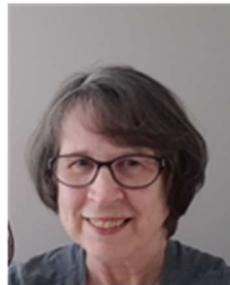


## CO-PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Civic education, book banning, teacher salaries, vouchers—the concerns of public education are making the headlines and the webinar circuit. I would love to see an education group that attends school board meetings, pays attention to legislative action, monitors League activity elsewhere, or whatever else is useful. We have a new state lobbyist (**Janelle Rivers**) for guidance.



Ruth Reed

I think the time is ripe. Do we have members who are willing to figure out what our League can do to address these and other issues, especially in Oconee and Pickens Counties? I'm sure we do. I will set up a Zoom meeting for late February to explore possibilities; will you give me your support?

*Submitted by Ruth Reed, Co-President*

***Participate in a Forum for  
Westminster Special Election***

Deadlines are approaching for a special election to be held on April 26 in Westminster. It promises to be a high-profile race following the resignation of three City Council members. Candidates must file between February 18 and 28. As soon as we get candidate names, we will begin contacting them for available dates. The forum could be as early as March 28.

**Sandy Land** is currently evaluating sites for a forum. Please join us in this first of the year endeavor. If you have questions that should be asked of the candidates, please send them to **Alice Flower** ([aliceflower2019@gmail.com](mailto:aliceflower2019@gmail.com)). Contact **Sarah McNeill** ([sdmceinill@live.com](mailto:sdmceinill@live.com)) or **Sandy Land** ([sandyl@pa.net](mailto:sandyl@pa.net)) to get involved.

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*THE VOTER*

League of Women Voters Clemson Area  
*Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee, and  
Anderson Counties*  
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633  
[www.lwvclemsonarea.org](http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org)

## OFFICERS:

Ruth Reed, Co-President  
Linda Gahan, Co- President  
Jill Gemmell, Vice-President  
Ellie Taylor, Secretary  
Elaine Laiewski, Treasurer

## ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Buzzy Adams  
Kathy Bargeran  
Carolyn Bishop-McLeod  
Sheila Crawford  
Sandy Land  
Janet Marsh  
Sarah McNeill

## APPOINTED BOARD:

Mike Ellison, *Voter* Editor  
Alice Flower, Vote411  
Eleanor Hare, Policy Advisor  
Cheryl Lee, Voter Registration  
Allison Ranson, Webmaster  
Janie Shipley, Policy Advisor  
Holly Ulbrich, Policy Advisor

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 5	Program planning for national (LWVUS) and local (LWVOP)- virtual at 10 a.m.
February 10	Pickens County Election Commission Board of Canvassers at 12:55 p.m.
February 15	LWVOP program: <i>LGBTQ+ Community Awareness</i> -virtual at 7 p.m.
February 22	LWVOP Board Meeting – virtual at 5 p.m.
March 15	LWVOP program: <i>Health Care for the Underserved in Our Community</i> -virtual at 7 p.m.
April 19	LWVOP program: <b>Penny Cothran</b> will speak about her work with the Sierra Club. <i>"Ready for 100: Developing an Equitable and Affordable 100% Renewable Energy System in South Carolina"</i> - virtual at 7 p.m.

## PRE-LEAD TAKEAWAY

On January 20, four panelists working in the health care industry educated leaguers on resources for medical care for low-income citizens of SC. **Dr. Elizabeth Brown** discussed Medicaid, an insurance program funded by the federal government and administered by the state, that is available to low-income families, disabled people and pregnant women. The majority of uninsured in SC are between 19 and 64 years, male and white and live in rural counties like Jasper, Dillon, Saluda, Oconee, Clarendon, Newberry, Chesterfield and Colleton Counties. Also complicating access to medical services is the closure of hospitals in rural counties.

**Dr. Lynn Glenn**, a nurse practitioner and primary care provider for the uninsured, talked about providing care to the uninsured through free clinics. Often clients have life situations which complicate their medical care. While free clinics are a savings to the health care industry, overhead costs and uncompensated services make the programs unsustainable. Equitable health care should be a right and not a privilege.

**Dr. Paul DeMarco**, a primary care physician at the Hope Community Health Center associated with Francis Marion University, addressed community health centers funded by the federal government. There are 1400 clinics in the US, 23 in SC serving 1 in 11 people that provide good medical care to low-income people. Care is provided to everyone on a sliding scale of fees. Universal health care is needed to make the system equitable.

**Dr. David Keely** apprised us of USA ranking in health care compared to 10 other industrialized countries. Comparing affordability, accessibility, efficiency, equity, sustainability and universality, our country ranks at the bottom for people aged 18-64 years. Only in quality of care, provided patients can get into the system, does the USA advance to number 2. Recommended policy changes include expanding Medicaid, negotiating drug prices, delinking employment and medical benefits, improving Medicare, and campaign finance reform.

*Submitted by Linda Gahan*

## REVIEW OF JANUARY MEETING

Election officials in Oconee and Pickens Counties discussed their roles and thoughts about elections in a January 18 panel sponsored by the LWV Oconee and Pickens Counties. **Carolyn Bishop-McLeod** of the SAFE (Safe, Accessible and Fair Elections) Committee moderated the panel.

Oconee County officials included **Kristie L. Burr**, Director, Voter Registration and Election Office and **Jim Murray**, Chair, Board of Voter Registration and Elections. Pickens County officials included **Dr. Amy T. Sams**, Director, Voter Registration and Election Office and **James Liddle**, Chair, Board of Voter Registration and Elections.

All four officials emphasized that they want the public to know elections in their respective counties are transparent and being conducted by the book. Pickens County Board Chair, **Jim Liddle**, told the 30 LWV members that Pickens County elections are as “fair and legal as elections can be. We did it right in Pickens County.”

**Jim Murray**, Oconee Board Chair welcomes questions from skeptical citizens about election procedures. He indicated he may use the exchange as a recruiting tool to engage citizens as election volunteers. Both he and Mr. Liddle praised their Election Office Directors and staff. Both Directors emphasized the importance of voter education. **Dr. Sams** asks voters to do their research using multiple sources and welcomes voters to come and watch as officials do their jobs. **Ms. Burr** agreed and underscored the confidentiality of voter ballots.

Officials indicated concern that changing election laws can be confusing to some voters. Their offices, which are minimally staffed, are sometimes stressed to keep up with new requirements. However, their primary concern is to get more voters to the polls. They thanked the LWVOP for its efforts to register and educate voters. **Dr. Sams** suggested casting a wide net in voter recruitment. She encouraged recruiters to ask all citizens who say they are registered to confirm voter status with their county office. For example, a new address may mean they are no longer registered. All four officials expressed concern that more citizens don't exercise their right to vote. **Jim Murray**, Oconee Board Chair, perhaps spoke for officials and audience alike when he stated that a citizen's right to vote is their most precious right.

*Submitted by Janet Marsh*

### Executive Director of the State Election Commission is Named

The commission that oversees elections in South Carolina has promoted one of the agency's employees to be its new leader. **Howard M. Knapp** was named executive director of the State Election Commission on Thursday by a unanimous vote of the agency's board. Knapp had been the commission's interim director and was also the director of Voter Services, handling cybersecurity and information technology and overseeing audits for the agency.

*AP Press January 29, 2022*

## RECAP OF LEAD MEETING (LEAGUE EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY DAY) JANUARY 22, 2022

Presenters highlighted four programs: Legislation pending in this session of the South Carolina state legislature, Redistricting, Civic Education in the Public Schools, and the League Non-partisanship Policy.

**Lynn Teague**, LWVSC lobbyist, emphasized the Making Democracy Work LWV Network on the LWVSC website as a way of tracking progress on various bills. Her focus is on testifying and educating our members on numerous bills ranging from vouchers and civic education to women's reproductive rights to plastics in environment to ethic accountability to voting and elections. H3444 and S499 deal with how elections are run statewide, giving the Senate advice and consent for appointing state election commissioners (the governor currently does this) and advice and consent for appointing the state election commission (SEC) Director. LWV opposes the latter because it would make this office too partisan. The SEC needs to be an independent body to run elections. **Jenelle Williams** has been added as a LWV lobbyist.

The LWVSC Redistricting Team consists of John Ruoff, the map drawer; **Shana Howell**, the organizer; and **Matt Saltzman** and **Anna Vagnozzi**, the map analyzers. Operating since 2018, this team has testified about best practices when drawing new district maps, has drawn and submitted district maps to South Carolina Senate and South Carolina House subcommittees and educated voters on the process. South Carolina Senate district maps have been drawn and adopted, South Carolina House district maps have been drawn and adopted with litigation, and Congressional district maps have passed the House and Senate and are now in a conference committee and may end up in litigation. While the LWVSC did not get the results they hoped for (some competitive districts were eliminated), the process brought the league greater visibility and credibility, and yielded decent South Carolina Senate district maps.

Three panelists addressed Civics Education in the public schools. **Rebecca Mueller** pointed to two national documents that serve to prepare teachers for this subject area and are resources for revising the curriculum. Civics Education involves not only knowing how government works and the rules function but may also act to bring about change for social justice. Since 2019, **Marc Turner** says there has been an effort to encourage more diversity and critical thinking into civics classes to better educate students in their role in government. An excellent resource is found on website: [Educating for American Democracy.org](http://EducatingforAmericanDemocracy.org). **Patrick Kelley** from the Palmetto State Teachers Association noted the national focus on civics education and the SC legislature's urgency in addressing six bills that could govern what is taught in civics, whom students could interact with and require a syllabus of instruction be provided to parents. Passing any of these would have a chilling effect on instruction and burden classroom teachers with mounds of paperwork. There is already a shortage of Social Studies teachers. The pandemic has interrupted professional development but South Carolina standards in civics are good.

The League's Nonpartisanship Policy can be tricky in these political times. Leaguers can address issues but should exercise care when it comes to political parties or elected officials. Serving on a political party's board and LWV board are not compatible. Presidents and Voter Service chairs should not run for office, attend fundraisers, or make campaign contributions. It is not okay to hold an empty chair debate for candidates who cannot attend. But standing up for positions which counter misinformation and lies and defending democracy is the function of the LWV.

*Submitted by Linda Gahan*

## PREVIEW OF FEBRUARY MEETING



Tuesday, February 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.  
Harvey and Lucinda Gantt Multicultural Center  
Division of Inclusion and Equity  
300 Bracket Hall, Clemson University

### **LGPTQ 101: Awareness of the Community**

Presented by **Kim Carter**, M.Ed. (they/them), Associate Director, LGPTQ+ Programs, Clemson University, [kec2@clemson.edu](mailto:kec2@clemson.edu)

Kim will help us learn to navigate conversations around LGPTQ+ issues in ways that foster our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals for our League. We hope that you and friends will be able to join in the Zoom presentation. Kim recommends that we watch the following video (about 7 min) before their presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE7bKmOXY3w>.

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81093493977?pwd=Wk5vMXM0RkM0c3hCOEwyVVNHTkF3dz0>  
(Also available on the website, <https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina/clemson-area>)

## COMMENTS PROVIDED TO THE PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOLBOARD ON JANUARY 24, 2022

*I am appearing before you today as a member of the Pickens County community to announce the creation of a community-based organization on redistricting. It is the Local Redistricting Advisory Committee. We have no official capacity or official authority; we represent civic organizations and civic minded citizens who want to make sure our process includes citizens. Our goal is to provide a more collective voice around the redistricting effort to redraw the district lines for Pickens County School Board. Up to this point, I am not aware that you have publicly stated the actual timeline, the exact process for public input, or when the process will be completed. It is now time to engage us in the local process. Our group, the Local Redistricting Advisory Committee, comprises the following organizations and several concerned citizens. These organizations are: The Pickens County Branch NAACP; The League of Women Voters Oconee and Pickens County Chapter; NOAH Naturally Recurring Affordable Housing; Black Lives Collective; Churches; Masonic, and some of the Divine 9 Organizations; and we are expecting more civic organizations to join this citizens engagement organization in the coming weeks.*

*We ask that you do the following: 1) tell the citizens what the timeline will be; 2) tell citizens what the process will be; 3) inform the citizens of the county of the procedures by which they can engage in the redistricting process; 4) hold public hearings outside of public comments at School Board meetings in each of the current districts; 5) provide an accounting of public input and how it impacted your decisions in drawing the new districts; 6) report to the citizens how you created the maps Finally, we ask that each council member offer a public statement explaining why they approve the district maps once you reach the approval stage. Let us join you in making that a reality. We want districts where voters can elect their representatives of choice. We want the process to be open, and the maps fair.*

*Submitted by Sheila D. Crawford*

## PROUD TO BE A LEAGUER!!

Instead of the pandemic curtailing LWVOP's education and advocacy on issues we care about – redistricting, voting and elections, health care, etc. – it may be making us more productive!

See a snapshot of LWVOP activity in January, much of it planned through Zoom. When someone tells you they are bored and can't do anything because of Covid, suggest they join the League!

Redistricting: Oconee County began its redistricting earlier than Pickens and LWCOP was right there to give our position. Oconee members:

- partnered with the Oconee NAACP Branch to host a virtual community forum on redistricting
- advocated fair redistricting before Oconee County Council and Oconee Legislative Delegation
- attended the quarterly meeting of Oconee Election Commission

Pickens members:

- advocated fair redistricting and other issues at the Pickens Legislative Delegation
- partnered with Pickens NAACP on their redistricting comments to Pickens County School Board

Elections/Voting: LWVOP Members

- held a virtual forum with Oconee and Pickens Election Officials (Directors and Board Chairmen) at monthly LWVOP meeting. Report of the meeting in "Guest View" on Editorial Page in Journal
- contacted Congressional Senators in support of voting rights legislation (about 50 members!)

Health Policy Group:

- met 3 times to plan March LWVOP meeting and to coordinate Medicaid expansion activities with LWVSC and LWV Charleston
- participated in the LWVSC Health Policy webinar (8 of 44 participants from LWVOP)

Community Service: Oconee members provided dinner to guests at Our Daily Rest, Seneca

Additionally:

LWVOP members attended the annual LWVSC-sponsored LEAD (League Education and Advocacy Day) Ellie Taylor and Janie Shipley serve as co-chairs of two LWVSC work groups, Environment and Health Policy respectively. Formation of a Communications Team is on target to better serve our members and community. *The Voter* was sent, the Board met, our co-presidents continue to provide excellent leadership.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY**, our membership continues to ACT – MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

***If YOU haven't been involved lately, come join us or contact Janet Marsh, what League can do for you!  
864.710.0557***

## YOUTH WANTS TO KNOW!

**Zoey Lawless**, 11, of Bucharest Romania, joined local League members in attending (via Zoom) the quarterly Oconee County Elections Commission meeting. The meeting comprised some of the following topics: dates for candidate filing for the general election, and absentee and in person voting were announced. Elected positions, such as the Soil and Water Commission and Fire Commission, are not party affiliated and have different filing dates: a petition containing 100 names will put a candidate on the ballot for these positions.



The School Board has its own requirements, and pertinent dates are available at [oconeesc.com](http://oconeesc.com). There was discussion of commercial vendors for the preparation and handling of absentee ballots. The State Elections Commission has announced a new and cumbersome process for handling absentee ballots. There were over 20,000 such ballots in Oconee for the 2020 presidential election and more are expected in 2024. The SEC paid for the postage paid envelopes for absentee ballots in the 2020 presidential election, but not in other elections. It was noted that problems with absentee ballots led to a decline in voter participation in both parties.

Perhaps the endless squabbling among state officials distracts us from more important issues of voter equity for disadvantaged groups. Why is this so, **Miss Lawless** wonders, instead of spending so much time on matters of finance. She states, "I like to hear both sides of a story." Hopeful words for the future of democracy.

*Submitted by Buzzy Adams*

## NEW MEMBER BIO



**Carol Asalon** grew up in Cincinnati and has been living in the Upstate for 26 years, 20 years in Pickens County. Carol recently retired from the Riley Institute at Furman University where she managed the financials, oversaw the marketing collateral, and created and maintained their website prior to its transition to Word Press. She was at Furman a total of 25 years and with the Riley Institute for 18 of those years. While at Furman, she completed her undergraduate degree in accounting. She has three children and two grandchildren. **Jason**, his wife and son **Andrew**; and, **Mike**, his wife and son, **Ziggy**; all live in Lexington, KY. Her daughter, **Gina**, lives in the Czech Republic while her husband earns his Ph.D. in philosophy.

Carol is passionate about the environment and sustainability of our ecosystems and voting rights protection to ensure preservation of our fragile democracy. She hopes to become involved with the League on these issues while meeting some new friends. Other interests she pursues are gardening, developing native plant areas, exercising, and hiking.

*Clemson City Council*      *1st and 3rd Monday, 6:30 pm*  
*Seneca City Council*      *2nd Tuesday, 6:00 pm*  
*Pickens County Council*    *1st Monday, 6:30 pm*  
*Oconee County Council*    *1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm*  
*Anderson County Council* *2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:00 pm*

*Pickens County School Board*    *4th Monday, 7:00 pm*  
*Oconee County School Board*    *3rd Monday, 6:00 pm*  
*Anderson Co. School Board*      *3rd Monday, 6:00 pm*

### Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area LWVCA, P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (opt) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 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 Ed 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.

Visit our website at [www.lwvclemsonarea.org](http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org) and contact us at [lwvclemson@gmail.com](mailto:lwvclemson@gmail.com).

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