

THE VOTER

LWVEA Kicks Off 2026 With Read Freely Alabama!

Amber Frey and **Angie Hayden** of **Read Freely Alabama** will join the LWVEA on **February 9** to discuss censorship and attacks on our Alabama public libraries and what you can do about it.

Read Freely Alabama is a volunteer group of concerned citizens who oppose censorship in our local libraries. The group also serves as Alabama's statewide resource hub for local chapters and affiliated groups fighting censorship. By connecting library advocates to one another and to state and national partners, Read Freely Alabama enables liberty-loving patriots across the state to stand together against this un-American campaign of bigotry. Learn more [here](#).

Read Freely Alabama!

Fighting to Maintain the Right to Read in Alabama's Libraries

February 9th, 2026 @ 6pm

Doors open at 5:30pm!

Auburn First Baptist
128 E Glenn Ave, Auburn, AL



Bring
menstrual
products to
the Feb. 9
Read Freely
event!

Menstrual Product Drive

The LWVEA is partnering with **Tuskegee Menstrual Closet** to collect menstrual products for those in need. Bring menstrual products to the Read Freely Alabama event to participate! Scan the QR code below to learn more.



Are You Ready for the 2026 Elections?

The next election in Alabama is the **State Primary Election** on **May 19!**

The **registration deadline** for the primary election is **May 4.**

Act Now:

- **Check** your voter registration status.
- **Register** to vote!
- **View** a full list of state election deadlines.

LWVEA News

League Members Participate in Legislative Teach-In

On January 24, League members traveled to Montgomery to participate in **Werk the Lege** — a community teach-in organized by **ACLU Alabama** that gathers organizers, advocates, and everyday Alabamians who want to engage the Alabama legislative process and promote progressive policy decisions. With the new 2026 legislative session already in full swing (it started on January 13), the ACLU AL event focused on shedding light on the legislative landscape and hearing from experts who are fighting for a better Alabama.

One curated conversation featured **Doris**



January Hot Topics at Piccolo

On January 22, leaguers met up at Piccolo in the Auburn Hotel to talk politics, local news, and legislative activity. Thanks to all who came. It was great to see you! We hope to see you again at the next one!



Crenshaw, founder of the Southern Youth Leadership Development Institute, and **Ja'Kobe Bibbs**, a college student who reactivated the NAACP chapter at the University of Alabama. “It was inspiring to hear from Ms. Crenshaw, who has been fighting for civil rights since she was a preteen and who has mentored several generations of community organizers and leaders,” said **LWVEA President Kim White**. “And Ja'Kobe Bibbs is a college student who is already fostering positive change by pushing for legislative reform.”

A quote that stood out to **LWVEA Board Member Vanessa Benitez** was, “Women and youth are at the wheel of all successful movements in the world.” The teach-in was a reminder that the work continues beyond filling out your ballot on Election Day. The ACLU has created the **ACLU Legislative Action Hub** that provides key updates on what’s happening this legislative session.

Don't Miss It!

Join us for the **February Hot Topics** gathering at the Corner Office on Auburn University campus on February 19! Catch up on current events, local news, and the upcoming elections.

When: 12 pm, Thursday, Feb. 19

Where: Corner Office
540 Devall Dr.
Auburn, AL 36832



LWVEA News

Investing in the Next Generation

LWVEA Launches Scholarship for Local Graduating High School Seniors

Now open! Scholarship Closes: March 15, 2026.

This year, the LWVEA is expanding its commitment to civic engagement and educational equity with the launch of a new **\$500 scholarship** for graduating high school seniors. To learn more about the inspiration behind the fund, its goals, and how students and supporters can get involved, the newsletter team spoke with **Vanessa Benitez**, Chair of the LWVEA Scholarship Committee.

LWVEA: What prompted the idea of creating a scholarship?

VB: I had a great mentor in high school who encouraged me to volunteer at my local board of elections office. So, at an early age I had a duty of civic engagement instilled in me. I believe that youth civic engagement and leadership need constant encouragement. In creating this scholarship, I hope that LWVEA and our members help instill that same passion and sense of duty in current students.

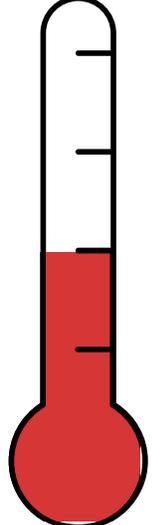
LWVEA: Tell us about the scholarship: what is it, and who is eligible to apply?

VB: If you're a graduating senior who is a U.S. citizen/permanent resident in Lee County, and you are pursuing post-secondary education or training, you can apply. The scholarship provides \$500 toward any expenses associated



with education (such as moving into the dorms, etc.). The scholarship fund currently has **\$500** — enough for one award. But **we hope to raise more** through donations so that we can award more than one. We encourage members and friends who are interested in supporting youth civic engagement to **donate!**

\$500



LWVEA: How do you think youth in Lee County will benefit from this beyond financial means?

VB: The scholarship poses an essay response that the Scholarship committee put thorough thought into. I hope by creating these essay responses, students are able to think critically about current actions they are already taking and how to build on them. I also hope that these students have a moment of self reflection on what an honor and privilege it is to be civically engaged in their community.

Interesting in applying?

You can apply if you...

- Are a U.S. citizen/permanent resident and have a home address within Lee County;
- Are graduating from a high school (or homeschool program) in Lee County in 2026;
- Are accepted or enrolled at an accredited college or university or trade or technical education school at the time of the receipt of the award.

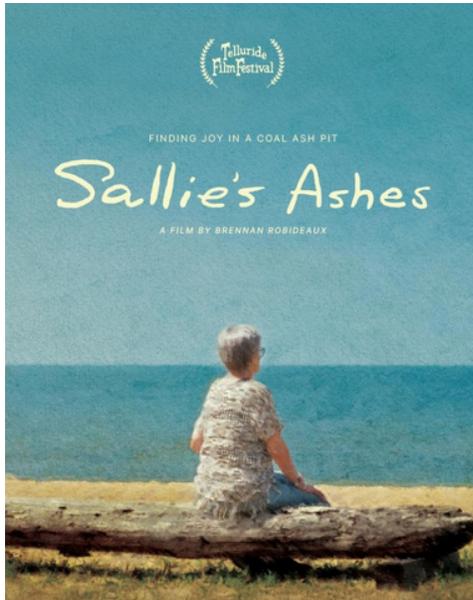
[Learn more and apply!](#)

Interested in donating?

If you are interested in supporting the committee or making a donation to the scholarship fund, click [here](#).



LWVEA News



Al Retirees Take on Coal LWVEA to Host Documentary on Mobile Bay Toxic Coal Ash

Mark your calendar! On **March 16**, the Coal Ash Action Group will join the LWVEA to screen Sallie's Ashes, a documentary about 80-year old Sallie Smith who rallies an unlikely team of fellow retired ladies to fight for the removal of a toxic coal ash pit that threatens Mobile Bay.

When: Monday evening, March 16

Where: Boxcar, 706 1st Ave, Opelika, AL

More details coming soon!



Statewide Events

Making Good Trouble Virtual LWV & Partner Events Spotlight Alabama Prisons

Did you know that **LWV Alabama** and **LWV Georgia** jointly convene **Good Trouble Tuesday** programs each quarter? The virtual sessions focus on important subjects affecting both states. These programs help people across the South put things into a broader perspective and enable us to take more informed actions.

This quarter's program on **February 17** will focus on how pardons and parole boards operate in Georgia and Alabama, and the role of prison labor in those systems. We will examine who holds the decision-making power and what it means for justice, rehabilitation, and families. Register [here](#).



FEBRUARY 17, 2026 | 6PM CST/7PM EST

GOOD TROUBLE TUESDAYS

Freedom and Fairness: Parole Boards and Prison Labor

A community conversation on how pardons and parole boards operate in Georgia and Alabama and the role of prison labor in those systems. We will examine who holds the decision-making power and what it means for justice, rehabilitation, and families.

GUEST PANELISTS



NICHELLE CUNNINGHAM
PARALEGAL

ACLU OF ALABAMA



VERONICA R. JOHNSON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

ALABAMA JUSTICE INITIATIVE



FALLON MCCLURE
DEPUTY SOUTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR

WORKING FAMILIES POWER



DOUG AMMAR
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GEORGIA JUSTICE PROJECT

ABOUT US

The League is a political grassroots network and membership organization that believes the freedom to vote is a nonpartisan issue. For more than a century, we've worked to empower voters and defend democracy. As a women-led organization, we encourage everyone to take part in our democracy.



REGISTER NOW



Moderator
DR. SARAH SHANNON
MEIGS PROFESSOR OF SOCIOLOGY
DIRECTOR, CRIMINAL JUSTICE STUDIES PROGRAM

Statewide Events

All Boots on the Bridge **LWV to Join Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee**

From **March 5–8**, League members and friends will participate in the **Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee**. The Jubilee commemorates the historic Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights marches of 1965, with particular focus on “Bloody Sunday,” March 7, 1965. On that day, peaceful protestors were brutally attacked by Alabama state troopers as they crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge—images that shocked the nation and helped galvanize public support for voting rights and the broader civil rights movement. Later that year, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965.



Visit the [Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee website](#) to view the 2026 schedule and learn how to take part in this important commemoration. Click [here](#) to let the League know you’re attending and to receive updates!

Call for Volunteers



Do You See Yourself on the LWVEA Board?

Want to learn the ins and outs of your local League? Keep your finger on the pulse of what is happening? **Consider joining the LWVEA Board!** Participate in monthly meetings with fun and interesting people. Foster community awareness and action in an area of your choice, such as voter services, social justice, sustainability, and more. Interested? **Email Kim White at lwveastal@gmail.com.**

Call for Award Nominations

In preparation for the **LWVEA Annual Meeting in April**, the LWVEA Board invites nominations for the following awards, which will be presented at the meeting:

- The **Sue Flood Award** honors a League member whose dedication and service have made a significant impact on the League.
- The **Phyllis Rhea Award** recognizes a non-League community member for outstanding contributions to the broader community.

Know someone you’d like to nominate? **Email Kim White at lwveastal@gmail.com.**

