



# 2020 ELECTION IMPACT REPORT

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## MISSION

Empowering voters.  
Defending democracy.

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## VISION

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

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## VALUE

We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

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The data presented in this report originate from a variety of sources including internal tracking reporting and a national survey of state and local Leagues.



“The League is at the intersection of democracy, social justice, and civil rights, and it is through that lens that we seek to advance voting rights in this country.”

DR. DEBORAH ANN TURNER  
President, LWVUS



# Introduction

The 2020 election cycle was unlike anything we have seen before. A generation-defining public health crisis affected nearly every voter, causing dramatic shifts in the way Americans could safely exercise their right to vote. In the midst of this unprecedented strain placed on local governments, election officials, and community groups working to engage and empower voters, widespread mis- and disinformation efforts threatened to discourage voter participation. Some officials used their positions of power to limit — not expand — voters’ access, leading to voter suppression in multiple states.

For every challenge voters faced in 2020, the League of Women Voters was quick to pivot our strategies and respond to the needs of both voters and our communities. When primary election dates shifted in the spring, state and local Leagues around the country worked with local election officials to inform the public about the changes and offer support as poll workers and election monitors. When states modified election requirements and rules for casting absentee ballots, Leagues joined dozens of lawsuits to ensure voters had safe access to make their voices heard. And when some cast doubt on the US Postal Service’s ability to manage the increase of mail-in ballots, the League urged our members and supporters to call on Congress to fully fund the US Postal Service so that it had the necessary resources to properly deliver mail-in ballots in a historic election.

Despite the constant challenges to our democracy, the League reached more voters than ever before, including a massive campaign for VOTE411.org, the League’s election website, available in Spanish for the first time ever. More than 25 million voters had their rights protected through our election-related litigation to expand absentee excuses, waive witness requirements, and establish or enhance notice and cure processes for ballots flagged for rejection.

At the same time, the League made history of our own by commemorating two significant milestones: 100 years since our founding (February) and 100 years since the ratification of the 19th amendment (August).

This 2020 Election Impact Report demonstrates how “Women Power the Vote” under the most trying of circumstances.



Dr. Deborah Ann Turner  
President



Virginia Kase  
CEO



## 100 Years of Women Powering the Vote

February 14, 2020, marked 100 years since the League of Women Voters was founded in Chicago, Illinois. The League celebrated a century of empowering voters and defending democracy with a “Women Power the Vote Day of Action.” **339 Leagues around the country hosted 396 events** to acknowledge our historic achievements while demonstrating the power we bring to the voting rights movement. For many Leagues, participating in the day of action was an opportunity to connect with voters ahead of primary elections. Leagues hosted voter registration events, educational forums, leadership development trainings, and commemorative events at their statehouses and city councils, **reaching 103,223 people**.

On our anniversary, we published a letter from League leadership to the women of America in The Washington Post, reinforcing the importance of building the next generation of women leaders and voting rights activists. Leagues across the country published multiple op-eds celebrating the power of women and contributed to **2,389 media mentions of the day of action, reaching more than 15.6 million news consumers**.

We equipped our partners with key assets, from social media messages to branded graphics, to promote the League’s anniversary, resulting in **968,566 impressions and 15,239 engagements** on the day of action alone.

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“We’re celebrating through action today, because we know our democracy is strongest when people build power together. Our founders did not stop after the achievement of the 19th amendment — they recognized that their dream could not truly be realized until all voters are empowered to play a critical role in our democracy.”

VIRGINIA KASE  
CEO  
LWVUS



# VOTE411.org:

## A Trusted Resource In Uncertain Times

The League’s one-stop election information website, VOTE411.org is operated by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). While VOTE411 provides every voter in America with election information, **the League’s focus in 2020 was reaching low-propensity voters and targeting women, LGBTQIA+, low-income, and Spanish-speaking voters with these resources.**

The conditions of the pandemic were ripe for mis- and disinformation about elections throughout 2020. With more Americans home and online, and election rules changing day to day, falsehoods spread across social media like wildfire. Countering any false narrative about the election required reaching voters with correct information through multiple mediums.

VOTE411 became one of the most trusted election sites for voters around the country and a powerful tool in countering false narratives about the 2020 election.

- “This is the way of the future and the best tool available for elections!”

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
Wichita Falls
- “VOTE411 is a convenient resource and is an easy-to-use site that voters over time will come to depend upon for their voting information. It is often the only place they can go to learn about candidates like school board candidates.”

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
Henry County, Indiana

### OUR IMPACT

6,120,345

Number of users who came to VOTE411.org for election information throughout 2020, with 31,558,393 combined pageviews in 2020

343,775

Number of visitors who used the site to check their voter registration status

171,132

Number of individuals who used VOTE411’s online tool to register to vote

22,000+

Number of races covered on the site, with information about more than 41,000 candidates







## The Primaries Set the Stage

When the COVID-19 pandemic first arrived in the US in March 2020, the primary election season was already underway. While states evaluated pushing their election dates or mailing ballots to registered voters, Leagues were already working in earnest to register voters and prepare them to participate in primary elections.

Every election year, thousands of League volunteers register new voters at schools, naturalization ceremonies, and local events. The League had planned to be in **1,000 high schools** and at **more than 1,600 citizenship ceremonies** to register new voters in 2020, but the COVID-19 curveball required all of that in-person activity to move online. Because the League is active in our communities every year and seen as a trusted source for voter information, this shift evolved into a great opportunity to message the truth about election processes.

From January to June 2020, LWVEF ran a 50-state online voter education and mobilization campaign leveraging search term advertising through Google, which highlighted state election rules and encouraged voters to check their voter registration, find their ballot information, and register to vote through VOTE411. When the pandemic delayed primary elections, LWVEF adjusted its digital advertising to ensure voters had up-to-date information in their states.

### OUR IMPACT

**1.9 million impressions  
and 321,000 clicks**

to VOTE411 as a result of Google grant ads in all 50 states  
from January to June

**14,565,619 impressions  
and 119,058 clicks**

to VOTE411 came from state-specific digital ads in 14 states  
across Facebook and Google during the extended primary season  
between February and August

**More than 300,000  
primary voter contacts**

were made in four states (Colorado, Maine, Texas, and Virginia)  
in the lead-up to the Super Tuesday presidential primaries on  
March 3, using a combination of postcards, phone banking, and  
canvassing. This included Spanish-language outreach in Texas

**More than 850 events**

were organized by League members and volunteers across  
the country, including setting up drive-thru voter registration  
booths, hosting virtual parties like BYOB (Bring Your Own  
Ballot), teaming up with restaurants to put voting information  
into take-out bags, working with schools to provide virtual voter  
registration presentations to eligible students and make voter  
registration announcements over school loudspeakers, and more



“No one should have to choose  
between exercising their  
constitutional right to vote and their  
personal health and safety.”

VIRGINIA KASE  
CEO  
LWVUS



## Reaching Spanish-Speaking Voters

In an effort to reach underserved voters and make VOTE411 more accessible in 2020, LWVEF partnered with the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) to translate VOTE411.org into Spanish for the first time ever. It has been a longtime dream and critical priority for the League to reach Spanish-speaking voters, which research shows is the fastest growing voter population in the United States.

- **All 50 states plus DC** had all of their content translated into Spanish on VOTE411 by August 2020
- **80,280 VOTE411 users accessed the Spanish-language content** for a combined 388,876 pageviews in 2020

Building the Spanish-language content wasn't enough to reach voters. To ensure Spanish-speaking voters could find the information they needed, LWVEF also produced a series of videos in Spanish, ran targeted social media ads in 6 states (Florida, Georgia, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, and Texas), and mailed bilingual Get Out the Vote postcards to voters in 3 states (Florida, New York, and Texas). In the final weeks of the election cycle, the League invested in Spanish radio ads on iHeartRadio, reaching Spanish-speaking listeners in 11 states.

## Get Out the Vote

2020 saw the League's largest-ever Get Out the Vote campaign, utilizing mail, text messages, phone calls, email, digital ads, social media, and a video series to connect voters to accurate information.

LWVEF worked in coordination with state Leagues to contact more than 1.7 million women under the age of 45 across 15 states, with an emphasis on helping underrepresented communities of voters learn about and navigate the ever-evolving election process, specifically their early and mail-in voting opportunities. The Get Out the Vote messages were tailored around specific key dates and deadlines, and in three states information was provided in both English and Spanish. With 51,308 clicks received, post-election analysis shows that **in the majority of the states, voters receiving a touchpoint from the League were more likely to vote.**

Complementing these efforts, LWVEF and a large network of state and local League advocates participated in multiple text-a-thon and phone bank efforts, resulting in tens of thousands of voters contacted before Election Day.



In August 2020, LWVUS conducted a set of focus groups to better understand the experience of Spanish-speaking voters in Florida, Texas, and Colorado.



**"[VOTE411] was very easy to navigate. I typically need someone to explain websites to me, but this was intuitive."**

**TEXAS VOTER**  
LWVUS Focus Group

### OUR IMPACT

## 2,264,165

**Number of social media impressions**, with 51,308 clicks from Spanish-language social media ads

## 2,000,000+

**Number of impressions** from Spanish iHeart Radio ads

## 550,000

**Number of bilingual postcards** (English and Spanish) sent to voters

## 80,280

**Number of VOTE411 users** who accessed the Spanish-language content for a combined 388,876 Spanish pageviews

### OUR IMPACT

## 5.4 million impressions and 618,000 clicks

to VOTE411 as a result of Google grant ads in all 50 states from July to Election Day

## 14.8 million impressions and 366,133 clicks

to VOTE411 came from state-specific digital ads in 16 states across Facebook and Google from September through Election Day





# Partnering to Reach Voters

Since National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) was founded in 2012, the League of Women Voters has been the largest on-the-ground partner every year. 2020 was no exception. With in-person events off the table as a result of COVID-19, and concerns looming that voter registration was falling behind schedule, Leagues got creative in order to reach voters at home, from home — with everything from Zoom parties to all-out social media blitzes. In the end, **more than 600 League events and activities** were carried out on NVRD — kicking off what would become a higher-than-ever voter registration rate on VOTE411.org.

The 2020 election cycle featured many firsts, including the first-ever national Vote Early Day. Set for October 24, 2020, this national day of recognition taps into the attention Americans typically give elections within 10 days of Election Day. The League served as a premiere partner alongside MTV, Univision Communications, Twitter, and many other groups, lending our support to amplify the message that Americans should consider voting early wherever they had the chance.

“Target was proud to partner with the League to create our VOTE411 custom tool. The tool helped us empower our team members and guests to find all the information they needed to confidently cast a vote and make their voices heard.”

ISAAC REYES  
Vice President, Government Affairs  
Target

OUR IMPACT

8,500

Ran English and Spanish VOTE411 PSAs with the National Association of Broadcasters on **8,500 radio/TV stations** totaling an estimated \$5M in value

400+

Worked with Entercom/Radio.com to produce VOTE411 PSAs that aired on **400+ radio stations nationwide**

2,098

Partnered with Power the Polls to directly **recruit 2,098 individuals** to find out about working at the polls

EMPOWERING THE FIELD

LWVEF built and supported the capacity of our state and local Leagues in all 50 states and DC to provide voter education, election monitoring, and rapid response to protect voting rights and access in their communities. We supported League leaders in their efforts to meet with state and local election officials, establish poll observer programs, and engage with Election Protection Coalitions.

30,000+

Number of news articles the League was included in from September through Election Day

\$370M+

Value of combined publicity of news articles



LWVEF cultivated **more than 80 external partnerships** that made more individuals across the country aware of the information and tools at their disposal. This included national nonprofits like the American Library Association and the National Association of Broadcasters, as well as major companies like Target, Sweetgreen, Lyft, Nando’s, Warby Parker, and Seventh Generation. LWVEF and Lyft worked together to provide thousands of free rides to low-propensity voters in 15 key markets. VOTE411 even worked with Amazon Alexa to make voting logistics information available to its users. These partnerships ranged from intensive employee-facing training sessions to heavy promotion of VOTE411.

Across the country, **Leagues partnered with several national, state, and local organizations** to reach voters in their communities. The groups ranged from civic engagement organizations to legal, women-focused, and Greek-letter organizations. Common Cause, the NAACP, AARP, and the League of United Latin American Citizens were some their most frequent collaborators.



# Protecting Voters & Defending Democracy

As our nation navigated the fear and anxiety of the COVID-19 pandemic, conditions were ripe for new threats to the democratic process. Last-minute changes to primary elections, inconsistent voting rules, and large uncertainties about the funding and operating status of the US Postal Service caused mass confusion for voters long before Election Day.

Through litigation, LWVUS **secured and protected options** for early and mail-in voting across the country, **ensured voters** had the ability to cure their ballots, and **expanded options** for voters to exercise their right to vote safely.

## OUR IMPACT

25,831,538

25+ million voters protected through voting rights litigation

78%

78%-win rate in federal lawsuit decisions

250+

More than 250 legal partners supported the LWVUS election litigation strategy

77

77 state and federal lawsuits in 37 states





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“There will be many lessons learned from the 2020 elections, and we should celebrate our successes, including the expansion of voter access, record-breaking early voting, and the wide-scale use of absentee and mail-in voting options. This is what creating a more perfect union looks like, and we hope to see these expansions become a more permanent part of our voting system.”

DR. DEBORAH ANN TURNER  
President  
LWVUS

## Fighting for Fairness In the Courts

The attacks on voter access, combined with the complications of the pandemic in 2020, impacted voting rules in nearly every state. This required LWVUS to shift our focus in response to the emerging needs of voters. To ensure free and fair elections, LWVUS took on the heaviest voter protection legal case load in our organization’s history. The League’s litigation strategy focused on ensuring safe options and flexibility for voters to participate in the 2020 elections.

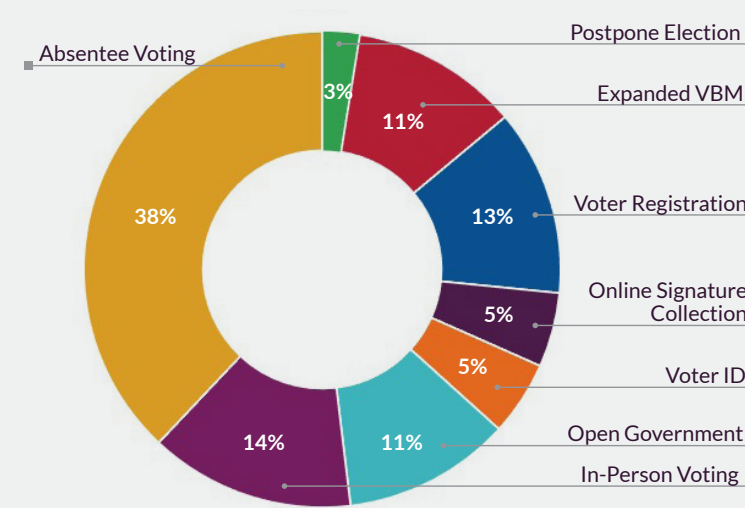
In anticipation of an increase in mail-in voting nationwide, the League knew that more ballots might be rejected due to simple human error — a signature in the wrong place or an unsealed envelope. We intervened to establish or enhance the “notice and cure process” in states, which requires election officials to notify a voter if their ballot has been flagged for rejection and provide the voter with an opportunity to fix, or “cure,” that issue so that the voter’s ballot will be counted. We also tackled a range of voting barriers to ensure voters had the freedom and the tools to vote.

### Our legal challenges achieved:

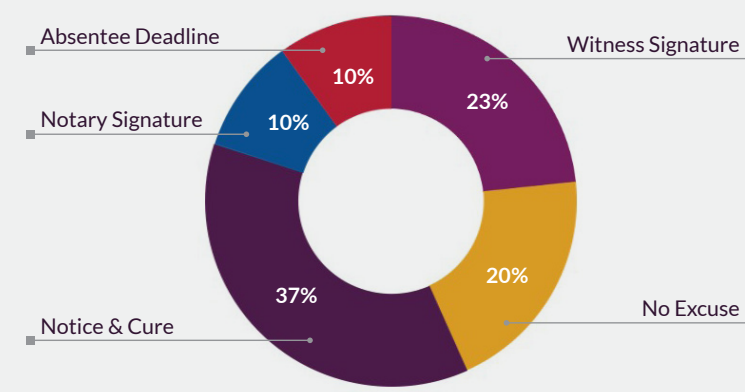
- absentee ballot deadline extensions;
- the elimination of ballot notary and witness signature requirements;
- an expansion of no-excuse absentee voting;
- the establishment of a notice and cure process for ballots marked for rejection;
- election date postponements;
- extension of registration deadlines;
- elimination or relaxation of ID requirements;
- authorization of online signatures for ballot initiatives; and
- added protections for in-person voting.

We did all of this to ensure that voters did not have to choose between exercising their constitutional right to vote and risking their health and safety during the pandemic. Because of our legal victories, **more than 25 million voters** had expanded options to make their voices heard on and before Election Day.

## NEW CASES RELATED TO COVID-19



### BREAKDOWN OF THE ABSENTEE VOTING CASES



## Funding the US Postal Service

A new Postmaster General, appointed in May 2020, issued changes to postal services and mail delivery, significantly delaying millions of pieces of mail each week and causing public confusion about mail-in ballots. The League opposed many of the modifications to the postal system and called on the Postmaster General to cease any changes until after the election.

In the weeks leading up to the 2020 election, LWVUS filed a lawsuit against the Postmaster General and United States Postal Service (USPS), asserting that recent changes to postal service procedures and equipment presented an undue burden on the fundamental right to vote. While the parties in the LWVUS case were unable to reach a settlement, other cases related to the USPS were settled in time with positive impacts **requiring the USPS to expedite ballots and process all ballots no later than the day after receipt.**





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“In the days ahead, as election officials count every ballot and certify each election, we are confident that the will of the people will be heard.”

**DR. DEBORAH ANN TURNER**  
President  
LWVUS

# Post-Election Night

With an unprecedented number of voters casting their ballots by mail, we knew election results would not be available for every race on Election Night. In the weeks leading up to November 3, Leagues worked to prepare the public for the delayed results, pushing the message in a video and social media graphic campaign that “Democracy is worth waiting for.”

Following Election Day, the League continued to amplify the message that it would take time for every vote to be counted. As the nation waited for states to report official results, the League pushed a “Count Every Vote” campaign across social media.

In addition to the counting and certification process, because of the increase in mail-in voting in 2020, more voters had the opportunity to fix any errors on their ballot or “cure” their ballots. Leagues helped states get out the word about the ballot cure deadlines.

We need to be patient.  
Election officials need more time to count absentee ballots because of extra security measures to verify the votes.

1. Sorting
2. Verification
3. Opening
4. Scanning & Review
5. Counting
6. Reporting Results

#CountEveryVote

**YOUR VOTE COUNTS**

CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR BALLOT NOW TO FIX ANY ISSUES BEFORE 5PM ON NOVEMBER 10

**MAKE SURE IT GETS COUNTED**

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS



# The Georgia Senate Runoff

By the second week of November, it was clear that the two Georgia open Senate seats were headed toward a rare double-runoff election. Stakes were high, as the results of these two races would determine the political control of the US Senate. With interest groups nationwide parachuting into Georgia, the League felt a responsibility to ensure Peach State voters had the information they needed to make their voices heard.

In partnership with the League of Women Voters of Georgia, LWVEF created a custom Get Out the Vote campaign in November and December.

Through these efforts, we reached well **over 1 million voters** in Georgia.

“Even during the pandemic, it has been so inspiring to see how Georgia voters have been motivated to participate in their democracy. Thank you to all our volunteers with the League of Women Voters of Georgia who worked to ensure all Georgians had the information they needed to cast their ballots safely and securely!”

SUSANNAH SCOTT  
President  
LWV of Georgia

## OUR IMPACT

466,000

Number of postcards sent to women voters, young voters, and infrequent voters with information on how to vote in the runoff election

415,000+

Number of texts from LWV volunteers and more than 600 calls to Georgia voters

1,800+

Number of VOTE411 ads on iHeart Radio with voting information in English and Spanish, which earned more than 5 million impressions

13

Number of billboards in the Atlanta metro area directing voters to VOTE411 to find the information they needed to make a plan to vote



**Your community needs you!**  
VOTE BY JANUARY 5 FOR  
THE SENATE RUNOFF ELECTIONS.  
VOTE 411 | VOTE411.org  
*Paid for by the League of Women Voters Education Fund.*

**Hey Georgia! Cast your ballot for the Senate runoff elections by January 5.**  
VOTE 411 | VOTE411.org  
*Paid for by the League of Women Voters Education Fund.*





## Looking Forward

Throughout history — from the Civil War to the Great Depression to World War II — our nation has always carried out fair and safe elections during crises. The work of the League of Women Voters does not stop between elections.

After the attacks on our voting system in 2020, the League stands ready to expand the franchise and defend access to the ballot. Through continued civic education, countering mis- and disinformation, and advocating for voting rights at the state and federal level, the League looks to build upon the successes and learn from the lessons of this unprecedented 2020 election.

“Democracy defines America, and democracy has prevailed in the 2020 elections.”

VIRGINIA KASE  
CEO  
LWVUS



## AT-A-GLANCE

### 2020 ELECTION IMPACT REPORT

The 2020 election saw the greatest participation in our nation’s history. The League worked tirelessly to ensure voters had the information and the access to make their voices heard. In the middle of a global pandemic, with mis- and disinformation about our elections and unprecedented attempts to disenfranchise voters or push anti-voter reforms, the League found new and innovative ways to impact voters.

With a focus on reaching low-propensity voters and targeting women, LGBTQIA+, low-income, Black, and Spanish-speaking Americans, LWVUS empowered voters and defended democracy through education, litigation, outreach, and advocacy to overcome every obstacle.



Below is a snapshot of the findings in the 2020 Election Impact Report:

**25+ million**

Number of voters protected through 70+ lawsuits

**6 million**

Number of people who accessed voting resources on VOTE411.com

**5 million**

Number of contacts made via mailings, phone banks, and more

**2.2 million**

Number of Spanish-speakers reached with Spanish-language ads

**233,000+**

Number of people registered to vote

**250**

Number of legal partners



## 2020 ELECTION **IMPACT** REPORT

The League is proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.



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