

**LWV of Greater Cleveland
Leadership 2019-2020**

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WINTER 2020 NEWSLETTER

Co-Presidents' Letter

Dear League Members,

Happy New Year to each of you! 2020 will bring us many ways in which we can each work to make a difference. We are less than a year away from one of the most important presidential elections of our lifetimes. In addition, 2020 is the year we celebrate the centennial of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed suffrage for women, and the founding of the League of Women Voters.

Back in 1920, when the ratification of the 19th Amendment was finally in sight, suffrage was not an end point. The founders of our organization understood that democracy required continuous protection, and they shifted to the work of helping citizens participate in self-government. The continuation of that work falls to us.

Today, many of our gains are threatened. The time for complacency is over. After decades of progress, the perceived value of the rights and programs the League stands for has steadily eroded. We must work to show the public that our causes are just, reasonable, and beneficial.

We need to ensure that young Americans understand it is not just their right, but their duty to be involved. The future of this country is in their hands. We must help them to vote and to be engaged in all levels of government.

Among ourselves, we must emphasize what unites us, not what divides us. An overall "progressive" environment is good for all League causes. Nonetheless, we must not drive away those who do not agree with all League stances, or with our own personal views, on each and every issue.

Finally, we must not alienate those who do not share the League's vision. We must do some listening, as well as some talking. We must convince, not condemn.

There is much to do, and in Greater Cleveland we have many efforts underway, as you will see in the pages of this Voter.

We will kick off the year with Program Planning. This is one of our favorite League activities, and it is your opportunity to help the national League decide where and how to focus our resources of member time, money, and reputation. Come enjoy a day of lively discussion and critical decision-making. We especially urge new members to come; this is a great way to get to know your fellow League members and share your passions.

If you see something that interests you, contact us at president@lwvgreatercleveland.org. We would be delighted to speak with you and help you find something that matches your interests and talents. We are grateful for everything that each of you does, and for your support throughout this historic year. Together we are making a difference.

Yours in League,

Audrey Morris and Catherine LaCroix, co-presidents



MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK

We are always looking to broaden our roster of talented contributors and provide mentorship to anyone who has an interest in bringing their suggestions and enthusiasm to the League. The **Nominating Committee**, chaired by **Susan Murnane**, is actively seeking members who can bring new ideas and energy to the Greater Cleveland board.

Consider whether you are ready for a leadership position. The League is a respected organization, and a LWV credential is an asset. The League offers you a flexible environment in which to work cooperatively, develop your abilities, and discover new talents.

New members and new perspectives are essential to the LWVGC's ability to grow and be effective. Are you ready to grow with us? Contact **Susan Murnane** at smurnane@lwvgreatercleveland.org.

Are you in the loop with League activities?

Many League communications from LWVUS, LWV Ohio, LWV Greater Cleveland, and LWVGC chapters come by email. Yes, that is a lot of emails, but League is active and email is an efficient way to let members know what League is doing and how they can engage, whether it's attending forums, registering voters, or contacting legislators about important issues.



If you are not receiving these messages, there are several reasons why that may be.

- **Spam filters:** It is a good idea to regularly check your junk mail to be sure it is not catching mail you do want to receive. Moving misdirected, but desired, emails back to your inbox can help prevent further misdirection.
- **Multiple inbox folders:** Email accessed through a browser, such as Safari or Chrome, will look different than email accessed through an operating system mail program, such as MacMail or Outlook. For example, on a browser, Gmail sorts messages into one of three inbox folders: Primary, Social, and Promotions. Other email services may do likewise. In Gmail, Primary usually receives personal emails sent to one or a few persons, while the Social and Promotional folders usually receive listserv (i.e mass) mailings. You can miss League mailings, if you do not check all three folders.
- **Self-unsubscribe:** You may have, either intentionally or unintentionally, unsubscribed from LWVGC's emailing service. If you have unsubscribed and want to get back onto the list, you will have to work with our emailing manager to make that change.

If you have checked your junk mail and other inboxes and are still not receiving emails from LWVGC, contact clacroix@lwvgreatercleveland.org who can verify your status on LWVGC's emailing list.

School Voucher Update

Rural and urban interests are frequently at odds when Ohio's lawmakers assert their interests. This division no longer applies to school vouchers.

Starting with the 2020 school year, every member of the state legislature will represent at least one school district that must use local funds to pay for students to attend a private school under Ohio's EdChoice voucher program.

Because test scores drive eligibility and scores reflect income, the first victims of the voucher laws were high poverty districts – urban districts. But new laws – inserted in the new state budget without public review – made the issue ubiquitous. In just three years EdChoice districts grew from 39 to more than 400 – two-thirds of

the state's 612 school districts.

The legislature needs to staunch the bleeding of public school budgets by ending the requirement that local districts pay for students they don't educate at the expense of those they do. Legislators can unite on this one! They can freeze the growth of vouchers, change rules defining EdChoice schools, only grant vouchers to students leaving a public school, and starting with this school year, pay for any new vouchers they approved but didn't fund for 2019-20.

– Susan Kaeser, LWVO Lobby Corps

» See page 7 to learn how to become involved in this issue.

2020 and the Centennial is Here

A trifecta year, 2020 will see 1) a big election; 2) the U.S. Decennial Census; and 3) Centennial Celebrations for – another trifecta: 1) the founding of the national League of Women Voters, 2) the founding of the Cleveland League of Women Voters, and 3) the ratification of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution giving women the right to vote.

LWVGC's centennial plans will not simply celebrate League's founding and women's suffrage, but will do so by underscoring, in this most important election and census year, how precious and important is the right to vote. Our celebrations will be fun, but also educational and mission-oriented.

Plans we have worked on for more than a year are now gelling into reality. Here are some highlights:

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CENTENNIAL LECTURE SERIES

With a few exceptions, these lectures, organized in collaboration with Siegal Lifelong Learning, Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), will take place monthly through 2020 at locations throughout Cuyahoga County. Thanks to a generous donation from League member **Lin Emmons**, all lectures will be free and open to the public. Below are the first four in the series:

- Tuesday, Jan. 28: Joy Bostic, Interim Vice President of the Office for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equal Opportunity and Associate Professor of Religion, CWRU, will speak on **"Our Voices, Our Vote: Courage and Persistence in Black Women's Struggle for Voting Rights."**
- Thursday, Feb. 27: Einav Rabinovitch-Fox, Visiting Assistant Professor of History, CWRU, will speak on **"Beyond Suffrage: Women's Reform Networks and the Road for Women's Rights."**
- Thursday, March 26: Angela Clark-Taylor, Director of the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women, CWRU, will speak on **"A Collector's Tale: Memorabilia of The American Women's Suffrage Movement."**
- Wednesday, May 20: Heather McKee Hurwitz, Lecturer of Sociology, CWRU, will speak on **"From the 19th Amendment to the Occupy Movement: 100 Years of Women's Social Movement Activism."**



For details on locations and times check the LWVGC website, lwggreatercleveland.org.

WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE CENTENNIAL SYMPOSIUM: FROM COMPLEX LEGACY TO COLLECTIVE ACTION



The symposium was organized with the collaboration of more than 20 organizations and institutions, many of which actively participated in the planning. The committee has lined up prominent and exciting speakers, who will take both a historical and forward-looking approach to the centennial.

The speakers include: **Paula J. Giddings**, retired professor of Africana Studies, Smith College, and author of several books including *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*; **Dawn Teele**, professor, Political Science Department, University of Pennsylvania, and author of *Forging the Franchise: The Political Origins of the Women's Vote*; and **Virginia Kase**, CEO of the League of Women Voters of the U.S., who will be the lunchtime keynote speaker.

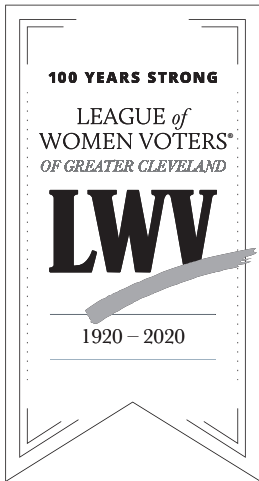
The symposium will also include a panel and audience participation in discussion of the issues raised.

The event will take place Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., at the Flora Stone Mather Center for Women at CWRU. General admission, which includes lunch, is \$35 per person, \$10 for students.

Register for this event now through the symposium webpage: bit.ly/WSCSymposium.

2020 and the Centennial is Here

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WOMEN AND POLITICS AT THE WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY (WRHS)

This exhibit opens May 22 in the Cleveland History Center at WRHS, with a preview party on Feb. 14. Presented by WRHS in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland, the exhibit explores the early days of the suffrage movement, the successful fight for women's suffrage with ratification of the 19th amendment, and the growth of the League of Women Voters, which emerged from the suffrage movement as a force for informed citizen participation and good government.

Special programs are being planned to accompany the exhibit including programming for schools, lectures, first-person interpretative performances, a voting rights parade, and more. In December, LWVGC will be inducted into WRHS's 100-year Club, which comprises Cleveland and Northeast Ohio companies, organizations, and institutions in operation for at least 100 years.

View exhibit details online at www.wrhs.org/explore/exhibits/women-in-politics.

BELLE SHERWIN LUNCHEON

The Belle Sherwin Luncheon, to be held Monday, Aug. 24, at the WRHS, will reprise a luncheon held for many years by the Cleveland League before the merger forming LWV of Greater Cleveland. Traditionally, the luncheon has conferred upon a prominent local woman leader, the Belle Sherwin award, named for the founder of the Cleveland League and second president of the national League.

This year's event will make an additional award to memorialize Patricia Burgess, the League leader who, about six years ago, employed her expertise in nonprofit law and worked tirelessly on the merger of the LWV Cuyahoga Area and LWV of Shaker Heights into the Cleveland League. Sadly, Patricia passed away before the Greater Cleveland League became fact on July 1, 2014, but she did see the three Leagues vote to approve the merger.

BOOK GROUPS, SCHOOL EXPO, AND MORE

Our educational materials committee is working on creating an expo for high school students on the history of women's suffrage and voting rights. This event, scheduled to take place at East High of the Cleveland Municipal School District on Thursday, May 14, will include an assembly with performances in the auditorium, followed by a fair in the gym with booths displaying various aspects of the history of women's suffrage and voting rights. The Expo's theme: the right to vote has been hard won by women and minorities and should not be taken for granted.

Also planned are book discussion groups, a partnership with the Cleveland Play House on a recently written play titled "A Doll's House, Part Two," costumed suffragists, a travelling one-woman Alice Paul performance, and more. Visit the LWVGC website and click on "Centennial 2020" to see most of what is happening. More updates will continue to be added.



League members registered new voters at the naturalization ceremony held at the History Center on Dec. 5. Clockwise from top left, Audrey Morris, Anne Batzell, Annette Himes, Patricia Carter, Bruce Robinson, Pat Solomon, Jackie Savoca, and Trish Zaiem. Upcoming ceremonies are on Jan. 17 and Feb. 7 at the Carl B. Stokes U. S. Court House. Let Patricia Carter know if you'd like to volunteer, voterservice@lwvgreatercleveland.org.

Cleveland Teachers Union Elections Help Wanted!

Friday, March 13, 2020

Every year, LWVGC is hired to manage the elections for the Cleveland Teachers Union. This is a fundraiser for LWVGC as the CTU pays us for our services. It's a unique chance to meet and interact with Leaguers from all over the county as we work together to tally thousands of ballots from the dozens of schools in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. It's democracy in action mixed with great League camaraderie. Please consider joining us!

Ballot counting will take place Friday, March 13, starting at 4 p.m. We need about 50 volunteers so bring a friend! Friends, spouses and older teenagers are welcome. Each volunteer will have the option to designate a LWVGC chapter of their choice to receive \$10 for every hour that they work. Non-members are welcome.

Ballot counting will take place in downtown Cleveland at the **North Shore AFL-CIO Labor Building at 3250 Euclid Ave.** The building has easy, free parking and dinner is provided. We will start at 4 p.m. and will go until we are done, hopefully before 9 p.m. The more people we have counting, the faster we get done! You do not need to commit to the whole time. Please come for any period of time that is convenient for you.

To volunteer or ask questions, contact **Meryl Simon** at [216-406-0817](tel:216-406-0817) or merylsimon18@gmail.com. When you sign up, please give us a phone number, email address and tell us what time you are available.

Thank you!

The Election Service Committee

Lobbying update and tips you can use

to build bridges and achieve goals

At the end of August 2019, **Jen Miller** came to Cleveland to train us on Ohio Senate Bill 186: Voter Verification and Registration. The bill will allow Ohio citizens to register to vote or update their registration each time they visit the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. Since then, pairs of Greater Cleveland League members met with each state senator in Greater Cleveland to discuss the bill and share the League's support for the bill. Below, some members who helped with this project share their tips for meeting with state legislators.

Rita Rome: Legislators are just people who love to talk, so be ready to LISTEN! If they agree with the League's position or the legislation, ask their advice on strategy. Remember that your goal is to build a relationship with the legislator so don't burn bridges. Listen respectfully even if you disagree and thank them for their time.

Catherine LaCroix: Research your legislator in advance—learn how she has voted on similar legislation in the past. Thank your legislator for accomplishments that you appreciate. Be prompt and courteous. Prepare your talking points in advance and be clear about what you want from the meeting (support in the future, co-sponsor for a bill, or something else).

Sarah Swanson: Be persistent and polite when scheduling the meeting. Legislators may cancel meetings more than once. And enjoy yourself. Legislators enjoy talking with their constituents and they tend to be interesting people.

– Sarah Swanson

BE A POLL WORKER!

The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections is gearing up for the 2020 Presidential Primary Election on March 17. In order to serve the voters, the Board of Elections hires over 4,000 people to work at over 300 locations throughout the county. A diverse group of persons take pride in performing their civic duty and serve our community as Precinct Election Officials.

This year, the Board of Elections has entered into a partnership with the Ohio Supreme Court in offering

free Continuing Legal Education credit to qualified lawyers who successfully train and serve as Election Day workers. This is a new and exciting opportunity for legal professionals to acquire free CLE/CEU credit and receive a minimum stipend of \$172.10 for working the polls. Lawyers who are interested in the program should visit the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections website at boe.cuyahogacounty.us and go to the Election Day Officials tab to complete an online application for Precinct Election Officials.

– Lisa Cech

LWVGC Chapter Program Meetings

LWVGC Chapter Program meetings will be held at 3 locations. Choose the date and location best for you:

- Fairview Park Library: Saturday, Jan. 25, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
21255 Lorain Road, Fairview Park
- Shaker Heights home of Co-Chapter Chair Mary LaVigne Butler: Sunday, Jan. 26, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
(For address email: michaeldavidbaron@gmail.com)
- Cleveland Heights/University Heights Main Library: Saturday, Feb. 1, 1:00-3:00 p.m.
2345 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights

These meetings will support national LWV program in advance of The League of Women Voters 54th National Convention from June 25-28, 2020, in Washington D.C. The Program meetings will also offer the opportunity to discuss state issues such as Automatic Voter Registration and local points of emphasis such as the 2020 U.S. Census.

As League members, we know you care about voting and never miss an election. So, we know you won't want to miss the League's program planning meeting, when the League sets its agenda and where we create the foundation from which to advocate our positions.

We'll be discussing League policy and positions at the national level to determine where the League should focus its energy over the next two years. Do we think there should be a new study? What issues are important to you? Should we focus on the National Popular Vote? What are the areas of concern to us here in Greater Cleveland? Snacks will be provided. Please come prepared by reading the prep materials which will be on the LWVGC website: lwggreatercleveland.org.

For the LWVUS, we need to answer the following questions:

1. Do you support the proposed program focus, continuing the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®?
2. Would you like to recommend another program item, in addition to or instead of the Campaign for Making Democracy Work®?
3. Which areas of the 2018-2020 national program priorities (Voting Rights, Improving Elections, Money in Politics/Campaign Finance, Redistricting, Other) within the Campaign for Making Democracy Work® has your League worked on during the current biennium?
4. Which LWVUS Positions does your League use to act at the state and local level?

For more detail on LWVUS positions go to: my.lwv.org/lwvus/positions.

– Audrey Morris, LWVGC Co-President

Chapter Chairs



Left to Right: Leigh Tucker (Cleveland), Nikki Salupo (Fairview Park), Jane Blackie (Bay Village), Nora Walsh (CSU), Roz Peters (Hillcrest), Wendy Deuring (Chapter Liaison), Penny Jeffrey (Chapter Liaison), Blanche Valency (Cleveland Heights), Nadia Zaiem (Westlake-North Olmsted), Patricia Carter (Shaker Heights/LWVGC Voter Service Director), Laniqua Jones (CSU), Audrey Morris (Shaker Heights, LWVGC Co-President), Catherine LaCroix (Shaker Heights, LWVGC Co-President).



BY THE NUMBERS

During 2019, LWVGC played a major role in registering, engaging, and protecting voters. We are proud to report that:

- Our members and volunteers **registered 1,536 new voters.**
- VOTE411, our online, non-partisan voters' guide,

provided vital candidate and ballot question information to 9,500 users.

- LWVGC hosted over **15 candidate and ballot question forums.**
- LWVGC hosted **18 public policy forums.**
- Our social media logged over **3 million users.**

Calling all public education advocates!

State education policies implemented in the name of “reform” are harming public schools and compromising education quality across Ohio, and especially in Cuyahoga County. Three Ohio voucher programs have been reducing public funds available to local school districts. The recent exponential growth of EdChoice vouchers is increasing attention to this diversion of public funds to private schools.

According to a recent Plain Dealer article, Cuyahoga County districts that will feel the pinch in 2020 include Cleveland Heights-University Heights (CHUH), Euclid, Richmond Heights, East Cleveland, Garfield Heights, Warrensville Heights, Maple Heights, Parma, Bedford, North Olmsted and Shaker Heights.

See: www.cleveland.com/news/2019/12/increase-in-private-school-tuition-vouchers-is-costing-districts-and-soon-you.html (or simply Google, “cleveland.com school vouchers costing districts”). LWVGC is planning a public policy forum on this issue in February, details TBD.

Because harmful state policies, especially vouchers, are threatening the CH-UH schools, the Heights Chapter has begun an education interest group. Because these same policies are harming public education across the Greater Cleveland area and Ohio, our goal is to invite members from all LWVGC communities to join us in creating an LWVGC Education Interest Group.

Taking the broader step, Susie Kaeser, LWV Ohio Lobby Corps member for education issues, is cultivating similar groups in local Leagues across the state to address three main education policy areas for which LWVO has strong positions: 1) school funding, 2) test-based accountability, and 3) school privatization. Touching all three of these areas are voucher programs, which divert funds from public schools to private schools and are triggered by high-stakes testing policies.

To join LWVGC’s Education Interest Group, contact Susie Kaeser at susankaeser@sbcglobal.net.



A team of volunteers, including **Siobhan Leftwich, Nora Stern, Nadia Zaiem, Nikki Salupo, Claire Banasiak** and **Penny Jeffrey**, helped load candidates into the Vote411 program, sent questionnaires to candidates, and researched local issues so we could list pros and cons for every ballot issue (except liquor issues). Many thanks to them and to the Board of Elections for sharing its candidate contact list with the League.

More than 530 candidates across the county received our questionnaire via email in early September. Any who had not responded by the first week of October (a week before early voting started) were sent a reminder email. About one-third of the candidates responded by Oct. 22, two weeks before Election Day.

Of the two-thirds of the candidates who did not respond by Oct. 22, roughly half were running unopposed. Only candidates facing opposition were sent a second reminder email on Oct. 22. Their responses continue to trickle in – and they’re published as soon as they’re received.

As we expected, candidates in the communities where we have a strong League presence (especially Bay Village, Cleveland Heights-University Heights, Lakewood, North Olmsted, Shaker Heights and Westlake) responded at a far greater rate than did those in other communities. In the communities where we held candidate forums (Hillcrest communities Beachwood, Lyndhurst and South Euclid; plus Chagrin Falls, Orange and Parma), we also saw better candidate response.

Other communities where candidates responded at a better-than-average rate were Brooklyn, Garfield Heights, Independence, Moreland Hills, Solon and Strongsville. It might be a good idea to start looking at how to get chapters up and running in those communities.

Now that we have used Vote411 during three election cycles (2017, 2018 and 2019), both candidates and voters are becoming more aware of and interested in our online voters guide.

SAVE THE DATE

Our Voices, Our Vote: Courage and Persistence in Black Women's Struggle for Voting Rights

Tuesday, Jan. 28, 7 p.m.

Tinkham Veale University Center on CWRU campus, 11038 Bellflower Road, Cleveland

Closing the Achievement Gap: Preschool and Early Child Education Forum

Thursday, Jan. 30, 7 p.m.

Shaker Heights Public Library, 16500 Van Aken Blvd.

Beyond Suffrage: Women's Reform Networks and the Road for Women's Rights

Thursday, Feb. 27, 7 p.m.

Landmark Centre Building, 25700 Science Park Dr #10, Beachwood

Paula Giddings Book Discussion

In honor of the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage: "When and Where I

Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex" by Paula Giddings

Friday, Feb. 28, 2:15-4:15 p.m.

Fairview Park Public Library, 21255 Lorain Road

Paula Giddings Book Discussion

In honor of the 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage: "In Search of Sisterhood: Delta Sigma Theta and the Challenge of the Black Sorority Movement" by Paula Giddings

Friday, March 27, 2-4 p.m.

Cleveland Heights-University Heights Public Library, 2345 Lee Road

Women's Suffrage Centennial Symposium: From Complex Legacy to Collective Action

Saturday, April 18, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Tinkham Veale University Center at Case Western Reserve University
Ticket price, including lunch, will be \$35; students (w/ID) \$10; CWRU and CSU students (w/ID) free.

LWV Ohio Statehouse Day

Tuesday, April 21

Sheraton Columbus Capitol Square

LWVGC Annual Meeting

Saturday, May 16, 9:30 a.m.

ESC Conference Center, 6393 Oak Tree Blvd., Independence
Speaker: TBD

The League of Women Voters' 54th National Convention

June 25-June 28

Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill & Liaison Washington Capitol Hill

We invite our League members to save these dates and plan to join fellow passionate and engaged League leaders for our biennial national gathering to be held in Washington, DC in June 2020. Email president@lwvgreatercleveland.org, if you would be interested in attending.

VOTER Co-Editors

Wendy Deuring
Tara Wendell



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LWV of Greater Cleveland
2800 Euclid Ave. #518
Cleveland, OH 44115
216-694-8108
LWVGreaterCleveland.org