



2017 - 2018

LWV-TC

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The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage informed and active participation in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

A Message from your President

Dear Friends,

Happy 2018! I can't believe the New Year has already come and gone. I hope that each of you had a wonderful holiday season, filled with family, friends, and lots of good cheer.

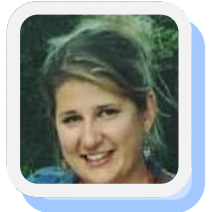
We have hit ground running this year. Our Board is working quickly to engage candidates in our Voters Guide. As many of you know, this is a tremendous task, but it is one of the most used and trusted resources we provide to the community. This year, with several contested races across Tarrant County, the guide is needed more than ever. If you have never participated in this process, I encourage you to check it out! Email or call Doris, our awesome administrator, and she will get you connected.

In closing, I continue to be impressed with the tremendous work you have done even through the holidays in keeping the League going. You find time for the League in between countless personal and professional obligations, and I am honored to be a part of such a strong organization that is truly carried by our dedicated volunteers. If you have time in the coming months to share the League and our work with a friend, ask him or her to join! It is important that our collective voices are heard, and membership is one of the ways we can do that.

Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

Kate

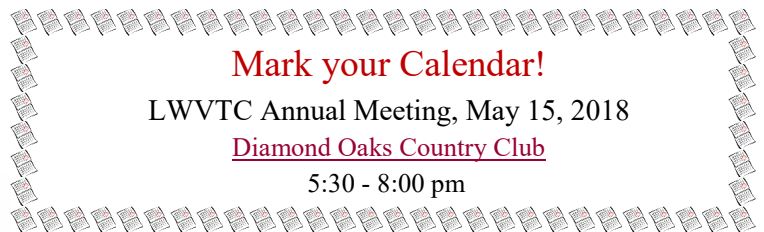


Mark your Calendar!

LWVTC Annual Meeting, May 15, 2018

Diamond Oaks Country Club

5:30 - 8:00 pm



Call the office to buy:
Oval Shaped Magnetic Bumper Stickers
Dimensions: 5.5"W x 3.5"H...
only \$5.00 Each



January Unit Topic - Redistricting

Gerrymandering is a practice intended to establish a political advantage for a particular party or group by manipulating district boundaries. Two principal tactics are used in gerrymandering: "cracking" (i.e. diluting the voting power of the opposing party's supporters across many districts) and "packing" (concentrating the opposing party's voting power in one district to reduce their voting power in other districts)

Redistricting reform holds potential to balance political competition. **The League of Women Voters has a long history of promoting transparent, fair, and accountable redistricting processes that reflect our fundamental value of representative democracy.** We are driven by a single goal: to make our election maps fair for everyone. We are concerned when district boundaries slice up our neighborhoods, leaving our communities without a cohesive voice of representation. In Texas, partisan gerrymandering has been a problem for decades. The political party that controls the state legislature at the time of the census can manipulate the newly-drawn election maps to favor their party's candidates, typically drawing a majority of "safe" or noncompetitive seats. The elected officials in these districts can then no longer be held **accountable through the power of our vote.** The League therefore supports reform that would place limits on partisanship and increase public participation in the redistricting process.

Stephanie Swanson, Redistricting Issue Chair, for the Texas League observes:

97% of incumbent politicians were reelected in the 2016 general election, showing that partisan gerrymandering allowed politicians to draw districts that serve themselves and not the community.

-66% of the state legislature was determined before a single vote was cast in the general election, because there was only one candidate from one of the major parties running.

-71% of state legislative offices are considered to be heavily gerrymandered with an electoral margin >45%.

This means that voters could not hold these elected officials accountable through the power of their vote.

This also produces districts that are largely democratic or largely republican, which contributes to polarization. This means that there is little compromise occurring across party lines.

The solution to this problem is to take the power of drawing election maps away from politicians and give it people who do not have a direct, vested interest. This would at least take redistricting out of the partisan battles of the Legislature and guarantee that maps will be debated in the open with public meetings.

Texas and the minority rights groups suing over the state's congressional and House districts maps are waiting to hear whether the U.S. Supreme Court will take up the state's appeal of a lower court ruling that invalidated parts of the state's political maps where lawmakers were found to have discriminated against voters of color.

As part of a complicated, years-long legal fight over the state's political lines, a three-judge panel in San Antonio **ruled last year** that the state's congressional and state House maps need to be redrawn to address voting rights violations. Specifically, the judges flagged two congressional districts and nine House districts in four counties. Adjusting boundaries in those districts could lead to a wider reconfiguration of the map because neighboring districts may also be affected.

Resources to review to help with understanding the issue in Texas and to help with discussion questions:

http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2017/04/20/

[federal_court_rules_texas_gerrymandered_districts_to_dilute_minority_votes.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_slatest/2017/04/20/federal_court_rules_texas_gerrymandered_districts_to_dilute_minority_votes.html)

<https://www.texastribune.org/2018/01/03/what-expect-texas-voting-rights-court-fights-2018/>

<https://my.lwv.org/texas/redistricting>

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CG8HwHc-h_vn8RCLdp2WU432Omz9U0i9/view - the League's position on establishing a non partisan Redistricting Commission

<http://www.redistrictinggame.org/> - online game about redistricting

Questions for discussion:

1. What impact do you think gerrymandering has on voters?
2. What impact do you think gerrymandering has on our confidence in representative democracy?
3. Right now, the Texas Legislature is in charge of drawing district lines. Do you think they are the best group to do that job? If not, why not?
4. What do you think about a Redistricting Commission? The Texas Redistricting Commission Amendment, also known as HJR 32 ([https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_Redistricting_Commission_Amendment,_HJR_32_\(2017\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Texas_Redistricting_Commission_Amendment,_HJR_32_(2017))), would have established a seven-member redistricting commission to develop and adopt redistricting plans for the districts of the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives and, United States House of Representatives.

It was introduced in 2016 but did not make it on the ballot of constitutional amendments that we just had in November. Why do you think it wasn't?

5. What do you think are the most important factors to consider when drawing / re-drawing district maps? The courts have said that each district needs to have a similar population size.

What else should be considered? Party affiliation? Common issues?

Geographic closeness?

6. Do you think this is an important issue for us as a League to advocate for? If yes, why?



Unit Topics

If you have a topic of interest you would like to see discussed at an upcoming Unit meeting, please forward your request to Mary Beth Garcia at mbalbaneze@hotmail.com or send it to the League office.



A SPECIAL WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

*Cindy Boyd, Nora Hobbie, Ann Stevenson
and Pamela Wright*

WELCOME BACK TO RETURNING MEMBER

Karen Kologe

A BIG **Thank You** TO RENEWING LWV-TC MEMBERS:

*Margaret DeMoss, Marjorie Montgomery, Linda Pavlik,
Tonya Presley, Cathy Stein, Mark & Randi Thistlethwaite
and Deborah Wolfe*

Not sure when your membership comes up for renewal?

Contact Doris at the League office.

Email lwtarrantcounty@sbcglobal.net or call 817-348-8683.

She will be happy to help.

Volunteer Opportunities:

- There are always elections to prepare for. There are still potential voters to register. Our work of educating the citizens of Tarrant County on issues we are concerned with is ongoing. If you would like to help in any way, please contact the League office at lwtarrantcounty@sbcglobal.net.
- Check with other groups you belong to. Would they like a **speaker** on one of the issues the League supports? Let us know and we can provide one. If your group would like to discuss any issue we have a position on, we will be happy to help with resources.
- If you have any ideas for upcoming **Unit Meetings**, email the office and we will try to incorporate them.



Have you moved or changed your phone number? Please contact the League office at 817-348-8683 or email us at lwtarrantcounty@sbcglobal.net so we can update our Local and National Roster. Thanks!

Do you know that we have the following social media accounts for the League?

Our Facebook Page is <https://www.facebook.com/LWVofTarrantCo/>

Our Twitter page is @LWVTarrant or you can access us by clicking on <https://twitter.com/LWVTarrant>

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Bring Your Talent into the League of Women Voters

We are the League of Women Voters® of Tarrant County (LWVTC), one of the hundreds of local Leagues across the nation whose members—men and women—are committed to Making Democracy Work. Our nonpartisan political organization encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWV does NOT support or oppose any political party or any candidate. Your membership automatically enrolls you in LWV-Texas and LWVUS at no additional cost and provides publications from all three.

Mail your membership application, dues, and contributions to LWVTC, P. O. Box 100175, Fort Worth, TX 76185

or enroll online at lwvtarrantcounty.com

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Basic Membership:

- ☐ \$70/yr **Regular** full voting member
- ☐ \$105/yr **Family** (two members in one household)
- ☐ \$40/yr **Student**

Or

Supporting Membership:

- ☐ \$100/yr **Sustaining** Membership – Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- ☐ \$150/yr **Advocate** Membership – Carrie Chapman Catt
- ☐ \$200/yr **Patron** Membership – Mary McLeod Bethune
- ☐ \$300/yr **Benefactor** Membership – Eleanor Roosevelt

THE VOTER NEWSLETTER BY U.S. MAIL

- ☐ \$10/yr (*online VOTER is no additional cost*)

Name _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ City/Zip _____

Phone (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Mobile) _____ (Fax) _____

Would you like to attend one of our Unit meetings? If so, please indicate which Unit would best suit your needs.

- ☐ Arlington Area ☐ Downtown Fort Worth Area ☐ Northeast Tarrant County
- ☐ South/Southwest Tarrant County

\$_____ For a tax deductible donation, write a separate check payable to:

LWV Texas Education Fund.

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2018 CALENDAR

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January 2018 ~ Study Topic for all Units - **Redistricting**

January 15 ~ Arlington Area Unit; **7 PM**, Fielder Museum, 1616 W Abram, Arlington. Call Sharon Whittington, 817-615-1656, for information

January 16 ~ NE/Mid-Cities Unit Meeting; **7 PM**, Barnes & Noble in the Shops at NE Mall; Melbourne Rd. next to Best Buy; Reservations suggested. Call Georgia Kidwell, 817-282-0712, for information

January 17 ~ **Candidate Forum**, District 24; **6:30 PM**, Irving South Library, 601 Schulz Dr. at Irving Blvd.

January 18 ~ Fort Worth Downtown Lunch Unit; **NOON**, Trinity Terrace, Blue Spire Room, 1600 Texas Street;

Reservations suggested but not required. Lunch is optional, cost is \$16. Call Marjorie Montgomery, 817-885-8372 for reservation.

January 18 ~ South/Southwest Dinner Unit; **6 PM**, Olive Garden at I-20 and Hulen in the shopping center; Reservations suggested. Call Mike Baldwin, 817-249-2193, for information

January 22 ~ Monday Matinee, **King Corn**; **11AM**. Arlington Police West Service Center, 2060 W Green Oaks Blvd, Arlington. Bring a sack lunch and a friend.

February 2018 ~

February 13 ~ Birthday celebration for the League. See below for details

February 15 ~ **Candidate Forum**, Northeast Tarrant County Democratic Candidates; **7 PM**, Tio Carlo's Tex-Latin Spirit Restaurant, 4843 Colleyville Blvd.



The League is turning 98!

Come and help us celebrate.

Our birthday is on Valentine's Day and lucky for us, Fat Tuesday is the day before.

We will be gathering for a Happy Hour celebration on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 from 5-7pm at the T&P Tavern.

A donation of \$10 or more to the League's operation fund is required.

We will be purchasing appetizers for our guests.

Alcohol or other drinks are Dutch treat and there will be Happy Hour prices.

Please feel free to wear your Mardi Gras colors.

More information about parking to come.



In Memorium

Please consider making a donation to LWVTC in honor of someone special.

Make your check out to **LWV Texas Education Fund** to take advantage of the Tax Exemption.

All Members and Guests are welcome and encouraged to attend any League event.

League Office Hours: M, W, F / 8:30am—12:30pm

~ we are on the web! ~

www.lwvtarrantcounty.org