



IN LEAGUE REPORTER

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May 2020

LEAGUE FILES LAWSUIT TO EXPAND ABSENTEE VOTING

To protect the right to vote in 2020, the League of Women Voters of Missouri has joined the NAACP and several individual voters in filing a lawsuit in Cole County that seeks a declaratory judgment that physical distancing and fear of contracting COVID-19 are valid reasons to request an absentee ballot in Missouri. The suit also seeks injunctive relief preventing local election officials from refusing such ballots or requiring them to be notarized.

“Missouri must expand and protect access to the ballot in these unprecedented times,” says LWVMO President Evelyn Maddox. “We want any Missouri voter who is social distancing in compliance with CDC guidelines to be able to request an absentee ballot in 2020 and return it without a notary seal.”

“Inconsistencies between voting jurisdictions violate the equal protection clause,” says Denise Lieberman, General Counsel for the Missouri Voter Protection Coalition. “Fear of contracting the coronavirus should be a valid reason to request an absentee ballot. Since election authorities can verify voter signatures, they should be told to accept all ballots without a notary seal this year. Absentee voting either by mail or in person will reduce the crowds at polling places and make them safer for other voters in 2020 elections.”



The state has a new electronic notary system, but the Secretary of State’s office indicates that it won't work for absentee ballots.



Voters in every state senate district approved Clean Missouri because they want fair maps and a stronger voice in government.”

- Louise Wilkerson

League of Women Voters of Metro St. Louis
Co-President



VOTERS WANT FAIR MAPS

The House General Rules Committee held a public hearing on SJR38 on April 30 even while the state was under a stay-at-home-order. Members then voted 9-4 along party lines to approve this resolution that asks voters to replace the redistricting reforms voters approved in 2018 with a system that allows extreme gerrymandering.

The Senate approved SJR38 on Feb. 15. The House is expected to take it up the first week of May. The League urges members who want a fair and transparent redistricting process to contact their representative.

In written testimony, LWVMO President Evelyn Maddox asked committee members, "Have you asked your constituents if they want a ballot measure to drop Amendment 1’s independent demographer, give political parties more power in redistricting, hide the data used to draw district maps, or set a weaker race equity standard?" She said, "These are unprecedented times, but please do not support this effort to allow unprecedented racial and partisan gerrymandering in Missouri.”

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE



We sincerely hope and pray that you and your loved ones are safe and healthy. Undoubtedly, this is a very challenging and sobering time, but we must maintain our resolve to survive, support each other, get through this pandemic, and continue the League’s important work.

Even though the Metro STL office has been closed your leadership team has continued to work hard to keep us moving forward with the help of Jean Dugan and Chantal Hoffsten. Smart use of modern technology has enabled us to continue meeting, communicating, planning, and implementing as we work from home.

As you can imagine, it has been necessary to change plans and invent new ways to get things accomplished. Many adjustments have been necessary at all three levels of the League. Most changes have been explained in other sections of this newsletter. Here are a few highlights.

At the local level, with the cancelation of Trivia Night, our fundraising has been negatively affected. Fortunately, some members who had already paid for tickets decided to donate the amounts paid instead of asking for refunds. We are very, very appreciative of their donations; however, their donations do not equal what we would have taken in at the event. Therefore, we look forward to Give STL on May 7th to bring in more dollars. Please think of the league next Wednesday!

Our annual meeting has been rescheduled for late May and it will be accomplished through use of Zoom, a cloud-based software platform used for teleconferences. You will receive simple instructions about how to participate from the comfort of your home. Please participate; we have important business to take care of such as approving a budget and electing directors and a couple of officers.

We plan to continue moderating candidate forums for the June local elections using Zoom technology. Unfortunately, but necessarily, voter registration is on hold for now. We are looking at how we can continue voter education activities using virtual technology.

As you probably know, the LWV Missouri Spring Conference would have been held in early May this year. It has now been rescheduled for August 29. Details will be forthcoming.

You probably also know that the much anticipated LWV National Convention scheduled to take place in Washington D.C. in late June will now be virtual. This is too bad because League members throughout the nation were really looking forward to a jubilant convention and celebration. The business of the convention will still take place electronically, however, and registration fees already paid have been refunded.

If you have questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact your co-presidents, board members and officers, and Jean Dugan, Executive Director. Best wishes for your health and safety. The League continues!

—Nancy J. Miller and Louise Wilkerson, Co-Presidents

2020 LWVMSTL OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents: Nancy J. Miller, Louise T. Wilkerson
First Vice President: Angie Dunlap
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Directors: Angie Dunlap, Eve Golden, Joan Hubbard, Meredith Langlitz, Irma Ruebling, Jennifer Rushing, Anne Sappington, Sydell Shayer, Catherine Stenger, Carol Strawbridge, Sue Williams
Editors: Sherri Pogue, Jean Dugan

—continued from page 1, Fair Maps

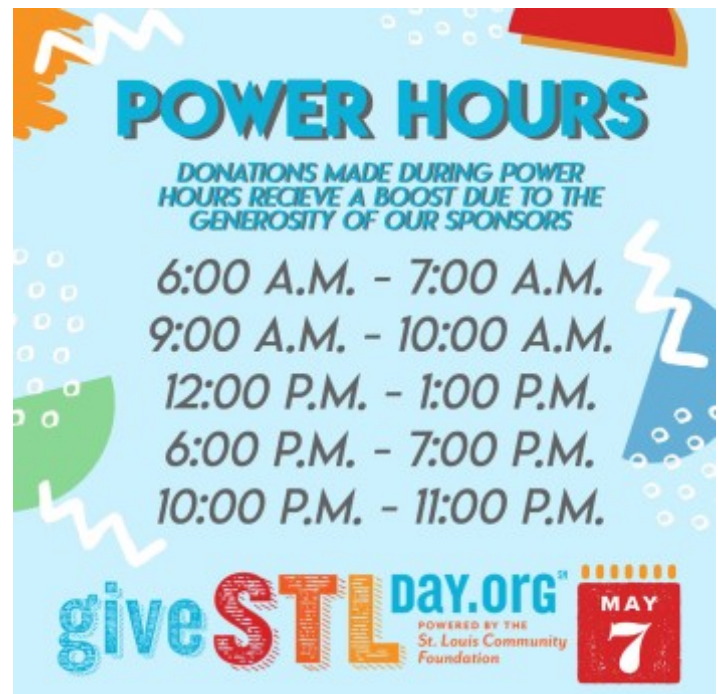
Election reform advocates say SJR38 would allow extreme partisan gerrymandering, weaken legal protection for communities of color, hide the data used to draw legislative districts, and make it harder to challenge unfair maps.

Politicians and lobbyists in Jefferson City should be spending their time helping Missourians with real problems during this terrible time, not working to undermine their votes,” Maddox said in a recent action alert. “It’s unconscionable that our legislators are focused on overruling the will of the people during a national pandemic.”

The Clean Missouri campaign issued the following statement: “Missourians are sick and dying, and our economy is in chaos. Our leaders should be finding ways to manage the pandemic and pull together, not advancing a plan to overturn the will of Missouri voters and put a radical gerrymandering scheme into the state constitution.

“That politicians in Jefferson City have been working so hard to overturn the will of their voters has always been outrageous — but trying to ram this extreme politician-protection measure through right now, when the public literally can't participate in the legislative process — is down-right scandalous.”

Call 844-983-1871 or 573-751-2000 to express your support of fair maps. Urge your legislator to oppose attempts to bring up and pass SJR38 or other legislation that goes against the will of their constituents.



MAY 7 IS GIVE STL DAY

LWV of Metro St. Louis is again participating in Give StL Day. The description at givelstlday.org/lwvstl says:

In these extraordinary times, the work of the League of Women Voters has never been more important. We protect voters by advocating for free, fair, and accessible elections. We register thousands of voters each year, including students and newly naturalized citizens. We also educate thousands of voters in seven Missouri counties.

Information on local candidates and ballot measures for the June 2 election is now available online at VOTE411.org. Issues of the print Voters Guide will be published by the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in late May. Many across the St. Louis region look to the League for unbiased, thorough, and accurate information prepared by our grassroots volunteers before each election.

The League of Women Voters of St. Louis was founded in November 1919, almost a year before the 19th Amendment was ratified in August 1920. Membership is open to anyone over the age of 16.

FOOD WASTE - WHY IT MATTERS

"Today, an estimated one-third of all the food produced in the world goes to waste. That's equal to about 1.3 billion tons of fruits, vegetables, meat, dairy, seafood, and grains that either never leave the farm, get lost or spoiled during distribution, or are thrown away in hotels, grocery stores, restaurants, schools, or home kitchens. It could be enough calories to feed every undernourished person on the planet. However, wasted food isn't just a social or humanitarian concern - it's an environmental one. When we waste food, we also waste all the energy and water it takes to grow, harvest, transport, and package it. In addition, if food goes to the landfill and rots, it produces *methane* - a greenhouse gas even more potent than carbon dioxide. About 11% of all the greenhouse gas emissions that come from the food system could be reduced if we stopped wasting food. In the U.S. alone, the production of lost or wasted food generates the equivalent of 37 million cars' worth of greenhouse gas emissions." (Holt, K., World Wildlife Fund)



Methane is a potent greenhouse gas 28 to 36 times more effective than carbon dioxide (CO₂) at trapping heat in the atmosphere over a 100-year period. When food waste ends up in landfills, it undergoes an aerobic (with oxygen) decomposition, during which little methane is generated, but then typically, within less than a year, anaerobic conditions are

established and methane-producing bacteria begins to decompose the waste and generate methane. In short, food waste with methane emissions is greatly accelerating the *rate* of climate change.

Also alarming, according to ReFed, a multi-stakeholder nonprofit organization committed to reducing U.S. food waste, the problem has more than tripled since 1960 and grown by 50% since 1990. Forty percent of all food in the U.S. goes to waste somewhere in the supply chain: Farms: \$15B; Manufacturers: \$2B; Consumer-Facing Businesses: \$57B; Homes: \$144B. (ReFed, 2016)

Tips for Each of Us

Before shopping, plan and buy only what you need. Take inventory of what you have on hand and think of meals that would combine easily with these.

- Use your freezer more. Cooking and freezing food - especially produce - before it goes bad is a great food saver. Remember food safety. <https://www.fda.gov/media/74435/downloads>
- Be creative with leftovers. Websites like *Supercook.com* and *Bigoven.com* help you search for recipes based on the ingredients you already have.
- Don't shy away from "ugly produce" that is on sale. It's perfectly fine in smoothies, sauces, and soup stock.

Talk it up. Preventing food waste is the most effective way to reduce its impact on the planet. Awareness is a good first step and according to ReFed, educating consumers about food waste could prevent 2.3 million tons of greenhouse gas, i.e., No to Landfills!

—Mary Archer, Environmental Quality Committee

Environmental Quality Committee is currently conducting all business by email. Watch for the next meeting, once restrictions are lifted. Questions can be forwarded to Mickey Croyle erwincroyle@charter.net.

One of the many wonderful traditions of the League of Women Voters is supporting your League while you are a member and in the future. We all know that it is only through the generosity of our members and friends that we are able to continue our mission.

This past year has been one of highs and lows. The Gala last November succeeded beyond our expectations on many levels. Kudos to Executive Director Jean Dugan for orchestrating the memorable event. But then the new year brought warnings of difficult days ahead with the arrival of Covid-19. This unpredictable virus has affected the Metro League in many ways. We were forced to cancel our Trivia Night, and the reception, tour and book signing with Dr. Caroline Jefferson-Jenkins at the Missouri History Museum this weekend; now set for September 13.



Numerous candidate Forums and Voter Registrations were cancelled, some are being rescheduled as virtual events. Our national convention, planned for Washington D.C. in June, is also being reinvented as a virtual event. The upside to missing all of this is our newfound skill at Zooming. We can attend meetings, family dinners, cocktail hour and more in this virtual world.

The real world still does exist and in the League world that means we are still advocating, writing letters, and planning for an upcoming election with email reminders and media notices. Our office is still in Brentwood and we plan to be there when it is safe to return. Especially important right now are the financial decisions we make. The bills of our “business” are like all the others – they continue to arrive and expect to be paid. We apply for grants, including the Small Business Administration’s PPP grant, for which our super able office assistant Chantal Hoffsten applied and gained for us last week.

But right now we are especially grateful for our members, former members, officers, and their families for recognizing the importance of the work we do and continuing to support us. Our mission to register, educate, energize and protect voters and our Democracy is recognized as necessary for the future of our communities, state and country. Without this support we would be out of business. Over the past year, we have received generous gifts from the estates of Louis Bliss and Ella Brown, and many current members.

— Nancy J. Miller, Co-President



League members Angie Dunlap, Dorothy Lockard and Nancy Pawol met with Rep. Judy Morgan (D-24) on March 11 and thanked her for sponsoring NPV legislation.

Fox will be facilitating developing a strategic plan for the committee via email. I will share our plan as soon as it is completed.

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE UPDATE

As you know we have not been successful and getting a hearing on the National Popular Vote bill in this Missouri legislative session. But filing bills start in December before the 2021 session begins. We will be ready to request legislators who we have identified as supporters of NPV to commit to file the bill.

The NPV committee decided to take this spring and summer to work on a strategic plan. Dorothy

—Sydell Shayer, NPV Committee Chair

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REFLECTIONS

We should get information soon on the LWVUS virtual convention. While it's disappointing for those of us who planned to attend this meeting June 25-28 in Washington, DC, more League members may now be able to participate.

The League now has a Zoom account. In May, several candidate forums are going virtual using Zoom. Last week, I participated in a conference call with the Clean Missouri Coalition, a Zoom meeting with the Missouri Voter Protection Coalition, and several webinars.

The League's new web site has new capabilities to explore. The online membership guide is open to any member who sets up an account (see page 3). We'll also have print guides available at the next in-person membership meeting, whenever that might occur. Technology is making it possible for the League's work to continue even with St. Louis County closed for business due to the coronavirus. I still look forward to seeing the office buzzing with volunteers again soon.

—Jean Dugan

METRO LEAGUE GETS PPP LOAN

The League of Women Voters of Metro St. Louis received a forgivable loan in the first round of the Small Business Administration's Payroll Protection Program (PPP). The League went through Carrollton Bank for the federal funding to cover two months of payroll as well as some rent and utilities.

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Congress approved the PPP loans to ease the payroll burden of small businesses, including nonprofit organizations with less than 500 employees. The loan is completely forgivable if employees are kept on payroll.

LWVUS Virginia Kase encouraged all eligible Leagues to apply. As far as we can tell, no other state or local League qualified for and obtained a PPP loan in the first round. Thanks to office assistant Chantal Hoffsten for doing the necessary paperwork while working from home.

The office closed on March 23 and won't reopen until St. Louis county lifts stay-at-home orders. New physical-distancing guidelines will be in place.



The Metro board's last two meetings have been held on Zoom —with Anne Sappington sharing documents from Maine.

REMINDER: LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

Thank you to those who have already renewed their League membership. I hope that everyone will renew your membership for the 2020-2021 year. The League’s work of serving voters is so important now with questions concerning safe voting during this big election year. That work is not possible without your membership to keep us going.

Note, as the office is currently closed, we will not be sending out a paper renewal reminder until after the social distancing requirement is relaxed.

A person can renew their membership online at LWVSTL.org. Click “Join,” or send a check to the office. Yearly dues are \$75 for an individual and \$30 for each additional person in that household. Students are \$30/yr.

—Angie Dunlap

LWVSTL WEBSITE HAS A NEW LOOK!



Our new League website is live for public use. It has lots of helpful content like the old website, but also has a “members only” page. An online member directory is viewable on the “members” page. If you want access to the member directory you need a personal username and password. Please email Angie at membership@lwvstl.org to get you set up for that access.

CALENDAR

June 25-27: 54th National LWVUS Convention, Expect more information soon on this virtual meeting.

August 26: 100th Anniversary of Women’s Suffrage.

September 13: Beyond the Ballot exhibit at Missouri History Museum, event with Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins.

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS

Erma Berry Bridgeton, MO 63044 berrymamiermi642@gmail.com	Mary Ann Gatto-Bingham & Barry Bingham Lake St. Louis, MO 63367 mgattobingham@gmail.com	Madelyn Gray St. Louis, MO 63105 madelyngray1@gmail.com
Donna Schwarz University City, MO 63130 donna.schwarz@yahoo.com	Catherine Smith St. Charles, MO 63301 cataiplesmith@gmail.com	Rosalind Turner St. Louis, MO 63130 msroz54@gmail.com

MEMORIALS



North County Leaguer Martha Panetti (pictured at left) passed away on March 27. The date for a memorial has not been set.

Barbara Yanow Lichtenstein and Caryl Yanow recently gave a donation in their mother’s honor. Elaine Yanow was President of the St. Louis City League from 1969-1970. Her daughter remembers helping her campaign at the Flynn Park School polling place with a sandwich board when she was a child in support of nonpartisan judges and Bi-state Transit issues.



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Hazel Hunkins is pictured second from the left on the White House picket line in February 1917 with a University of Missouri sash. After teaching chemistry at the University of Missouri in Columbia, she became active in the National Woman’s Party. She was one of several suffragists who was arrested and went on a hunger strike while serving 30 days in Occaquan Jail.

This photo is included in the League’s Speakers Bureau presentation on Women’s Suffrage in Missouri.