

GETTING READY FOR THE LEAGUE'S 100TH ANNIVERSARY

The LWVUS Board is shaping up plans for our 100th Birthday Celebration in 2020 and Charleston Area League Member and LWVUS Board Member Julie Hussey is leading the planning committee. Our 100th year anniversary — February 14, 2020 — is part of a big year that includes our 54th national convention, the 100th anniversary of ratification of the 19th amendment, the 2020 Census, and a major national election.

LWVUS is developing an online and paid advertising campaign to celebrate the diversity and passion of the League's members. It is also setting fundraising and advocacy goals and looking for commemorative items and even a possible advocacy day to meet these goals.

South Carolina League members met at LEAD in Columbia in January to brainstorm what could be done locally or organized by the state to celebrate. We recognized the 100th Anniversary as an opportunity to: increase visibility; raise

money; share our history; honor founders, members, or outstanding people in our communities; bring in new members; and bring in partners such as colleges, high schools, libraries and arts organizations. We looked at ideas such as Women's Equality Day celebrations with period costumes, a theater event with a local theater group, a concert, a birthday party, or programs featuring local women (e.g., women in the military).

Ideas to increase visibility

- Make a video
- Sell merchandise (e.g., badges with 100 years, t-shirts)
- Library or traveling exhibits with photos honoring women
- Give out birthday cake at festivals or local events
- Collect women's stories
- Participate in parades
- Have mayors issue proclamations
- Hold an anniversary poster contest
- Hold an anniversary essay contest among high school students

Ideas to raise money

- House parties with a message and a specific "ask"
 - Arrange viewing of Iron Jawed Angels
 - Gala (honor League leaders, give community awards)
- Julie Hussey and Nancy Williams



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**May 4-5, 2019:
Convention!**

Our biennial state convention will be held this year in Charleston.

PLEASE SAVE THESE DATES!

Co-President's Message

There is an old Chinese curse/blessing, “May you live in interesting times.” We surely do and they are exciting times for the South Carolina League. We had a great turnout for LEAD on January 19th and there is lots of energy around good government issues like voting technology and redistricting and regulatory reform with the League as a respected voice in all three. Our shift in focus to our core mission of being the good government people was long overdue. It gives us a lot of credibility and reduces any perception of partisanship. Yes, we care about outcomes in education, environment, child welfare, transportation, and criminal justice, but we need good process in order to make it more likely to get good outcomes. We need legislators who will listen to their constituents — the main goal of redistricting. We need elections to be conducted fairly, which is why we are focused on getting the electoral equipment right, along with other voting issues like early voting and adequate staff at the polls. We need our regulatory authorities to do their job of representing all of the stakeholders, not just stockholders at the expense of consumers and/or the environment. We need ethics reform and better campaign finance disclosure so we know who is working for whom. We need to work together to make these good things happen. We collaborate

with a number of other organizations on issues of common interest, and our focus is always on the good government dimension of issues. Reproductive rights is not just a reproductive rights issue; it’s a first amendment issue. The Duke Energy rate hike proposal, which we are working on with a coalition of groups including NAACP, AARP, Applesseed, and several environmental groups, is an environmental issue, a fairness and poverty issue, but it is also a regulatory reform and transparency issue. Ban the ban (plastic bags) is an environmental issue, but it is also a home rule issue. Any issue relating to elections, like redistricting and voting technology, is a good government issue by definition.

In order to work more effectively, the State Board has taken several important steps. Last summer’s board reorganization greatly strengthened our social media presence and created two new positions to serve local Leagues better — the national issues director and state issues director, who are working with local Leagues on education and advocacy beyond the statehouse and the core good government issues. Recently, we sent out a fundraising letter and raised enough money to hire a part time administrative assistant to help us with the flow of paperwork. A second step was to respond to some



inquiries about starting a League in Aiken, and with some solid groundwork by VP for Membership Joyce Franklin, it is happening. They will be joining a large influx of new members in our local Leagues elsewhere over the last two years.

As the League of Women Voters approaches the start of its 100th anniversary year, we are in good shape. We know what our mission is and are prepared to tackle the challenges. And we are happy that you-all are a part of it.

See you at convention in Charleston!

— Holley Ulbrich, Co-president

In Memoriam

Theodis Parsons Palmer, wife, working mother, educator, businesswoman, church leader, social worker, administrator, advocate for women and their families, activist for civil rights and social change and a visionary transitioned Thursday, January 3, 2019, at the Agape Hospice and Suites in Lexington, South Carolina. Mrs. Palmer was the first president of the Sumter League of Women Voters and the first Black woman to serve on the SC State Board of League of Women Voters.

— Dee Woodward
President, Sumter League

Keep in touch between SC Voter Issues!

LWVSC regularly communicates news, announcements, policies, legislative developments, and more through email, Facebook, and our website.

Email: Watch for emails (about twice a month) from **LWV of South Carolina.**

If you do not receive these, please let us know (send to lwwsc.cml@gmail.com).

Facebook: Follow our page **League of Women Voters of South Carolina.**

There are daily posts about breaking developments and the page gets a lot of traffic. “Liking” and “sharing” posts helps spread the word.

Website: our website lwwsc.org is kept up to date; check it regularly.

Don't miss out on all the things LWVSC has going on!

EDUCATION AT THE FOREFRONT

After years of neglect or lip service, public education appears to be the dominant legislative issue of the 2019 session.

Teacher salary levels will be at the center of the debate, driven by data indicating a growing teacher shortage in South Carolina caused by retiring public school teachers and fewer young people entering the profession.

Using teacher shortage statistics, elected officials and public education associations have called for increases in teacher salaries, some promoting an across-the-board pay raise of 5 percent; others, increases to the Southeastern or national levels.

In both his inaugural address and State of the State, Gov. Henry McMaster listed teacher salaries and school improvement as an important component of his legislative priorities, a departure from the past two governors, who rarely

included teachers and public education as gubernatorial priorities.

The school improvement proposal most likely to receive the most attention by lawmakers is that of House Speaker Jay Lucas (R-Darlington). His plan recommends a \$270 million budget increase allocated to increasing teacher salaries. In addition, the Lucas plan would raise the salaries of first year teachers from \$32,000 to \$35,000. South Carolina not only has the lowest starting teacher pay in the Southeast, but also the fifth lowest in the nation, trailed only by Oklahoma, Montana, Missouri and Colorado. Senate Education Committee Chairman Greg Hembree (R-Horry) has filed a companion bill to Lucas' legislation, allowing the proposal to move forward simultaneously through the committee process in both chambers.

Also, actively supporting a 5 percent across-the-board teacher pay increase is

State Education Supt. Molly Spearman, the Palmetto State Teachers Association, and the South Carolina Education Association.

No doubt the most controversial education issue will be consolidating the state's 81 school districts. Long considered administratively top heavy, advocates for consolidating districts with small student populations argue that it will be a cost saving move, especially in rural, sparsely populated districts. However, those who oppose district consolidation contend that it will erode community identity, important in many small towns. To track H.3759, the Lucas school improvement bill, go to www.Statehouse.gov.

For information on the state's teacher shortage, reports by the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement at Winthrop University can be found at: www.cerra.org/supply-and-demand.html.

— *Sally Huguley, LWVSC Education Chair*

MAKING OUR REGULATORY SYSTEM WORK

As the saga of V. C. Summer wraps up, we have learned a lot about how well our regulatory system works; we have made some contributions to improving future accountability; and we have discovered issues that remain to be addressed.

On December 21, 2018, the Public Service Commission (PSC) released its ruling in the dockets arising from the failure of the project and the subsequent proposal from Dominion Energy of Virginia to acquire SCANA and its subsidiary, SCE&G. That ruling put continuing electric rates at about the same level as the temporary rate established by the General Assembly. The real story is in what is **not** there.

During the 2018 session we testified repeatedly in the General Assembly for reform of the mission of the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS), given the impossible task of protecting ratepayers, promoting economic development, and monitoring the financial integrity of utilities. The General Assembly agreed with us that the responsibility of ORS should be **to protect the interest of ratepayers**. Accordingly, ORS presented the PSC with an impressive body of evidence regarding the imprudent management of the project and the need for specific protections for ratepayers going forward. Unfortunately, the PSC was unwilling to make even the most basic determination that SCE&G had

acted imprudently. After most intervenors — including the Speaker of the House — filed petitions for reconsideration, the PSC fixed that. They did not adopt some of the important future protections.

The job of reforming the regulatory process in South Carolina is not over. PSC members and legislators overseeing the system should not be subject to undue influence from the utility industry. We must keep the focus on accountability to the citizens of the state so long as ratepayers are captive customers to monopolies.

— *Lynn S. Teague
LWVSC Lobbyist and
VP for Issues and Action*

LEAD: IT WAS ALL EDU



We don't turn our backs on anyone; we're always educating voters!



Co-president Christe McCoy-Lawrence



Welcoming attendees at the registration table.

More than 80 members representing 10 local leagues attended the LWVSC League Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD) on Saturday, Jan. 19, 2019. The gathering included a panel discussion, animated workshops, and a lot of networking.

Kate Kennedy, Chief Development Officer for LWVUS, started the day with a report on the status of LWVUS (growth: excellent; fund-raising: not so good). She identified the positive things the League does, to provide reasons why it “pays” to give to the League. For instance, League members go to areas where voter registration drives are not normally scheduled. The LWV holds candidate forums and provides candidate information to the public through VOTE411.org. VOTE411 had over five million visitors this year, a 25 percent increase over 2016, even though 2016 was a presidential election year. At the national level, the League is the plaintiff in 20 state legal actions to achieve democratic processes and protect the vote.

The panel discussion, “After the Midterms: Lessons for Future Elections,” included three experts. John Holder, Political Science Professor at Winthrop

University, spoke on demographics and trends in the 116th Congress. Duncan Buell, USC professor in the Computer Science and Engineering Dept., and a nationally known expert in voting technology, explained the flaws in the computerized touch screen voting machines we in South Carolina have been using and the reasons the League supports a system of hand-marked paper ballots, optically scanned at the precinct. Barbara Zia gave a report on the exceptional success of the Leagues’ voter services and citizen education activities in SC during the recent election.

Lynn Teague, our registered lobbyist, brought us up-to-date on the opening of the new legislative session and the bills we are following and working on. The issues we “lead” on in the Statehouse are those that are instrumental in “Making Democracy Work” — our mission. Redistricting, secure and transparent voting systems, voter access, ethics and dark money are the issues that the LWV is known for and where we are at the forefront in the General Assembly, gaining bipartisan support to help produce solid achievements.

— Pam Craig



Roundtable discussion

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY!

LEAD roundtable discussions offered League members a wealth of ideas!

Presidents' Roundtable: Presidents agreed to create a communication chain with resource links for programming and good ideas. They agreed that they will explore how to coordinate efforts on our positions across the state at Convention.

Our new **state issues director** (Sally Huguley) and **national issues director** (Janie Shipley) listened to members who expressed concern about the need to engage in advocacy at the local League level.

Because we have a registered lobbyist, and because we want to be effective in promoting a good government agenda, we leave much of the rest of the agenda at the state level to local work with members advocating *as individuals* with their legislators. Local Leagues also have a role in addressing local issues, or local impact of state issues (e.g., coal ash, ban the bag) with legislators as well as keeping local officials accountable. A listserv including local leaders and certain members has been created to inform local Leagues of issues/activities promoted by LWVUS.

Nonpartisanship is a challenge for local Leagues. Nonpartisanship means *not supporting or even giving the appearance of supporting parties or candidates*. If you are a League leader, be careful about whom you are photographed with—the photo could show up in the newspaper or campaign ads! Getting responses from as many candidates as possible for VOTE411 is important for the perception as well as for the reality of nonpartisanship.

Managing an **Observer Corps** is important but it can be difficult to identify people who will serve as observers. Some suggestions include rotating attendees, assisting observers in making League-approved statements, and publishing observers' reports. League observers are important for visibility and for ensuring that local officials realize someone is paying attention. So wear your League button and sit up front!

—Holley Ulbrich
LWVSC Co-President



After the Midterms panel discussion

Convention: A Chance to Act, Learn and Enjoy the League!

On May 4 and 5, 2019, our biennial State Convention will take place in Charleston, at the Town and Country Inn and Suites on Savannah Highway. This event is a major highlight for the LWVSC, a time when members from around the state gather to refocus and reinvigorate our work. We will conduct business, of course (including adopting a budget and program for 2019-2021, electing a new board, reviewing achievements), but we will also learn from presentations and workshops and from networking with other League members.

The special theme of this convention is “Celebrating Democracy, Embracing Diversity.” Planned speakers include Anton Gunn, Chief Diversity Officer and Executive Director of Community Health Innovation, Medical University of SC; Jennifer Bremmer, Statewide Coordinator for Fair Elections, League of Women Voters of North Carolina;

Carlton B. Washington, Executive Director, SC State Employees Association, and Richard Gergel, District Judge of the U.S. District Court for the District of SC and author of *Unexampled Courage: The Blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard and the Awakening of President Harry S. Truman and*

Judge J. Waties Waring. We are very excited to have been able to arrange for all four of these individuals to address us; their work touches on our mission, each from a different angle; they will inspire us and help guide us in our planning and programming for the next two years.

Participants will also be able to choose workshops to attend, will have an opportunity to caucus on particular issues, and will attend a banquet on Saturday evening. Adjournment is planned for 12:30 pm on Sunday, so participants will then be free for some afternoon sightseeing in Charleston.

All members of the LWVSC are invited to attend Convention, either as a voting delegate (a certain number is allotted to each local league, depending on size) or as a registered observer. We hope many members will attend to allow us to hear voices from all sections of the state — and to enhance the opportunity to meet new and old League friends. The registration form, schedule, and further information are available on our website, lwwsc.org. Reserve your room by April 1 for the LWV rate, and register by April 17 to avoid a late fee!

—Christe McCoy-Lawrence
Co-president, LWVSC

THE ERA: IT'S TIME

At this summer's LWVUS convention in Chicago I was among the delegates who unanimously added ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) to our national advocacy priorities. I was surprised, but delighted, to learn that there was a movement afoot in several states, including South Carolina, to reach the 38th state threshold for the ERA to become the law of the land.

The LWVSC joins the national league in supporting passage of the ERA and encourages all its members to support the South Carolina efforts through individual advocacy with their legislators.

Thanks to the efforts of the Charleston League and its member Barbara Fry, who leads the Equal Means ERA Coalition, my local League and I have become educated as to why it's important to take action.

Many people may feel that women already have equal rights and are not aware that the word "woman" appears nowhere in the US Constitution. Even

though some laws have been passed that are favorable to women, such laws vary from state to state and can be rescinded in just one election.

Among the compelling reasons to ratify the ERA are the needs for

- pay equity
- healthcare and insurance coverage equity
- protection of reproductive choices
- protection against domestic violence
- alleviation of poverty
- legal protection as a class against discrimination

Even though women won resounding victories in the 2018 mid-term elections, women still only represent 24 percent of the US Congress. Isn't it about time that 51 percent of the population has equal representation and the same rights as the other 49 percent?

As we approach the 100th anniversary of both the 19th Amendment and the founding of the League of Women

"Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex."

Voters, the time is ripe for fulfilling the vision of our foremothers. To learn more, visit EqualMeansEqual.org and join Equal Means ERA on Facebook. And you can find the LWV Equal Rights Amendment Group at the LWVUS Facebook page www.facebook.com/groups/339511446590873.

And, just for good measure, you can pass the word that the ERA will protect MEN as well as WOMEN!!

— Nancy Williams
Co-President, League of Women Voters of
Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Area



Earth Day 2019: An Opportunity to Advance the League!

EARTH DAY isn't just about the earth; it's about people, too. And, fortunately for the League, it's about people who believe as we do that we must take action to improve and maintain the health of our planet. So, let's participate in EARTH DAY! Now you might say, "Just what does participating in Earth Day have to do with membership?" Well, if you think about it, you realize that our chances of meeting people who think as we do and who might be interested in joining the League are very good at an Earth Day event. So, let's not just talk about Earth Day; let's participate! Let's be collaborative and visible! The official Earth Day each year is April 22, but many celebrations take place on other days. Check your town's calendar now to see when your community will celebrate

and plan to attend. Earth Day is a great opportunity to come together with other League members, community groups, organizations, churches, neighbors, businesses, adults, children and neighbors. Participation is an excellent way to introduce the League to like-minded individuals in your community and spread our League environmental message at the same time! We can celebrate the League by getting engaged and spreading our "Make Democracy Work" message. We can celebrate Mother Earth by promoting eating earth friendly, reducing waste and saving energy and water. We can help save our planet and advance the League at the same time. What better "two for one" could there be?

— Joyce Franklin
VP for Member Services



REDISTRICTING UPDATE

South Carolina. The South Carolina Legislature is back in session and there are some promising developments regarding the state's redistricting process. Bills have been filed in both the state House of Representatives and the state Senate. Our preferred house bill (H.3054) is one of nine redistricting bills filed in the house and senate. The companion senate bill is S.230. Other bills would require amending the state constitution and would therefore be more difficult to pass and to implement. However, any of these bills would be preferable to the status quo, in which **representatives choose their voters** with only perfunctory oversight. H.3054 is sponsored by a bipartisan group of legislators: Gary Clary (R), Jason Elliott (R), William Cogswell (R), Mandy Powers Norrell (D), Chris Wooten (R), Ivory Thigpen (D), Seth Rose (D), and Beth Bernstein (D). Judiciary Committee chair Peter McCoy has been encouraging and our bill's sponsors sit on crucial subcommittees. There is no hearing scheduled at this time, but we are optimistic that the bill will get a hearing this session.

H.3054/S.230 would establish a South Carolina Redistricting Commission, consisting of seven members: two appointed by the governor, two by the House, and two by the Senate, with no more than one in each pair from any party. Those six would select a seventh member to serve as chair. More importantly, the bill would establish criteria to be used in the process of drawing redistricting maps. In particular, it would forbid protection of partisan or incumbent advantage.

It would require public hearings on the proposed maps and any changes made by the Legislature.

National

There are two important national developments. First, you may recall that the Supreme Court last year heard redistricting cases from Wisconsin, Maryland, and North Carolina, and sent those back to the lower courts to reconsider whether the plaintiffs had standing to bring the suits. Two of those cases—Maryland and North Carolina—are back at the Supreme Court. Oral arguments are scheduled for March 26 and a decision is expected by June. Of course, the character of the court has changed since last year, with the retirement of Justice Kennedy (who was, in some sense, the focus of arguments last year) and the appointment of Justice Kavanaugh.

Second, the new Democratic majority in the House of Representatives has introduced HR.1, the "For the People Act." HR.1 covers a broad range of measures addressing campaign finance, ethics, and voting rights. Among the voting rights measures, it would require independent redistricting commissions in every state and ban consideration of partisan advantage in the mapping process.

Follow our blog.

The South Carolina League has established a blog to follow redistricting developments in the state. You can read our first two entries and sign up to follow us at votersrule2020.wordpress.com.

— Matt Saltzman
LWVSC Redistricting Director

The League Wants Hand-Marked Paper Ballots!

Democracy is at risk when we use computers to count votes. Computers have miscounted thousands of votes and have been successfully hacked by amateurs. Every voting machine/computer that has been subjected to testing has surrendered to intruders. When voting machines/computers are so easily hacked, cyber-criminals can determine the results of our elections.

The accuracy of our elections is seriously threatened by the use of computers. The vote is too important to continue to risk our democracy by using discredited and unsafe technology. Paper ballots, counted by optical scanners at the precincts, are much more accurate and secure.

In 2010, we documented thousands of uncounted and miscounted votes. In 2018, when voting results were examined again, we saw that over a thousand votes were not counted. More than a hundred additional votes were *miscounted*. Some voters had their votes counted twice. The response to a yes/no question was added to the total for a candidate. The certified results are incorrect. A dozen years after the iVotronic computer was adopted, identified problems remain uncorrected. **Obviously, certification does not (and cannot) assure that the voting computers will count votes correctly.** It is not possible to guarantee that computer code will always give the intended results.

The first priority in a trustworthy election is to count the votes correctly. Voting machines/computers have consistently failed that test. We should adopt hand-marked paper ballots because they provide *accuracy* and *security* and, just incidentally, **cost about half as much as the discredited computer-based alternative.** The League supports S.374 and H.3616 which protect the accuracy and security of our elections by requiring that a paper ballot be the ballot of record.

— Eleanor Hare
LWVSC Voting Technology Chair

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SC VOTER

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Established in 1951, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. All members receive the National Voter, the SC Voter, and a newsletter from their local League.

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YOU CAN HELP MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK! GIVE TO THE LEAGUE!

CONTRIBUTION FORM

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City _____ State _____ ZipCode _____

Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Phone(opt) _____

Email Address _____

I wish my contribution to remain anonymous.

I wish my contribution to be tax deductible where allowed by law. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters Education Fund" which is a 501(c)(3) organization.

I wish to support the League's action priorities. My check is made out to the "League of Women Voters" and is not tax-deductible.

Comments _____

Contribution can be mailed to LWVSC, P.O. Box 8453, Columbia, SC 29202 or a donation can be made on line at www.lwvsc.org. You can donate with a one time or recurring gift. Every little bit helps support advocacy efforts at the SC Statehouse and grassroots efforts in our local communities.

Thank you for your support!