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Iowa League of Women Voters Honored with ACLU's Edward Allen Award

Des Moines, Iowa – For its unwavering stance on the protection of voting rights in Iowa, the League of Women Voters of Iowa has been named the 2016 winner of the ACLU of Iowa's Edward S. Allen Award.

Since 1920, the League of Women Voters of Iowa has been a stalwart, active, nonpartisan, and highly effective supporter of voting rights for decades. So it's suiting that they have been given the Allen Award, which recognizes long-time civil libertarians who have made a lasting impact in our state.

"We appreciate the ACLU of Iowa recognizing our long-term commitment to voting rights. We have long been at the forefront of fighting for voting rights for all citizens. We recognize that voting issues never go away and all of us must be vigilant in protecting them," said Bonnie Pitz, recent Iowa president of the League.

The League has been especially high-profile with recent voting rights efforts. Most recently, it filed an amicus brief in the ACLU's *Griffin v. Pate* ex-felon voting rights case in front of the Iowa Supreme Court.

The League of Women Voters of Iowa is part of the national nonpartisan nonprofit political organization for women and men that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

It has been an active partner to the ACLU in other legal, legislative, and outreach efforts, including:

- Successfully fighting voter ID bills in the Iowa legislature that would have made it harder for women, the elderly, people of color, and the poor to vote.
- Improving voting rights for those with disabilities
- Getting online voter registration in Iowa, and then working to make it accessible for those who don't have an Iowa Department of Transportation-issued ID.
- Participated in multiple efforts to get better wording and clarifications on Iowa's voter registration form

- Supported regulatory advocacy before the Voter Registration Commission and Administrative Rules Review Committee around the ACLU of Iowa's successful 2015 lawsuit on behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) of Iowa that blocked the previous Secretary of State's attempt to wrongly purge voter registration list of those he suspected, based on flawed methods, were noncitizen immigrants.
- Been a leader in distributing voter education materials.

"The League of Women Voters in Iowa has been a driving force in expand voting rights in our state," said ACLU of Iowa Legal Director and Interim Program Director Rita Bettis. "Through the leadership of the League, we've been able to protect our state from some of the worst voter suppression efforts like voter ID that have plagued other states. In other areas, like felony disenfranchisement, we have more work to do together and are so grateful to know the League is dedicated to change."

The League will formally accept the award at the ACLU of Iowa's Bill of Rights Brunch November 12 at the Des Moines Botanical Garden. Find out more at www.aclu-ia.org.

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The ACLU of Iowa is a private, non-partisan organization that fights to advance civil liberties for all. It is the state affiliate of the national American Civil Liberties Union. The ACLU prides itself in upholding everyone's civil liberties, no matter who they are or what they believe. We work to assure the rights of all Iowans – from atheists to devout Christians, from labor unions to businesspeople and more – to make sure the constitutional rights of all are preserved. For more information, please go to www.aclu-ia.org.

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