



January 2026 "eVoter"

LWV CVA New Year's Greetings

Dear League Members,

As we step into a new year together, I want to begin by wishing each of you good health, hope, and renewed energy for the work ahead. The start of a new year is always a moment to pause—both to reflect on how far we've come and to look ahead with purpose.

2025 was a year of change. Membership shifted from a local grassroots management model to one that is more nationally aligned and supported. With it we welcomed many new members who bring fresh ideas, energy, and perspectives to our work, strengthening our League for the future. New Member meetings were held to help demystify League work such as Program Planning and Women's Legislative Roundtables.

Our mission to inform and educate voters went into full gear in 2025 with a new website that is clear and easy to read and navigate. We more voter registration and civic education drives. Vote 411 was enriched and expanded. We held Listening Tables, as alternatives to candidate forums in every area we serve where candidates conversed face to face with constituents. Partnering with other nonpartisan groups we were able to reach more people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.

In 2025 we hosted meetings with our General Assembly members and took closer looks at critical issues such as AC44 and the rapid expansion of data centers, while also recognizing and responding to the broader rise in authoritarianism that challenges democratic norms nationwide. We also joined other nonpartisan organizations participating in rallies fighting authoritarianism for those who fight for the need for gun violence prevention, climate control, women's rights, and rights and freedoms for all.

At the same time, we say a heartfelt goodbye to one of our longest continuously active members, Sue Lewis, as she returns home to New York State. Sue's dedication, leadership, and steady presence have left

a lasting mark on our League, and we are deeply grateful for all she has given.

In 2026 we will continue with Unite and Rise 8.5 working with our national league to get 8.5 million more voters to the polls in November. Our efforts will place even greater emphasis on student participation and understanding of the democratic process. We intend to expand partnering with other nonpartisan groups who share our commitment to voter participation and civic engagement using Civic Circles. Vote 411 and Listening Tables will be held in spring and fall elections.

Thank you for your time, your passion, and your belief in the power of democracy. Together, we enter this new year united in purpose and ready to rise to the challenges ahead.

With gratitude and best wishes for the New Year,

Lisa Hilgartner
President

2026 Program Planning

Help Us Plan Our Positions and Actions for the Coming Year

Come join fellow league members as we review League Federal and Local Positions and provide recommendations for updates. Our recommendations will be passed along to our state league and National in preparation for the National Convention in June 2026.

Come have your voice heard. Snacks will be provided.

Please come prepared, we strongly encourage you to review Impact on Issues 2024-2026, focusing on pages 12-17 for a Summary of Public Policy Positions. The link can be found here: [LWV Impact Issues](#) Feel free to delve deeper as you desire.

For Local Programs refer to the latest Member Handbook Pages 19-24. Looking forward to a great discussion.

2026 Program Planning will take place on **January 17th** from **11am-1:45pm** at **The Center at Belvedere**

2026 Annual Fund Drive

Only 20% of the yearly dues collected goes to our local league. We receive 100% of donations. We are an all volunteer organization, so

any money donated goes directly to running the league.

Letters will be sent out to all members and past donors for our annual donor drive on January 15th, so keep an eye out for those!

MLK Vigil and Advocacy Day

THE VIRGINIA CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY
Defend America. Drive Smart. Stay Safe.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

34th ANNUAL VIRGINIA VIGIL & ADVOCACY DAY TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

MONDAY, JANUARY 19, 2026

2 - 5 P.M.

VIRGINIA STATE CAPITOL
2 PM - 3 PM VIGIL AT THE BELL TOWER
3 PM - 5 PM ADVOCACY, GENERAL ASSEMBLY BLDG

Honoring Dr King Through Advocacy

Please join the Virginia Center for Public Safety, its partners and our Virginia community as we honor the memory and teachings of a great civil rights leader whose life was cut short by gun violence.

We will also honor the lives of Virginians killed by gun violence and invite you to commit to reducing gun violence by raising your voice for responsible gun laws.

♥ *It's About Saving Lives* ♥

VIRGINIA CENTER FOR PUBLIC SAFETY
info@VACPS.org
757.423.8801
www.VACPS.org

Mark your calendars for **Monday, January 19**, for the annual **MLK Vigil & Advocacy Day** in Richmond!

To ride the FREE bus - please register by clicking the link below and following the prompts. It would be great to get a crowd to fill the bus so please register ASAP.

We will be leaving at **12pm** from **Meadows Presbyterian Church** (2200 Angus Rd. Charlottesville, 22901) and return after the rally and meeting with Legislators at 5pm.

***Even if you plan to attend the Moms Demand Action Advocacy Day, please also plan to join the MLK event — strong turnout at both underscores the urgency of GVP to all legislators.*

Women of the Run

Women on the Run 2026

Campaign Training

- ✓ Nonpartisan leadership and campaign training program
- ✓ Five interactive workshops
- ✓ Learn from current and former elected officials

Register: VAWomen.org/WOR

Women on the Run 2026 Schedule

- Sunday, January 18 - Kickoff Workshop
1:30 - 4:30pm - In Person Charlottesville & Virtual
- Monday, January 26 - Where Should I Run
7:00 - 8:30pm - Virtual
- Monday, February 16 - Campaign Plan
7:00 - 8:30pm - Virtual
- Monday, March 23 - Messaging & Media
7:00 - 8:30pm - Virtual
- Monday, April 20 - Fundraising
7:00 - 8:30pm - Virtual

Register: VAWomen.org/WOR

Logos: BWRI VIRGINIA, ZOE, NCJVA, VIRGINIA WOMEN'S VOICES, LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF VIRGINIA, VIRGINIA WOMEN'S FOUNDATION

Women on the Run is a free nonpartisan campaign training and leadership initiative designed to empower more women to step into public leadership. Through practical skill-building, mentorship, and a supportive community, the program equips participants with the tools, confidence, and networks they need to run for office—or support other women who do. Together, we're building a stronger, more representative Virginia.

[Register Here!](https://VAWomen.org/WOR)

Save the Dates *Upcoming Events*

January - March 2026 Women's Legislative Roundtable Sessions

Hosted by Joan Porte, President of the League of Women Voters of Virginia virtually from 8:30-9:30am on Wednesdays from January 14-March 11.

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

December in Review



LWV CVA Grills General Assembly Members December 8, 2025

On December 8th LWV-CVA members met with St. Senator Creigh Deeds, Del. Amy Laufer, and Del. Callsen to give them our priorities for this coming 2026 session. Promoting National Popular Vote, Ending Voucher Program for private schools, green energy initiatives, stronger gun safety laws, wise data center legislation, affordable health care and retaining Medicaid and Snap benefits for those who need it. They spoke about getting the three state constitutional amendments: restoring voting rights to felons who served their time, marriage equality, and women's right reproductive care.



Remembering the Victims of Gun Violence Vigil December 15, 2025

Bitter cold did not deter this vigil. In attendance were Meg Heubeck, Randy Fleitmann, Kerin Yates, Sally Thomas and Lisa Hilgartner who came together with members of the Coalition for Preventing Gun Violence. A bell tolled for each mass killing by fire arms since Sandy Hook Massacre on December 14th, 2012.



LWV CVA Holiday Party December 17, 2025

Our Holiday Party this year gave us a chance to say goodbye to Sue Lewis, who has been in the Charlottesville league for many years. She moves back home to Geneva NY to reunite with friends and family. We will miss her.

Committee News

Voter Services Committee by Kim Harris

Are you ready for 2026? This year promises to be full of lots of opportunities to get involved. Voter Services will be spending January preparing to launch Civic Circles in a fulsome way, so we'll be workshoping how to facilitate conversations in different environments. Additionally, we'll meet via Zoom on the second Tuesday of the month for our regularly scheduled meeting. Please contact Kim Harris at kwharris555@gmail.com if you want to join us!

Gun Violence Prevention by Meg Heubeck

This is a big month for the Gun Violence Prevention Committee.

With a newly elected General Assembly with a majority of Democrats, there should be movement on the Gun Violence Prevention front. Check the General Assembly website, [Meeting Calendars & Schedules | Virginia General Assembly](#) to find out when issues and bills will be discussed.

MLK, Jr. Birthday Trip to General Assembly

See the flyer and more information about this event above (in the Save the Date section). To ride the **free** bus, please register at the link above. It would be great to get a crowd to fill the bus so register ASAP!!!!

We will leave at noon from Meadows Presbyterian Church on Angus st. (2200 Angus Rd. Charlottesville, 22901) and return after the rally and meeting with Legislators at 5pm.

We will be joined by members of the CGVPC and the SAW Unit of LWV-VA. Should be a great day!!!

Natural Resources Committee by Peggy Gilges

Impacts of Growth

The environmental impacts of development continue to be a focus of the NRC's discussions. The League's Charlottesville Area (City of Charlottesville, Albemarle, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa and Nelson Counties) is experiencing a surge in development, spurred by programs like [Go Virginia](#).

Although residential property tax receipts make up the primary component of operational revenue for a county's services, on the whole residential property tax receipts do not contribute enough to offset the cost of county-provided community services. According to the UVA Weldon Cooper [Cost of Community Services](#) study, in 2023, the residential land use category in Albemarle generated 70.18% of tax revenues, but required 90.11% of County expenditures, while both commercial and rural land use categories contributed more in revenues than they required in service expenditures.

[A breakdown of expected expenses](#) for Albemarle for the next tax year (FY2027) is enlightening. Although landing AstraZeneca's \$4.5 billion advanced pharmaceutical manufacturing facility is considered a commercial win for Albemarle, it won't come without an influx of employees, and an anticipated 1,000 additional public school students, as well as major investments in other infrastructure, so taxpayers are not likely to see a decline in their taxes in spite of additional commercial revenue.

Thus economic growth drives population growth, and more people require more services, which require more tax revenue. Beyond the effect on our taxes, economic growth and development have real impacts on our environment and quality of life.

Data Center and Transmission Line Demands in the CVA

Data center companies continue to seek more land, water and energy than central Virginia counties can sustainably provide.

In Fluvanna, the Planning Commission has postponed until January 15, 2026, its [review of a new gas plant proposed by Tenaska](#). one of several new plants proposed in Virginia to meet data center energy needs.

In Louisa, Supervisors are considering [how to protect residents from heavy truck traffic](#) on rural roads as they go to and from multiple data center sites now under construction.

And all across central Virginia, plans are being laid for high-powered electrical transmission lines to service data centers. The Piedmont Environmental Council has put together information on both what has already been approved and [what is currently being proposed](#). Learn about transmission line proposals for our region pending before the PJM (our regional grid operator) [here](#).

Despite the State Corporation Commission approving a new rate class for large electricity user, including large data centers, the billions of dollars of infrastructure required for data centers will be paid for by all of us, the ratepayers, so expect to see your electric bills rise as a result. Although the Virginia legislature will likely be taking up bills in January to shift more of the financial burden of data center investment to the tech companies, it's important to remember that where the energy comes from, where the water comes from, and the land use decisions being made to accommodate data centers all have consequences for our environment, quality of life and future generations.

NRC Committee Meetings

NRC meetings are held the 4th Monday of the month from 4 to 5:30 pm. Our next meeting will be held January 26th. Please contact Peggy Gilges for details.

Healthcare Taskforce by Stephanie Lowenhaupt

As we approach the 2026 legislative session, the task force has been focused on collaborating with our partners, helping set healthcare legislative priorities and meeting with our local legislators. The priorities we will be focusing on are:

- ACA Provisions (state subsidies)
- Support for Safety Net Facilities such as Free Clinics and community health centers
- Protecting Medicaid/FAMIS Investments (Family Access to Medical Insurance Security Plan)
- Children's Health Coverage

We plan to follow the applicable legislation and budget amendments and continue our advocacy efforts.

Update Your LWV-CVA Handbook WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS:

Betsy Greco
434-242-6044
850 Buckhorn Trail
Earlysville, VA 22936
Betsygreconow@gmail.com

Pamela McGee
202-999-2685
6601 Reserves Hill Ct.
Anny, VA 22003
Pamela@pamelamcgee.com

Janet Parker Whitmore
434-242-3221
1954 Rock Quarry Rd.
Louisa, VA 23093
Janet.whitmore@gmail.com

RETURNING MEMBERS:

Jane Dittmar
434-960-8848
113 #10 Turtle Creek Lane
Charlottesville, VA 22911
dittmarjane@gmail.com

Sandra Johnson
434-960-3040
7153 Hampstead Dr.
Crozet, VA 22932
ssj808@gmail.com

Sonjia Smith
434-420-6005
815 Broomley Rd.
Charlottesville, VA 22901-7821
Smithsonjia@gmail.com

Welcome to our new student member:

Madeleine Brann will be head of the Civics Club at Western Albemarle High School.

LWV CVA Calendar of Events

January 2026

Mark your Calendars

January 13 5pm, Voter Services Meeting, via Zoom
Contact kwharris555@gmail.com to join

January 14 8:30am, WLRT Session, Virtual
Register at link above

January 15 1pm, IR/FG Meeting, Linden House

January 15 3pm, Board of Directors Meeting, Hybrid at Northside Library

January 17 11am, LWV CVA Program Planning, The Center at Belvedere

January 19, MLK Vigil and Advocacy Day, Richmond VA

January 21 8:30am, WLRT Session, Virtual

Register at link above

**January 26 4pm, Natural Resources Meeting, Piedmont
Environmental Council Office**

January 28 8:30am, WLRT Session, Virtual

Register at link above

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area

President: Lisa Hilgartner

eVoter Editor: Jessica Harris

Visit our website: lwv-cva.org



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®

OF THE CHARLOTTESVILLE AREA