



## The Voter September 2025

### Calendar of Events

**October 21, 2025, 4:00 pm**

**"How County Government Works"**

**Ken Roper, Pickens County Administrator and TBD**

**United Methodist Church of Clemson**

**300 Frontage Road Clemson, SC 29631**

**[Click for a list of local Public Meetings](#)**

We must show our interest and determination to make a difference in the current political environment. Please make an effort to attend some of these meetings.

### Women's Equality Day Celebration

We had a fantastic night at the Women's Equality Day Celebration. Enjoy the remarks from Holley Ulbrich, or read it at her blog, [Purple Sage 41](#).

The Declaration of Independence says that all men are created equal. Man is a troublesome word in English. Sometimes it means a human being and other times it means a male human being. I took four years of Latin in high school. Despite the patriarchal, misogynistic, authoritarian, slave-owning culture of the Roman empire, Latin did distinguish between a *homo* as a human being and *vir* and *mulier* as, respectively, as a male human being and a female human being. Jefferson must have missed that lesson. The Declaration of Independence assumed an even narrower view of man. It meant a white male property owner. It took a Civil war and four constitutional amendments and several Civil Rights Acts and the Voting Rights Act to broaden our definition of man. This month we celebrate one of those acts, the 19th Amendment.



Now we are once again fighting for women's rights, the right of reproductive choice and control of our bodies, which we have enjoyed for fifty years. I was married in 1962 in my native state of Connecticut where contraception was illegal. That law that was not being enforced. Fortunately, condoms could be purchased for the prevention of socially transmitted diseases and birth control pills could be prescribed for menstrual irregularity, both of which were apparently epidemic in the state. In 1965, SCOTUS handed down a ruling in *Griswold v. Connecticut* overturning the state's contraception blue law on the grounds of a right to privacy inherent in the 14th amendment. That case set the stage for *Roe v. Wade*.

Only in recent years have we learned the extent to which assumed rights are fragile—voting rights, civil rights, privacy rights, safety rights. A major difference between the contraception ban in Connecticut before 1965 and the new abortion laws was enforcement. There was no enforcement in the earlier era, but now some states have established criminal penalties for

doctors, clinics, and women for having abortions—even miscarriages that someone claims are actually abortions.

How did it finally happen after 72 years of agitation that women got the right to vote? The movement was launched in 1948 at the Seneca Falls Women's Convention with a Declaration of Women's Rights. Soon that agenda had to take a back seat to the battle over slavery. In 1868, three years after the end of the War of the Rebellion, as it was sometimes known in the north, the lesser-known 15th amendment was ratified. It prohibited the federal government and each state from denying or abridging a citizen's right to vote "on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." Efforts by women to explicitly include gender were ignored.

Four other significant events took place in the intervening years that helped the suffrage cause. The first was the settlement of the west, which was less conventional about women's roles than the east. One by one, western states gave women voting rights.

The second was the 1913 constitutional amendment requiring direct election of senators by the people instead of appointed by state legislatures. Western senators had to court the women's vote, and increasingly, so did presidential candidates in states where women could vote.

The third event was the service rendered by women in so many ways for the war effort during the first world war. They could fight, nurse, or do men's jobs while the men were away, but they had no say in the government they were serving.

A fourth and final event was the victory of the female-dominated temperance movement in enacting The 18th amendment, prohibition, in 2018. Many men and especially liquor interests saw a link between suffrage and prohibition, but when liquor became illegal even without women being able to vote, the opposition lost its steam.

Back in the days before the 19th amendment, when my great-grandmother was marching for women's suffrage, there was a split in the movement over strategy. Two splits, in fact. One was whether to over focus on suffrage or push the ERA. Realistically, the ERA would probably not have made it, but suffrage did. Sometimes compromise is the best path.

The other split was more tactical. Get the right to vote state by state or focus on Congress and a Constitutional amendment? And the answer was yes. It took both to get the 19th amendment through Congress and ratified by 36 of the 48 states. In August 1920, Tennessee put the amendment over the top by a single vote by a first term young representative responding to a request from his mother.

The League of Women Voters was organized in 1920 as an educational resource for newly enfranchised women to encourage and support their informed participation in government.. Its mission has expanded to include all voters, and to interpret that mission in the broader terms as making democracy work. Making democracy work requires eternal vigilance.



The majority of Americans values our civil liberties and those of their fellow citizens, not to mention immigrants and refugees. For almost 50 years we have taken these rights for granted—freedom of religion, a right to privacy, the right to vote in free and fair elections, the right to engage in peaceful protest. The right to an equal and not separate public education. More recently, we have added the freedom to marry a person of the same gender or a different race.

When one Constitutional right is threatened by the courts, all rights are at risk. As Martin Niemöller, a Lutheran minister during the Nazi era, wrote:

*First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out— because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak for me.*

The 19th amendment in 1920 was the culmination of a 72-year battle. Tennessee, the 36th state to ratify, passed it into law, giving the required  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority on August 19th. The U.S. Secretary of State enrolled the amendment in the Constitution on August 26th, giving us not Women's Equality Day but Women's Equality Week. A fitting length for such a long labor before it was birthed. Only one of the original suffrage leaders was still alive in 1920 but she was too ill to vote. My great-grandmother Alice Munger Stewart, who was born in the 6th year of that battle, marched in Washington for the suffrage movement in 1913 and lived to vote in 1920 and 1924. Given my birth family's Republican leanings, I am guessing that she voted for Warren Harding and Calvin Coolidge.

There are lessons in that struggle about compromising and holding firm, about strategy and tactics, and about the truth of Reinhold Niebuhr's dictum that nothing worth accomplishing is ever accomplished in our lifetimes. Therefore, we are saved by hope. As we struggle to keep hope alive and make a difference in democracy, voting rights, and human rights, let us hold up and retell the stories of these past struggles to revive our commitment and determination.

I want to conclude with some words of wisdom adapted from Lincoln's Gettysburg address as we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence:

*Two and a half centuries ago, our forebears brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all persons were created equal. Now we are engaged in an undeclared civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. The task before us is dedicate ourselves to the great task remaining before us, to resolve that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

—Holley Ulbrich

# Membership Renewals

Wondering how you will know if it's time to renew your membership You will receive an email notice from LWVUS shortly before your membership expires (one year from your last dues payment). To renew, go to [LWVOP.org](http://LWVOP.org), click on JOIN/RENEW, and pay by credit card. If you have difficulty, contact [Janet Marsh](#) or [Ruth Reed](#). —*Ruth Reed*

## New Member Orientation

The LWVOP Membership Team met with nine new members in early August to share information and lead a lively discussion about the League and its various aspects. Three new members participated through Zoom – Kathy Headley, Donna Buchanan and Jody Usher. Six participated around Janet Marsh's dining room table – Marian Osborne Berky, Janet Bull, Paula Eversole, Katie Haritos-Shea, Nookie Nemchak and Bonnie Surface. Janie Shipley facilitated the discussion. Membership Team members Ann Fuhr and Kathy Barger on were on hand to extend a warm welcome.

Membership stands at 113 with 32 new members between January and June 2025. Over the next months we hope to have the photos and bios of many of our new members in the monthly electronic VOTER.

Please, do all you can welcome our new members! — *Janet Marsh*

***Continue to scroll to read about the League's new member!***

## New Members



### Dr. Tarina Schroeder Mendes

I grew up in an Air Force Family and traveled from Virginia to Germany and Guam during my childhood. I am happy to claim Virginia as home and attended the University of Virginia for college (psychology) and Medical School class of 1981. I married Michael Mendes, also a physician, and we moved to University of Michigan for his Surgery training and my Pediatric and Endocrinology training. He completed a Orthopedic Trauma fellowship in Texas and we moved to Geisinger Medical Center in Pennsylvania for 2 years.

We then moved to South Carolina in 1994 to McLeod Regional Medical Center. I was director of Pediatric Specialties and practiced Pediatric Endocrinology, and he was their Orthopedic trauma Surgeon. In 2003, we moved to Seneca and our daughter Genevieve attended Clemson and then Miami Law school. She practices law in Greenville SC. Our son Michael was at Clemson with a Master in Bioinformatics and now works at Greenwood Genetic Center.

In Seneca I opened a part time practice, Seneca Pediatric Endocrinology, from 2007 until 2021. I retired at age 65. I enjoy playing tennis and gardening. I have joined the LWV in the hope that I can help keep America a democratic country for this generation and generations to come.

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## Want to Submit to the Voter?

We are always looking for great content to share with our members. If you have something you wish to share, including the great work being done by League members, let us know! We need the content submitted by the 21st of each month for inclusion. You can email your submissions to [Pat](#) or [Christine](#).