



VOTER

League of Women Voters of Charlotte Mecklenburg

January-February 2019

REACHING LWVCM

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Find updates for League action and activities at goleaguego.org

Next Civics 101 dates will be posted on the website when available

EMPOWER VOTERS DEFEND DEMOCRACY

If you joined the League to make a difference for democracy, now is the time to step up

Two opportunities are available now to promote citizen involvement in the democratic process.

1 If you think it is extremely important to provide non-partisan election information to the citizens of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, sign on now to become **coordinator for Vote 411.org**. Contacting Beth Springston, Vote411.org coordinator, soon will get you great training with Beth before she moves to Vermont in June.

2 If you think it is extremely important to provide as many voter registration opportunities as possible, volunteer to serve as the **voter service director**. When Marian Silverman moved to Virginia, **Leta Bosc** stepped up to coordinate voter registration at the Naturalization Ceremonies. With Leta making those assignments, the new Voter Service director can concentrate on other opportunities to promote registration and voting.

The League is dedicated to ensuring that our elections remain free, fair and accessible. When you joined, you signed on to this mission!

Voter Service director requires membership on the board of directors. In the monthly meeting, you can help guide the board as it makes decisions about League action promoting voting and educating voters.

Contact president Delores Johnson Hurt (deloreshurt@yahoo.com 980-355-0054), Beth Springston (bethspr@gmail.com 704-661-4425) or Tom E. Bowers, nominations committee chair (tomebowers75@gmail.com 704-491-5132).

Join the Parade Honoring Martin Luther King

Saturday, Jan. 19, 10 am

March with fellow League members to publicize League activities and promote voting in the King holiday parade.

Contact **Debbie Snowdon** at Debbie.snowdon@yahoo.com, and she will send you meet-up logistics by email.



Coming Events

League Talk
Tuesday,
Jan. 15,
6:30 pm

Dr. Gina Navarrete will talk about Immigration: Can the US Afford to Get Rid of Immigrants?

Dr. Navarrete is a clinical neuro-psychologist and is incoming co-president of the Charlotte Women's March.

League talk is held at the League Center in the Midwood International Center, 1817 Central Ave., Rm 210.



Lunch with the League
Wednesday,
Feb. 13,
11:30 am

Cedric Dean, founder of SAVE (Safeguard Atone Validate Education) in Charlotte will be the speaker at February's League Lunch.

Dean, highlighted by *The Charlotte Observer* 12/26/18 as a hero "among us who make(s) our city and region better," was serving a life sentence in prison but was released a year ago after nearly 24 years, and vowed to take action helping kids succeed in school.



He created SAVE and works with students in the Hidden Valley and Lakewood communities focusing on building character while exposing them to different career paths, service and education, according to WSOC-TV. The report said his program is part of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department's community empowerment initiative.

Self-described as "a world leader in thugology and character building, enabling individuals and organizations to make our children job-ready instead of jail ready" on his website, Dean is now a reentry specialist helping former prisoners enter society.

Fair Elections Action Team Committee
Thursday,
Jan. 10,
6 pm

FEAT team members will meet to address and stuff envelopes in order to reach out to community/business/faith, etc. leaders to enlist their support in implementing the Reasonable Redistricting Reform plan.

The Committee will meet at the League Center in the Midwood International Center, 1817 Central Ave., Rm 210.

For more information, contact **Debbie Snowden** at Debbie.snowdon@yahoo.com

Environment Interest Group,
Friday,
Jan. 18,
11 am

All interested League members are invited to attend the organizational meeting of an Environment Interest Group on Friday, Jan. 18, 2019, 11am.

The meeting will be held in the League Center in the Midwood International Center, 1817 Central Ave., Rm 210.

Feel free to bring your lunch and definitely, bring your ideas. For further information, contact **Margaret Howe-Soper** at margaretsoper@hotmail.com.

League Talk
Tuesday,
March 19,
6:30 pm

League members will hear about the LWV of North Carolina ERA Action Team and how Charlotte Mecklenburg can participate in the effort to pass ERA this year.

Sherry MacQueen, Action Team coordinator who lives in Raleigh, will present information about efforts going on throughout the state to bring pressure on the General Assembly to pass the ERA.

Members especially interested in women's issues will not want to miss this program.

Interested in joining the League. Find the "Join" form [here](#).

Education

Statement to CMS Promoting a Board Equity Committee

President Delores Johnson Hurt presented the LWVCM's Education Committee statement to the Board of Education Dec. 11.

As you know the League of Women Voters Charlotte Mecklenburg supports a strong public education system as an essential element of a viable democracy. Unfortunately, we know from the district's own *Breaking the Link* analysis that there are inequities present as evidenced by significant gaps in student achievement among our student populations. We know that Superintendent Wilcox and his staff are working to close those gaps and provide quality education for all the children in the district, no matter where they live. We want to support those efforts.

That is why we urge you to establish an Equity Committee now to serve in an advisory capacity and to act as a conduit for accountability and transparency. The work of this committee is not to tell the Supt. and his staff how to do their jobs, but it is the work of the committee to act in collaboration with the CMS Board to provide community input and to shine a light on the district's progress toward meeting their equity goals.

The League's Education Committee has met individually with almost all of you, and you have voiced your support for an Equity Committee. We have previously presented a viable proposal to the Board for the composition, goals, and functioning of just such a committee. Carol Sawyer has presented two other viable proposals to the Equity Policy Committee. Do not delay! Now is the time to take action by establishing a community-based Equity Committee that can provide different perspectives and resources to address the equity issues with which the district is confronted and support the work of our Superintendent and his staff.

By taking action NOW to establish an Equity Committee, the Board will take a necessary and significant step in addressing some of the issues identified not only in *Breaking the Link*, but also highlighted in the work of the Opportunity Task Force. Do not delay! It is time to move forward.

Members of the Education Committee of the LWVCM have been meeting with newly elected legislators from Mecklenburg County to the NC General Assembly to discuss and advocate League positions. Nine key points that the Education Committee has identified as essential for supporting moving education forward in North Carolina were presented to **Rep. Christy Clark** from District 98, **Rep. Brandon Lofton** from District 104, and **Sen. Natasha Marcus** from District 41.



Rep. Brian Lofton

The key points include (1) lack of accountability and transparency of schools that receive voucher money (Opportunity Scholarships); (2) need for greater funding for Pre-K school slots; (3) need to revise the skewed formula for determining School Performance Scores; (4) the disaster that awaits when schools are graded on a ten-point rather than a 15-point scale; (5) loss of funding for public schools when charter students return to public schools after the school year begins; (6) need for more hands-on, project/problem-based instruction in our schools; (7) overwhelming needs (housing, medical, dental, nutritional, etc.) that poor students bring to school every day; (8) teacher recruitment and retention; and (9) denial of in-state tuition for non-citizens who have lived here for years and desire teacher or teacher assistant licensure.

The meetings have been very productive in that all three of these new legislators indicated their support for these key points.

Education Committee members were impressed with the caliber of each of these legislators and their knowledge of the education issues facing NC today as well as their support of the key points presented.

The Education Committee will continue to meet with newly elected members of the NCGA and advocate for improving education in NC and removing us from the depths to which our state has sunk in the last decade. **Education in North Carolina can be better than this.**

--Cheryl Milam, Committee co-chair



Rep. Christy Clark



Sen. Natasha Marcus

League in Action

North Carolina LWV Demands District 9 Election Integrity

12/7/2018

Chapel Hill, NC – The **League of Women Voters of North Carolina** is committed to fair elections and strongly supports the Board of Elections' decision to delay certification of the results of the 9th Congressional District election until a thorough investigation has been conducted. The integrity of our election process must be ensured, and those responsible for undermining our democracy should be held accountable.

The reports to date provide alarming evidence of an ongoing effort to illegally harvest ballots, buy votes, dispose of ballots, and alter voters' intended choices. North Carolina state law authorizes the Board of Elections to order a new general election if the nature of these offenses "taint[s] the results of the entire election and cast[s] doubt on its fairness."

"Elections that are both fair and represent the will of all voters are essential to retaining our state's democratic process," said Janet Hoy, president of the League of Women Voters of North Carolina. "The state has the responsibility to ensure the integrity of our elections. The League of Women Voters of North Carolina calls upon state officials to complete a thorough investigation to ensure voter confidence in our elections."

As the investigation continues, the League will remain watchful and fully prepared to take whatever steps are necessary to protect the voices of North Carolina voters.

Contact: Janet Hoy | LWVNC President | janetahoy@gmail.com

More Voters Than Ever Found VOTE411 for Voting Information

A whopping increase of 163% was recorded for usage in Mecklenburg County of the League's Vote411 for the "off year" 2018 general election compared to the Presidential election in 2016.

There were some 52,000 sessions in the five weeks leading up to the Nov. 6 election in the county, and Mecklenburg accounted for 29.9% of the Vote411 users in North Carolina this election. Since the county's population is ten percent of the state's, the new ways of publicizing the election tool with radio ads, social media, flyers, bookmarks and digital and print ads paid off with this county garnering 29.9% of NC Vote 411 usage.

The online voter guide is the national League's premier effort to help voters learn about the candidates and all the rules and regulations regarding voting in each state.

I want to thank all of the members who gave a contribution to VOTE411 this summer as part of the 100% donor match program. That really helped us increase our advertising, and it seems clear that advertising is crucial to get the word out.

For the first time, LWVCM had an intern, **Emma Schambach**, a UNCC political science and communications major, who helped publicize Vote411.org. After the election she surveyed 265 students finding that, out of that group, 60% were registered to vote and 56% did. Of those who voted, 53% voted early, 18% voted absentee and 29% voted on Election Day. According to her findings 77% researched candidates ahead of time, and over half used a nonpartisan online voter guide. She also found that students identifying as unaffiliated were less likely to be registered, to research candidates or to vote. Male students were more likely to miss the registration deadline.



Analyzing the Nov. 6 election results were from left, Larry Shaheen, Emma Schambach and Dan McCorkle.

A **major frustration** was the refusal of a number of legislative candidates to participate – not just in our guide but in the efforts of many non-profits trying to provide voter education. We worked very hard to ask questions that were non-partisan to make sure voters were getting a clear view of candidates' positions on important NC issues. In Mecklenburg, 12 out of the 61 candidates in contested races declined to submit information, giving us an 80% participation rate, down from previous years.

In summary, VOTE411 usage continues to build and is becoming a vital resource for voters looking for nonpartisan information before they make their voting decisions.

—**Beth Springston**, Vote 411 coordinator

League News

Welcome to New Members

New members joining since October are:

Linda A Beard	Katherine Luce
Natalie Heling	Mary Alice Warren
Mary Terese Kelly	Safronia Caldwell
Elizabeth Kirsch	

Thank you

Many League members have been very generous making additional contributions to LWVCM.

Ann Wood	Carol Rousey
Carolyn M Lyons	Debbie Snowdon
Harvey Wood	John Haynes
Joyce Waddell	June White
Karen Zapata	Lucille Howard
Margaret Howe-Soper	Mary Klenz
Mary L Monahan	Pat Sweet
Peg Chapin	Rollin Raymond
Sandra Cross	Sarah Johnson
Shannon Lalor	Sharen Shiffer
Tom Murdock	Cate Stadelman



President Delores Johnson Hurt poses with Community police officers who picked up donated books from the League's holiday party. See more photos p. 6.

Finding Common Ground

Better Angels, a citizens organization uniting red and blue Americans, is being formed here by **Tom E. Bowers** for a three-hour Saturday workshop Feb. 23, 9:30-12:30.

The idea is to create a working alliance to depolarize America by trying to understand the other side's point of view, even if we don't agree with it and to engage those with whom we disagree, looking for common ground and ways to work together in the political arena.

Participants must identify themselves as either "red" or "blue". The group will be limited to seven of each "color" and 14 observers. Read more about it [here](https://www.better-angels.org/). <https://www.better-angels.org/>

To register or get more information, contact Tom at tomebowers75@gmail.com 704-491-5132.

Calendar

All events are at the LWVCM Center, 1817 Central Ave., Room 210, Charlotte 28205 unless otherwise noted. Click [here](#) for driving and parking directions.

Jan. 3 (Thurs)	League Board of Directors, 6:15 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave, Rm. 210
Jan. 9 (Wed)	League Education Committee meetings, 11:30 am, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave. 210
Jan. 10 (Thurs)	FEAT team meeting, 6 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave., Rm. 210
Jan. 15 (Tues)	League Talk, 6:30 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave., Rm. 210
Jan. 18 (Fri)	Environment interest group, 11 am., League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.,
Jan. 26 (Sat)	Charlotte Women's March 11 am, First Ward Park, E. Eighth and N. Brevard Women's March in Raleigh, 10 am, City Plaza-Halifax Mall
Jan. 28 (Mon)	Community Book Discussion on Affordable Housing, 7 pm, First Baptist Church West, 801 Oaklawn
Feb. 5 (Tues)	League Board of Directors, 6:15 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.
Feb. 6 (Wed)	League Education Committee meetings, 11:30 am, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave
Feb. 13 (Wed)	Lunch with the League, 11:30 am, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.
Mar. 5 (Tues)	League Board of Directors, 6:15 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.
Mar. 6 (Wed)	League Education Committee meetings, 11:30 am, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.
Mar. 19 (Tues)	League Talk, 6:30 pm, League Education Center, 1817 Central Ave.

LWVCM Holiday Party



LWVCM members enjoyed good fellowship and delicious food at the annual holiday lunch. Peg Chapin won the raffle and several went home with poinsettias they won.



We need FAIR DISTRICTS for FAIR ELECTIONS

Questions and answers on reasonable redistricting reform

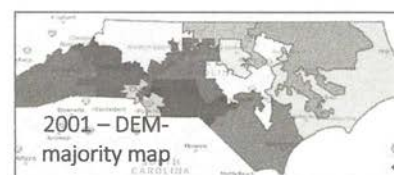
What is redistricting? Every 10 years, after the census, our electoral districts are redrawn to take account of population change. In NC, the legislature draws the maps for both its own districts and Congressional districts.

What is gerrymandering and how does it threaten our democracy? When politicians draw their own districts, they can rig the maps to favor their own party. That's ***gerrymandering!*** Both parties do it: see recent Congressional district maps at right.

Politicians now use sophisticated computer programs to choose their voters more precisely than ever. They don't have to compete for your votes: the maps make the winners almost a foregone conclusion. Voters can't hold their representatives accountable. This isn't how democracy is supposed to work: voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around!

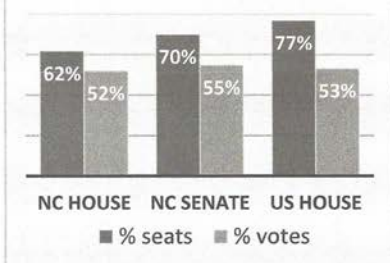


2011 – GOP- majority map
Both parties have gerrymandered NC



2001 – DEM- majority map
Courts found both maps unconstitutional

Gerrymandering enabled the party drawing the 2016 maps to win a higher share of the seats than it earned from our votes



What can YOU do to help?

Join us! Together, we can put an end to rigged maps.

How can we ensure fair maps for North Carolina? We need Reasonable Redistricting Reform. The NC League of Women Voters studied redistricting commissions proposed or in place around the country. Their study identified **5 principles** to design a reasonable redistricting commission that can end extreme gerrymandering once and for all:

1. Maintain a ***role for the legislature*** in the process, such as naming commissioners.
2. Include ***citizens and/or impartial experts*** as commission members.
3. Set ***strict rules*** for the commission's work that:
 - a. rule out ***partisan data and objectives*** and
 - b. use ***voting rules*** that force consensus.
4. Provide for ***extensive citizen participation and transparency***.
5. Make the ***maps final on the commission's vote***, without further action by the legislature.

Fair Districts NC is a coalition managed by LWVNC committed to an open & fair process for NC's 2021 redistricting. **Learn more at www.FairDistrictsNC.org**

Excerpts from LWVCM Education Funding Subcommittee Letter to Mecklenburg County Commissioners 12/18/18

Quality education is something Mecklenburg voters understand the need for, they want and support. Data that supports this need is well documented in several well researched studies.

We are . . . aware that the General Assembly has chosen a funding plan that undermines public education by failing to provide adequate teacher salaries, cutting per pupil spending and diverting public money to private nonprofit and for-profit educational endeavors.

Here at home, we recognize you have chosen a different path with your support for Pre-K education and the recent school bond package. However, as you can well imagine, there are additional critical needs that cannot wait. . .

So, where does this leave us here in Mecklenburg County where the rubber hits the road? We urge you to continue what you've started and do more. Provide funding for resources such as increased supplements to teacher salaries, additional support services such as social workers, Pre-K and other programs identified as essential to quality education.

As you begin the budgeting process, the LWVCM supports you in your work to provide needed funding and **urges you to work with CMS** to enable [the school board] to reach its vision to provide all students the best education available.