

League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area



LEAGUE LINES

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Mark Your Calendar

» UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, November 2, Come see *Grannie D*, - see page 10

Tuesday, November 5, Municipal Elections in SC – see Vote411.org

Tuesday, November 12, forum on **Plutonium Pit proposal for SRS** – see page [8](#)

Thursday, November 21, **Gun Safety** at the Lourie Senior Center, [1650 Park Cir, Columbia](#), 11:45.

Monday, December 2, Board meeting, 5:30 at Jason's Deli. Let Laura know a week in advance if you wish to be on the agenda

Saturday, December 14, Winter Social at the beautiful home of Pat Forbis and Joel Duncan. You are invited to bring finger food or beverages. Our Winter Social is always an opportunity to spend time with your fellow League members and simultaneously get into the holiday spirit. Potential friends of the League are welcomed. Details will follow.

Thursday, January 16, Program Planning Luncheon, Lourie Senior Center



CONTRIBUTORS FOR DECEMBER LEAGUE LINES

A REMINDER WILL BE SENT OUT FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15.
ARTICLES DUE FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22 AT THE LATEST.



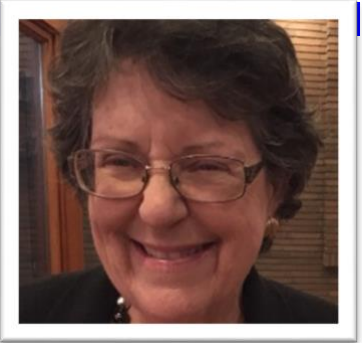
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN: "Fair Districting is Nonpartisan & Makes Democracy Work"

Recently, a League of Women Voters Columbia Area (League) colleague was approached by a leader of a local civic organization to recommend a League speaker for one of their events. The League member responded that the local League has several people trained and ready to give timely, informed talks on redistricting and fair political maps. The League speakers, she explained, have data and clear maps showing results of past districting in South Carolina and neighboring states and resulting partisan advantages or disadvantages. The local organization leader responded that redistricting sounded too partisan and controversial for their group needs, and the membership wouldn't appreciate it.



This exchange is telling and chilling. Discussions about the fair or skewed distribution of citizen votes to favor any political party is not, in and of itself, partisan. A well prepared, fact-based presentation on the issue of districting and redistricting, however, can be controversial. That point is well taken. The controversy would be most disquieting to people who suspect or know that malapportionment helps secure their political party or favorite candidate's power.

As in many aspects of human behavior, when a favorable scam has been figured out and established, the danger is that the tables can turn, and, eventually, two or three people can play the same game. The League asserts, instead, that fair and open district drawing is how a healthy democracy thrives.

In addition, it is not fair districting that is partisan. Rather, unfair districting is almost always partisan. Discussing the idea of fair districting and the problems of unfair maps and gerrymandering is not partisan. Not discussing these issues implies that everything is fine, clean, fair, and just. The reverse is true: not discussing it, accepting the status quo in the face of objective data, is partisan.

League members are often first responders to attacks on democratic norms, procedures, and ethics. Democracies are difficult and demanding. Democracies depend on informed and active citizens. In one-party systems, one tool of power is silencing. The League is not silent on issues of unfairness. For almost 100 years, the League has maintained a nonpartisan stance yet

strongly and persistently advocated for issues and policies to make democracy work.

In the summer and fall of 2019, the League has helped a bumper crop of citizens register to vote, change their address, figure out what kind of photo ID they need, meet deadline in order to vote, verify the districts they would vote in, and address myriad other voting issues. A partial list of these efforts includes voter registration tables at: The Tasty Tomato Festival; The Jubilee Festival; Okra Strut; various area high school open houses and senior nights; college campuses; parades; civic meetings, (reunions, training sessions, coalition meetings, and rallies).

In addition to voter registration and participation, League members recognize that votes need to be counted through reliable, easily accessible, and accountable procedures and machines. Another component of the election process is the funneling of citizen's votes into geographic domains or districts. If district lines are skewed, then the steps leading up to the selection of representatives is tainted.

The League helps citizens register to vote and works to keep them informed about candidates, races, and referenda through VOTE411.org, pamphlets, handouts, forums, debates, and notices to media outlets. LWV/SC helped push for new state voting machines. Yet, if votes on election night are sorted into districts which fracture and diminish the power of some votes and pack the heft of other votes, election results are not a clean, democratic reflection of voting.

The League's duty is to address malapportionment of the vote. It is vital, but not enough, to register voters and get out the vote. Ensuring that all votes matter equally requires that organizations like the League discuss and advocate for fairly drawn districts so the adage "Every Vote Counts" is true in practice.

It is partisan NOT to want to discuss the issue, or to examine the facts, or think about alternative ways to draw districts. Fair districting is a worthy goal. From it might come less cynicism, less divisiveness, more voting participation, and a deeper, more robust democracy. *Laura Woliver*

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RECAP OF OCTOBER PUBLIC POLICY LUNCHEON: Listening to Lynn Teague, LWV/Columbia Area member and (volunteer) LWV/SC Lobbyist, along with Professor Debbie Billings, USC Public Health, you would think that you might have been transported back to the 1960s: before the Civil Rights Act, before women in SC could buy a house on their own signature, before a woman could be a cop or a bus driver; when nursing, teaching, and being a secretary were the “jobs for women;” and when abortions were illegal, and access to contraception was limited. I was just a young kid then, but I remember my brother came home from college one summer and told the story about a girl at school who had become pregnant and died by giving herself a “coat hanger abortion.” I wasn’t old enough to know exactly what they were talking about, but I was terrified. That fear is coming back because, as both Lynn and Debbie reported, the “fetal heartbeat” bill H.3020 is an extreme restriction on abortion. It has passed in the SC House and is being strongly supported in the Senate.

Our speakers indicated that some in South Carolina’s legislative leadership are annoyed that South Carolina has not been among the states that have already adopted the six-weeks “fetal heartbeat” ban. Those legislators are determined to pass this extreme bill to show their stance.

The bill was written to “REQUIRE TESTING FOR A DETECTABLE FETAL



HEARTBEAT BEFORE AN ABORTION IS PERFORMED ON A PREGNANT WOMAN AND TO PROHIBIT THE PRFORMANCE OF AN ABORTION WHEN A FETAL HEARTBEAT IS DETECTED.”
You can read

the bill and listen to the hearing by going on the following website and putting the bill number in the Quick Search box and clicking the Video Schedule. <https://www.scstatehouse.gov/>.

Rather than abortion, the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* requiring school desegregation initiated a goal of a more conservative judicial system in the United States. Another ruling prohibited school prayer and energized more members of the public. Subsequent rulings led to the coalescence of a political movement that became central for some evangelical religious groups. The Catholic Church had primarily been fighting abortion, but today other religious groups have picked up the anti-abortion banner. This is happening even though a 2019 Winthrop poll shows there is broad-based support in South Carolina for a woman's right to make reproductive decisions for herself within the limits established by *Roe v. Wade*. Most mainstream Christian and Jewish denominations also support a woman's right to choose.

Both Lynn and Debbie stated that pro-choice groups have discovered that data and science are not effective arguments by themselves; personal stories must also be added to put a face on this issue and communicate with the public. However, because people fear they will be ostracized and/or stigmatized, urging people to tell their stories is often difficult.

League members asked about how this argument will go forward in the courts. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said that she regards arguments centered on discrimination are important for protecting women's rights. There was discussion of "bodily autonomy" as the foundation of some arguments against abortion restrictions. Contemporary medical ethics – reflected in government policy – holds that the individual right to personal dignity and bodily autonomy overrides demands for mandatory organ donation. Even after a person is deceased, doctors must have explicit permission to harvest organs to save other lives. Why do pregnant women have less right than the dead to decide how their bodies will be used?

Another aspect of the discriminatory nature of abortion restrictions is that people at the lower end of the economic scale are more likely to be captive by laws that drive them toward dangerous illegal abortions or enduring an unwanted pregnancy, while more affluent women can seek help outside the state or nation. Minorities would suffer more from this inequity.

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An added fear of the “fetal heartbeat” bill is that it is a step toward a “personhood bill” that would give fertilized eggs rights equal to those of living persons. In many South American (SA) countries, women have been charged with homicide because they were blamed for causing a miscarriage. Doctors in some of these SA countries adopted a “harm reduction strategy” to reduce possible negative consequences of this public policy. In Uruguay, where women were dying from self-induced abortions or being arrested for trying to get a medically safe abortion, so, doctors advising patients would “tell them what they shouldn’t do” to prevent an unwanted pregnancy.

The South Carolina Coalition for Health Families (now Women’s Rights and Empowerment Network, or WREN) is one of our partner organizations providing guidance on how you can help fight against efforts to limit the rights of women to make some of the most crucial decisions of their lives. The League has been a member of the Coalition since its inception.

Lynn adds: Interesting tidbit from the PPL: I was talking to Hannah Timmons and she asked where I went to high school – I looked so familiar. OMG, she is Miss Timmons, my University High librarian and senior English teacher! Now I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to call her Hannah again. (It has been 53 years, so we didn’t instantly recognize one another.) *Pam Craig*



OBSERVER CORPS UPDATE

Lady June Cole

10/1/2019 West Columbia City Council

Observer: Amy Mikell

During this regularly scheduled meeting, there was a presentation asking for easement for a Comet bus stop near city hall. Comet plans to build 200 shelters in the Midlands to encourage more ridership. Council agreed to supply \$23,000 to support the West Columbia Chamber of Commerce with several events, including the Holiday Parade of Lights, St. Pat's on the River, and the Rhythm on the River concert series. Hospitality tax funds will be used.

Susan O'Cain, Director of Communications for Riverbanks Zoo and Gardens, described a new event, "World of Migratory Birds Day" to be held October 12. She thanked the council for their ongoing support of the work of the zoo.

In addition, the Pineview Minors baseball team was lauded for having reached third place in the Dixie Youth World Series. A senior at B.C. High School was recognized for his community service project earning him the Eagle Scout award: he designed and installed benches to provide more seating in West Columbia Parks. Jamie Hook, Public Works Director, was honored for his excellence and dedication to the city. He received a standing ovation from the audience.

10/10/2019 Richland Voter Registration and Elections Commission Observer:
Robin White

The Commission has received at least 20 candidate resumes for the position of director. The Commission voted to close the window for accepting additional resumes.

An issue concerning the upcoming election for one seat on the R1 school board was discussed. Based on timing, the original prescribed date would fall on December 24 – ineligible, as it is a holiday. By rule, the next date will be a week later, on December 31, which is not a holiday. Concerns are that the public will be thinking about New Year’s Eve preparations instead of voting, the inability to hire voting poll officials, and the probability of an extremely low turnout.

The interim director reported that new machine testing is in progress. One plan is to introduce the machines to voters at venues such as Soda City and other community events to allow some “hands on” opportunities for voters.

10/15/19 Richland County Council

Observer: L.J. Cole

This regularly scheduled meeting addressed both the continued monitoring of the Penny Tax records and improperly posted campaign and other street signage. The Honorable Joyce Dickerson suggested that the county use the phone numbers on any signage improperly displayed and call the owner to remove the signs. The Honorable Gwendolyn Kennedy suggested increased enforcement of fines for improper placement of signage.

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MEMBERS' CORNER



Elizabeth Jones receives our “inky fingers” award for yet another successful submission to *The State* for League-issue letters to the editor. This time, “Let impeachment and democracy work” . . . “It’s about Trump and his Interactions with heads of foreign governments. America was already great, and the impeachment process is about trying to keep our country that way”



Professor Duncan Buhl has served several years as the watchdog for LWV/SC and the State of South Carolina regarding voting machines and many related issues. He recently wrote:

“There have been arguments made that the electronic ballot-marking devices (BMDs) are actually less expensive than hand-marked ballots because the cost of the paper for the hand-marked ballots is eventually greater than the cost of the BMDs.

This argument is basically wrong.

Costs here are taken from the ES&S bid to South Carolina in the spring of 2019. One should note that, although these costs would be slightly different for North Carolina, the two states would likely share the PrintElect contractor to ES&S, so these costs would be reasonably close to costs in North Carolina”

*If you wish to read Duncan’s 2-pager, contact Suzanne Rhodes at suzrhodes117@yahoo.com

THE LEAGUE WELCOMES CHARLOTTE HOLMES, a fifty-plus-year member of the League of Women Voters. She and her husband have moved here from Clemson, where they both were employed by Clemson University. They now reside at Still Hopes in West Columbia, where Charlotte already has begun working as an ambassador for Vote411.org. She is interested in voter registration and elections and is busy sharing information about the upcoming November 5th election with her fellow Still Hopes residents. Charlotte wore her blue VOTE411 t-shirt and put flyers describing VOTE411 in the mailboxes of all the residents



SHARON AYLING registered voters at Spring Valley High School's open house on September 17.

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FRIENDS OF THE LEAGUE



Savannah River Site (SRS) Watch is sponsoring a public forum Tuesday, November 12, on the risky plan to locate a Plutonium Bomb Plant at SRS. This proposal would violate important long-standing League-supported international nonproliferation agreements, cost what DOE estimates to be \$1 billion/year for decades, and subject not only on-site workers, but off-site

citizens to contamination, as was generated at the troubled Rocky Flats site in Colorado. Earlier this year at another forum, local citizens were assured that the Rocky Flats site had been cleaned and is a national park. That is only partly true - another part of the site is a fenced-off National Superfund Site, subject to continued monitoring. The SRS Watch forum will focus on the history of all that happened at the Colorado site, what's going on now at that site, and the "need" to bring even more plutonium to SRS (which already must manage about 12 metric tons). See Facebook for more information on the public meeting at the Aiken Public Library from 7 to 8:45 pm. More at:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/740219543106007/> and

<https://www.einpresswire.com/article/500683166/nnsa-s-proposed-plutonium-bomb-plant-at-savannah-river-site-and-lessons-learned-from-the-rocky-flats-plutonium-disaster> .

Suzanne Rhodes will be driving a carpool – contact her if you wish to ride with other interested members – Suzrhodes117@yahoo.com



SCGAP: At a press conference last month, Governor Henry McMaster introduced SC Women in Leadership's **SC Gubernatorial Appointments Project** (SC GAP), designed to recruit capable women to serve on state boards and commissions. You can share the call to action through word of mouth, social media, email, and communication with family and friends. We look forward to a flood of applications!

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO RAISE A LITTLE HELL: At age 90, Doris Haddock blazed a 3200-mile trail across America for campaign finance reform, precipitating the passage of the McCain-Feingold Act. Off-Broadway actress Barbara Bates Smith will summon Granny with the Straw Hat, which has toured across the US to rave reviews. Come see Granny D at the Unitarian Universalist church, 2701 Heyward St., 29201. Doors open at 6:30; the show begins at 7:30. Drop by early for wine and cheese and stay afterward for coffee and dessert. Advanced tickets are available through email:

Patmohr@mindspring.com

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OTHER NEWS

United States
**Census
2020**

ALERT FROM LWV/US – CENSUS GAMES

Mailers labeled [“2019 Congressional District Census,”](#) allegedly have been sent to at least five states thus far (California, Louisiana, Montana, Ohio, and Washington State).

Although the forms look nothing like a real census form, the partisan nature of the content, request for payment, and the labeling of “census” is concerning, as it could cause confusion in many communities.

This sort of a misinformation campaign is not new; however, given the political climate around the census, we want to be careful not to counter the misinformation with messaging that would discourage the public from participating in the actual census next year. Our goal is to inform – not instill fear or anger.

Our message recommendation is to use straight-forward facts to provide accurate information without emotion:

The only official U.S. census form comes directly from the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Anything solicited prior to April 2020 is not part of the U.S. census.
- Any survey by an outside group mentioning the census is not part of the official U.S. Census.
- Anyone who has participated in these surveys should still plan to participate in the U.S. census starting in March 2020.

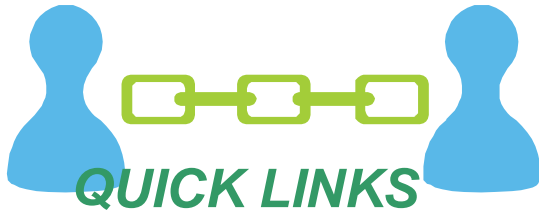
For additional LWV talking points about the 2020 Census, see Census Talking Points (<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/talking-points->

[templates/talking-points-2020-census](#)) and the Census Action Kit (<https://www.lwv.org/league-management/voting-rights-tools/census-action-kit>) on the League Management Site.

Our coalition partners have provided the following recommended actions if you see these mailers in your community:

1. Report the deceptive mailer to your non-partisan state/local Complete Count Committee, your area 2020 Census Partnership Specialists, and your regional or area Census Office (if/when applicable). Urge them to release a clarifying statement.
2. Send the mailer to your U.S. House and Senate members in order to raise the visibility of the problem and to spur action with the U.S. Postal Service (which has authority over this issue). For your reference, Reps. Carolyn Maloney, Lacy Clay, and Frank Pallone recently sent a [letter](#) asking the Postmaster General to investigate the fake census mailer. The Deceptive Mailing Prevention and Enforcement Act prohibits private entities (nonprofit or for-profit) from using logos, slogans, return addresses, and the like that would reasonably confuse the recipient into thinking it was official federal government mail.
3. Educate your community and clarify that this is not an official mailing from the U.S. Census Bureau or related in any way to the upcoming 2020 Census. The Census Bureau website includes resources on "avoiding frauds and scams" (<https://2020census.gov/en/avoiding-fraud.html>) that make clear that the Census Bureau will not ask for money or donations. Consider sharing these resources with your community.
4. If you receive an unknown mailing, please take a photo and email to advocacy@lwv.org

Thank you all for your commitment to this work!



Websites:

National: www.lwv.org/

State: <http://lwvsc.org/>

Columbia: www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Facebook: *To see our Facebook Page:*

1. Go to YOUR Facebook page and begin typing "**League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area**" in the search box until a list pops up.
2. Click on the name **League of Women Voters of Columbia, SC** with the familiar blue LWV Logo on the left.

That's it!


Twitter:


1. Go to YOUR Twitter account and search for the League of Women Voters Columbia Area and connect.


Facebook and Twitter email address:

@LWVColumbiaSC

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 **Columbia City Council**
 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM City Hall 1737 Main Street Columbia, SC 29201
 Check website at www.columbiasc.net for more information.

 **Lexington County Council**
 Meet: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:30 PM 2nd Floor County Administration Building 212 South Lake Drive, Lexington, SC 29072
 For confirmation of meeting dates, please call 785-8103 or check website www.lex-co.com

 **Richland County Council**
 Meet: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM 2nd Floor County Administration Building 2020 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29202.
 For more information, please contact the Clerk of Council Office @ (803) 576-2060 or check: www.richlandonline.com

