

February 2026 "eVoter"



This Black History Month, we invite you to take a deeper look at the rich history and ongoing work of Black leaders in your county and local community!

Before the thaw of spring, try something different. February is an ideal time to slow down and explore.

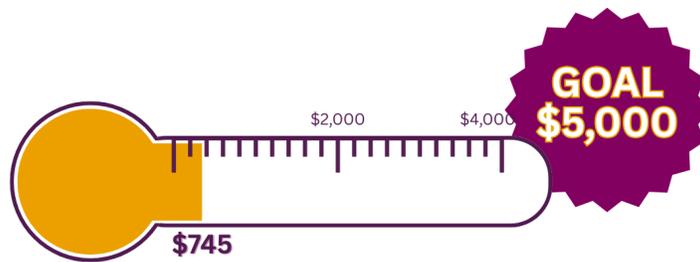
Start close to home. Courthouse records, local libraries, community centers, and historical societies are excellent places to begin.

Encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to explore alongside you. Learning what has been done in the past helps prepare us to move forward with greater understanding and purpose.

Take time to learn about Black-led organizations in your area, get to know the people involved, and consider how you might support or participate in their work. If you're able, branch out to surrounding counties to broaden your perspective.

Discover what has happened—and what is happening now—in your own community.

Our Fund Drive Continues!



We started the fund drive at our Program Planning Meeting on January 19th. Letters with envelopes enclosed were sent out to all members last week.

As noted in our letter only 20% of our dues goes to our local league. The funds we raise are our main source of income. Please contribute what you can. Every dollar sent goes directly to operating our league. We are an all volunteer organization. What you send in to us helps us continue our work and mission to inform, educate and advocate for the voters.

You may make your donation in one of two ways:

By Mail:

Please use the enclosed envelope (or your own) addressed to:

LWV CVA 2026 Finance Drive
PO Box 2786
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Online:

Visit our website at www.lwv-cva.org and click on the **DONATE** button at the top of the home page to pay via Zelle.

Zelle QR Code:



The League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area sincerely thanks you for your consideration and your commitment to strengthening our democracy!

LWV-CVA Turns 80 This Month

Celebrate with us!

The League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area turns **80 years old** on February 14th.

We plan to hold a celebration at **Eastwood Winery** on **Sunday, February 22th** from **2-4pm**. We'll have a trivia game and a celebratory cake and snacks. We are opening this up to the community so if you have a friend who's interested bring them along!

We are in the process of gathering digital and digitized photos of members of our local league in action through the years. If you have any or know a Life Member or retired member who has photographs, we'd love to scan them for a photo album we're creating.

Please send them to lwvcvasocials@gmail.com and lwv@lwv-cva.org by **February 9th**.

Now Accepting Nominations for LWV-CVA Officers

Help Shape the Board of Directors for the Upcoming Year

Judith Selzer, our Nominating Committee Chairperson, will be working with our Membership Chairperson, Carolyn Fitzpatrick to place the right candidates in the jobs available.

President, Secretary, Membership Chair, Voter Services Chair and Director -at Large are up for election. If you would like to nominate a member or want to self-nominate contact Judith this month for details.

Save the Dates *Upcoming Events*

January - March 2026 Women's Legislative Round Tables

WLRT's continue through the month of February!

Legislators in the General Assembly talk about their plans for the new session, covering a different topic in each session.

Find out more about the 2026 WLRT Sessions [here!](#)

If you aren't able to attend a session, you can still sign up for it and a recording of the event will be sent to you.

[Register for WLRT Sessions](#)

February 4, 2026
LWV HC4US Immigration Webinar

How Legislation and Policy Changes Are Impacting Healthcare: Practice and Access for Immigrants and their Families

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 via Zoom at 7:15 PM

League of Women Voters (LWV) will be hosting a webinar that will explore how the two topics of immigration and health care share information and identify a joint project for members of the LWV.

The LWV Health Care Reform Group and the LWV National Immigration Interest Group are stating that currently in our Country there are Too many immigration raids, and not enough (affordable) health care.

Presenters Include:

- Moderator: Dr. Susan Martin, Donald G. Herzberg Professor Emerita of International Migration at Georgetown University
- Dr. Triveni DeFries, Director, UCSF Human Rights Institute
- Ben D'Avanzo, NILC Strategist for Health/ Economic Policy

Discussion Includes:

- Featured organizations
- Migrant healthcare needs
- Policy changes

[**Register and Access the Zoom Link Here**](#)

February 11, 2026 League Day at the General Assembly

February 11th is League Day at the General Assembly. LWV will be recognized by both GA chambers. That day members get a chance to meet our representatives or their legislative aides. Several league members are attending. There will be no WLRT that day and will be in person only. Last day to sign up is February 2nd . Contact LWV-VA for details.

January in Review

Program Planning January 17, 2026

There was a very successful planning meeting at the Center on January 17th. Thanks to all who attended. There was discussion about conversion to 501 C3 tax status completely and getting rid of our 501 C4 tax status. LWV National and LWV VA have already done this. After much discussion it was decided to have a more in depth discussion with interested members before the May Annual Meeting.

Other discussion items included the role of Voter Services (role of registering voters) and Advocacy and Civic Engagement role. It was agreed there should be some restructuring to delineate responsibilities. This will be further discussed with the board and committee members.

There is a proposal to the General Assembly this year to approve **Virginia's joining the "National Popular Vote Interstate Compact"** where states agree to award all their electoral votes (Va. has 15) in a national election to whichever candidate wins the most votes in your state. The goal is to for 270 of the total U.S.'s electoral votes to sign on to the compact. The Interstate Compact has 209 so far. League members were in favor of supporting this.

As far as new or changes to current LWV US Positions are concerned, the recommendations from Attendees were

- We concurred with a new position that is being proposed about Immigration. A study was done by LWV WA in 2025.
 - LWV [add name] concurs with the findings and position adopted by LWVWA to protect the rights of immigrants in the United States and calls on LWVUS to adopt this position by concurrence at the upcoming national convention.
- We concurred on the Privatization Position proposed by LWV NY
 - The League believes that healthcare, like other programs that provide and protect basic human needs, should be considered a public good. The League favors a system where fiduciary responsibility (for such programs) is to patients and the public. Where private entities fail to deliver programs that provide and protect basic human needs, the League supports de-privatizing them"
- Anita Pilling introduced a proposal to amend the Constitution Article 2 Section 2 to limit Presidential Pardon Power.
- Peggy Gilges, Natural Resources Committee, Introduced a new position on Data Centers. It was recommended by consensus to investigate further and determine if a study will need to be done. Stay tuned!

There were no new updates to our Local Positions but it was noted under the Education section that we support public funding be allocated to public schools that had already been studied and approved had been inadvertently omitted from our actions . This will be updated and voted on at our annual meeting in May.

Our recommendations will be sent to LWV VA and LWV National to be considered prior to the National Convention in June 2025 in Columbus Ohio.



MLK Vigil and Advocacy Day

January 19, 2026

LWV-CVA members traveled to Richmond for the MLK Vigil and Advocacy day!

LWV-SAW Launches in Staunton, Augusta County & Waynesboro

The Staunton–Augusta County–Waynesboro (SAW) region now has a local branch of the League of Women Voters: LWV-SAW. Recently featured in The News Leader (Dec. 29, 2025), this new league is

focused on expanding voter education, protecting voting rights, and strengthening civic participation across our communities. LWV-SAW is proudly nonpartisan—we do not support or oppose candidates or political parties. Our work centers on helping neighbors access clear, accurate election information, encouraging civic learning, and creating welcoming spaces where everyone has a seat at the table.

Priorities

As a new league, LWV-SAW is focused on:

- Voter registration and voter education, including promoting trusted tools like VOTE411
- Youth engagement and civic learning, especially in schools and on college campuses
- Community partnerships, connecting civic participation to everyday needs across the SAW region

Food Drive Results: Community Impact in Action

One example of what collaboration can accomplish is our recent SAW-area food and fund drive. This effort was powered by a partnership among LWV-SAW, the LWV-VA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee, and dedicated Youth Council members, who also created a Hacksaw account to support coordination and outreach.

Together, we raised:

- Food Drive: 1,080 lbs.
- Fund Drive: \$1,426.61 (not including an additional state gift of \$676)
- Volunteer Support: 5.25 hours (as of Jan. 23, 2026)

Thanks to this collective effort, our generosity will help provide 5,180 meals to our community. We're also excited to share that the League will return to volunteer in Verona next month, continuing to strengthen this partnership and support our neighbors.

Get Involved

Meetings: Fourth Tuesday of each month, 6:00 p.m.

Location: Staunton Public Library (virtual option available)

Join or Ask Questions:

Start your membership through the League website. Questions may be sent to membership@lww.org.

We look forward to growing LWV-SAW and collaborating with neighboring leagues, including LWV-CVA, as we continue advancing an informed and engaged electorate across Virginia.

Committee News

Voter Services Committee by Kim Harris

Many thanks to Meg Heubeck who trained a number of our volunteers on facilitating civic circles and how to handle disruptive dialogue. Our committee will continue to practice handling these situations at our regularly scheduled meetings for the foreseeable future. Join us for some fun!

Did you know that Civic Learning Week is March 9-13? What a great time to talk about civic issues with our local communities!

We'd like to work with local area high schools during that week, if possible. More to come! That said... preparations are still underway for our new Civic Circles effort. If you are interested in helping (or just learning more!), please join us at our 2nd Tuesday, 5pm zoom meeting!

Note: We are currently monitoring for news on the impending special election that will likely be held in April on redistricting. As soon as we have confirmation that this is taking place, our plan is to hold Listening Tables for folks to discuss/ask questions. We'll certainly keep our membership informed as we prepare to keep our citizenry informed.

Gun Violence Prevention by Meg Heubeck

Thank you to everyone who participated in the MLK Jr. Day Rally at the Capitol in Richmond. The event was well attended, and the bus ride was uneventful — always a win!

Now, the real work begins: tracking legislation as it moves through the General Assembly. Below is a comprehensive list of the bills the Gun Violence Prevention Committee is following this session.

Please stay engaged and keep in touch with your legislators — and others — to let them know that Virginians want common-sense gun safety legislation. Progress is already being made. You can read more [here](#) and we will be sending out more detailed information on bills that we are tracking soon!

Natural Resources Committee by Peggy Gilges

On February 10, the Albemarle County Planning Commission will discuss the [Riparian Buffer Protection Standards](#), a series of important zoning updates to better protect our waterways. Buffers are essential for many reasons: they protect water quality, improve infiltration of water into the ground, reduce the risk of flooding, and provide habitat corridors for wildlife. The LWVCVA has submitted a letter to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors in support of these protections. Read about the Riparian Buffer Protection Standards in the [September eVoter](#), and please communicate with your [district planning commissioner](#) and [supervisor](#) to show your support for this important regulation update to protect our environment, health and wellbeing.

Fluvanna Planning Commission Votes on Tenaska Gas Plant Proposal

On January 13, the Fluvanna Planning Commission concluded that the proposed 1.5 gigawatt gas-fired power plant was not in “substantial accord” with the county’s comprehensive plan.

A recently released report produced by the Dominici Lab at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health on [the health impacts of the proposed new power plant](#) found that increased air pollution caused by fine particulate matter, also known as PM 2.5, would adversely impact Fluvanna and surrounding counties (including Albemarle and Louisa). The worsened air quality would affect more than four million residents of the state. Exposure to fine particulate matter, nitrogen oxides and sulphur dioxides originating from the power plant would result in estimated health-related damages ranging from \$27 to \$50 million annually. Although the Planning Commission voted 3-1 against the project, Fluvanna's Board of Supervisors will make the final decision. A public hearing date has not yet been set.

The Natural Resources Committee meets on the fourth Monday of the month at 4 pm. Please contact Peggy Gilges (peggygilges@me.com) for more information about the NRC.

Healthcare Taskforce by Stephanie Lowenhaupt

The Health Care task force is engaged in following legislation and budget amendments regarding funding for Medicaid, SNAP, ACA Subsidies, Children's Health Coverage as well as additional funding to support Free Clinics and Community Health Centers. We will be advocating as these proposals progress through the legislative process.

International Relations and Foreign Government by Gerry Kruger

On January 15, 2026 the International Relations/Federal Government Committee met at Linden House. Anita Pilling selected topics for discussion by having our members use ranked choice voting, which LWVUS promotes. Attendees were Miriam Fleitman, Kathy Sudduth, Carol Cutler, Janet Parker, Dena Imlay, Bobbie Williams, Rosalie Simari, Ann Degler, Gerry Kruger, and our host Lois Sandy. To illustrate how ranked choice voting works, Anita passed out pieces of paper to all attendees containing members' votes. The choices were:

1. Presidential power
2. Iran
3. Gaza
4. Venezuela
5. Africa/USAID

Next, she asked those holding papers with number one as presidential power to raise their hands and recorded the number. If no one raised her hand for a topic, that topic was eliminated. Iran, Africa and Gaza were eliminated in the first round, so presidential power and Venezuela were our chosen topics for the next two months.

There are algorithms that can determine winners in ranked choice voting. Ranked choice voting makes primaries unnecessary and thus saves money. Political leaders cannot threaten to primary a serving legislator. Democrats, Republicans, and Independents all vote in the same election with candidates usually listed with no party indicated. Candidates are less likely to belittle and insult their opponents because they want to be the second choice of voters if not the first.

Ranked choice voting eliminates election fraud claims because algorithms don't commit fraud. Extreme right-wing and left-wing candidates are usually

eliminated. The result is groups of moderate legislators being able to work together and accomplish more.

Our discussion of presidential power began with an amendment to the United States Constitution that we would like for the LWV to support. The amendment would limit presidential pardon power. George Mason, a Virginia delegate to the Constitution Convention in 1789, said, "The President ought not to have the power of pardoning because he may frequently pardon crimes which were advised by himself."

Over time the number of pardons issued by presidents has increased. Both Biden and Trump administrations issued thousands of pardons. The only comparable numbers were the blanket pardons Andrew Johnson granted former soldiers of the Confederacy – men who claimed state and federal power after the Civil War and helped set the stage for a century of brutal repression of Black Americans in the South. So far only one president has used the pardoning power to enrich himself and his family. Without an effort to limit this power, others will be tempted to enhance their financial worth and the number of pardons will increase exponentially.

Our committee reached consensus that this amendment should be adopted. We should use this proposal for legislative advocacy and public education. A new topic under The Presidency should be added to Impact on Issues. The header could be Presidential Abuses of Power. There should also be a more specific amendment regarding the emoluments a President can accept.

Prior to our meeting Anita sent an article by Michael Luttig, "President for Life," from The Atlantic. Despite being an avowed conservative, Judge Luttig is quite concerned that President Trump claims monarchical power. He States the following actions that confirm his fears:

1. Dictating to universities what viewpoints can be taught
2. Firing thousands of federal employees without reasonable cause or explanation
3. Abolishing the Department of Education
4. Deporting documented immigrants without due process
5. Silencing dissent by persecuting and prosecuting American citizens for criticizing him

The Supreme Court has largely supported Trump and used the shadow docket which often is only one justice to overturn lower court rulings.

Luttig insists if the Supreme Court rules that Trump can fire a member of the independent federal reserve, he will have absolute control over the Central Bank and monetary policy. This could destabilize financial markets.

Without Congressional approval, President Trump sent special forces to Venezuela to capture and arrest Maduro. He claims Maduro used his presidential power to send drugs to the United States. As Maduro awaits trial in a US jail for his crimes, President Trump plans to run Venezuela which has rich resources of rare earth minerals and oil that will cost a huge amount of money to refine.

Feel free to join us as we continue to discuss current international issues and the developments transpiring in Washington at this time.

In Memoriam

Lulu Meese- a passing of note

Longtime member of the Virginia and Waynesboro League of Women Voters, Lulu Meese, passed on October 15, 2025. Inspired by the political engagement and humanitarian work of Eleanor Roosevelt, Lulu worked tirelessly to improve her community of Waynesboro and her State of Virginia, especially for women. Lulu served as a volunteer registered lobbyist at the General Assembly of Virginia for the League of Women Voters of Virginia starting in the 1970s. She served as the President of the Waynesboro League of Women Voters in 1969, 1985, 1987, and 1997. Representing pro-ERA supporters, Lulu debated Phyllis Schlafly of “Stop ERA” in Virginia. Lulu was active on the Virginia ERA Ratification Council. She also chaired the Virginia Women’s Round Table in the early 1980s. She also served as President of the Virginia League of Women Voters three times: 1975–1979, 1995–1997, and 2005–2007. At the conclusion of her third state Presidency, the Virginia League of Women Voters honored Lulu with an amendment including the statement: “Whereas Lulu is surely Virginia’s strongest and most active feminist who thinks of the League as her second family and will be remembered and honored in the annals of the League of Women Voters of Virginia”. Lulu also volunteered at the Shenandoah Arts Center and was a chair of First Night Waynesboro.

Scott Syverud

Scott Syverud, husband of league member Ellie Syverud died January 6th. Condolences to Ellie and her family.

Update Your LWV-CVA Handbook WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Pnina Jalon
2812 Northfield Dr.
Charlottesville, VA 22901
Pnina.jalon@gmail.com
434-945-0845

LWV CVA Calendar of Events February 2026 *Mark your Calendars*

February 10 5pm, Voter Services Meeting, via Zoom

Contact kwharris555@gmail.com to join

February 11, League Day, Richmond, VA in person only

February 19 3pm, Board of Directors Meeting, via Zoom

February 23 4pm, Natural Resources Meeting, Piedmont
Environmental Council Office

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area

President: Lisa Hilgartner

eVoter Editor: Jessica Harris

Visit our website: lww-cva.org



The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We are committed to applying the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our operations and activities. We support governmental policies that apply these principles in addressing the social, environmental and economic problems in our communities.

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area | PO Box 2786 | Charlottesville, VA 22902 US

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