



THE VOTER

February 2021, Vol. 48 No. 2

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area
Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee and Anderson Counties

Co-President's Message

We've accomplished much in the recent election cycle, including, among other things: voter registration efforts, building positive relationships with Voter Registration and Election Board Commissions and Executive Directors throughout the 3 counties, communicating both as individuals and as the League to statewide elected officials to encourage and



Michael Wood

applaud legislative support for safe, free and fair elections, and providing the public with readily accessible election information through multiple channels, including newspapers, our revamped League website, the sterling now-bilingual VOTE411 website, and the wonderfully organized candidate forums. We can say with some pride that in our three counties and throughout the state the election went smoothly, with integrity, honesty and transparency.

We still have lots who can't use our website and forums if they don't know about them. Letters to the editor still matter — but not as much as they did in 1990. People under the age of 50 still use Facebook and Twitter and Snapchat do, including among other things: Expanding our attendance at meetings of city and county councils, election commissions, school boards and county legislative delegations.

And communicating better. People — but not as much as they did in 2010. We do need to master these, and also Instagram, WhatsApp, and other contemporary social media. Which may be to say: we urgently need to welcome and attract young people to the League.

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League of Women Voters Clemson Area
Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson Counties
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633
www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

| | |
|--|--|
| Zoom March Meeting | March 16 |
| Zoom Candidate Forum for Open Clemson Council Seat: | TBD |
| Zoom April Meeting | April 20 |
| Zoom May Meeting | May 18 |
| State Convention | Saturday, May 1, 2021 (All day) to Sunday, May 2, 2021 (All day) |

Co-President's Message Continued

Of course, the League does so much more than work directly on elections. On our own and partnering with our sister community organizations, we work on many civic issues including legislative agendas, representative government, education, the environment and racial justice. Don't miss our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion book discussions at 1:30 and 7 pm, on 2nd and 4th Thursdays, currently discussing *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents*.

This is my last Co-President's Message. I am retiring from the Board effective Friday February 26, for personal reasons. I thank each and every one of you for your collegial welcome, your creative contributions, your boundless dedication to the strongest ideals of democracy. What amazing citizens and people you are!

PS: Don't forget to pay your annual dues! And please be kind if someone calls or texts to remind you, even if it turns out that you've already paid your dues!

Thanks, Michael

"Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." Winston Churchill, 1947

LWVSC Forming 2021 Redistricting Advisory Committee

In 2021, following the release of the decennial census data, legislative district lines must be redrawn to account for population changes, so that each district includes approximately the same number of people.

Since 2012, the SC Legislature has declined consideration of bills creating an Independent Redistricting Commission for SC that would have protected against partisan or incumbent gerrymandering during this process. Over 15 states are now using some form of commission instead of having legislators draw their own lines.

In 2021, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) will be drawing and submitting district maps to the public and to the SC Legislature for consideration. We hope to influence thinking in the General Assembly, but more importantly to encourage the public to understand the potential uses and abuses of the process and become engaged in speaking up on behalf of their right to a meaningful vote.

To help inform our process, the LWVSC is creating a Redistricting Advisory Committee (RAC) with the intention of having a transparent, nonpartisan process that considers diverse perspectives. The committee will be formed of between 9 and 13 members, who will collectively offer varying geographical and political viewpoints and represent a variety of communities of interest.

The RAC will meet virtually with the LWV Redistricting Workgroup three times with the following responsibilities:

- Review demographic changes and discuss potential impacts to voting districts Identify communities that may be particularly impacted by redistricting, and that may be vulnerable to impacts of gerrymandering.
- Suggest ways to prioritize often-divergent map-drawing criteria to create a series of acceptable maps.
- Analyze maps drawn by LWV experts in advance of submission.
- Make recommendations for how to improve them.

Criteria to be used to draw districts:

Beyond the legal redistricting requirements, which include maintaining compact and contiguous districts that comply with the Voting Rights Act, there is significant opportunity for manipulation in the map-drawing process that may disadvantage voters. The criteria we use, along with the maps we produce, will be made public. We believe that criteria for the map-drawing process should exclude partisan and incumbent protection and should not be drawn with the intention of reducing competitiveness. District lines should avoid splitting counties and precincts when possible. The process of drawing district maps should be open and transparent and include an avenue for meaningful public input.

Submitted by Shayna Howell

Hunger and Food Insecurity in Pickens County: 2019

Update in the Context of COVID-19 LWVCA Presentation – February 16, 2021

Ensuring the availability of healthy, affordable food is an essential component of a community's quality of life. While food security rates have improved since the 2008 recession, food insecurity remains a concern among certain subpopulations and in some areas of the country. To better understand the extent and character of food insecurity and hunger in Pickens County, SC, the research team conducted a mixed-method study of these issues in Summer 2019. The study was commissioned by the United Way of Pickens County as a follow-up to an earlier study conducted in 2011. This study aimed to:

- 1) Assess state of food insecurity in Pickens County in 2019 and the community assets available to address the issue; and,
- 2) Document, through maps and a transportation study, the extent of the needs and gaps in services; and,
- 3) Recommend steps for harnessing community assets to address the needs individuals facing hunger and food insecurity.

This presentation was originally scheduled for March 2020 LWVCA meeting, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic causing the subsequent cancellation of the original presentation. Since March 2020, the research team has engaged in additional data collection about hunger and food insecurity after the onset of COVID-19. The research team has interviewed residents of Oconee and Pickens counties to learn more about residents' experiences with hunger and food insecurity and will provide a brief overview of these studies.

Team Members

Catherine Mobley is a Professor of Sociology at Clemson University.

Cassius Hossfeld is an MS degree candidate in Social Science in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice at Clemson University.

Michelle Eichinger is a Ph.D. candidate in Planning, Design and Built Environment at Clemson University.

Leslie Hossfeld is the Dean of the College of Behavioral, Social and Health Sciences at Clemson University.

Book Review - *Caste: The Origins of our Discontents* By Isabel Wilkerson

In this brilliant book, **Isabel Wilkerson** gives us a masterful portrait of an unseen phenomenon in America as she explores, through an immersive, deeply researched narrative and stories about real people, how America today and throughout its history has been shaped by a hidden caste system, a rigid hierarchy of human rankings.

Beyond race, class, or other factors, there is a powerful caste system that influences people's lives and behavior and the nation's fate. Linking the caste systems of America, India, and Nazi Germany, Wilkerson explores eight pillars that underlie caste systems across civilizations, including divine will, bloodlines, stigma, and more. Using riveting stories about people—including **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, baseball's **Satchel Paige**, a single father and his toddler son, Wilkerson herself, and many others, she shows the ways that the insidious undertow of caste is experienced every day. She documents how the Nazis studied the racial systems in America to plan their out-cast of the Jews; she discusses why the cruel logic of caste requires that there be a bottom rung for those in the middle to measure themselves against; she writes about the surprising health costs of caste, in depression and life expectancy, and the effects of this hierarchy on our culture and politics. Finally, she points forward to ways America can move beyond the artificial and destructive separations of human divisions, toward hope in our common humanity.

Beautifully written, original, and revealing, *Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* is an eye-opening story of people and history, and a reexamination of what lies under the surface of ordinary lives and of American life today.

<https://turningpagebookshop.com/shop/ols/products/caste-the-origins-of-our-discontents-isabel-wilkerson>

Notice – Special Enrollment Period for the Affordable Healthcare Act

A special enrollment period for the Affordable Health Care Act has been announced. This special enrollment period will offer health care access to thousands of individuals whose health care has been impacted by COVID-19. This supports the League priority of fair and equitable medical care to all. Please do what you can to get the word out.

Description from [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov): You may qualify for the Special Enrollment Period if you lost health coverage through your employer or the employer of a family member **in the past 60 days** OR you expect to lose coverage **in the next 60 days**, including if you lose health coverage through a parent or guardian because you're no longer a dependent. In addition, you may qualify for a Special Enrollment Period if you lost health coverage through your employer **more than 60 days ago but since January 1, 2020** and were prevented from enrolling in health coverage due to the national emergency on COVID-19.

A Looming Threat: Climate Change

Our lives have been disrupted this past year by a pandemic and political chaos, so somehow the threat of climate change seems less urgent. But it is an issue that demands our continuous engagement. Our future depends on addressing this existential threat that can impact every place on Earth including South Carolina.

ROOT CAUSE: The consequences of steady increases in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions like carbon dioxide and methane has been studied exhaustively over the past three decades. These emissions are largely from our continued reliance on fossil fuels (coal, oil, natural gas). Scientists agree that these emissions are resulting in an increase in global temperatures due to GHG in our atmosphere that block heat from going into space. Instead, the heat is reflected back to Earth and results in an increase in global warmth. To avoid ever increasing catastrophic changes, this warming must be contained below 1.5 C degrees.

Yet our planet is now 1.0 C degree warmer than pre-industrial levels. This much warming already has serious planetary impacts: melting polar ice caps that are resulting in coastal sea rise along with an increase in catastrophic weather events including Category 5 hurricanes and droughts with extensive fires, plant and animal species extinctions, and food and water shortages resulting in massive human migration.

OUR STATE: The southeastern region of the United States ranks 6th worldwide in GHG emissions while South Carolina ranks 27th nationally. Continuous action is needed statewide and locally to decrease GHG emissions.

Much state focus is now on transitioning from non-renewable fossil fuels to a renewable energy future. *The South Carolina State Energy Plan* was developed in 2016 as a comprehensive blueprint for a future with reliable, resilient, clean, and affordable energy. It states that it will maximize (to the extent practical) reliability, environmental quality, energy conservation, and energy efficiency while minimizing the cost of energy throughout the state. Check out renewable energy options at Energy.SC.gov. However, each option can be evaluated for positives and negatives as to usability, affordability and potential limitations.

SOLAR: Our state energy plan was supplemented in 2019 with the passage of *The SC Energy Freedom Act* which is a detailed plan for expansion of solar throughout the state. It provided expanded freedom for the consumer by mandating greater support from their commercial energy provider through net metering. The term “net metering” is an electricity billing concept that allows consumers who generate some or all of their own power to feed that electricity to the grid, obtaining credit through the meter, thereby enabling use of that electricity any time instead of just the moment it is generated.

More good news is that solar technology is improving rapidly. Solar panels are becoming cheaper and more efficient. Our future may include solar panels that float on water, “building-integrated” photovoltaic materials that blend into architectural features like skylights or walls, and solar skin and solar fabric that can supplement any décor. In addition, communities can build solar into roadways, fences and barriers.

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A Looming Threat: Climate Change Continued

In more news about solar, there is a new concept that will be offered in future legislation: Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). This would allow municipal governments, residential groups, or businesses to procure or produce power from an alternate (hopefully green) supplier while still receiving transmission and distribution services from their existing utility provider. Nine states currently have this authorization, and it is working well to reduce both GHG and the cost for retail electricity by 12-20 percent. This would be especially helpful in areas of our state that have high energy costs.

OTHER SC ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION: The current SC legislative session has a myriad of proposed bills that, if passed, could impact our environmental future. These include Electric Car Sale Limits, the future of Santee Cooper, Clean Drinking Water, and Pyrolysis of plastic waste back into fossil fuel components (but problems with providers wanting to avoid solid waste regulations). Watch for LWV notifications to call our senators and representatives about these bills. Every call helps.

Submitted by Ellie Taylor, LWVSC Environmental Committee

Who are we and what do we do?
Check out twelve years of League newsletters on our website!
<http://www.clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/Archives.html>

New Member Bio



Marjorie Campbell has lived in Westminster for thirty-seven years on the Campbell family farm. Her husband owns a high-end retail furniture store in Westminster, and they have three adult daughters and one grandchild.

Her granddaughter lives with her parents in a home nearby on the family farm, so she has the delight of spending some time with her every day. Marjorie's other two daughters live in Seattle, WA and Charlotte, NC. In her free time, she hikes, gardens, reads and plays with her four dogs.

She has been at Clemson University for thirty-one years in CCIT which is the IT department. Currently, she is Director of Organizational Effectives and the Plan Administrator for the CCIT DEI Strategic Plan. She has a lifelong passion in civil justice and voting rights that began in her undergraduate degree studies of religion and politics. Having booted her children from the nest, she is actively re-engaging in those pursuits through a variety of avenues. She's delighted to be joining the League of Women Voters and hopes to make a valuable contribution as she learns more about the organization.

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| <i>Clemson City Council</i> | <i>1st and 3rd Monday, 6:30 pm</i> | <i>Pickens County School Board</i> | <i>4th Monday, 7:00 pm</i> |
| <i>Seneca City Council</i> | <i>2nd Tuesday, 6:00 pm</i> | <i>Oconee County School Board</i> | <i>3rd Monday, 6:00 pm</i> |
| <i>Pickens County Council</i> | <i>1st Monday, 6:30 pm</i> | <i>Anderson Co. School Board</i> | <i>3rd Monday, 6:00 pm</i> |
| <i>Oconee County Council</i> | <i>1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm</i> | | |
| <i>Anderson County Council</i> | <i>2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:00 pm</i> | | |

Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email address _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Phone (opt) _____

I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters Ed Fund" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

Visit our website at www.lwvclemsonarea.org and contact us at lwvclemson@gmail.com.

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