

League Action & Happenings

Environment and Sustainability Team Focuses on Plastics

The LWVCM Environment and Sustainability Action Team, along with Jennifer Rubin of LWVNC, sponsored a panel discussion on plastics in June. All North Carolina E & S Teams were invited to attend.

Speakers Eileen Ryan from [Beyond Plastics](#), and Caprice Pratt opened our eyes to the failure of the current recycling model and health hazards caused by overuse of plastics. We learned how plastics and big beverage industries avoid responsibility for their part in a global pollution crisis. We were stunned by facts, such as: On average, humans ingest a credit card's worth of plastic particles every week. Solutions exist, but they need to be promoted. What can we do? Learn more and join the E & S team in attending an online webinar with Beyond Plastics on Sept 13.

[Register for free here.](#)



Join the E+S Team for Stream and Street Clean Ups

Mark your calendars for our next semi-annual Adopt-a-Stream event to take place on Saturday, September 17. Get outdoors with the Environment & Sustainability Team at Randolph Road Park for our Adopt-a-Stream Clean Up. Working side by side in a shady park collecting litter is becoming a fun tradition for our group. We wrap up this rewarding job with refreshments and a collective pat on the back. Meet from 9:00-11:30am at 3115 Randolph Road, Charlotte, 28211. Parking and restrooms on premises.



Tom Bowers dons his safety vest, gloves and waders during LWVCM Stream Cleanup.

And on October 15, we will hit the streets as we participate in our Keep Charlotte Beautiful: Street Clean Up. Participants will meet up at 10am in the Board of Elections parking lot located at 741 Kenilworth Avenue, Charlotte, 28204. Armed with safety vests, grabbers and garbage bags, we'll cover our designated route which usually takes about an hour. What will be our most interesting find this time? July's treasure was an empty bottle of Dom Perignon! Questions: Environment@goleaguego.org

LWVCM Members March and Register Voters in 20th Anniversary of the Charlotte Pride Parade

League members came to represent and to educate voters by handing out VOTE411 bookmarks in a parade that boasted 40 floats and 10,000 marchers. Attendance at the parade broke the previous record. It was estimated that approximately 275,000 revelers were in attendance!



LWVCM President's Perspective



"One Person, One Vote: Time for a Change!"

How surprising and disheartening is it to realize that Americans cannot cast a vote for President? Under the Electoral College system, we vote not for the candidates for President or Vice President, but for the electors, who then determine the outcome of the U.S. Presidential elections. We have no constitutional guarantee to participate in the Presidential election. Furthermore, Article II, Section I of the Constitution gives **States exclusive power to determine how to select and instruct their electors—we cannot even cast a vote for our state's electors if lawmakers object.**

The origins of the Electoral College are linked to our country's original sin of slavery. In their haste to see the Constitution ratified, the founders agreed to a compromise permitting slave-holding states to grant enslaved persons just three-fifths of a vote for the population count. This increased the slave states' voting power while ignoring the disenfranchisement of the enslaved, as well as women and non-landowners. It appears the framers didn't trust an unfettered, true democracy in which people directly elect their leader. So, they created the Electoral College.

Our current Electoral College system of electing our two top executives stems from the "winner-take-all" laws of awarding ALL of a given states' electoral votes to the candidate who wins the most votes regardless of how close the race. The votes of individuals are not equal because the votes of those whose candidate lost in the state do not count in the Electoral total.

Historically, five out of 46 U.S. Presidents have been elected without winning the popular vote, thus placing the second-place candidate in the White House. A second-place president does not reflect the will of the people and is not good for the country. The American Bar Association called the Electoral College "archaic, undemocratic, complex, ambiguous, indirect and dangerous."

A smart campaign's most valuable resources are time and money—so it focuses on a handful of battleground states where a switch of even a few hundred votes can swing all the states' electors. A couple of extra visits from the candidate or a few more dollars can make all the difference.

Presidential candidates thereby ignore most American voters, with entire campaigns targeting a few battleground states entirely. Non-battleground states receive little or no attention. Surprisingly, population does not figure in to the equation. Our three most populous states—Texas, California and New York—are not considered battleground states.

The focus on battleground states distorts government policy: these states receive more Presidential visits, twice the FEMA support, and higher discretionary spending. Conversely, noncompetitive states are negatively affected with weakened state party operations, loss of voter participation, negative down ballot results, losses in disaster aid, preferential Presidential policy and discretionary grants.

The nearly 800 failed attempts to reform or abolish the Electoral College attest to the fact that the Electoral College violates the core democratic principles of equality and majority rule—more than any other provision of our Constitution.

The LWVUS voted at its National Convention in Denver this June to work to abolish the Electoral College. The League also voted to support a work-around measure that does not require a Constitutional Amendment: The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact. This non-partisan agreement among the states that adopt it will guarantee the Presidency to the candidate receiving the most popular votes in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. The compact will go into effect when enacted by states possessing a majority of the electoral votes, 270 of 538. In addition to the LWVUS, the NAACP, the American Bar Assoc, the ACLU, the Brennan Justice Center, organized labor and Common Cause have all has endorsed the plan. In addition, the idea has the public's support: national polls over the last 50 years reveal that most Americans believe the President should be elected by a national popular vote.

The compact has been enacted by 16 jurisdictions with 195 of the 270 needed. Every state has introduced the bill in their legislatures including North Carolina and only seventy-five more electoral votes are needed for the compact to go into effect.

In February of 2019, in North Carolina, Senators Nickel, Chaudhuri, Waddell and Searcy introduced the National Popular Vote bill, and it passed the House Rules Committee. The bill will be re-introduced in the House in 2023.

The winner-take-all Electoral College is a primary factor leading to the impairment of our country's political system. With the enactment of the [National Popular Vote](#) and the subsequent elimination of the Electoral College we will be asking ourselves what took us so long to apply these commonsense solutions!

President, League of Women Voters
Charlotte Mecklenburg

League News and Reflections

Welcome to New League Members

New members August 2022

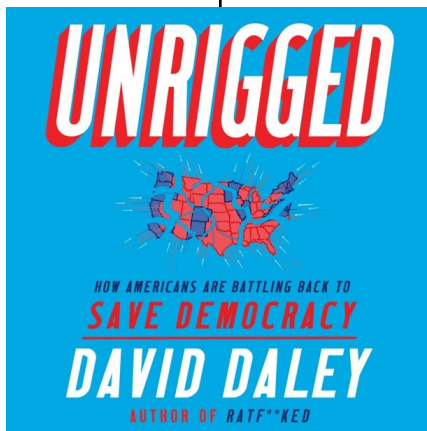
Karen Critzer	Phyllis Holly-Ward
Shannon Jefferson	William Jefferson
Karen Taylor	Phyllis Fulton
Summer Nunn	Sarah Harriss
Carol Gray-Adler	John Adler
Marlene Wilson	

The membership team is looking to shore up all renewals prior to the transition over to Club Express. Members not planning to renew their membership should contact Margaret Howe-Soper, Membership Chair at: mhowesoper2014@gmail.com.

Please join us at our next LWVCM Book Club meeting on September 27 to discuss David Daley's *Unrigged: How Americans Are Battling Back to Save Democracy*.

Publisher's description (Liveright): Our country is dominated by a political party that has no interest in governing, and that seeks to entrench its power by limiting democracy—going so far as to force people to the polls in the middle of a pandemic. Yet there is hope, as best-selling author David Daley argues in *Unrigged*, though it doesn't lie in Congress, gerrymandered statehouses, or even the courts. We must, instead, look to the grassroots. Introducing us to groups that have pioneered innovative organizing methods—often combining old-school activism with new digital tools—Daley uncovers the story behind voting-rights victories nationwide and the new organizations reinventing our politics. The result is a vivid portrait of a new civic awakening, and an essential toolkit for reviving our democracy in the Trump era and beyond.

Our book club meets (via Zoom) every other month. We are registered with Park Road Books (4139 Park Rd. Charlotte, NC 28209). Identify yourself as a LWVCM book club member and receive 20% off current book club titles. Suggestions for future titles? Email: goleaguego@gmail.com



Moore vs. Harper: Independent Legislative Theory The New 800-pound Gorilla in the Room!

How curious that one can recall a seventh grade Social Studies class so many decades ago. Yet I do. Here's what stuck: 1) The U.S. president made \$50,000 per year. 2) Gerrymandering is how political parties rig elections to gain political power. 3) Ours is a tripartite government, three branches – Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. These are the makings of our "balance of power." The greatest nightmare the framers of our Constitution faced was that they might accidentally create a government that could enable a single individual or small group to control their new land. Balancing power among the branches was paramount!

While the founders granted states responsibility to elect representatives to the federal government, they unfortunately did not establish how it should be done. Consequently, for nearly 250 years, we've been burdened by the menace of gerrymandering... beginning in 1788 when Patrick Henry tried to rig a Virginia election district to keep James Madison from the U.S. House of Representatives. The practice has caused havoc ever since. Unethical, immoral, dishonest, illegitimate, but legal because political office holders refuse to bury it.

North Carolina has the dubious distinction of suffering through more redistricting litigation than any other state in the country. Having recently put to bed the likes of *Common Cause v. Rucho* and *Harper v. Lewis*, the dominant party in the state legislature continues to accelerate gerrymandering efforts. Looming on the horizon is *Moore v. Harper*—a case that The Brennan Center for Justice calls the "next constitutional crises."

Under the notion, known as "independent legislative theory," legislators could vote to overturn federal elections, gerrymander freely, or subvert election administration, all without the check of state courts. They could even trample over rights guaranteed in state constitutions and voter-passed initiatives.

Surprising many, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to review *Moore v. Harper* when the new term begins in the fall. The surprise part is that in *Common Cause v. Rucho*, the court ruled that federal courts cannot hear partisan gerrymandering cases. This new theory pretty much proposes that state courts won't be able to hear partisan gerrymandering cases either!!!

So...who would watch over the state legislature to assure compliance with the North Carolina constitution? No one! Balance of power quashed! The precise nightmare our constitution framers so feverishly worked to avert.

Stay tuned when the current U.S. Supreme Court opens the new session in October.

Harry Taylor, Redistricting Team Co-Lead

League News

Women's Issues Action Team Takes on Reproductive Rights

The Women's Issues Action Team led by Cate Stadelman is broadening its focus to include Reproductive Rights. The team already advocates for the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and Gender Pay Equity. With the Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* on June 24 of this year, the Women's Issues team felt it was imperative to add this third focus area to its work. New members are welcome to join the effort of advocating for Economic, Political and Health Equality.

The team is also encouraging members to post true stories about abortion if they have such a story to tell in an effort to change the conversation about abortion from one of shame and secrecy to one of empathy and understanding. Stories can be posted to :

www.myabortionmylife.org

As a related part of voter education, the team is looking for a source of information on candidates' positions on reproductive freedom. Please contact womensissues@goleaguego.org with any suggestions.



International Delegation Meet President Elsberry and Former Mayor Roberts

President Suzanne Elsberry and Jennifer Roberts, Co-Lead for the Carter Center's NC Trusted Elections Program, spoke to a 15-member delegation of international visitors sponsored by the U.S. State Department and the International Center's Citizen Diplomacy Program on August 25. Countries represented were: Egypt, Finland, Ghana, Guyana, Kosovo, Lebanon, Moldova, Nigeria, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Trinidad & Tobago and Zimbabwe.

Margaret Sanger Appears at Women's Equality Day

Margaret Sanger (played by League member Jinny Sullivan) made a surprise appearance during the League's Women's Equality Day Event "Women Firsts: Representation and Real Political Power" co-hosted by the American Association of University Women (AAUW). Sanger addressed a delighted audience, who were asked to play along by pretending to be a stodgy men's group. She passionately appealed to the group asking for their support for birth control programs. When the "men" jeered and hissed, Sanger suggested that woman refuse all sexual activity for fear of pregnancy. "And that, gentleman, will take care of the problem," she concluded.



Guests of the event also heard from a distinguished panel, moderated by LWVCM President Suzanne Elsberry, of five women who each were the first of their gender to achieve a particular accomplishment. The panelists were former LWVCM President Delores Johnson Hurt, AAUW President Beverly Larson, Commissioner Susan Rodriguez-McDowell representing District 6, Education Action Team Co-Chair Jeanne Smith, and Women's Issues Action Team Lead Cate Stadelman.



The event concluded with a speech by Cate Stadelman entitled "Why We Need Real Political Power" in which she asked the audience to recognize how fighting for the ERA, Pay Equity, the reinstatement of *Roe*, and voter turnout (especially among women 18-to-29) are all essential.

We captured video footage of Aug. 27 Women's Equality Day event. Is there anyone who could help us edit it? Please reach out to dessuz@bellsouth.net if you can help.



Voter Service Director Regan Adudell gets out the "V-O-T-E" at a voter registration event in partnership with VoteRiders and Roof Above. Many more voter registration volunteer opportunities are planned including on National Voter Registration Day.



1900 Queens Road, Suite A
Charlotte, NC 28207

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