

President's Message

We will start the 2023 year by engaging in program planning, reviewing existing state and local positions, and making recommendations for change. This process gives each of us a chance to acquaint ourselves with issues that leaguers have previously studied and positions they have voting rights, education, the



Linda Gahan

environment, health care, effective government, taxation, racial equality, transportation, etc.? We will also identify three action items we want to advocate for in the coming biennium. These will guide our advocacy and education efforts at the state and local levels for 2023-2025. Thirdly, we can recommend a new study at the state or local level.

The program planning process is grassroots, meaning league members at the local level collectively determine the program and action for the next two years. All thirteen local leagues in South Carolina will do this and the results will be sent to the LWVSC board for compilation. At the LWVSC Convention in April, we will learn what the LWVSC board recommends and vote on our Program and Action Agenda for 2023-2025. For this process to be genuinely grassroots, **we need your participation. Come to the January 17th meeting at 7 pm at OLLI.**

Every January, LWVSC offers League Education and Advocacy DAY (LEAD). League members across the state come together to prepare for this year's legislative session, listen to speakers to become better informed and hang out together for a full day in Columbia. In this issue of the VOTER, you will find more information. The cost of \$30 will be paid for any LWVOP member who want to attend. **Registration deadline is January 17** for the January 28th meeting. Come and energize your engines.

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Oconee and
Pickens Counties
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29631
<https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina/oconee-pickens-counties>

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Calendar of Events

January 9	Pickens County Legislative Delegation meeting at the Performing Arts Center in Liberty at 6 pm.
January 17	LWVOP General Meeting, “Program Planning”, OLLI, 7 pm.
January 17	Registration Deadline for LEAD (League Education and Advocacy Day) on Jan 28.
January 24	LWVOP Board Meeting, Zoom, 7 pm.
January 28	LEAD (League Education and Advocacy Day) , Midlands Technical College – Airport Campus, Columbia, 9:30 am– 3:00 pm.
February 7	Pickens County Board of Voter Registration and Elections, PC Administrative Building, Pickens, 4:30 pm
<i>OLLI Building</i>	<i>578 Issaqueena Trail, 100 Thomas Green Clemson Boulevard, Clemson (864-633-5242)</i>

Have You Seen the LWVOP Website and Facebook to See What’s New?

Come visit our website’s homepage to see new items that include an “Upcoming Events Calendar” to view league events at a glance, the latest stories from around the state and the national league, and a link to Facebook and the current LWVOP newsletter. Forthcoming updates include a “Members Only” dropdown that will serve as a valuable tool for all LWVOP league members and consolidation of information on the site that will make it more concise. As our site transforms, it will be one you will want to visit often! The link to the LWVOP website is LWVOP.ORG.

Here’s a quick link to the Facebook page: <https://bit.ly/3EAGc11>. With the election behind us, the Facebook page will be focusing on outreach and educating the public about our mission and the work we are doing. Featured material comes from the state and national league, and locally generated articles that link to our website for more information. Anytime you share a post from Facebook, it raises our profile and sends our messages to people who are supporters or potential new members.

Please contact the communications team if you have information you would like to share, or questions/ suggestions about the website or Facebook.

By Carol Asalon and Cherie Walker

LWVSC Positions in Brief

ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY

LWVSC supports policies that ensure fair and open elections through unbiased and equitable redistricting, encouraging voter registration and access to voting, open primaries, and use of voting equipment that ensures that voters can participate without any undue obstacle and produces election results that can be verified as accurately reflecting the intent of voters. Specific positions address redistricting, voter registration/voter access, and election management.

EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNMENT

LWVSC supports development and monitoring of government structures, processes, and procedures that are efficient, responsive, representative, transparent and accountable; providing citizen access to, and participation in, decision-making; and a system of state and local taxation that is equitable and provides adequate revenue for public purposes. Specific positions address transparency and accountability, the General Assembly, executive and regulatory, judiciary, constitutional revision, local government and home rule, and state and local taxation.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN SERVICES

LWVSC supports the creation of a nurturing, protective and supportive environment for all its residents, regardless of race or gender. Important public services that contribute to that environment include education, health care, protection of children's rights, and the criminal justice system. We support a public state-supported education at all levels which is high quality, effective, equitable, fully funded, and accountable. We affirm the right of children to protective services, safe and affordable childcare, and fair and supportive treatment when in the juvenile justice system. We support policies that will reduce the prison population and provide better services to inmates that will help to rehabilitate them when they return to the community.

Racial and Gender Equity: LWVSC supports gender and racial equity, including ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and the promotion of fairness in hiring, advancement, pay, and representation in public appointments.

Education: LWVSC supports public state-supported education at all levels that is high quality, effective, equitable, fully funded, and accountable.

Criminal Justice: LWVSC supports improvements in function and oversight of the Department of Correction to promote the rehabilitation, safety, and well-being of inmates, with attention to offenders' responsibility to the community and preparing them for their return to the community.

LWVSC Positions in Brief Continued

Health Care: LWVSC, in conformity with LWVUS policy, supports provision of a basic level of quality health care at an affordable cost for all South Carolina residents. Health Insurance should be expanded to cover all South Carolinians. The state should participate fully in federal programs to provide health care insurance and services. LWVSC strongly supports access to sexual and reproductive health care and autonomy of decision-making.

Protection of Children’s Rights: LWVSC supports programs and policies that ensure quality services, personnel, financing, and training at all levels of government to meet the needs of children and families, and a juvenile justice system that has as its primary purpose the rehabilitation, safety, and well-being of the offender.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

LWVSC supports promoting an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the interrelationships of air quality, energy, land use, habitat preservation, waste management and water resources, sustainable agricultural programs and practices and a balanced approach to transportation and growth management planning.

Natural Resources: LWVSC supports promotion of an environment that is beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest by recognizing the inter-relationships of air quality, energy, land use, habitat preservation, waste management and water resources and sustainable agricultural programs and practices.

Transportation: LWVSC supports local, regional, and coordinated multi-modal transportation services that efficiently and economically meet community needs and enhance planned growth, but do not adversely affect the environment.

Oconee and Pickens Counties LWV Positions

Education: Adequate financing of education, greater fiscal autonomy for school boards, and structure of Pickens County School Board.

Growth Management: We support intentional and collaborative growth management in the three-county area (Anderson, Oconee, Pickens) of South Carolina.

Representative Government: Support for odd number of members of committees, commissions, and councils and seven member Pickens County Council

League Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD)

Location

Midlands Technical College - Airport Campus
1260 Lexington Drive
West Columbia South Carolina 29170

What?

League Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD)

Gather with fellow League members across the state as we power up for the new legislative session! Hear from South Carolina leaders about hot topics and strategies to move our state forward. You'll leave inspired—and energized!

When?

Saturday, January 28, 2023, 9:30 am – 3 pm

Who's Invited?

All South Carolina League members

Event Details

The **full-day program, 9:30 am - 3 pm**, will open with a retrospective on the midterm election by SEC Executive Director Howard Knapp. You'll preview the legislative session and LWVSC priorities with **Lynn Teague**, LWVSC Vice President, Issues & Advocacy. Then a powerhouse panel will tackle grassroots strategies for change. Later we'll delve into hot topics with our own League experts, then close the afternoon with remarks by **Andy Brack**, popular editor of *Statehouse Report*. Your **\$30 per-person fee** will cover coffee, snacks, and lunch. **Registration deadline Jan 17.**

<https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina-state/event/lead-2023-league-education-advocacy-day>

New Member Bio

Ellen Ellick was born and raised in Nebraska. Later, she lived in St. Louis for 30+ years before moving to Clemson. She worked as a newspaper reporter, community college English teacher, employee communications writer for the Union Pacific Railroad, and public information officer for the St. Louis Health Department. Ellen's daughter and son-in-law are employed by Clemson University. She has two granddaughters. She enjoyed the dog rescue organization she founded and continues to enjoy birdwatching, reading, writing, travel, walking, knitting, OLLI classes and watching the St. Louis Cardinals play baseball. She is looking forward to learning more about the League and where her talents might be best utilized.

Program Planning on State and Local Issues

What's your hot button issue? Teacher pay? Infrastructure? Expanding health care? Reproductive choice? Climate change? The state League wants to hear from all our 13 local Leagues as they prepare for the biennial state convention in May.

LWVOP is trying an experiment for our January 17th meeting. For many years, we have provided input to the state convention through a lunch meeting with about a dozen people in attendance. Your program and Action Team wants all of you to have a chance to tell us what to say to the state board about any changes in our positions and program priorities for the next biennium. We will share your thoughts with other Leagues as well as state board. This practice of reviewing positions and making recommendations to state board for changes (retain, drop, revisit, reword) is grassroots democracy at its best. We are inviting members of our sister League in Anderson to join us in this program planning since it will be their first crack at it since becoming a recognized local League. And we will also be reviewing our local positions, which are listed in a second attachment.

Our program and advocacy team is drawing on local members of our statewide working groups in education, environment, racial justice and health care to highlight some of the possibilities for recommendations. We also expect some lively discussion around ranked choice voting and home rule. A starting point for your thinking is to look at the Positions in Brief (attached) so be sure to look them over and see what you think. If you have time for more homework, here is the link to the full positions:

https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/wysiwyg/South%20Carolina%20/lwvsc_programaction-agenda_2019-2021_rev_5-21_for_website_final_2_772021.pdf.

Mark your calendars and plan to be with us on the 17th at OLLI!

Pickens County Legislative Delegation Meeting

The Pickens County Legislative Delegation Meeting is at the Performing Arts Center in Liberty at 6 pm on January 9th. Possible issues to raise include teacher pay, ranked voting, reproductive rights, voting rights, and a thank you for providing two weeks of early no-excuse voting.

Teacher pay--especially in poorer counties that find it difficult to attract and retain qualified teachers. Possible innovative programs like expanded student debt forgiveness for teachers who work in designated poorer districts. Ranked choice voting saves the cost of runoffs and gives voters a clearer way to express preferences when there are more than two candidates, either in a primary or a general election. Several states are now using it and our neighboring state of Georgia is now considering it.

Recycling in Oconee County

As a resident of Oconee County, I greatly appreciate our convenient manned recycling centers. Their website helps by offering updates on what can be sold for reprocessing, like certain plastics, so these items don't end up in the landfill where it will take 500 years to degrade. Their motto is "Recycling Today, Preserving Tomorrow." It also discusses cleaning items before recycling, so they are useful to manufacturers. Their brochure states that the average American generates four pounds of trash every day, most of it being food waste. Oconee County encourages thinking about donating leftover food to shelters or groups that can use the food. Composting at home can greatly reduce organic trash load.

Most of the usual discarded waste however is packaging, much of it plastic. Our country uses 2.5 million plastic bottles per hour, so they are asking Oconee citizens to be aware of how they can reduce plastic bottle waste by using a water bottle that can be refilled continuously for years. There is currently a market for selling Type 1 and 2 plastics so reading the numbers on plastic waste is a lesson in just how many plastics are NOT recyclable. Yet when buying groceries plastic is often unavoidable even when purchasing from our local farmers through CAFÉ (Clemson Area Food Exchange) or farmer's markets. Taking our own containers is one solution. So is reusing plastic grocery bags multiple times along with a Food Lion large collapsible grocery bag that is a deal at \$5.00 (They also make a great gift).

Our state LWV Environmental Working Group is developing a resolution for in-person meetings that creates awareness about reducing use of fossil fuels, decreasing waste, and staying aware of our carbon footprint in all we do including overuse of paper. It applies to our personal lives as well. Let's share ideas on how we are using our environmental conscience in our work together.

Submitted by Ellie Taylor

Stepping Outside Your Comfort Zone

Have you ever avoided situations where you were asked to put yourself in unknown territory? Yes, I admit I have avoided situations in the past where I could possibly fail. One of my goals after joining the League was to take on situations that made me feel uncomfortable – be outside my comfort zone - but my plan was to accomplish this in baby steps.

Recently, I was confronted with a situation that was completely out of my comfort zone and way beyond my plan of taking baby steps! I was asked by **Sarah McNeill** to serve as moderator of one of the candidate forums recently held in Clemson. I did everything possible to sidestep this challenge. I suggested others who would do a nice job and exclaimed, "I have never served as a moderator in my life!" Slowly my mindset gravitated towards "maybe I should accept this challenge and maybe I can do this!" Yes, I was nervous, but optimistic. Yes, I thought about others who seem so natural in these types of situations. Ultimately, after much introspection, I concluded that if you never step outside your comfort zone fearful of failure, you may never experience successes either. I encourage you to take on the challenge!

Submitted by Carol Asalon

*Clemson City Council
1st and 3rd Monday, 6:30 pm*

*Pickens County School Board
4th Monday, 7:00 pm*

*Seneca City Council
2nd Tuesday, 6:00 pm*

*Oconee County School Board
3rd Monday, 6:00 pm*

*Pickens County Council
1st Monday, 6:30 pm*

*Oconee County Council
1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm*

Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of Oconee and Pickens Counties LWVOP, 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 <https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina/oconee-pickens-counties>.