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## **A Day to Take Action to Protect Your Rights**

Just 10 days before the United States was attacked at Pearl Harbor in 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared December 15<sup>th</sup> as Bill of Rights Day, proclaiming this historic document, “the great American charter of personal liberty and human dignity.” As he signed his proclamation on November 27<sup>th</sup>, our Country was unaware – as we were on those days before September 11, 2001 – that very shortly things would be changed in a profound and permanent way.

Then, as now, we must remember, appreciate and take action to guarantee “the immeasurable privileges which that charter guaranteed: the privileges of freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and the free right to petition the Government for redress of grievances,” as stated in Roosevelt’s proclamation.

In its Preamble, the writers of the Bill of Rights stated their purpose was to protect citizens from the “misconstruction or abuse” of the powers granted in our Constitution. The guarantees granted in the Bill of Rights -- free schools, free churches, labor unions, religious and educational and civic organizations of all kinds – comprise the very fabric of our democracy, our way of life. We must never relinquish these rights: not for money, not out of fear, not as the result of ignorance or inaction.

Democracy means “government by the people.” Working through education and advocacy, the League of Women Voters encourages the “*informed* and *active* participation of citizens in government.” What are you willing to do to protect the freedoms you enjoy in this Country, many of which do not exist in many places around the world?

The League works tirelessly to promote social and economic justice. We are working to protect the right to vote, even for those ex-offenders who have satisfied their punishment except for owing fines and fees they can’t afford to pay. We advocate for reform in pre-trial detention practices, which afflict a disproportionate number of African American men, women and children. We advocate to reform Delaware’s money bail system, which cruelly targets the poor, depriving them of the equal rights and protections to which they are entitled under the law. We speak out against injustices including the overcrowded conditions in our prison system and the inequality of Delaware’s sentencing policies. The League also supports repeal of Delaware’s Death Sentence.

This year on December 15<sup>th</sup>, consider taking action to protect your rights. Learn more at [lwvdelaware.org](http://lwvdelaware.org). Join the conversation on our Facebook or Twitter pages. Get involved!

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