

League of Women Voters Discusses Their Role in Local Elections

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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EDWARDSVILLE - The League of Women Voters of the Edwardsville Area explained its role as an unbiased community organization that encourages voting.

According to Carol Gerdt, a representative with the League, its goal is to educate community members so they can make informed decisions at the polls. In partnership with the Edwardsville chapter of the NAACP, the League of Women Voters recently hosted a candidate forum and a [debate between Kurt Prenzler and Chris Slusser](#). Gerdt said this exemplifies the League's mission.

“One of the things we like to do is show the candidates and have them describe their policies and their plans so that voters can be informed when they go to vote,” she said. “A lot of people don’t know the candidates that well, and it gives the public a chance to find out what the candidates are all about and get a sense of what they’d be like in the offices that they want to hold. We really think it’s important to have an informed electorate, and we also feel it’s very important for everyone to vote.”

The League often holds voter registration events around the Edwardsville area, including the Edwardsville High School and SIUE campuses. Gerdt said they are trying to reach younger people and encourage them to vote. She pointed out it took “a long time” for women, especially women of color, to have the right to vote, and fighting voter suppression continues to be “a constant battle.” By registering voters, the League hopes to bring more people to the polls.

As an organization, the League of Women Voters is known for their lack of bias. Though they have a few positions on policies, they are not associated with any candidates and never endorse a candidate.

“I think if you have an informed group of voters, they will probably know how to vote,” Gerdt explained. “The problem with politics now is there’s so much disinformation. And people use these little quips and they really do misinform the public. So you really have to go beyond the one-liners and see what the people really are about and what they really want to do...We strive to be very fair in allowing the candidates to present their views.”

Gerdt noted the importance of staying informed, especially during local elections like the upcoming Madison County primary election on March 19, 2024. She hopes that the events and information by the League of Women Voters can help community members educate themselves about candidates before Election Day.

“They say all politics is local,” she added. “I think it’s really important for people to have a say in what’s going on in their local community because that’s where they live, that’s where they work, that’s where they spend their time. And it really is important to have the right people in the job so that’s kind of why we do the forums too because it just gives people a sense of what’s going on.”

For more information on the League of Women Voters of the Edwardsville Area, including how to become a member, visit their [official webpage](#) on the [League of Women Voters website](#). To learn more about the candidates on the ballot for the Madison County primary election on March 19, click [here](#).