

President's Information and Up-dates



Lisa Johnson
League President

First of all – before I start with more local League topics – I would like to comment on the Wisconsin Supreme Court Decision on December 23, 2023 regarding Fair Maps! Wow! Oh ----what a happy day!

Here's a link to a NYTimes article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/22/us/wisconsin-redistricting-maps-gerrymander.html> Sorry but this may have a few advertisements sprinkled in but as outlined in the article!

From the article, 'Dan Lenz, a lawyer for the petitioners, called the decision **"a victory for a representative democracy in the state of Wisconsin."**

The long term –arduous efforts in the "Fair Maps Initiative" throughout the state of Wisconsin, **has paid off!** The hard work and consistent clear messaging--- along with strong legal representation, **worked!** I suspect the war is not over on this, but a battle has been won!

Thank you to all that have been involved ---for your dedication and service to the voters of Wisconsin!

A word on communication-----As a reminder – with all that is going on, and there is a lot going on---I am making every effort to communicate information to the League in a timely and will do my best to make it easy for the receiver to manage !

The bad news for some is that unfortunately, what seems to be the most effective method to communicate information is with ----that's right----emails.

I realize that emails can mean drudgery ---to many----dull reading but frankly, I cannot find a more effective way to reach everyone. (Suggestions are welcome by the way!)

So as a tip from me, watch for the League's emails.....(There are ways to group incoming emails in Outlook or Gmail that you may find helpful.)

But I encourage you to check the subject line of the emails "League Related". I have and will always try to note if something is urgent; or if it needs your response; or what the email pertains to. I feel that may help the reader to decide if you need to read it immediately and act or save if for a later time to peruse. Not everything is urgent but more "FYI". For your information type things.

So – as we weave our way through the next 308 Days to the General Election – there will be a ton of information coming our way! Watch for communication and I also encourage you to consider volunteering when you can – as well as supporting our advocacy positions when possible – sign up for activities that are a fit for your personal calendar these next 308 days!

One of my favorite quotes that I have used in Voter Services Meetings sums it up:

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can!"

Arthur Ashe

*See PRESIDENT, Page 2

*President's

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Board of Directors Recent Action or Decisions-Dates

Reminder – many league members are already poll workers. Thank you for your service!

If you have not had the opportunity in the past – please consider volunteering as a poll worker for the upcoming elections!

Contact our local clerk's office for more information or go on line to find sign up information.

Conventions and Annual Meetings:

Local:

2024 LWV-Janesville **Annual Meeting** Set for Wednesday, May 22- 6 p.m.-8 p.m. Confirmation of site to follow with more details on the program soon.

State:

2024 LWV-WI State Announced Convention Dates – and Location: LWV of Green Bay is hosting and the dates are June 7-June 8. Let me know if you are interested in attending in person or virtually. Registration cost unknown at this time.

National:

LWV-US Convention Dates and Location – Announced – Location Washington DC – Hybrid

Event June 27-30. Registration Cost \$300

Short List of Upcoming Events to Support:

January 2024

MLK Day Event – January 13, 2024 – at Blackhawk Technical College We will have a Voter Services Table at the event. Great event! More details to follow.

Separate emails to the various committee zoom meetings will be send separately---in the next few days.

February 2024

Special thanks for the planning committee for the Forward Together event: Linda Reinhardt, Maryam Enterline, Brad Munger, Heide Keith and from Beloit---Bette Carr and Susan Adams.

We have been meeting---regularly - sharing great ideas and getting the details ironed out for what will be a great event!

We will be receiving an outline of Sara Finger's presentation in the next few days which will be centering around "A Closer Look at Being and Staying---Wide Awake in Wisconsin".



By the way, another reminder----all league members are invited to attend our monthly Board of Director's Meetings – Please visit our website for more information on scheduling---in person or zoom etc.

<https://www.lwvjvl.org>

I feel as though I am forgetting something but fear not----don't fret!

I will send an email message if I have missed something!

Again---Happy New Year!!!!

Lisa Johnson

So now for my very own PSA for this edition of The Voter:

Calling All Members ----My ask-----

If you are not currently supporting a committee or serving now, or could do something more, please consider joining a committee. We need your support to carry out our mission statement now and in the future!

Why? The LWV-Janesville needs you! This is a huge and I repeat **huge election** year! The LWV can make a difference in our communities.

I understand we can all feel that we don't have any extra time our already jammed schedules. I under-

* President's

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stand totally.

But the reality is the actual time commitment in most cases is very flexible ---not huge chunks of time.... maybe an hour or two to get ideas, share responsibilities and delegate or assign very small tasks. This is not a lifelong contract or commitment.

“Many hands make for light work.”

So you may wonder-----How do I do show interest? Will I feel pressured if I respond? **Absolutely not!** Just start the ball rolling by sending me an email. Volunteering has many subtle benefits that frankly just make me feel good about myself!

Lisa.johnson1014@gmail.com is the best email for this.

Also, I would like to get ideas of ways to insert some fun activities along the way----such as maybe a quarterly membership event that is pure social----maybe it's a group going out to dinner-----doing an evening at a spot to discuss our favorite books we have read in 2023 ----over a wine or beverage of your choice and an appetizer. Movie night – board or card game night..... Planning more of a field trip to a play in the area----or a concert----and inviting friends to join us....just a thought. They can be easy, informal, and relaxing. We have an excellent group of people in our League and doing something in a social setting can really reinforce our connections as a group!

Maryam Enterline -Membership Chair will be working on some suggestions or events to “get together” and make some social connections with fellow League members over the next few weeks.

**So ---here's are the needs:
Current Committee Members Needed
On-- Newer Committees:**

* **By-Law and League Positions Review Committee**—Via Zoom Meeting – 1 or possibly 2 in preparation for the Annual Membership Meeting – May 22, 2024 & State Convention June 2024

* Review our positions/bylaws/DEI and Nonpartisan Policies for any updates needed

* Discuss a possible new study and the process involved.

* Review LWF-WI Action Items

* **Strategic Planning Committee/MENTOR Program** – Monthly Zoom Meeting with Jennifer Balmer our assigned mentor

* Review and discuss local LWV Priorities and Short Term and Long-Term Organizational Goals

* Make recommendations to the Board of Directors and Membership

* **LWF-Janesville Land Acknowledgement Draft Statement Subcommittee**- Meeting for an hour as needed.

* Formulate rough drafts of our preliminary “Land

Acknowledgement Statement for the LWV-J to recommend to the Board of Directors and on to the Membership at the May Annual Membership Meeting.

* **Communications Committee** – Monthly Zoom

* **Social Media, Public Relations Group** to plan a communication schedule for the upcoming elections and assign scheduled tasks.

* **Coordinate and enhance our media presence.**

* **Even Planning Committee** (Meet as needed) Planning LWV-Janesville Events i.e. “Forward Together”; Annual Membership Meeting; Summer Book Reading; Etc.

* **Membership Engagement Committee** (Maryam Enterline Chair)

* **Recruit and develop social events** to strengthen our League's internal membership relationships as well as attract new members and external collaborative community partnerships.

Here's A List Current Active Working Committees or Coordinators ---

Each of these would welcome new committee members.

Why not attend a meeting and see what they are doing and “what their committee is all about” ? You might like to get involved.

Not all meet regularly but check with the chair.

DEI – Mary Buelow Chair – Monthly Meeting

Observer Corps- Debra Griffith Chair- Monthly Meeting

Sustainability – Susan Johnson

Voter Services – Lisa Johnson

Newsletter- Editor – Carol Herzig-

Diversified Action Committee – Evon Mitchell-
League **Liaison**

Contact me with questions, to discuss what your interests are and what you have in the way of time.

We are all in this together!

We have many choices and excellent opportunities to make a difference and to be of service!

Our organization's grassroots efforts make a measurable difference in our communities!

Thank you for your past service as members and look forward to working with everyone in 2024!!! Cheers to 2024!

My very best wishes to you and your family for new year filled with laughter, good health, and fulfillment of your dreams!

Lisa Johnson, President
608-333-8105



Voter Services--- Newsletter Report

Lisa Johnson, Chair

Happy New Year!

**This Is A Call to Volunteer---Be engaged in
the process!
Now is the time!
All Hands On Deck!**

**On January 1, 2024 – 309 Days to the General
Election!**

**Our next primary is scheduled for February
20, 2024----if needed**

Spring Election April 2, 2024

Fall Primary August 13, 2023

General Election November 5, 2024!



Voter Services activities have made a difference!
2024 Provides More Opportunities to Serve Our Communities!
But first, are you feeling a little “rusty” or do you need a new “elevator speech” on
the “Get Out The Vote Message” in your daily engagement with friends, family,
coworkers etc?

No problem! VS will be hosting a VS Refresher!

email

lwj.voterservice@gmail.com

Here’s the VS Scoop!

When?

**Beginning the first week in January – Sign
ups for VS volunteer opportunities will be sent
to the LWV Janesville membership from the**

**Our first “session” will be hosting a VS
Refresher---via Zoom.**

**We may be a little “rusty” on the election
process and how to address the public at the**

*See VOTER SERVICE, Page 5

* Voter Service

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VS Table Events.

This session will help get everyone back in the “groove” and it will include digital hand-outs on current voting information.

Important Note:

There will always be a “veteran” VS member at each event to support members with less experience at a VS table, in case you are concerned about not being “up to speed” on the details!

How How will I know how to volunteer and support the LWV Voter Services Events?

It's easy!

Watch for emails sent directly from Voter Service's marked As 'Volunteer Opportunities or Sign Up Request' in the email subject line!

lwvj.voterservice@gmail.com

What?

We plan on continuing to sponsor “tables” and attend our “usual and successful community events”!

VS will always be open to new opportunities. Please let me know if you have any suggestions for other VS opportunities or community locations in mind where we could “leave” voter registrations information. Please contact me and I will get the material to them.

Yard signs and materials are available at my office at 1215 Black Bridge Rd Suite 120 or I can drop off at your home. Please send a text to my cell phone if you wish to stop by or need something delivered please send text to 608-333-8105.

VS will be doing our usual school visits with the “VS Table” to do on site voter registrations, on line, hand out materials etc and at all local schools and community events

Again, each VS event will have a separate communication sent for sign ups and the exact details of the event will be contained in the sign up email. Please watch your email!

Other projects in the works-----to name just a few!

1. Contact made to City of Janesville for free bus rides to the polls on Election Day

2. Contacting local churches to do a “Souls to the Polls” project in Janesville. Is there an interest? Can we coordinate with the NAACP program?

3. Contact made to the Rock County Jail on current Voter Registration Program and will be contacting local parole officers as well regarding voter registration opportunities or materials that may be helpful and the

LWV-J will offer support as needed.

4. Janesville DMV Voter Registration Project

5. Stepped up Social Media Work with LWV J newly formed Communications Committee. Volunteers are needed for that committee as well. Interested? Let me know.

6. Scheduling letters to the editor and text messaging campaigns on a group calendar working with the “Communications Committee”.

7. Contacting apartment complexes, food pantries and realtor associations with voter registration materials.

Update :

Postcard ----this is a “Complete At Home Project” for Voters that have been removed from voting rolls

The postcards are being prepared and a sign up for volunteers will be sent the first week in January. The cards will be completed during the month of January for mailing in February.

(The purpose in case you have forgotten---we are sending postcards to deactivated voters in the League's area. We will have the list ----This occurred in July 2023. There were over 108,000 in WI that were deactivated.)

To Review!

Remember and watch for communications from:

lwvj.voterservice@gmail.com

Want to volunteer now? Send a quick note to:

lwvj.voterservice@gmail.com

What more information – verbally ---???

Call me at 608-333-8105

What voter services signs or materials ----

Call or text 608-333- 8105



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Each month we will be placing our position on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Voter, as a service to our members.

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.

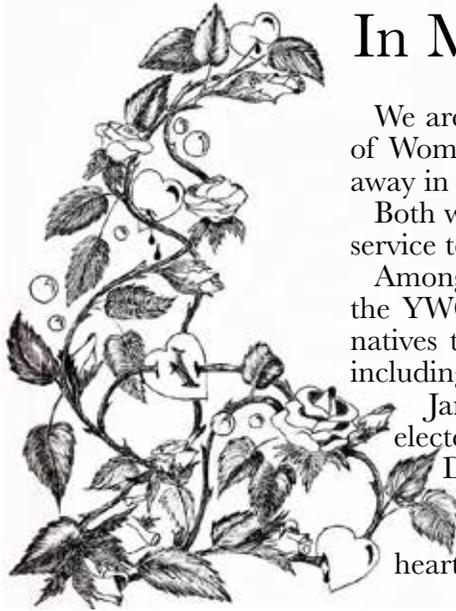


There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of gender, gender

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.

The Janesville LWV commits to the diversity of Janesville and fully endorses the LWV's DEI policy.

In Memoriam



We are saddened to report on the passing of two veteran members of the League of Women Voters of Janesville, Gloria Ziegler and Jan Hoopes. Both women passed away in August of this year.

Both women were active members of the League, and had distinguished careers of service to the community.

Among her accomplishments, Gloria Ziegler had served as Executive Director of the YWCA of Rock County and was instrumental in establishing the YW's Alternatives to Violence Program. She will also be remembered for her beautiful quilts including some that related to women's history.

Jan Hoopes served the Janesville community in many ways including being elected to serve three terms (nine years) on the Board of Education of the School District of Janesville and she had been a board member and President of the Janesville Art League.

The members of the League of Women Voters of Janesville extend our heart-felt sympathy and condolences to the Ziegler and Hoopes families.

Wisconsin Supreme Court orders new state maps

Happy holidays! I wanted to make sure you all saw the good news!

<https://my.lwv.org/wisconsin/article/breaking-news-new-maps-are-coming-wisconsin>

<https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/2023/12/22/wisconsin-supreme-court-rules-legislative-maps-unconstitutional/72010456007/>

Best,
Eileen

Eileen Newcomer
(she, her, hers)
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League of Women Voters of Wisconsin
2023 Democracy Defender
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PFAS: Health Dangers and Needed Legislation

Susan Amber Johnson

LWW of Janesville, Sustainability Committee Chair

On October 27, 2023 I had the great pleasure of attending a conference at UW-Green Bay concerning PFAS and your health. It was sponsored by Clean Water Action Council of Northeast Wisconsin. Several experts from around the state were there to educate the general public about PFAS. I want to share with you what I learned:

Dr. Beth Neary, Co-President of Wisconsin Environment Health Network, and the Wisconsin Representative to Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units, which is a joint venture of the EPA, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, told us that 98% of Americans already have PFAS in their bloodstreams! PFAS, PFOS, and PFOAs are per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances that were created in labs. They exist as either short-chained bonds, or longer-chained chemical bonds. They can be found in many household products including Teflon pans, stain-resistant carpets, food packaging, and even dental floss! It can be ingested from the air, or the water you drink. They are found at industrial sites like the TYCO plant in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, or Johnson Controls in Milwaukee. It can be found on military bases, and airports. These chemicals have been spread quickly in the ground water in rural areas because BIOSOLIDS containing PFAS are used as fertilizer on farm fields! This also means the milk we drink, the cheese, and ice cream we eat also contains PFAS! They are often called “forever” chemicals, because of the difficulty in breaking down their bonds.

Once in the bloodstream, PFAS attaches to multiple receptors, and can target various organs, particularly in the endocrine system. They can cause thyroid disease and thyroid cancer, ulcerative colitis, kidney cancer, elevated cholesterol, testicular cancer, as well as, numerous issues like infertility, and hypertension in pregnancy. These chemicals reduce antibody response in both infants and adults! In fact, studies of COVID patients showed those who had higher levels of PFAS in their bloodstreams, had worse COVID outcomes! Since chemicals like PFAS, PFOS, and PFOAS accumulate in

the body, (and the chemical bonds don't break down), children are more at risk into the future, because they have longer to live from this point forward, and could accumulate more, and more PFAS over their life spans.

How much is too much? The EPA does not currently regulate PFAS under the Safe Drinking Water Act, although this reality may change in the near future. A bill has been proposed in Congress to require the EPA to set new standards under the Clean Water Act for industries that discharge PFAS into the environment, and to establish water quality criteria for PFAS. Currently, states set their own enforceable limits for PFAS in drinking water; ranging from 5 parts per trillion to 70 parts per trillion. The state of Wisconsin adopted 70 parts per trillion as its PFAS standard in drinking water. Rob Lee, Attorney for the Midwest Wisconsin Advocates, explained what a part per trillion means with this example: Imagine 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools, each with 20,000 gallons of water. One drop from these pools would represent one part per trillion.

If even such miniscule amounts in our water might be harmful to us, how much is too much in our bodies? We don't know yet. Research on PFAS, PFOS, and PFOAS has lagged in spite of the fact that health-related concerns about them have been raised ever since the 1960's and 1970's. Adverse health effects from PFAS exposure were found in studies involving monkeys, rats, and people who worked in the plants manufacturing these chemicals like Dupont and 3M in 1978 and 1987.

What we do know more about is how much PFAS exposure costs Wisconsin each year in healthcare expenses, and productivity loss. Rob Lee, Attorney for the Midwest Environmental Advocates, the group handling cases in which the state League of Women Voters is involved, estimates that the cost of PFAS exposure to Wisconsin is between 121 million and 1.38 billion dollars. In 2016, the EPA published a lifetime advisory designated to be anything over 70 parts per trillion exposure to PFAS over the lifespan will mean potential for negative health impacts. Due to this lifespan advisory, many experts would like to establish a stricter groundwater standard than the 70 parts per trillion currently held by the state of Wisconsin. However, the Wisconsin state legislature is currently following an Administrative Rule that states, any enforcement actions costing private corporations more than 10 million dollars over a two-year span of time are disallowed.

What is there to do about this serious problem? There are actions individuals can take to help protect themselves and their families from PFAS exposure. Learn which consumer products you use contain PFAS in them. Here are two websites to check out to find out if you are using PFAS every day: <https://www.thefiltery.com/list-of-products-with-pfas/> and <https://www.fed->



[eralregister.gov/documents/2023/09/20/2023-20332/per--and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-consumer-products](https://www.eralregister.gov/documents/2023/09/20/2023-20332/per--and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas-in-consumer-products).

In addition, community advocates are essential! Several states have already banned PFAS from food packaging, including Maine, New York, California and Washington. Minnesota will ban these chemicals from ski wax, carpets, fabrics, children's products, cosmetics, and cookware beginning in 2025. Wisconsin needs to pass laws banning PFAS from all products not deemed essential for it. (Fire-fighting foam is considered essential, until another, safer material can be found). Home Depot has already stopped purchasing carpets and rugs containing PFAS. And, I was happy to discover

my favorite hiking boots, my Keen's, are truly keen in being PFAS-free!

Simultaneously, Wisconsin needs to regulate use of BIOSOLIDS containing PFAS as fertilizer on our farm fields. In addition, we must pass legislation mandating clean-up of contaminated sites! Rob Lee explained to us how complicated this process is particularly because of the legal differences between culpability and liability. However, clean-up needs to happen somehow for the safety and well-being of all our five million residents! And, since PFAS accumulates in the body, the sooner, the better!

Observer Corps Report: Janesville City Council

By **Linda Reinhardt**
Observer Corps

In the past month, the Janesville City Council has passed the City's Budget for 2024, the City's Strategic Plan, and an update of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

Among the most interesting parts of the meetings are the presentations that City Manager Kevin Lahner and other city staff make to the Council. Lahner's presentations are on issues of general interest to the Council; in one he provided graphs that showed that Janesville is more frugal than almost all of its peer cities in spending and taxing, but that we are somewhat more dependent on the residential segment of the tax levy. Public Works Director Mike Payne provides updates on the Woodman Center at each meeting. Other city staff give presentations as needed, depending on the business before the Council. The presentations are always accompanied by slides and other exhibits that are attached to the agendas published on the city's website.

I am struck by how much work takes place before items ever get to the City Council. For example, at its last meeting the Council voted on an ordinance to update the Comprehensive Plan, but this was just the final step of two-years of work by the city's planning department and the Planning Commission to update the Comprehensive Plan of 2009. The updated plan includes a chapter on public health and emphasizes the development of "complete neighbor-

hoods." League members should watch to see how the Planning Commission works to enact the plan by updating the zoning code and subdivision code to allow for more planned mixed use areas that would include the development of more than one type of housing in an area.

City Council meetings are broadcast on JATV's Spectrum Channel 994. They are also live streamed and recorded for later viewing on the City's website. The agendas and other Public Meeting Materials and Videos for Council and Committee Meetings can be found on the City of Janesville website at <https://www.janesvillewi.gov/government/public-meeting-materials-videos>

I am impressed by how much information our city government makes available to residents who want to follow and participate in the work of our city government.

Get involved by serving (or observing) a City of Janesville board, commission, or committee. Serving on a City of Janesville board, commission, or committee is one of the most effective ways for citizens to influence City policies and activities. If you're not ready to dive in that deeply, consider becoming a member of the Observer Corps.

A list and brief description of the boards, committees and commissions are at <https://www.janesvillewi.gov/government/boards-commissions-committees>

Upcoming Lecture on Ho-Chunk Resistance to Removal

Stephen Kantrowitz, Plaenert-Bascom Professor of History at UW-Madison, and author of the recently published book *Citizens of a Stolen Land: A Ho-Chunk History of the 19th Century United States* will present

“How the Ho-Chunk Resisted Removal”

April 30, 2024

Hedberg Public Library

6:00 p.m.

LWV of Janesville is a co-sponsor of the event along with the Hedberg Public Library, League of Women Voters of Beloit, and the Janesville AAUW and Badger Talks.

Preparing for Kantrowitz talk and for Land Acknowledgment

As the LWV-Janesville develops its Land Acknowledgement statement(s) of the Native People who inhabited and still live in this area, we encourage League members to read Professor Stephen Kantrowitz’s book *Citizens of a Stolen Land: A Ho-Chunk History of the 19th Century United States* before his presentation in April

Unlimited copies of the book are available in electronic format from the Hedberg Public Library as a Hoopla E Book. Hard copies of the book are on order by the library. You can also purchase Kindle, paperback and hardcover editions of the book.

Professor Kantrowitz has participated in programs and interviews regarding the Ho-Chunk people’s resistance to removal by the US Government from Wisconsin. See

“The Ho-Chunk Struggle Against Removal, 1828-1875” on the “University Place” of PBS Wisconsin, that aired on 06/29/2022

<https://www.pbs.org/video/the-ho-chunk-struggle-against-removal-1828-1875-ywwksf/> (1:07:39)

Stu Levitan interviewed Stephen Kantrowitz for the Madison Bookbeat and the WORT Radio News Department on November 27, 2023

<https://www.wortfm.org/prof-stephen-kantrowitzcitizens-of-a-stolen-land-a-ho-chunk-history-of-the-19th-century-united-states/>

Happy New Year!

It’s time to make those New Year’s Resolutions! Let’s make a resolution to vote in every election in 2024 and take the pledge. It can take time for good habits to become routine, but one way to make voting a habit is by requesting your mail-in ballots for the entire year. Visit MyVote.Wi.Gov to make your request today. #ResolveToVote

While the 2024 Elections might seem a ways away, many Wisconsinites will have elections as early as February 20 and everyone will have the opportunity to vote in the Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary on April 2.

Take two minutes today to get a head start on this goal by requesting all of your mail-in ballots for the year. Visit MyVote.Wi.Gov today to make sure you are registered and to request your absentee ballots for all elections in 2024.

Encourage your friends and family to take up this resolution and check in with one another as we get closer to the elections. Post the link to MyVote.Wi.Gov on social media and tell your friends that they can request their mail-in ballots today. Find lots of shareable content in our toolkit!

Let’s celebrate the New Year and the freedom to vote in 2024!