

Summer 2019

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**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

## LWVDE Acting on Public Policy Issues

By Sandy Spence, Advocacy Corps Chair

The Advocacy Corps was relieved to see the close of the first year of the 150<sup>th</sup> Session of our General Assembly. Most controversial issues were either dead or deferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the session in 2020, so the legislature adjourned before 2 a.m. on July 1, much earlier than in recent memory. A full report is listed on pages 5-9 in this newsletter on the status of significant bills we addressed in 2019. Using the electronic copy, you can right click on the bill numbers to access links to the legislature's website to learn details about each of those reported. Let me know if you have questions on any of them.



Sandy Spence testifying at a committee hearing in Legislative Hall.

We are continuing to work during the legislative break until January. In July, we have addressed some new bills that were introduced in the closing days, giving legislators and lobbyists time to digest them. We have begun some brainstorming on possible topics for League Day 2020 including one to address the absence of sufficient funding to deal with major needs such as clean water, educational equity, mental health, etc.; an overview of criminal justice progress and implementation; homelessness and affordable housing needs. We welcome suggestions.

We began a process to address the need for assistance for portfolio chairs and invited Charlie Garlow to join us as a registered lobbyist focusing on the environment. We also enjoyed lunch after our July 10 meeting at Frazier's to celebrate our 2019 successes and enjoy each other's company.

## LWVDE CONVENTION 2019 HIGHLIGHTS



The LWVDE biennial convention held at Barclay Farms Clubhouse in Camden on June 1, 2019 and featured a program on **How Our Advocacy Corps (AC) Works**. The format consisted of a special meeting of the AC where all attendees were invited to participate in considering whether to support, oppose or monitor some key bills. Considerable discussion ensued. Those present gained a better understanding of the role of the AC and enjoyed learning how details of bills challenge members in deciding on which ones to advocate.



Kent County hosts provided a yummy breakfast of home-made and catered goodies and a delicious assortment of sandwiches, salads and desserts catered by Panera. An efficient business meeting chaired by then President Joann Hasse featured election of state board members and officers for 2019-21, adoption of a state budget, new and continuing policy positions, an amendment to the bylaws, and local presidents' presentations on their respective highlights of the year.

# LWVDE Alternative Voting Methodologies Study

Besides plurality voting as commonly used in the U.S., other ways to count votes include ranked choice voting, approval voting and proportional representation. Several state Leagues have formed positions in favor of ranked-choice voting (RCV), which is also known as instant-runoff voting (IRV). Should Delaware join their ranks?



At the State Convention in June 2019, LWVDE members approved a study on alternative voting methodologies and their potential application in Delaware. League members from all three counties are participating in the study. We are in the early investigative stages this summer.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS' OF MAINE EDUCATION FUND RANKED CHOICE VOTING SAMPLE BALLOT

- A. To vote, fill in the OVAL  to the right of the candidate of your choice like this  .  
B. If you wrongly mark, tear or spoil the ballot, return it and get another.

- \* Rank candidates in order of preference.
- \* Fill in the ① next to your first choice.  
Fill in the ② next to your second choice.  
Fill in the ③ next to your third choice.
- \* Do not fill in more than one oval per candidate. Do not fill in more than one oval per column.
- \* Ranking a 2nd, 3rd, etc. choice candidate will not hurt your first choice candidate.

Candidate 1	①	②	③
Candidate 2	①	②	③
Candidate 3	①	②	③

1st Choice  
2nd Choice  
3rd Choice

The study team believes that a discussion of general voting principles... what the goals of an election system should be... can help to inform and guide our study. To that end we are asking **all interested League members** to **fill out this survey:** [LWVDE Voting Principles Survey - August 2019](#). We'll be taking survey responses until August 31, 2019.

Our next in-person study team meeting will be **Wednesday September 11, at 2 pm**, in the House Majority Caucus Room at Legislative Hall in Dover. All are welcome! If you think you might like to participate in the study, or if you are just curious about how League studies are run... please come! Contact Kim Wells ([kimwells19702@gmail.com](mailto:kimwells19702@gmail.com)) or Jill Itzkowitz ([jillitzkowitz@gmail.com](mailto:jillitzkowitz@gmail.com)) for more information or to RSVP, and/or to get in on a carpool from Sussex or NCC.



**Congratulations to our own CHARLOTTE KING**, past president of LWVDE and founder of Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice. She will be honored by the ACLU as one of **Delaware's Own Liberties Superheroes at ACLU KANDLER AWARDS CELEBRATION, Saturday, November 2, 2019**. For tickets visit [www.aclu-de.org](http://www.aclu-de.org) or call 302-654-5326.

## CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE



Sue Claire Harper

On June 1st, Carol Jones (LWVSC) and Sue Claire Harper (LWVSC) assumed the reins of the LWVDE co-presidency for the 2019-2021 from outgoing president Joann Hasse (LWVNCC) at the biennial convention, held at Barclay Farms Clubhouse in Camden. Having served as LWVDE president from 1988-93 and again from 2017-2019, Joann deserves a rest from the helm of leadership with its wide ranging responsibilities and the sometimes overwhelming time commitment. As you can see, we needed two people to replace her!



Carol Jones

Les Stillson (LWVKC) has agreed to chair the Finance Committee, Marj Johnson (LWVNCC) has agreed to continue to serve, and Pat Petchel (LWVSC) has agreed to join the committee. We're pleased to report that these capable individuals will monitor the League's finances and work closely with our treasurer Jill Itzkowitz. (*Continue on page 3 Co-presidents'*)

*(Continued from page 2 Co-presidents' Message)* Subsequent to introducing the new LWVUS program "Diversity, Equity and Inclusion" (DEI) at the July 17th meeting, LWVSC president Gwendolyn Miller agreed to chair this committee. The goal of this program is to raise self awareness of these issues among our members, and as a consequence to proactively attract and cultivate League members who truly represent the diversity of our state's varied ethnic, gender and socioeconomic population. With her professional expertise as a Racial Microaggressions Consultant, Gwendolyn is well prepared to serve as chair. She is seeking a minimum of six volunteers, hopefully two from each League, to serve with her on this committee.

Other committees will continue to be headed by their current chairs, and there will probably be additional committees organized as we continue to adjust to our new roles. We're looking forward to a busy year with 100th anniversaries coming up in 2020 for both the passage of the 19th Amendment and the establishment of the League of Women Voters. Stay tuned for the activities we're planning for the state as well as all three local Leagues.

Future LWVDE Board meetings will be scheduled for the 2nd Wednesday of the month at the Kent County Library from 5 -7:30pm located 497 S Red Haven Ln, Dover. All interested LWVDE members are welcome to attend to observe the Board's process and activities.

## LWVUS Council 2019 Meeting – Report by Sue Claire Harper

Newly minted LWVDE Co-president Sue Claire Harper and LWVSC president Gwendolyn Miller attended the 2019 LWVUS Council Meeting, held June 20-23 at the National Conference Center in Leesburg, VA. LWVUS president Chris Carson and CEO Virginia Kase (hired in 2018) welcomed all participants.

Citing the LWVUS theme 'The Power of Our Transformation', presentations focused on the following programs and concerns:

1. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)** Former LWVUS President Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins spoke about the role of women of color in the League's founding and history. She argued the LWV is still not the diverse, inclusive, and equitable organization as promised during her presidency a decade ago. She challenged the membership to truly represent the diversity of our nation's population.
2. The pending "**She is Me**" campaign (<https://www.lwv.org/sheisme>) coincides with the LWV's 100th anniversary. The campaign's primary focus is to cultivate diverse LWV members in the younger generation. More information is available at the following link: "[She is Me](#)" Toolkit
3. DC attorney and LWV consultant John Pomeranz spoke on the League's power as a nonpartisan organization in hyper-partisan times. He discussed Minnesota's "**Empty Chair Debate**" (local debates and forums where only one candidate is present), referring to the LWVUS website [FAQ's Candidate Forums-Debates](#) as the best resource guide.
4. **Vote411.org redesign** with multilingual platforms is scheduled to be launched in August.
5. In order to provide a cohesive message across all state leagues, the importance of complying with **newly revised LWV logo** was stressed.
6. The **LWVUS Nominating Committee**, chaired by Susan Smith ([ssmith@lwv.org](mailto:ssmith@lwv.org)) announced they are seeking volunteers to serve from June 2020 to June 2022. This committee meets quarterly and covers traveling expenses to DC. Applications are due by 10/28/19.

Gwendolyn and Sue Claire realized that because of Delaware's small size, the entire LWVDE enjoy benefits that only such close physical proximity allows; namely, the opportunity to build personal relationships among members throughout the state, as well as ready access to Delaware's elected state officials and the state's legislative processes.

LWVUS President Chris Carson confirmed that following their September Board Meeting, Delaware can look forward to being assigned a new LWVUS Board Liaison. In concluding the Council, LWV CEO Virginia Kase stated she plans to reach out to every state president to learn about their needs

## LWVDE Hosting African Students



On Thursday, July 11, 2019 the LWVDE once again hosted 22 impressive young African women leaders from Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Senegal, Uganda, and Zambia. The students are part of the Study of U.S. Institutes Women's Leadership program hosted at the University of Delaware.

A lively roundtable discussion was led by Co-president, Sue Claire Harper, Sandy Spence, Advocacy Chair, and Ellen Wasfi, state board member.



Councilman Fred Neil welcomed students to the City of Dover, refreshments were provided by the LWV. Students also spent time in Legislative Hall, taking selfies and having a good time. It was a very rewarding experience for all involved.

### Congratulations to the CIVICS COMMITTEE - Our series on the U.S. and Delaware Constitutions, entitled "**We're the WE in We the People**" is done!

Report by Carol Jones, Civic Committee Chair



Good news everybody! Our series on the US and Delaware Constitutions, entitled "We're the WE in We the People" is done – and up and running on YouTube. It's also on the State website and the Delaware Humanities website. DH funded a substantial portion of the cost, individuals the rest. I hope you will review at least some of the segments (they run from 20 to 30 minutes per segment) and that some of you will plan a series of meetings around the lectures that are presented on the video series. Each segment includes some learning points (leader guide material) as well as a reading list. One of the best things about this series is that it doesn't cost the users anything. The

League of Women Voters of Delaware is giving it away. It's part of the voter education we have promoted from our very beginnings.

We also completed a one-hour video lecture on the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. You know, the one that gave women the right to vote. It's called "The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment . . . Finally." It's also on YouTube.

The link to find both the series and the lecture on the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment is:  
[http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiaEJ\\_2n3fmqJwi9MnvSLcg](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiaEJ_2n3fmqJwi9MnvSLcg).

Alternatively, you can type in League of Women Voters of Delaware You Tube in the search box at the top of your internet screen and it will take you there.

As we reach out to educators and other interested organizations across the state, we'll keep you posted on what is being done with these videos. If you watch one or more, we'd like to have your feedback. Email contact address is: [sundiallee@aol.com](mailto:sundiallee@aol.com).

## Finance Committee Report

A final report from the outgoing chair of the Finance Committee . . . and an introduction to the new!

Our Vanguard account is beginning to show some decent profit. Established with money donated by members of the League, it's an endowment fund which we intend to grow by re-investment of profits and, over time, by additional donations from members and friends of the League. One day, hopefully not too far in the future, we'll be able to use profits from this fund to support League projects and operation expense – so that we're not so dependent on grants and donations. We have heard criticism that this money would be better used to finance current projects, but the Finance Committee feels that we need to be visionary and plan for the future. Keep that good thought in mind if you're looking to use an IRA account to balance out your taxes, or making plans for distribution of your estate.

We have terminated our account with Tax Chicks. Our new treasurer, Jill Itzkowitz, has come up with a plan using Google that will simplify the process and allow us to generate the reports we must have for our financial needs.



Les Stillson, Finance Chair

And finally, I am pleased to report that Les Stillson (LWVKC) a long time Committee member has agreed to chair the Finance Committee going forward; that Marj Johnson (LWVNCC) another long time member, has agreed to remain on the Committee; and Pat Petchel (LWVSC) has agreed to join the Committee. Pat has an extensive professional background in banking and will be a valued addition.

Ciao, y'all,  
Carol D. Jones

### A Report on the Status of Significant Bills Addressed by the L WVDE in 2019. The first year of the two-year 150<sup>th</sup> Session of the Delaware General Assembly<sup>1</sup> The Budget for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020 (pages 5-9)

All bills in this report were supported by the L WVDE Advocacy Corps unless otherwise noted.

#### Budget for July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020



L-R Sandy Spence, Advocacy Chair, Kyra Hoffner, Margaret McLoughlin, Ruth Bertrand

HB [225](#) is the state's operating budget for July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020. It totals \$4,451 billion, an increase of \$181.1 million over the current budget; \$62 million for one-time expenditures. A supplemental bill contains \$37.5 million to help local schools over the next three years with the costs of providing assistance to certain high-needs students. More than a third (35.3%) of the new budget -- \$1.572 billion -- is dedicated to funding Delaware's public schools.

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), which administers Medicaid, received \$1.234 billion or 27.7% of the total budget. Almost \$764.2 million is earmarked for Medicaid, an increase of 1.46% (\$11 million). The hike includes partial year funding (\$1.3 million) for a new dental benefit for adult Medicaid recipients, leaving only two states that lack such coverage. Full-year funding will cost \$5.2 million annually. [The L WVDE has been advocating for dental benefits for adults on Medicaid for several years.] The Governor signed this bill on June 25, leaving no late-night debates on June 30.

(Continued on page 6 *Significant Bills*)

<sup>1</sup> You can access details of each bill reported here by right clicking on the underlined bill number and then clicking on "Open Hyperlink." This will take you to the General Assembly's website. If you left click, this will not work!

(Continued from page 5 **Significant Bills**)

SB [180](#), the capital budget, or Bond Bill, finances state-related construction projects. It totals \$820 million a large amount partly due to the centralized nature of Delaware government. [In other states, counties and cities would bear some of the costs of highways, schools and other areas of infrastructure, often through property and sales taxes.] More than a quarter of the money in the bond fund comes from bonds floated by the state, with the general fund (income taxes, corporate fees, etc.) bringing in \$184 million and the Transportation Trust Fund accounting for most of the remainder. As reported in *Delaware Business Now!*, even with this level of spending and a high level of debt (by some measurements), Delaware will maintain its AAA bond rating. The top bond rating is bolstered by the current administration managing to sock away \$100 million. Final passage occurred late on June 30 and it was signed by the Governor in the early hours of July 1.

#### Voting and Elections – Jill Itzkowitz



HB [38](#), signed by the Governor on June 30, provides for ten days of early voting, including the last Saturday and Sunday before election, beginning in 2022. The requirement does not apply to municipal elections.

HB [73](#) is the first “leg” of a Constitutional amendment that would eliminate restrictions on absentee voting. It passed the House with only three negative votes but in the Senate, it failed to receive the two Republican votes needed. Recognizing the inability to get the needed votes, Sen. Bryan Townsend voted no, which gives him the ability to bring the bill up again in 2020 to try again to meet the two thirds majority required for constitutional amendments. It would then need to be passed again in the next Session in 2021-22.

HB [175](#) would authorize voting by mail by any qualified voter who requested a mail-in ballot from the Department of Elections, beginning in 2022. This bill was released from the House Administration Committee but died in the Appropriations Committee due to its cost for new equipment and personnel to administer.

SB [22](#) signed by the Governor on March 28, 2019, added Delaware to the list of states joining the National Popular Vote compact. When the number of states whose collective number of electors totals the 270 required to elect a President, this bill requires electors from those states to vote for the candidate with the most popular votes in the nation, regardless of the outcome in that state.

SB [121](#) makes necessary changes to Delaware’s election laws based on the State’s purchase of new voting machines and establishes auditing requirements for the machines. It passed the House and Senate in June and was signed by the Governor on July 30.



Governor Carney is signing HB 38 which allows for early voting bill. He is surrounded by legislators and election reform advocates.



Group of LWV lobbyists attending the signing of election bill: L-R Sandy Spence, Letty Diswood, Jack Young, Kyra Hoffner, Dustyn Thompson, (Network Delaware) and Peggy Schultz.

#### Education – Linda Barnett

HB [48](#) authorizes funding for basic special education for kindergarten through grade 3. State funding does occur for intensive/complex spec ed in these grades but current basic spec ed funding runs from 4th-12th grade. Partial funding is provided in FY18-19 Budget. This bill was released from the House Education Committee but died in the House Appropriations Committee.

(Continued on page 7 **Significant Bills**)

## Environment – Coralie Pryde

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HB [65](#) enables roof-mounted solar systems on private residences; an amendment requires notice to any HOA and gives option for conditions on installation. It passed both Houses and was awaiting signature as of August 9.

HB [130](#) expands existing at-store recycling program regarding single-use plastic bags. The existing requirements will continue, however stores subject to this program will now be limited to providing single-use plastic bags for only specific uses. The bill has passed both Houses and was signed by the Governor on July 29.

HB [200](#) establishes a framework and funding to enhance Delaware's efforts to clean up its contaminated and drinking water, and reduce flooding. It was released from the Natural Resources Committee but died in House Appropriations for lack of a revenue source to address the \$10 million needed over the next ten years.

HB [224](#) prohibits the use of single use paper bags and works to lessen consumption of single use bags in favor of having consumers utilize reusable bags. Introduced on June 14, this bill is in the House Natural Resources Committee awaiting action in 2020.

## Health Care – Joann Hasse

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HB [24](#) prohibits “clawbacks” whereby pharmacy benefits managers charge enough for prescription drugs to require a co-pay that is more than it would cost to pay without charging to the insurer. The insurer or pharmacy benefits manager keeps the difference. It was signed on June 17.

HB [79](#) requires restaurants to offer healthy beverages as the default beverage with a combination children’s meal that includes a drink sold at a unit price. The customer may choose a substitute or alternative beverage. This bill passed the House and Senate and was signed on July 17.

HB [140](#) permits terminally ill adults in Delaware to request and self-administer meds to end their life in a humane/dignified manner if both the individual's attending physician and a consulting physician agree on the individual's diagnosis and prognosis and believe the individual has decision-making capacity, is making an informed decision, and is acting voluntarily. There were insufficient votes to get the bill out of the House Health and Human Resources Committee. It will take a major effort to secure passage of this legislation in 2020.

HB [166](#) would increase childhood lead poisoning screenings to add testing at 2 years (currently only at 1 year); simplifies requirements and process for healthcare providers and clarifies insurance coverage. This bill generated opposition from national organizations that do not believe such testing is necessary. It was released from the House Health and Human Resources Committee but failed to be taken up in the full House.

Senate Substitute for SB [25](#) restricts access to tobacco products and tobacco substitutes (vapor products) to individuals under age 21. This bill was signed by the Governor on April 17, 2019 and takes effect 90 days after enactment. The League did not have a position on this bill but reports it because of its widespread interest and support by many individual members.

SB [35](#) ensures the Affordable Care Act’s core consumer protection provisions will remain in place during the uncertainty surrounding the ACA in light of recent court challenges, including the prohibition of preexisting condition provisions, guaranteed issue and availability of coverage, and permissible rating factors. This bill passed both Houses and was signed on August 7.

SB [92](#) authorizes dental care to all eligible adult Medicaid recipients, subject to a \$3 recipient copay. The total amount of  
(Continued on page 8 **Significant Bills**)

(Continued from page 7 **Significant Bills**)

individual's dental care assistance may not exceed \$1,000 per year, except that an additional \$1,500 may be authorized on an emergency basis through a review process established by the Department of Health and Social Services. As noted above, funding was provided in HB 225, the annual appropriations act. Ready for Governor's signature.

## Housing



HB [46](#) creates a Delaware Manufactured Home Owner Attorney Fund with \$0.50 monthly assessment per lot, administered by the Department of Justice to contract with an attorney or agency to provide legal representation and advocacy for manufactured home owners in enforcing existing rights in disputes with land owners. Signed by the Governor on June 25.

## Criminal Justice – Sandy Spence, Jack Young, Kyra Hoffner, Charlotte King



The League is a member of the Safe Justice Coalition that reviews and supports numerous bills to reform our system with a goal of reducing our prison population by 50 percent. Among the most significant bills are these:

*Jack Young*

HB [4](#), the James Johnson Sentencing Reform Act, named after the former state representative who dedicated his legislative career to criminal justice reform, would remove most drug offenses from being designated as "violent felonies," so they would no longer be subject to the enhanced charging and sentencing provisions as violent crimes; expand the ability to modify sentences for conditional release based on the rehabilitation of the offender, serious medical illness or infirmity, or prison overcrowding; and establish the Sentencing Accountability and Guidelines Commission. This major bill was introduced late (June 10). It cleared The House Judiciary Committee but remains to be considered in 2020.

HB [5](#) reforms concurrent and consecutive sentencing by providing sentencing judges with the discretion to [sentence](#) prison time concurrently when appropriate. Balancing public safety, it leaves the most egregious crimes in the code as mandatory consecutive sentences. It was signed on June 25.

House Substitute 1 for House Bill [10](#) would prohibit the prosecution of any child under the age of 12 and bar transferring a juvenile prosecution to the Superior Court unless the child is aged 16 or older, with the exception of first- and second-degree murder and rape. This bill was introduced late (June 18). It cleared the House Judiciary Committee but remains to be considered in 2020.

HB [63](#) creates the crime of "unsafe storage" when a person intentionally or recklessly stores or leaves loaded firearms where a minor or other person prohibited by law can access the firearm and the unauthorized person obtains the firearm. This language was a Senate compromise on the stronger "safe storage" bill passed by the House. It was signed on June 6, 2019.

HB [102](#) allows a person arrested or convicted of any crime, except a violent felony that was a direct result of being a victim of human trafficking may apply for a pardon or expungement or make a motion to vacate judgment. It was signed on June 20.

HB [124](#) would modify the impact an applicant's criminal history would have on their eligibility to obtain a plumber or HVAC technician license. Similar bills are being considered to modify eligibility for additional licenses. This one is scheduled for signing by the Governor on August 12.

HB [165](#) would have reinstated the death penalty in Delaware. It was not released from the House Judiciary Committee. LWWDE opposes the death penalty based on a strong LWVUS position. (Continued on page 9 **Significant Bills**)

(Continued from page 8 **Significant Bills**)



Kyra Hoffner

HB [196](#) would provide compensation to persons found to have been wrongfully imprisoned. One person in Delaware who served 38 years is now eligible. The bill was introduced late (June 10). It cleared the House Judiciary Committee but a compromise on its details among advocates could not be developed in time for it to be considered this year, so it remains to be considered in 2020.

Senate Substitute 1 for SB [37](#), signed on June 30, would expand the availability of expungement for adult criminal records of arrest and conviction. Funding of \$600,000 in FY 20; \$1million in '21 and '22 is provided in the appropriations bill. Could affect 70,000 Delawareans.

SB [39](#) would prohibit a court from suspending a driver's license for nonpayment of a fine, fee, cost, assessment, or restitution; also would prohibit a court from imposing an additional fee on a defendant for payments that are made at designated periodic intervals or late, or when probation is ordered to supervise a defendant's payment; also permits a court, before imposing a fine, fee, cost, or assessment, to consider a defendant's ability to pay the fine, fee, costs, or assessment, whether an adult or a juvenile; etc. This bill remains in the Senate Judicial Committee due to the estimated costs for additional staffing needed in state agencies of nearly \$2 million annually and a loss of nearly \$1 million to the Transportation Trust Fund.

SB [60](#) Recommended by the Human Trafficking Council, this bill clarifies that in order to be found guilty of prostitution the person must be 18 years or older. It provides that a child who engages in prostitution is presumed to be neglected or abused in order to receive services from the state and Family Court. It was signed by the Governor on June 20.

Senate Substitute for SB [68](#) would have banned assault weapons. When union members joined the gun lobby in opposition, the Senate Leadership failed to release the bill from the Executive Committee.

SB [70](#) would have banned magazines with a capacity to fire more than 15 rounds. When union members joined the gun lobby in opposition, the Senate Leadership failed to release the bill from the Executive Committee.

SB [82](#) would have required a permit to be eligible to purchase a firearm. When union members joined the gun lobby in opposition, the Senate Leadership failed to release the bill from the Executive Committee.

#### Social Policy – Linda Barnett



HB [1](#) is the second and final “leg” of Delaware’s Equal Rights Amendment on the basis of sex. It is now part of our Constitution.

HB [80](#) makes Delaware’s Earned Income Tax Credit refundable for working families whose income is too low for them to be eligible for a regular credit. It was released from the House Revenue and Finance Committee in March. Three amendments placed with the bill in June will, hopefully, satisfy concerns so that it may be enacted in 2020.

HB [252](#) would raise the minimum wage for tipped workers from \$2.23 to \$3.35 per hour. This level has not changed since 1983. The bill was introduced on June 27 and awaits action in the House Economic Development Committee in 2020. Unlike other minimum wage bills, this one does not increase state expenses.

SB [105](#) would increase the minimum wage by \$1 per hour each year until it reaches \$15 per hour. It will impact lower income state employees and various substitute positions within the State’s public schools and charter schools and is projected to cost the state over \$1 million in Fiscal year 2020 and significantly more in future years. It was released from the Senate Labor Committee but remains in the Senate Finance Committee.

## NEWS FROM ONE OF OUR LOCAL LEAGUES

The League of Women Voters of Sussex County, Delaware had a wonderful time at our Fun Lunch on July 26th at the Baywood Country Club in Millsboro, DE. We enjoyed meeting our new friends, Susan Gees, Karen Borges, Ginny Palmer,



Alice Blannett, Bruce Bolander, Joan Sundstrom, Kate Renner, Latoya McGrevy, Ianthy Prawl, and Alicia Jones. Several members presented useful information to everyone. First, Martha Redmond spoke excitedly about the 19th Amendment celebration plans which sparked a lot of interest at her table. Next, Maria Fletcher shared a moving story regarding her experience with Observer Corps, followed by Pat Newcomb, who gave an overview of all the opportunities to serve. All the guests were very interested in joining the League; three joined on the spot!

In addition, Janet Ambrose chair of Social Policy has an upcoming forum with Susan Bunting, Secretary of Education and her Department's Associate Secretary of Operations, Chuck Longfellow. For an in-depth report contact Janet.

Following the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment Celebration Committee's August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, chair Martha Redmond can fill you in on the latest plans. Contact Martha at [marthr27@hotmail.com](mailto:marthr27@hotmail.com).

## Will Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Tankers be Coming Down the Delaware Soon?

By Coralie Pryde, LWVDE Environmental Committee Co-Chair



Coralie Pryde is taking part in a demonstration.

On June 12 the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC: the governors of NY, NJ, PA, DE and the US Army Corps of Engineers) unanimously approved a request to allow a port in Gibbstown N.J. (across the Delaware River from Chester, Pa.) owned by Delaware River Partners LLC to be deepened so that it can accommodate tankers used for shipping natural gas products including liquefied natural gas (LNG). These products of fracking in the Marcellus shale will be brought to Gibbstown via truck from a planned gas liquefaction plant in Wyalusing, Pa.

The DRBC decision means that this particular dock will likely be the first to export LNG using the Delaware River, but it is unlikely to be the last. The Army Corps of Engineers is currently examining a plan to add a second dock at Gibbstown that could simultaneously serve two tankers. In the long run, there appears to be a plan to enlarge an underground storage cavern in Gibbstown, once owned by DuPont, for storage of propane and butane.

The parent company of Delaware River Partners, Fortress Transportation and Infrastructure Investors LLC plans to spend \$450 million on building a major rail terminal to bring the natural gas products to the port.\* These products can include liquefied natural gas (LNG), which is primarily methane and natural gas liquids (NGL), which contain a variety of hydrocarbons ranging from ethane to pentane, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which is primarily propane and butane.

The port at Marcus Hook , Pa. is already a major foreign export hub for ethane, using tankers with a capacity of 12,500 cubic meters (or about 3.3 million gallons of chilled (liquefied) ethane. It also has a growing business in exporting LPG on taker vessels. These natural gas products are being brought to Marcus Hook from the Marcellus/Utica shale regions via the Mariner East 2 Pipeline.

(Continued on page 11 **LNG Tankers**)

\* "The 'hidden' plan to remake an old dynamite factory near Philly into a major gas export terminal", Andrew Maykuth, Philadelphia Inquirer, June 9, 2019. <https://www.inquirer.com/business/energy/philly-lng-export-terminal-delaware-river-fortress-20190609.html>

*(Continued from page 10 LNG Tankers)*

Clearly, a lot of money can be made from these exports. But what are the downsides? Are there safety issues? Will there be more jobs for Delawareans? Are there environmental concerns?

### **Do Delawareans Want LNG Tankers on the Delaware River?**

In 2006, Delawareans opposed an LNG import terminal at Crown Point, N.J. because of the danger of a massive fireball that might be triggered by an accident or a terrorist attack. As a result, our legislature outlawed LNG terminals in Delaware. Across the U.S., ports that are handling LNG or other volatile hydrocarbons are located in sparsely populated areas and away from other ship traffic. In 2006, LNG tankers were docking in Boston in a port that was not far away from the main port. Extraordinary precautions were taken to prevent any possible terrorist attacks: Roads and bridges were closed, all other ship traffic was banned and the LNG tanker was escorted by several guard vessels and a helicopter. Since then, Boston's LNG terminal has been moved offshore where it is 13 miles away from any part of the mainland.

Now Governor Carney has agreed that it's fine to send ships carrying LNG past Wilmington and New Castle, under the Delaware Memorial Bridge and past the Salem nuclear plant. Did he discuss this issue with the legislators that banned our ports from importing LNG? What do the legislators currently representing districts bordering the river think? Do they believe that there is no longer any possibility of terroristic attacks on ships carrying explosive cargo traveling slowly down the main channel of the Delaware River?

Right now, we don't have the slightest idea how these questions might be answered. Governor Carney has never publicly discussed how he came to his decision to support transport of LNG through Delaware's waters. Our newspapers have been mum on this issue, while New Jersey and Pennsylvania papers have commented extensively on the secrecy and extraordinary speed involved in bringing this issue before the DRBC. Delaware won't benefit from exporting LNG, but it will face the possibility of fires and explosions resulting from accidental or deliberate damage to LNG tankers.

### **LNG is Not the Only Problem**

As noted above, other hydrocarbons such as ethane and propane are already being transported down the Delaware from Marcus Hook. Depending on the final language used in the Coastal Zone Conversion Permit Act, Delaware might allow export of similar materials. Is this a good idea?

The shipping industry appears to be rather blasé about shipping these materials, saying they are just like the oil and gasoline they ship everywhere. Nevertheless, deadly fires and explosions have occurred when propane/butane mixtures have been spilled during transfer operations. Ethane presents special problems because of its extreme volatility. In the event of accidental or intentional damage to tankers that results in leaks, vapors of ethane and the higher hydrocarbons will collect in a cloud over the river and its banks, where they can be ignited by sparks or even the heat of an engine in a passing ship or car.

Common sense suggests that shipments of NGL and LPG be treated with the same degree of care accorded to LNG. Is that the case currently? Do state agencies have any oversight on this issue, or is it solely up to the Coast Guard?

### **More Jobs?**

If Delaware decides to allow export of natural gas products (excluding LNG) from any of its northern Coastal Zone ports, it could bring a few more jobs to the Wilmington area. However, we need to consider what will happen to the operations at the Port of Wilmington if exports of gas products start occurring on an almost daily basis. Safety concerns should dictate that the main channel of the Delaware be closed to all northbound vessels while a tanker is traveling south. This could interfere with deliveries of produce to the Wilmington port, causing significant job losses there.

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### **Environmental Issues**

Shipping of LNG and other liquefied gases is generally considered less of an environmental hazard than shipping oil, because leaked gas will evaporate, leaving no toxic residue. The major environmental issue is that exportation of fracked gas products from the Marcellus shale will revive an industry that was essentially moribund. The high volume of natural gas in the U.S. has driven prices down to the point that fracking operations are not profitable. Exporting these products around the world can bring in higher prices. At the same time, it can encourage countries to stay dependent on fossil fuels, rather than switching to renewables that will, in the long run, be both cheaper and more environmentally friendly.

### **Do Delawareans Have a Say on this Issue?**

Fighting the fossil fuel industry is definitely an uphill battle. Groups in other states have formed to fight the decision by the DRBC. Delawareans haven't done so yet because so few of us are even aware of the situation. A meeting will be held in mid-August in which Tracy Carluccio of the Delaware Riverkeeper will update us on the situation and talk about next steps. If you (or your organization) are interested in being active on this issue, please contact Coralie Pryde at [coraliepryde@gmail.com](mailto:coraliepryde@gmail.com) to receive information on the time and place for the meeting.

### **THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS TO THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DELAWARE, Inc.**

We cannot function without all our dedicated volunteers who serve on our board, committees, and those who advocate, educate, and lobby. Of special mention is Carol Jones who organized and led both the Civics Project (now on YouTube) and the lecture on the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, as well as the following contributors:

All Saints Parish Thrift Shop, Rita Corbett, Delaware Humanities Forum for Civics Project, Letty Diswood, Joann Hasse, Marjorie Johnson, Carol Jones, Martha Redmond, Sandy Spence, Ellen Wasfi.

(Note: Those who made a cash contribution to the LWVDE at convention 2019 are not listed here. Please email [lwvde@comcast.net](mailto:lwvde@comcast.net) so that your name appears in the fall issue of this newsletter. Listed are contributors since the last newsletter spring 2019)

### **CALENDAR**

Wednesday, August 14, 2017 9:30 - noon	<b>Legislative Hall (House Majority Caucus Room)</b> <a href="http://411legislativeavenue.com">411 Legislative Avenue</a> Dover, DE 19901	<b>Advocacy Corps meeting.</b> Contact Committee Chair Sandy Spence for details (302-841-2882) or <a href="mailto:sandyspence325@gmail.com">sandyspence325@gmail.com</a>
Tuesday, September 3, 2019 11 am - noon	Sheridan's Irish Pub 44 W. Commerce Street, Smyrna, DE 19977	<b>Election Committee meeting.</b> Contact Jill Itzkowitz for details (302-650-6862) <a href="mailto:jillitzkowitz@gmail.com">jillitzkowitz@gmail.com</a>
Wednesday, September 11, 2019, 2:00 - 4 pm	<b>Legislative Hall (House Majority Caucus Room)</b> <a href="http://411legislativeavenue.com">411 Legislative Avenue</a> Dover, DE 19901	<b>LWVDE Alternative Voting Methodologies Study Team</b> Does this sound like something you'd enjoy? Lend us your brainpower! <u>Contact</u> Kim Wells or Jill Itzkowitz if you are interested in participating.
Wednesday, September 11, 2019 5-7:30 pm	<b>Kent County Public Library</b> 497 South Red Haven Lane Dover, Delaware 19901	<b>LWVDE Board meeting.</b> Note: No food or drinks allowed in meeting room. <b>LWVDE Board Meeting.</b> Board meeting for the Delaware state-level. RSVP to Carol Jones <a href="mailto:sundiallee@aol.com">sundiallee@aol.com</a> .

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