

# LWV<sup>®</sup> VOTER

League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg

July-August 2020

## REACHING LWVCM

Voice Mail:  
704-556-4600

E-mail:  
[Communications@goleaguego.org](mailto:Communications@goleaguego.org)

On the Web:  
[www.goleaguego.org](http://www.goleaguego.org)  
[www.facebook.com/League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg](https://www.facebook.com/LeagueofWomenVotersofCharlotteMecklenburg)

Twitter:  
[@lwvcm](https://twitter.com/lwvcm)

Newsletter Editor:  
Lucille Howard  
[newslettereditor@goleaguego.org](mailto:newslettereditor@goleaguego.org)

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Find updates for League action and activities at  
[goleaguego.org](http://goleaguego.org)

LWVCM Calendar will return when events to attend in person are scheduled. Meanwhile, watch your email, website and Facebook for announcements about relevant action in which to participate on line.

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

If you are like me, you might have commented from time to time that 2020 feels like the worst year ever. It's been rough. . . . We've seen challenges to our democracy, a global pandemic, and more Black lives lost because of the color of their skin. It's hard not to feel hopeless. But what if 2020 is actually a turning point?

Yes, America is going through some very difficult labor pains right now, but I believe that our democracy can be reborn. I believe that now, more than ever, we have the power to change our country and our society for the better. Right now, there is an awakening the likes of which I've never seen in my life, and I am, for the first time in a long time, hopeful.

This past week, we've seen people from throughout the country exercise their First Amendment right in support of the Black Lives Matter movement. You may have already joined the many protests happening throughout the country or may be planning to participate in one in the coming weeks. You also may be new to protesting and not really sure how to "show up" at a public demonstration. For that reason, LWVUS developed a resource for you on [How to be Good Allies at the Protests](#).

[Also this week] The LWV UN observers joined a coalition letter asking the United Nations Human Rights Council to conduct an inquiry into the recent violence against African Americans. New justice reform legislation is also being introduced, and LWVUS will be evaluating these bills for opportunities to lean in.

As Americans are rising up to demand police accountability, the need for everyone's voice to be heard in our elections is clear, but that is at risk during the COVID-19 pandemic. . . .

**Being democracy defenders means standing up to injustice with all our power: the power of our voices, the power of our resources, and the power of our votes.** That is how we continue the push for a more perfect democracy. Thank you for using your power in this moment.

—Excerpts from statement by **Virginia Kase**, CEO LWVUS 6-8-20

**Statement from LWVNC President Jo Nicholas:** "We grieve the death of George Floyd and all the Black lives lost as a result of rogue law enforcement. We stand in solidarity with the Black community and abhor racism in all of its forms. LWVNC joins the LWVUS in the belief that the perpetuation of the myth of white supremacy must be dismantled if we are ever to achieve a nation providing liberty and justice for all."

If you missed the annual meeting, catch the video [here](#). (Note: It starts with the board getting organized.)

## President Hurt's Message to the Annual Meeting

Dear Members,

A little over three months ago, on February 29 in uptown Charlotte, we celebrated in grand style 100 years of the League of Women Voters. The gala was the proudest moment of the year, not just because it was a great social event, but because it gave us on a single occasion a \$30,000 cushion to continue the work of the League.



Delores Johnson Hurt

Three weeks later, however, COVID-19 struck, and life as we knew it changed. We sheltered in place and lived in fear, consuming news around the clock about the growing numbers of the infected. How much worse could it be for us, we thought.

But then, within the past ten days, we have seen demonstrators of all colors and stripes explode in empathy and rage as they protested the death of yet another black man - George Perry Floyd - the symbol of the deaths of thousands of black men and women at the hands of callous law enforcement officers, those killings visible only because of cellphone footage.

I applauded the strong statement by our National League last Friday, which condemned Floyd's death as murder and called the people of this nation to actively advocate for anti-racist policies at every level of government and, just as importantly, in our homes and communities.

After each outpouring of grief of this nature, we call for solutions. And the singular one at which most of us arrive in an attempt to remedy systemic racism is Voting. Voting to put us on a trajectory to a democracy where all people are

equal under the law and the League's pledge of defending democracy less of a necessity.

Informed voting is the core mission of the League and in these times of pandemic and social upheaval, we must continue to find ways to engage citizens, particularly young people and people of color, to vote for the changes that will improve their lives.

But, how do we do this, when many of us are social distancing and so many are struggling with unemployment and the need for the basics of food and shelter? How do we register an average 5,000 plus new citizens we ordinarily assist when we can't attend naturalization services? How do we register voters at community and other colleges, at apartment buildings, at community events and other venues?

It is scary to think that COVID-19 will snuff our dream of a change in government - for which many of us yearn - by hampering our ability to vote. With tens of thousands of deaths in the United States, the virus is poised to ravage the country for months to come. We must, however, make sure voting is not obstructed or weakened.

Unless we can move about freely in the fall, it is very likely absentee voting by mail will be our ticket to success, and the League must find a way to help people do that. That means sustained volunteering and advocacy.

We must lobby elections officials to make sure there are enough absentee ballots. We must figure out how to get them into the hands of as many voters as possible and returned and counted. We must make sure there are enough polling places so all can vote easily. We must volunteer at the polls. If we cannot work the polls or poll watch because of health concerns, we must urge younger family and friends and neighbors to do so. From our homes, we can staff voter protection hotlines and make sure get-out-the-vote phone banks reach as many as possible. We must let young people know that these efforts are as important as marching.

Charlotte schools open August 17. Volunteer with our Voter Services team to register high school students, and emphasize the importance of informed voting. We can use that help. The League's goal is to mobilize one million young people to vote nationwide. Do you know that a Guilford County school took seniors to the polls in a display of civic duty? Can we do that in Charlotte Mecklenburg?

Vote411.org is the League's online personalized voter guide where you'll learn all you need to vote and also where candidates stand on issues. Tell everyone you know about the site. It's free. It goes online August 15. Our Vote411.org team is working now to publicize the site, including offering yard signs to you. We will let you know when those signs are available.

(President Hurt's message continued p. 3)

## League Action

### While we've been at home. . .

#### WOMEN'S ISSUES

Recently throughout Switzerland women joined together to express their outrage by screaming for a full minute to protest against gender inequality. This year's event took place on June 14 at 3:24 P.M., the time after which women technically work for free every day because of Switzerland's gender gap.

**A significant gender pay gap exists in this country also, and closing it is absolutely essential to helping women achieve economic security.**

Women's Issues members have been proceeding with plans to sponsor a forum on closing the pay gap to be held on Women's Equality Day in August. Numerous women's organizations have been contacted to participate in the planning process, and several have eagerly responded.

Watch your email for more information about the forum.

Interested in helping with the planning? Contact Women's Issues Action Team Chair **Cate Stadelman** [here](#).

#### EDUCATION

**Education Committee** members met (on zoom) with LWVNC state board members to describe our League's study and conclusions about the Opportunity Scholarship (OS) program. They also presented the information to an education forum (on zoom) with state-wide participation. Several groups and individuals indicated interest in advocating reform of the accountability and transparency aspects of the legislative program, as well as lobbying to use the reserve funds of the OS for some of the needs of public education exacerbated by COVID19.

You can read a summary or the whole report on the League website [here](#).

### #DadsforEquality

LWVCM member Jim Michaels tweeted a photo of himself with his daughter, Claudia Michaels, (daughter of member Carolyn Lyons too) for the #DadsforEquality #ERANow campaign. The picture was taken at the January 2020 Washington DC

Women's March.

Photos of other LWV members' daughters have been seen often on Facebook, as well. Tweet yours and put it on the LWVCM Facebook page too.



### Vote411.org goes live Aug. 15

#### Candidate & Election Information

#### WELCOME To New Members

Jacqueline Berg	Suzanne Fetscher
Laura Gillette	Karina Mevs Korff
Lucinda Lucas	Shanda Martin
Robert Payment	Pamela Pearson
Amber Wright	Brittany Wright
Christina Wright	

Please notify the membership committee [here](#) with any changes in your contact information, such as email, address and telephone number.

(President Hurt's message continued from p. 2)

Across the country, there have been concerted efforts to stop voters from casting their ballots - or make it much harder to do so. Legislators and election officials have purged voters from the rolls, made cuts to early voting, reduced polling places, put in place strict voter photo ID laws and levied onerous voter registration restrictions. North Carolina, of course, heads that line. Even now, the NC League is fighting efforts to purge voters from the rolls in Mecklenburg County by a group called Judicial Watch, the group that has done so successfully in other states.

My Annual Meeting address this evening is the fifth since I took office in 2016. Each year, I struggle with what I should say to you because I know I am preaching to the choir. What I can do each year is to urge your continued support of this wonderful organization in as many ways as you can. The very least you can do is urgently support voting and attend and promote League programs and events.

Thank you very much. Stay safe.

—Delores Johnson Hurt 6/4/20



## Voter Services Gearing Up for “New Normal”

Welcome to all the new volunteers that have joined in June! I think we are all ready to get out and register voters but getting out seems to be the sticking point! COVID-19 has made us rethink how we are able to reach people and get them registered while protecting the health of both the voter and our volunteers.

It currently is not possible to hold the registration events so we are now trying to reach folks digitally as well as handing out registration packets to organizations that can pass them on to clients. We have a new member who is working on a great video tutorial on how to fill out the registration form since we are not able to do so. We have given registration packets to multiple organizations as well as sending our digital links.



We are excited to partner with Habitat for Humanity and hope to be able to host a Women's Build Day in the fall.

We participated virtually in the YWCA's Stand Against Racism and will continue to assist their clients and partners with registrations. Thanks to

two new members we were able to attend the “Black Mama's March” which was a very impactful day. ➡

## Dues Notices are going out soon WHY PAY DUES NOW?

Even though members haven't been invited to any programs during this pandemic, the work of the League goes on—admittedly in a different format—but continuing the League mission and preparing for the protection of democracy that lies ahead.

The League is still paying rent for an office!

The League is still paying for website hosting!

The League is still paying for printing signs!

The League is still paying for insurance!

The League is still paying per member payments of \$32 to LWVUS and \$12 to LWVNC.

**You get the point.**

*Please know your membership is valued far beyond your financial commitment.*

***Thank you for your timely response to the notice.***

USCIS continues to hold naturalization ceremonies in their new format, and, although we are unable to be present, they are giving the new citizens our registration information, and they say it is going well and the citizens are eager to register to vote.

We have been asked to present the program on the 19th Amendment that Voter Services prepared and gave to CPCC students at the Levine Museum of the New South on Aug. 18. We will also be part of the Library's Engage 2020 program.

As we try and navigate this “new normal” I am always looking for ideas on how to reach voters and look forward to hearing any suggestions. Contact me at Voter Services [here](#).

**--Regan Aduddell, Voter Services Chair**

## LWVCM Switches to Virtual Meetings

Shown at left is the first virtual meeting of the 2020-21 Board of Directors.

After successfully conducting the 2020 Annual Meeting on a zoom call with nearly 50 members in attendance, the board proceeded with planning for League action in the year ahead.

Members voted for a slate of new officers, a budget of \$27,739.00 and program issues focusing on Voter Services, Women's Issues, local environment and public education

L-R, Carolyn Lyons, Lucille Howard, Margaret Soper-Howe, Suzanne Elsberry, Regan Aduddell, Pam Liebman, Cate Stadelman, President Delores Johnson Hurt, Kevan Woodson, John Lee & Tom Murdock. Not shown: June White



# LWVUS 2020 Convention

What had been slated to be an elaborate celebration of the LWV's 100th anniversary at its 2020 national convention became a three-day zoom meeting of caucuses, business sessions and inspirational speakers last month. **Four LWVCM members** were among the 1,749 credentialed delegates with an average of 1,250 plus attending via the internet. Fifty states plus territories were represented. Seven time zones were involved.

Official LWVCM delegates were **President Delores Johnson Hurt, Karen Bean, Pam Liebman and Kevan Woodson**. With its commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) on members' minds, delegates adopted the following LWVUS program for 2020-2022:

- Campaign for Making Democracy Work®: ensuring a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on Voting Rights, Improving Elections and advocacy for the National Popular Vote Compact, Campaign Finance/Money in Politics and Redistricting; and
- Continuing to work on urgent issues: Climate Change, the Equal Rights Amendment, Health Care, Gun Safety, and Immigration.

Also added to the program were statements regarding the abolition of the Electoral College, retaining federal lands and racial justice.

*Karen's note about the Health Care Priority:*

**Karen Bean**, who has headed LWVCM action on health care in the past, said she was personally grateful that Health Care is included in the list of urgent issues to be supported by National. The Covid-19 pandemic, with its tragic health and economic consequences, has made clear that employee-based health insurance is not viable. This has not gone unnoticed by Leagues across the US.

She reported that the pre-convention caucus, *America's Choices in the Health Care Debate* <<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcZAto9WGvetEyK84oRWj2Q>>, was attended by over 400 participants. This is four times the number who attended a similar health care caucus at the 2018 LWVUS convention and is evidence of the increased urgency of this issue. In April 1993, LWVUS Board announced the LWVUS Statement of Position on Health Care which, in summary called for *a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost available to all U.S. residents*. In 2020, we are far from meeting this goal. The pandemic, besides exposing vulnerabilities in our health systems, has laid bare the health inequities that underlie systemic racism. Health care reform requires prioritized attention and advocacy as never before, she said.



Virginia Kase, CEO LWV

**Virginia Kase**, CEO of LWVUS, told the convention that LWV is at times perceived as partisan, but she reminded delegates that defending democracy is a critical part of our mission, and "when democracy is attacked, we can't stay neutral. We must stand in our positions and advocate for what is right and just."

Newly elected president **Dr. Deborah Turner** stressed that democracy, social justice, and civil rights are intersectional, and all should be part of our work. Regarding the League's future, she said, "We, as an organization, acknowledge our own difficult history with racism while we embrace our future, where DEI will become part of our DNA." The words of our suffragist foremothers still ring true today, **HARD WON – NOT DONE!!**

**Amazing statistics about the impact** of LWV during the past two years can be found [here](#).

A recap of Convention, including vote results, can be found at <https://www.lvv.org/league-management/council-convention/2020-convention-daily-briefing>.

Recordings of many caucuses are available at <https://www.lvv.org/league-management/council-convention/2020-convention-virtual-caucuses-and-info-sessions>.

**Pam, Karen and Kevan** contributed to this report.



Deborah Turner, MD, JD,  
LWVUS President 2020-2022.