

League of Women Voters Glen Ellyn  
And League of Women Voters Wheaton

Defend Democracy Issue: Misinformation and Disinformation

The LWV Public Statements:

The upcoming presidential election will occur within a rapidly changing, intense, 24-hour news cycle. In an era where not all news is based in truth, the public can become more knowledgeable about basic fact-checking when consuming media.<sup>1</sup> The League of Women Voters encourages the public to develop a fact-checking routine to provide balance, opportunities for reflection on the essential issues of our time, and to engage with the League's Democracy Truth Project initiative. The Democracy Truth Project strengthens democracy by restoring trust in the electoral process by combating mis- and disinformation. The public is encouraged to understand how these two insidious tools are being used to undermine our democracy, as well as the potential impact of artificial intelligence of our elections.

What You Can Do:

1. Be an informed consumer of news.
  - Consider the source of your news. Are news outlets local or national? Is their coverage reliable or inconsistent? What organizations are funding them?
  - Be aware of your personal habits when consuming news. Seek out diverse, reputable sources and read from different perspectives.
  - Be mindful that misinformation runs rampant on social media due to the speed and scale in which it is shared.
  - Examine the objectivity and emotion in which facts are reported. News reporting should be free of bias and balanced.
  - Check the source and the date of an article. Check to see if other news outlets are also covering the issue. Read past the headline and question emotionally charged content.
2. Support the LWVUS Democracy Truth Project<sup>2</sup>
  - Understand the difference between misinformation (inadvertently sharing false information without the intention to harm), and disinformation (intentionally sharing false information with the intent to harm).
  - Don't engage on social media with inaccurate information. This only amplifies it further with likes, clicks, and shares. Instead, share accurate information in a separate, new post.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lwv.org/blog/essentials-fact-checking-know-your-news>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lwv.org/blog/your-guide-mis-and-disinformation>

- Read the LWVUS comments submitted to the Federal Election Commission in October of 2023, urging the Commission to apply laws against fraudulent misrepresentation to deceptive AI campaign ads. Some of the issues raised in these public documents can be used for your own letter to the editor to combat disinformation you may observe during this election cycle or to warn your local community about these dangers to our democracy. <https://www.lwv.org/elections/lwvus-weighs-use-ai-campaign-ads>
  - Promote the use of the LWV's voting information platform, where voters can get accurate, unbiased election information about candidates; obtain ballot information; register to vote; and check their registration. (<https://www.vote411.org>)
3. Misinformation/Disinformation Task Force
- Visit the LWVIL to learn about the newly formed Mis/Disinformation Task Force webpage and learn how the League is educating the general public on this important issue: [www.lwvil.org/misdis-info](http://www.lwvil.org/misdis-info)
  - Watch the recording, "How Illinois Strives to Ensure a Secure Election Process." This is a LWV Mis/Disinformation Task Force virtual interview with Matt Dietrich from the Illinois State Board of Elections<sup>3</sup> <https://youtu.be/MCb9HqPj63U?si=snyQV-9LFVMZDCNc>
  - Attend the upcoming LWVIL virtual webinar on Protecting Democracy in the Age of Social Media and AI on Wednesday, April 17 at 7 pm. Register here: <https://lwvil.app.neoncrm.com/np/clients/lwvil/eventRegistration.jsp?event=534&>
  - Report disinformation! You can report most social media posts directly to the platform, or report it here: <https://reportdisinfo.org>
  - Become a point person on the task force by e-mailing: [misdisinfotaskforce@lwvil.org](mailto:misdisinfotaskforce@lwvil.org)

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<sup>3</sup> Hear Matt Dietrich discuss disinformation (time stamp 10:20), ballot security (time stamp 23:47), how ISBE debunks election related myths (time stamp 43:00), and how LWV members can help ISBE secure elections (time stamp 49:00)