance to our own league. Additionally, a movement to join the protests and march in

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downtown Denver against the Supreme Court's repeal of Roe v. Wade was organized during plenary and many league members joined in.

Unfortunately, the positive interactions we had at convention did not fully translate to the support needed to pass the bylaws amendment to abolish the age limit for full membership within the League. Heading into Convention we were aware of the amendment, but it was not until we met with other league members who were in support, especially other youth league members leading the charge, that we realized how passionate we were about this cause. Young people have a right to have the same representation if they are to be asked to do the same work as league members. The power, energy, and future that young people bring are so inherently critical to the success of any organization or cause. There are so many organizations in this nation that would gladly take young members. For us to limit them because of our fears and concerns about insurance, local laws on board membership, or even member manipulation is self-limiting to our organization. We draw our strength from believing in our own inherent power and ability to make positive change. The League of Women Voters have an enshrined history of challenging the status quo, of challenging traditional membership values, and of challenging the highest court and legal document in this country. I believe the potential "issues" that arise around removing the age limit for full League membership are trivial in comparison to what the benefit could be. This is a feeling that I, and many other League members both young and old who were in support of this amendment, passionately hold as evidenced by the fact that the vote came within a majority of support. (However, a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority was required). At the end of the day, the future of our country depends on both youth and adults holding Lady Liberty's torch of democracy, freedom, and justice together.

Convention Highlights from LWVUS:

Daily Briefing

Letter from LWVUS:

Sunday concluded the 55th League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) National Convention.

This was the League's first hybrid Convention, with 1000+ members from all 50 states joining both virtually and in-person in Denver, CO.

Notably, the 2022 Convention coincided with the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the constitutional right to abortion. In her [opening remarks](#), LWVUS board president Dr. Deborah Ann Turner reflected on her experiences as an obstetrician/gynecologist and the League's dedication to reproductive justice.

"We hold the power to create a more perfect democracy. Women's rights are human rights, and we will continue to fight until the right to abortion is restored," Dr. Turner stated. "This is the work that the League of Women Voters does...We fight for our freedom. And that's why we are here today at Convention."

Dr. Turner closed by announcing the League's next "moonshot" goal: abolition of the Electoral College. The League has [long supported this goal](#) due to the college's racist history and many shortcomings.

Friday evening, Convention attendees joined Denver activists in marching to the Colorado State Capitol Building and rallying for abortion justice.

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Thoughtful action remained a focus throughout Convention. On Thursday, June 23, [a panel of women leaders](#) in the voting rights and social justice movements spoke to the ways in which women can power democracy. Later, [MSNBC political analyst Joy Reid reflected](#) on the essential nature of our work in her keynote address.

The League also shared its [2020-2022 biennium report](#), which showcased the League's impact over the past two years.

Throughout three days of plenary, delegates elected the [2022-2024 LWVUS Board of directors](#). Dr. Deborah Ann Turner was once again elected as board president, a role she has held since 2020.

Delegates also voted on several motions, including the LWVUS budget and various bylaws amendment proposals. Read the [decision summaries](#).

Delegates had the opportunity to attend dozens of workshops and caucuses throughout Convention on topics as diverse as mis and dis-information, activating young voters, using OutreachCircle, and more.

Due to time constraints, the presentation of Biennium Awards was postponed and will be held the week of July 11. Be on the lookout for a virtual invitation to this celebration!

Thank you again to everyone who made our 55th Convention a time of community, action, and inspiration. This past week reminds us of both the urgency of our work and the power of our members to create a more perfect democracy.

The next two years will determine the course of our nation; as Dr. Turner said, we will "keep on keeping on."

And we will win.

