



LOBBY CALL

September 8, 2026

**136th General Assembly
119th US Congress**

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Housekeeping

Be Present

Be Respectful

Assume good intent

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Around the Statehouse

Some Disturbing Bills We Are Starting to Flag

SB 311: School Building Bill

SB 113 and HB 155—Bans diversity, equity, and inclusion in k-12 public schools

SB 311: School Building Bill

Brenner Bill: Passed the Senate and introduced in the House

Take over of schools not being used efficiently: Problem with definition of adequate use of building (square footage that does not allow for special uses

Operation of public and chartered nonpublic schools; teacher licensing, truancy, remote proctoring, **forced sale of school buildings**

Passed Senate 6/10 with amendments on out-of-state teacher licensing, truancy procedures, proctoring ratios, and school building redevelopment. OEA switched to opponent; Ohio 8 Coalition opposed forced building sales.

SB 113 and HB 155—Bans diversity, equity, and inclusion in k-12 public schools

Official, unedited bill description: “Prohibits diversity, equity, and inclusion in public schools”

[Analysis from ACLU Ohio](#)

Toolkit—<https://bit.ly/ProtectDEI-Ohio>

[Read Senator Brenner’s testimony here](#) — [Watch the hearing here](#)

[Facts and Resources document — bit.ly/OhioSchoolDiversity](#)

SB 113 had a 3rd hearing in Senate Education Committee (Brenner is chair)
on Tuesday 5/19/26



Defending a Democracy Under Seige





Defending a Democracy Under Siege

VOTING RIGHTS

Ensuring that every eligible voter has equitable access to register, vote, and have their ballot counted fairly and accurately.

PROTECTING ELECTIONS

Protecting and empowering voters to ensure that our elections are fair, accessible, and representative of all Americans.

REDISTRICTING

Ensuring fair and equitable representation for all residents through transparent and accountable redistricting processes and protection of the US Census.

IMMIGRATION



Advocating for a fair immigration process and a path to citizenship. Standing up for immigrant communities to ensure they receive fair treatment under the law and encouraging new citizens' participation in our democracy.

INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

Protecting and defending the rights and liberties guaranteed by the Constitution and preventing attacks that undermine those fundamental freedoms.

THE PRESIDENCY

Working to guarantee that presidential power is exercised within the constitutional framework of a dynamic balance between the three branches of government (checks and balances). Supporting the Abolition of the Electoral College, including the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

Unite & Rise 8.5 September Key Priorities

- Register and re-engage voters
- Center accessibility and inclusion
- Strengthen partnerships and coalition outreach

Unite & Rise 8.5 Resources & Webinars

- [Playbook 6: Power Rising for Midterms](#) fuses building power and holding power accountable, mobilizing our nationwide network to deliver record-breaking voter participation, and safeguarding our elections.
- [Election 2026: From Messages to Media](#) on Tuesday, Sept. 15 | 4pm – 5pm ET
Learn how to develop clear, compelling election messages rooted in League values and turn them into stories that reach and engage your community.
- [Building Networks of Trust in a Digital Democracy](#) on Thursday, Sept. 17 | 4pm ET – 5pm ET
Are you interested in understanding media literacy for democratic participation? Do you want to know the why behind how information moves online? In this webinar, League members will learn how and why the information environment feels different today.

Unite & Rise 8.5 Toolkits

- Election Observation Toolkit
- Election Preparation Toolkit
- Advocacy Action Toolkit
- Youth Civic Education Toolkit
- Civic Holiday Toolkits

Unite & Rise 8.5 September Key Dates

- 4 – 19 Disability Voting Rights Week
- 15: National Hispanic Heritage Month begins
- 15: International Democracy Day
- 15: National Voter Registration Day
- 17: Constitution Day

Unite & Rise 8.5 September Core Actions

- Host a voter registration event on National Voter Registration Day where large numbers of unregistered voters may be available.
- Organize “Vote Together” activities (carpools, walk-to-the-polls, faithbased voting days).
- Launch “Family Vote Pledges” to encourage collective participation and storytelling.
- Host “Ballot Parties” to help voters leverage the resources on VOTE411 and determine who to vote for, as well as ensure people voting by mail complete all the required steps so that their ballot is counted.

Unite & Rise 8.5 September Core Actions

- Recruit and train volunteers for roles such as election observers, outreach ambassadors, and event leaders.
- Launch/re-launch an election observation program in your community.
- Continue relational organizing and monthly friend banks focused on registration and early voting.
- Spotlight stories for first-time, multigenerational, or newly engaged voters.



Using Positions: A Review

Detailed guidance that will be reviewed over the next couple of Lobby Calls can be found in our [Advocacy Guide](#). The Guide contains a description of the Local League's Advocacy Chair and Committee.



“The Rules”

- “Speaking with one voice”
- The national League is responsible for determining strategies and action policies that ensure that the League’s message on national issues is consistent throughout the country.
- State Leagues are responsible for a consistent state message, and
- Local Leagues must cooperate with one another to ensure that regional issues are addressed in a manner consistent with neighboring Leagues.
- The president of the national, state, or local League is the only person who speaks for the League in an official capacity, unless another person has been designated as the official spokesperson on a specific issue.

Understand League Position Hierarchy

- We operate on three levels corresponding to the three levels of government.
- We speak with one voice, coordinating action with other affected Leagues or levels of League.
- When speaking for League, the relevant Board must approve the spokesperson and the message.
- The League must have a position before acting.
- League members must study and come to agreement on an issue before a position is reached. Studies echo League nonpartisan philosophy by examining all sides of an issue without prejudice.
- Local studies focus on issues that can be addressed by local government.
- Local Leagues may use any local, state, or national position to lobby at the local governmental level only without asking for authorization from state or national.
- We never lobby in opposition to a League position.
- Members are encouraged to take action on League topics as individuals (not mentioning League affiliation).

LWVUS Positions & Principles*

Can be used for lobbying / general advocacy...

- At the federal level by LWVUS / EF
- At the state level by LWV-Ohio / EF
- At the local level by local Leagues / EFs (LL)

The LWVUS may only initiate action at the federal level and may only use US positions / principles.

LWV-Ohio Positions*

Can be used for lobbying / general advocacy...

- At the state level by LWV-Ohio / EF
- At the local level by LLs / EFs

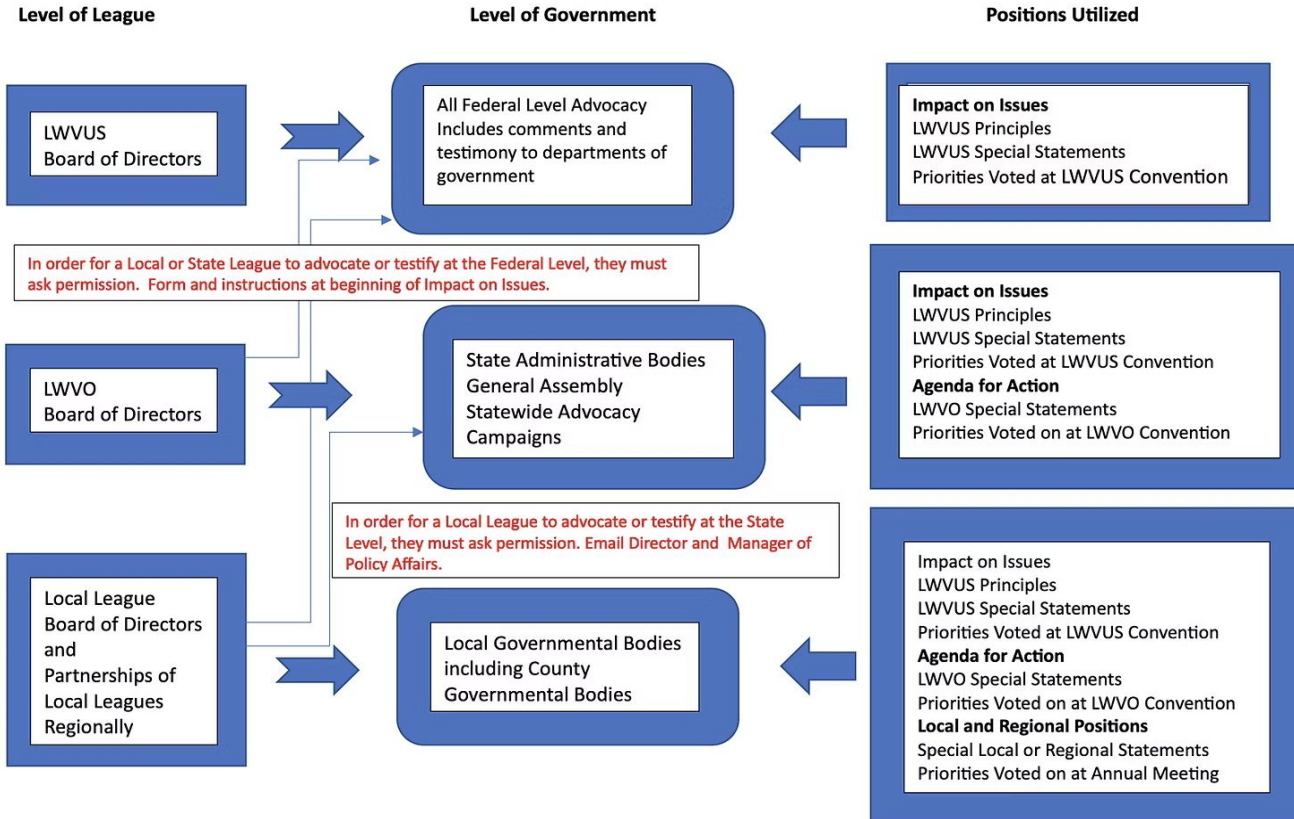
A state League may **initiate** action at the **state level** under a state or national position, although the state League should confirm the intent / interpretation of a US position if there is any doubt.

Local League (LL) Positions

Can be used for lobbying / general advocacy...

- At the local level by the LL / EF

Who Owns the Action & Creates the Strategy



Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Advocacy is a broader concept than lobbying.

- developing public policy briefs that analyze issues and provide detailed information and recommendations
- forums for discussing issues and educating policymakers and the public.

Lobbying is defined as an attempt to influence specific legislation

- actions that transmit a point of view on a specific piece of legislation to elected officials or their staffs,
- action urging the public to contact their legislators
- communications to the general public expressing a view

Being Nonpartisan in Hyper-Partisan Times

- We do not endorse or oppose political candidates or parties
- We do not ask members about their political affiliation
- Nonpartisanship does not mean apolitical or neutral
- An informed, active citizenry is critical to a functioning democracy. Voters must always have the facts, no matter how difficult those facts could be to accept, especially when they challenge deeply held beliefs about a candidate or political party.
- We advocate for various policy reforms, and we arrive at our issue-based positions through careful study and thorough input from our members in communities across Ohio and/or the US.
- We must value the voices of every Ohioan and every American. Democracy calls us to care about equity and human rights, because our government works best when we all participate and are heard.
- Positions around climate, health care, and voting rights have been in place since the 1970s and earlier

*Issues are
not
partisan*

<https://www.lwv.org/blog/staying-true-nonpartisanship-divisive-political-climate>

Therefore... We will Speak up and Speak out

- LWV has long supported sunshine laws, freedom of the press, campaign finance reform, voter rights, and public education so that voters can understand government and participate in government.
- As a nonpartisan organization, we will call out statements, actions, and policies that are counter to the values and principles of the League and/or the US Constitution.
- Advocating for checks and balances within government as well as a balance of powers is ***not partisan***.
- Calling out government overreach is ***not partisan***.
- Calling on elected officials to obey the Constitution and other laws is ***not partisan***.
- Advocating that every person - regardless of their race, gender identity, or immigration status- is treated with dignity is ***not partisan***.





Using National Position Locally/Regionally

Example: Immigration

The new position on protecting the rights of immigrants is based on a LWVWA position that was adopted in 2025. The existing 2008 LWVUS position on immigration addresses who should be admitted to the US.

The proposed position on the rights of Immigrants addresses what happens once they are here.

With the new position, we can

- Speak out in local communications condemning xenophobia, racism, discrimination against immigrants, and anti-immigration rhetoric.
- Encourage local policies that protect the rights of immigrants in our schools and churches. Keep ICE out of these places.
- Take leadership in ensuring access to legal services for all persons, regardless of immigration status; particularly immigrants in removal proceedings.
- Advocate local governments seek to provide essential services to all residents, regardless of immigration status.
- Advocate for effective coordination among local agencies and other organizations that interact with immigrants and refugees, including funding to permit such coordination.

Stand up and stand with our immigrants such as the Haitians in Springfield.



Using State Position Locally/Regionally

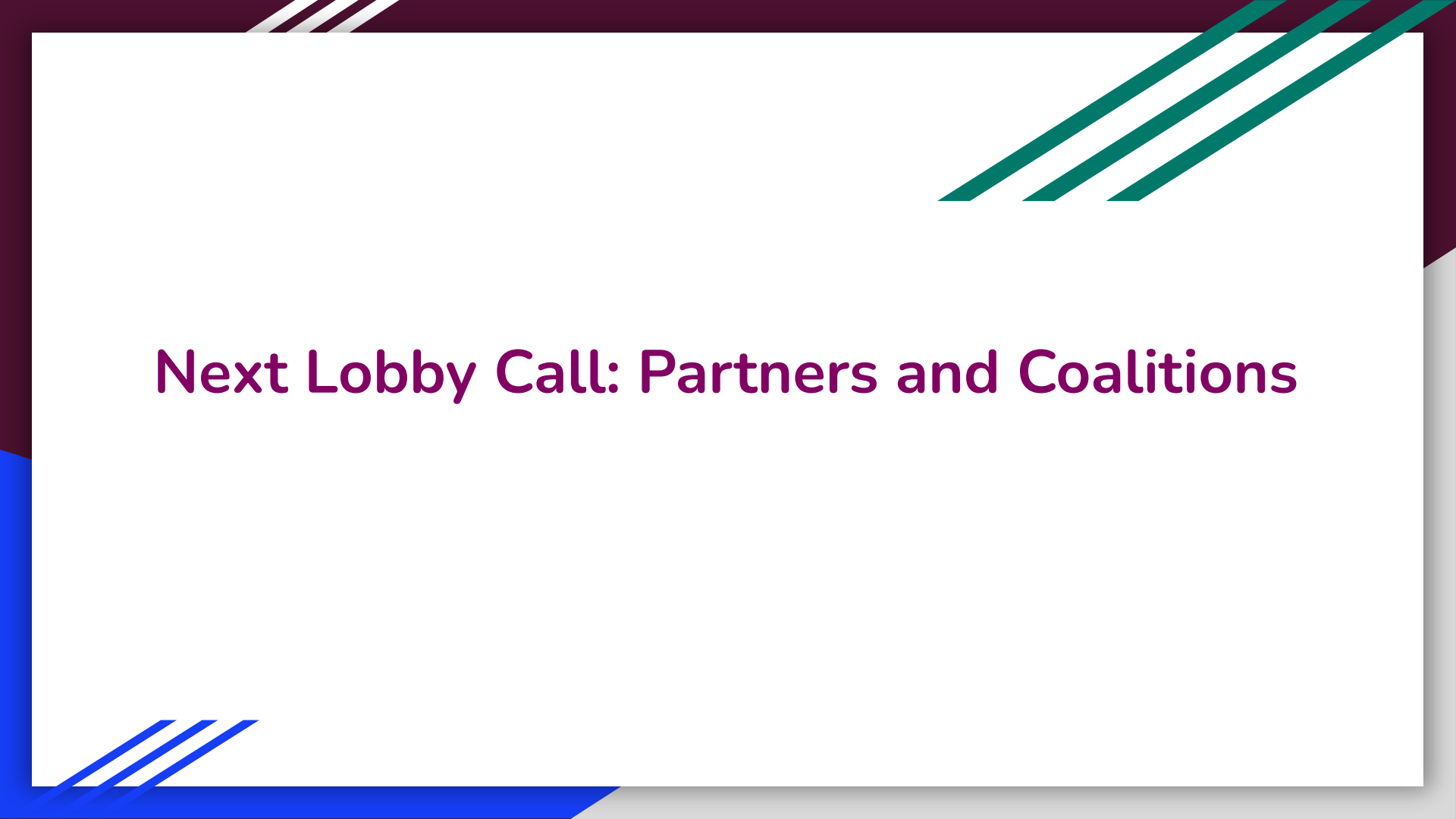
Example: Redistricting

We have both national and state positions on redistricting.

Currently, it is mostly the state position that is being used to help cities redistrict for local representation. Using all out tools and positions, state staff is even helping with the effort to bring local political entities in line with the criteria for voters having a voice.

Example: Supporting School Levies

1. For any League that doesn't have a local position, the state position calling for adequate funding can be used.
2. Form an ad hoc committee to review the budget and the levy history in order to make a recommendation.
3. The local League Board needs to approve.
4. The local League president writes a letter of support (or an op-ed) for the local papers or other communication. You can coordinate this part with the levy campaign.
5. List of school issues on ballot.



Next Lobby Call: Partners and Coalitions



From Honest: Strong Ohio Schools Research Report

Why the Research

Ohio's K-12 public education system sits at a crossroads:

though ranked 21st nationally by U.S. News and World Report in 2023,

the state ranked 46th for equitable school funding

and 40th for starting teacher salaries (Pruitt & Mohr, 2023), and

its EdChoice voucher program is set to grow from roughly \$770

million in fiscal year 2025 to a projected \$2.4 billion by 2026–2027,

raising questions about the future of the state's Fair School Funding Plan

and the role public education will have in Ohio's future.

The Who and When of the Research

Between **February 2025 and March 2026**,

- approximately **2,250 Ohioans** shared their views
- **through four channels:**
 - 17 grassroots listening sessions (~150 participants),
 - an activity- driven town hall in Cincinnati (~75 attendees),
 - sticky-note responses collected at 11 community events, and
 - surveys completed by 1,690 adults and 48 youth statewide

The research team (Kent State) analyzed these data through an iterative, collaborative coding process, building and revising a shared codebook and set of themes that captured participant responses.

The Resulting Pillars (Emergent Themes)

Informed and Activated Communities: Ohioans worry that the people who have power over school funding, policy, and what public schools teach are often far removed from the classroom. Instead, that power should belong to the people closest to, most knowledgeable about, and most invested in the education of all Ohio's children—educators, community members, families and students.

Subtitle: Who decides?

Freedom to Learn: Ohioans believe public education should be free from hidden agendas, whether motivated by religious beliefs, political ideology, for-profit interests or other censorship. Learning should be free and easy to access, welcoming and supportive of all young people, and genuinely inclusive of student, family and community voice.

Subtitle: What students learn.

Educating the Whole Child: Ohioans believe our public schools must welcome and include every child as they help them grow into well-adjusted, capable adults who find belonging and purpose in their communities. This means a focus not just on academics, but on life skills and social development. To get there, schools need to be places where young people can explore who they are and who they want to become.

Subtitle: Who students are.

The Resulting Pillars - Cont.

Conditions for Students to Thrive: Ohioans believe that school environments should be safe, accessible and nurturing with trauma-informed approaches to teaching and learning. Every student's experience and life conditions are different. Public schools should support mental health, honor how each student learns, and ensure there is equitable access for all, regardless of barriers, so all students feel safe enough to be fully themselves.

Subtitle: Where students learn.

Student-Driven Learning: Ohioans believe student learning should focus on a deep process that students own, one that's honest about our history and helps us work together for a shared future. We know that deep Learning requires more than content delivery – students should be able to take responsibility for their own understanding and have access to learning materials that are accurate and applicable to their lives and futures.

Subtitle: How students learn.

Schools as Community: Ohioans want our public schools to be at the heart of community life. Schools can and should bring together families, services, and local resources. Many worry that these connective functions have been lost or could be lost, putting at risk both the sense of shared responsibility for our children and community support for public schools.

Subtitle: Why schools matter.

The Short Conclusion

Taken together, these findings point to a shared vision of public schools built on the premise that **schools should support all students by being anchors in their communities, treating students as whole people, distributing decision-making closer to the classroom, protecting the freedom of teachers and communities to meet local needs, keeping students safe and supported, and handing learning back to the students.**

Participant responses indicate that realizing this vision depends on addressing the funding inequities and shifting the policy landscape currently standing in the way.

Understanding the Situation

Research on the state of K-12 public education in Ohio identifies **key factors that contribute to these safe, accessible environments, including access to safe, reliable transportation to/from schools, the recruitment and retention of support staff, and equitable funding.** **Example:** The need for buses and qualified drivers to meet Ohio's transportation requirements, along with increasing costs, is a salient theme in reports describing the landscape of Ohio's K-12 public education. **Also:** Reports also suggest support staff are crucial to protect instructional time by limiting barriers related to mental and behavioral issues

These issues are often **linked to absenteeism, lack of students' development of learning strategies, limited understandings of career pathways and postsecondary transitions, lack of emotional regulation, and decreased student engagement.**

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ACTION

These questions are open-ended to encourage authentic dialogue. Facilitators, plan to spend about 20 minutes on each question. There are additional probing questions included if needed to spur conversation.

- **What are the most pressing issues facing Ohio schools today?**
 - **Probing Questions:** What gets in the way of schools serving students and communities well? Who is served well by Ohio schools? Who is not? What do you believe children and youth would say are the most pressing issues in schools? What fears do you have about education in Ohio?

- **What are the purposes of public education?**
 - **Probing Questions:** Who should decide what is taught in schools or what schools are? Who do you believe should have the most say in decisions about what schools teach and how they operate? Why? What could / should schools provide?

- **What ideas do you have for how schools could better serve students / communities?**
 - **Probing Questions:** What would you like to see in schools that are not currently there? Dropping all limits of funding, what dreams do you have for how students and communities could be served by schools? What resources would schools need to fulfill these dreams? What is a critical incident that has impacted your school community recently? **Who should be responsible for this funding?**

The Recommendations

Based on the identified themes and the suggestions captured in the data, we propose **two main areas** Honesty could focus on to expand their work and collaborate with other stakeholders invested in Ohio's public education system.

The **first broad area** consists of work that aims to identify ways to strengthen the development of trust and shared responsibility between schools and communities.

The **second broad area** for exploration efforts encompasses understanding the structural supports needed so schools can provide what Ohioans believe they should provide.

So, Where Does All This Lead?

Developing an Action Plan that contains for each Pillar:

Convene: Ways of bringing people together in community groups, teams, in specialized groups, with coalition partners, etc.

Educate: Meet people where they are by tailoring content, format, and entry points to each audience in order to educate, demystify, update and just inform

Activate: Develop what is needed for engagement on all levels: elevating conversations, templates and training for action, etc.

These are currently being refined: 3 before the holidays and 3 after. Full action plan to be rolled out next Spring.



Programs

Presented by LWVO & Honesty for Ohio Education

Register [here](#)

PUBLIC EDUCATION, **DEMOCRACY**, AND THE FIRST AMENDMENT

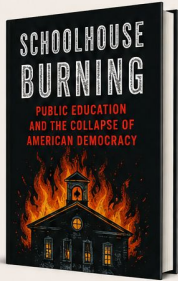
WHAT'S AT STAKE?

 **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 7-8:30 PM**



DEREK BLACK
★
Professor of Law,
Ernest F. Hollings Chair in
Constitutional Law, and Director of the
Constitutional Law Center,
University of South Carolina
School of Law.

Authored
Schoolhouse Burning



“ — FROM BLACK'S ARTICLE: — ”

Once conceived as the means to sustain American democracy, public schools are now entwined with the forces tearing it down. This Article is the first to analyze current education trends as a form of what international scholars term democratic erosion. ”



MODERATOR:
BRYAN WARNICK
OSU professor and chair of the
Department of Education.

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OHIO

 **HONESTY**
FOR OHIO EDUCATION

REGISTER NOW: |  bit.ly/4ppKZYD |  **zoom**
WEBINAR

EDUCATE. ★ EMPOWER. ★ UPHOLD DEMOCRACY.



Important Education Program

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OHIO

PRO-BONO, VIRTUAL DATA CENTER LEGAL CLINIC

for individuals, community groups, and nonprofits in
PA, WV, and OH

OCTOBER 7

More Info and Registration at:
fairshake-els.org/events

Registration is now open for the next Pro-Bono Data Center Legal Clinic on October 7, 2026. Before registering, please take look at the [Data Center Decision Tree](#) to help inform your strategy, legal questions, and next steps!

See next slide for what questions you can ask.

What Types of Legal Questions Can We Ask? Fair Shake attorneys can answers specific questions around issues including:

- Zoning, rezoning, and updated zoning maps and ordinances;
- Public notice, sunshine act violations, and government transparency;
- Right to know requests;
- State permits or permitting processes;
- Becoming a 'party of interest';
- Utility rate proceedings;
- Moratoriums and municipal curative amendments;
- Ballot initiatives and referendums;
- And other questions that you are running into in your community that connect back to data center development.

Date: Wednesday, October 7. Each group will receive at least a 30-minute slot of time. We will notify you of your time slot and send a zoom link by the end of the day on Monday, October 5.

[REGISTER HERE!](#)





Resources

Books in the LWVO Library

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the book on parliamentary procedure, yet those not well versed in that comprehensive manual can find themselves lost—and delayed—while trying to locate the most important rules. The solution? ***Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised In Brief.***

The Little Book of Boards: A Board Member's Handbook for Small (and Very Small) Nonprofits by [Erik Hanberg](#) is a practical, conversational guide designed for people who join small nonprofit boards with little to no prior experience. It breaks down core duties, meeting mechanics, and relationships with executive directors.

The Imperfect Board Member: Discovering the Seven Disciplines of Governance Excellence is a 2006 leadership fable by Jim Brown. The book uses a fictional CEO named David Slater to show how corporate, non-profit, and faith-based boards can move past dysfunction to build real trust, healthy communication, and strong organizational results.

From Honesty form Ohio Education:



A good candidate doesn't ghost you after Election Day. Join us to hold elected officials accountable.



Questions for your CandiDATE on Public Education

You wouldn't marry someone who dodges every question. Don't vote for them either.



Early Voting Begins: 10/6
Election Day: 11/3

Honesty for
Ohio Education

Dessert

Vision and accountability. Catch vague charm versus real commitment

1. What does success for Ohio public schools look like by the end of your first term?
2. Will you commit to a public town hall on school funding within your first six months?
3. How will parents and community members know you're keeping your word?

Appetizers

Easy to answer. Tells you if they even showed up prepared to talk about schools.

1. Did you attend Ohio public schools?
2. What's one thing every Ohio kid should have access to at school, no matter their zip code?
3. Who's a teacher, shaped you and who?
4. What does a great school look like to you?



Bread Basket

A little more specific. Starts to test whether they know the basics.

1. Do you know how our local district is currently funded?
2. Have you visited a public school in this district since you started running?
3. What's your understanding of Ohio's Fair School Funding Plan?
4. Where does public education rank among your priorities?

Education Questions for Candidates

Main Course

This is the meat. Specific questions that force a real position.

1. Ohio schools were underfunded by \$2.75 B in the last state budget and Ohio just announced a revenue surplus leaving \$536 M unallocated. What would you have done with that money?
2. Do you support fully funding the Fair School Funding Plan on its original phase-in schedule? Why or why not?
3. Edchoice vouchers are pulling funding from local districts. Do you support the current expansion, capping it, or rolling it back?



Sides

Swap in whatever questions matter most to your community.

1. How would you address Ohio's special education funding gap?
2. Where do you stand on school safety funding versus arming staff?
3. How do you feel about the state pushing more reliance on local property tax levies?

Red flags on a first date are red flags in office too.



Data Centers: New Discussion Group in January

- While data centers are essential to the new technology, how they are built and the impact they have on a community can have community input, transparency, good environmental guidelines, an understanding of how they can improve over time, accountability, improve the tax base, etc.
- LWV has many good government and natural resource positions that can be applied. Leagues can have a voice locally and regionally.
- **Peggy Berry has offered to start a discussion group for Leagues** facing AI data centers in order to understand the issue of data centers and what guidelines should be promoted if they are developed. **This group will start in January.**
- **We can start a resource library, plan educational programs and offer guidance to local Leagues.** There are Leagues across the country who have some materials, questions, etc. to offer also.
- If interested, you can start emailing your interested contact person to advocacy@lwvohio.org. Please give us your League, the person's name and contact information.



Next Lobby Call

September 22,
NOON

