



Annual Report

July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

PRESIDENTS' REPORT

Despite the unexpected challenges of COVID-19, we emerged with new and better ways of doing things. Just as in 1918, when the force of a pandemic flu risked derailing the long-planned campaign to secure women's right to vote, we will persevere. Using technology unknown in 1918, LWVGC pivoted quickly to holding virtual events, reaching hundreds of viewers. We used our enforced "work from home" to engage in a comprehensive review of the way our organization does its job.

We were an active part of the Cuyahoga County and City of Cleveland Complete Count Committees for the decennial US Census. This effort, too, was upended by the pandemic but we continued to find ways to boost the census, as the Census Bureau revised and lengthened its timetable for census completion.

Unfortunately, the census delays also will affect congressional redistricting in 2021. The Census Bureau currently projects a two-month delay in transmitting official headcounts to the states. This will significantly tighten the timetable for the mapmaking process in Ohio, an issue that the League will continue to work on.

LWVGC is actively making democracy work. We have educated and empowered voters and have encouraged increased voter participation. We advocated at Cuyahoga County Council for banning single-use plastic bags in the County and to preserve key reforms in the County Sheriff position.



LWVGC is all of us: our incredible observers, volunteers, members, and supporters like you. We're gearing up for programs to protect and empower voters in new ways due to Covid-19. We're stepping up our work to register more new voters, hold more forums and debates via Zoom, provide more ballot information and help all eligible voters participate in our electoral process. We'll also keep an eye on our local government; support fair districting that is transparent, non-discriminatory, and politically impartial; and ensure that our elections are fair, safe, secure, and accessible.

Yours in League,
Audrey Morris and Catherine LaCroix
Co-Presidents

CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION



Sadly, the pandemic disrupted our outstanding plans for this year's celebration so we opted to present some events virtually and to postpone others.

The Women's Empowerment Lecture Series began with Einav Rabinovitch-Fox, Visiting Assistant Professor of History, Case Western Reserve University, delivering the first lecture in-person on the history of the suffrage movement. The pandemic interrupted plans for monthly lectures, but June 27, Angela Clark-Taylor, Director of the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women at CWRU, delivered the second lecture virtually. The monthly lectures have continued by Zoom and are ongoing.

We are planning to hold The Women's Suffrage Symposium: From Complex Legacy to Collective Action, originally scheduled for April 18, in April 2021 either virtually or in-person depending on public health conditions. The Belle Sherwin Luncheon is postponed until an in-person event can be held safely.

In August, the Western Reserve Historical Society launched the "Women and Politics" exhibit, using many of our archives. It can be enjoyed as a virtual event as well as in-person at the Cleveland History Center. Research for the exhibit uncovered previously unknown information about the founding of the Cleveland League, which took place May 29, 1920.

Early in 2019, the Lakewood chapter applied for a historical marker commemorating Lakewood women getting the vote in municipal elections two years before passage of the 19th Amendment. The Ohio History Connection approved the marker. With help from the Lakewood Historical Society and a grant from the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, Lakewood members researched historical documentation, the City of Lakewood approved a site in Lakewood Park, and the marker was erected and celebrated in July, 2020.



A selection of photographs from the "Women and Politics" exhibit at the Western Reserve Historical Society.



PROGRAMS & FORUMS



WVGC held wide a variety of public forums this year on an array of subjects, central to the program of the League of Women Voters. Through collaboration with other like-minded organizations, we are able to extend our reach to do programming in all areas of Greater Cleveland. Almost every forum was recorded and there now exists a library of public policy forums available to the public: tinyurl.com/LWVGCvideos.

Topics included: Money in Politics, Gerrymandering Reform, How Will Non-Profits Survive Covid-19, Vote by Mail in Ohio, The Crisis in Local News, The 2020 Census, Vouchers and Ohio School Funding, Food Insecurity, Closing the Achievement Gap: Preschool and Early Child Education, Bail Reform in Ohio, How Do We Increase Voter Turn Out in 2020, Senior Financial Fraud, Women's Health in Ohio, Plastics and Ohio, Domestic Violence, Keeping Kids Safe in an Online World, and Waste Water.

Ballot Issue Forums included Health and Human Services Levy Issue 33, Tri-C Levy Issue 3, Cleveland Heights/University Heights Schools Levy Issue 26.

Candidate Forums were held in South Euclid/Lyndhurst, Bedford, Bedford Heights, Oakwood, Walton Hills, East Cleveland, Beachwood, Cleveland Heights, Westlake, North Olmsted, Shaker Heights, Chagrin Falls, and Parma. In addition to candidate forums, the Lakewood and Bay Village chapters hosted meet-and-greets with candidates in uncontested races.

ADVOCACY



All Communities Vote: The goal of this initiative is to help residents of Ward 14, an area with low voter turnout, to consider the power of their votes and to provide information about social and political issues of interest to the participants. In Ward 14, we collaborated with Metro West Cleveland and Cleveland Votes to register voters and help people apply to vote by mail.

News and Brews: Young League members from the Greater Cleveland chapters offer short programs on issues like voting rights, reproductive rights, and LGBTQ+ rights in local bars. The purpose of the group is to educate and activate citizens on issues adopted by the League of Women Voters, and to give younger League members opportunities to collaborate with each other.

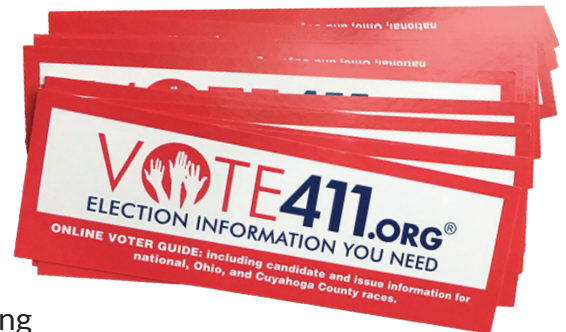
Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Group: The goals of this group are to increase diversity of League membership, as well as support inclusion and equity within the League. We also strive to increase the diversity of participants in League activities and to advocate for equity within our community.

Other advocacy efforts during the year: We attended Senator Dolan's town hall to discuss gun violence, met with state senators to advocate for SB 186 which would allow people to register to vote at the BMV, and called senators to advocate that every voter receives a postage paid ballot by mail for the November 2020 election.

VOTER SERVICE

In the months before the pandemic, our many volunteers registered voters and helped with Vote-by-Mail applications at dozens community events in conjunction with various other organizations. We registered young voters at more high schools than ever before, and registered new citizens at naturalization ceremonies throughout the year. We worked with Cleveland Votes and COHHIO to register a record number of new voters (2,481) on National Voter Registration Day in September 2019. We used our social media accounts to reach voters and engage in advocacy, provide non-partisan education about candidates, elections, and issues, partner with other organizations, and raise awareness of our League.

At the national level, Vote411.org won the People's Voice Webby Award. This recognition is a testament to the important election information Vote411.org provides to voters every cycle, with over one million users nationally so far this year. In Cuyahoga County, 9,524 voters used Vote411.org for the November, 2019 General Election.



When we learned that Ohio's 2020 primary election was shifting to an all vote-by-mail process, LWVGC quickly mobilized and worked in coalition with other voting rights organizations and partner groups (All Voting is Local, Cleveland Votes, Ohio Environmental Council, NAACP Cleveland), to reach eligible voters who had not yet cast their ballots. LWVGC along with Cleveland Votes distributed 8,300 vote-by-mail applications to over 30 regional grocery stores, community resource centers, and food distribution centers. In addition, with our partners, we texted more than 58,100 Cuyahoga County voters with messages about the vote-by-mail process and reminders to vote.

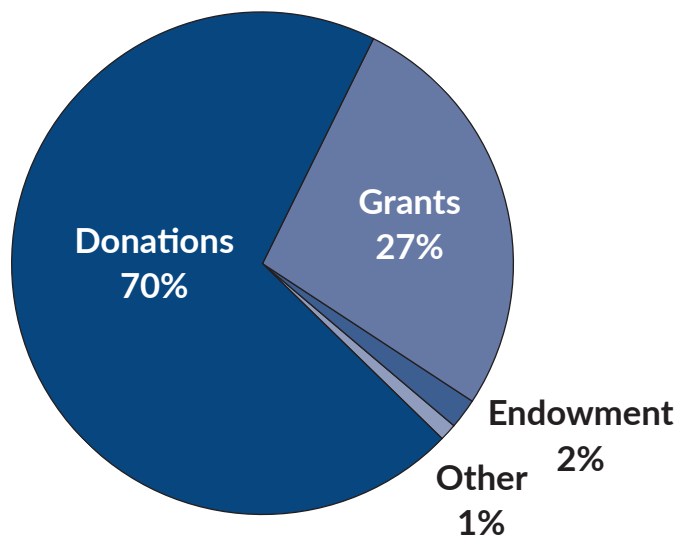
After the primary election, our focus switched to Election Day, November 2020. By July, we had distributed over ten thousand voter registration forms, vote-by-mail applications and flyers about the importance of the 2020 Census. Additionally, we began planning to print voter guides for distribution in low turnout, and low internet access areas throughout Cuyahoga County.



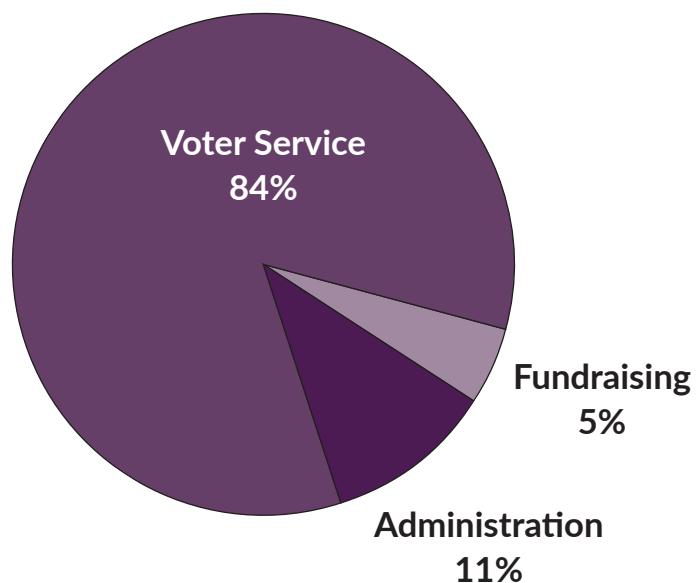
Anne Batzell, Jan Devereaux, Audrey Morris, Ose Arheghan, Elena Weingart, and Meg Weingart at a voter registration event in Shaker Heights.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

REVENUE



EXPENSES



BOARD OF TRUSTEES 2019-2020

Co-Presidents
Audrey Morris and Catherine LaCroix

Vice President
Catherine Ryan

Treasurer
Janet Kershaw

Secretary
Nadia Zaiem

Chapter Liaison
Penny Jeffrey

Director of Voter Service
Patricia Carter

Director of Advocacy
Sarah Swanson

Director of Funding and Development
Meryl Simon

Director of Membership
Lisa Cech

Director of Leadership Development
Lauren Orrico

Director of Program
Michael Baron

Appointed Directors
Maryann Barnes and Roz Peters

LIST OF DONORS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Joann Adler
Anonymous
Joanne Ballis
Maryann Bannes
Michael Baron
Anne Batzell
Conda Boyd
Karen Bradley
Brush High School
Joan Bush
Patricia Carter
Stacey Cassidy
Dorothy Cibula
Jean Cibula
Anda Cook
Lana Cowell
Laura Creed
Audrey DeClement
Nancy Dietrich
Sue Dyke
Barbara Ebright
Elva Edger
Lillian Emmons

Anne Engel
Edward Feldman
Friends of the
Beachwood Library
Katherine Funkner
Holly Gigante
Carol Gobel
Granovsky & Sundaresh
Marcia Grant
Greater Cleveland
Community Shares
Dorothy Greenslade
Lois Gross
Jessica Hausknecht
Hawken School
Kathleen Hickman
Timothy Hoolihan
Gale Jacobsohn
Penny Jeffrey
Janet Kershaw
Eefje Kolkman
Carole Koscielny
Jessica Kress
Catherine LaCroix
Linda Lalley
Mary Lavigne-Butler
Malia Lewis
Pearl Ling
Lynda Mayer
Marilyn McLaughlin
Michael Melincoff
Jeanne Melvin
Joseph Milgram
Claire Moore
Amelia Morgenstern
Audrey Morris
Patricia Moyer
Susan Murnane
Margaret Murphy
Karen Nestor
Network for Good
Maureen Ordman-Fike
Lauren Orrico
Janice Patterson
Carol Phillips-Bey
Dorothea Polster
Judith Rawson
Jean Robejsek
Barbara Robinson
Gaye Rule
Laura Rushton
Nikki Salupo
Anne Sanford
Ellen Schermer

Jean Seasholtz
Jeanne Shatten
Faye Sholiton
Leah Sieck
Joanne Siegla
Meryl Simon
Kathy Smachlo
Pamela Smith
Elizabeth Solender
St. Lukes's Foundation
Sue Starrett
Carolyn Sugiuchi
Annette Sutherland
Carolyn Thum
Jean Triner
Susan Troia
Blanche Valancy
Nan Volpe
Holly Wang
Meg Weingart
Brian Widowski
R Wilkinson
Susan Wolpert
Diana Woodbridge
Katharyn Woodbridge
Ellen Wurtzel-Auten
Kal Zucker

**We apologize for any inadvertent omissions or misspellings.*

DONATION OPTIONS

To donate by check, mail to:

LWV Greater Cleveland Education Fund
P.O. Box 5310
Cleveland, Ohio 44101

To donate by credit card, go to:

www.lwvgreatercleveland.org

An endowment fund was established at The Cleveland Foundation to support the future of the LWV Greater Cleveland Education Fund. Please consider donating with a check or credit card, transfer of stock or other assets, and/or a planned gift made through your will or trust. Call The Cleveland Foundation at 216-861-3810 to discuss these and other options.