

ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES

We find ourselves in the final days of an important election cycle here in South Carolina. Every House seat, Congressional seat and top State office is on the ballot along with many local races. There are several reasons why these races are important this year.

1. Nearly every House race is a contested race. For the first time in many years, incumbents are being challenged. This is a healthy sign for our democracy. Despite the fact that our House seats have been seriously gerrymandered to favor incumbents, many voters will have a choice for who will represent them.

Not since 2022 have voters had a chance to make such significant decisions.

2. All seven of our State government offices are up for re-election plus one of our US Senate seats. Not since 2022 have voters had a chance to make such significant decisions in who represents them on the state and federal levels. Yet in 2022, only 50% of qualified voters felt it was important enough to vote. This year, the League is working to improve that result by targeting areas of the state with low voter turnout. We have been awarded grants to educate voters through text-banking, phone-banking, radio ads and to promote the use of

VOTE411 to check registration, find out where/when to vote and see who's on the ballot.

3. This election is important because of the unsubstantiated threats that have been made to the integrity of our elections. The attacks on mail-in voting threaten to suppress the votes of the elderly, college students and those living out of the country. This election season has become a time of confusion, fear and misinformation, but the League of Women Voters is working to be a trusted source of voter information to get out the vote.

In our work this season:

1. Threats of voters being listed as "inactive" resulted in an active campaign by every local League to make sure voters checked their voter registration before the October 2 deadline to register to vote.
2. If voters show up to vote and find out they are "inactive," they can still vote. (See the "Purged vs Inactive Voters" article on page 2)
3. To avoid any problems with mail slowdowns, we're encouraging voters to vote in person during early voting or on election day whenever possible.

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina has been able to do the work we do because of the generous grants we've been awarded this fiscal year.

1. A \$10,000 grant from the LWV Education Fund funded a text and phone banking campaign during election season.

2. We received a \$25,000 unsolicited grant from the South Carolina Association for Community Economic Development (SCACED) in recognition of the work League members did to defeat the gerrymandering effort at the end of the legislative session and for all the work we do to support fair and just representation in South Carolina. These funds went directly into our Get Out the Vote (GOTV) campaign to target low turnout voters and to help increase that turnout beyond the 50% of four years ago.

Though we may be in a constitutional crisis where our systems of government appear to have failed us, what remains is the informed voter to keep democracy healthy and strong. LWV believes that an informed voter is our best citizen!

—Joan Zaleski, LWVSC Vice President,
Voter Services

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Purged vs Inactive Voters

Voters are not intentionally *purged* from the voting rolls in SC, but they may become *inactive*. According to the SC State Election Commission, every odd numbered year, the SEC reviews the voting rolls for the last two general election cycles, as required by law.

If a voter has not voted within the last two general election cycles, they are listed as inactive and a postcard is sent to the voter so they can confirm they are still residing at the address listed. The voter can still vote when they show up to vote by showing their valid photo ID. At that time, the poll clerk will change the voter's status to active and the voter can vote as usual.

If the postcard is not returned to the Board of Elections, the voter will be removed from the voting roll. However, this time the voter can still vote if their name does not appear on the voting roll when they go to vote. The voter should ask the poll manager to call the Board of Elections who can verify that the voter has been removed and will confirm that the voter can vote with a provisional ballot. The voter will be told to appear at the Board of Elections following Election Day to verify their address and be added to the voting rolls.

To avoid any complications before going to vote, voters are urged to check their voter registration, especially if they have moved in the last two years. If that card arrives from the State Election Commission, be sure to return it promptly!

— Joan Zaleski, LWVSC Vice President, Voter Services

MAIL-IN VOTING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Mail-in voting has been in the news over the last several months. Here's the current status of mail-in voting in South Carolina.

South Carolina offers limited opportunities for mail-in voting (aka absentee voting).

1. To obtain a mail ballot, request it by calling or visiting your county election office or sending a request to them by mail. There are eight approved reasons that qualify you for an absentee ballot. See [SCVotes.gov](https://www.scvotes.gov) for the full list.
2. Absentee ballots must be returned by 7:00 pm on Election Day, either dropped off at your county election office or via US Postal Service (USPS).
3. The outer envelope for an absentee ballot must be signed by the voter and witnessed by another qualified person. There are strict limits on who can return someone else's ballot.

The national news has recently been full of stories about the Trump administration's attempts to restrict voting by mail. These efforts have mostly failed to come to pass.

- The SAVE America Act is a bill in Congress to place federal regulations on voting, including voting by mail. While there are a few versions of the bill circulating, a key provision under discussion is a requirement for voters to provide not only ID, but also proof of citizenship at the polling place. It would also effectively end voter registration online or by mail. **The SAVE America Act has passed the House, but is stalled in the Senate.**

- President Trump signed an executive order in April 2026 instructing the US Postal Service to verify citizenship of anyone receiving a ballot by mail and to refuse to deliver ballots to voters who do not pass the verification. To make this work, states would have to send lists of voters to USPS to check against a federal database. The order includes severe penalties for election workers who send or deliver ballots to voters who then fail the verification. **The US Supreme Court recently blocked implementation of the ballot restrictions, so for this election, the executive order will not apply.**
- The US Fourth Circuit Court recently ruled that South Carolina's absentee ballot rules illegally discriminate by age because voters over 65 did not have to provide an excuse to receive an absentee ballot. **That ruling came too late to affect the present election, but watch for rule changes in upcoming elections.**

Whether you meet the requirements for an absentee ballot or not, you can vote early in person at your county election office or at Early Voting Centers in your county. See [SCVotes.gov](https://www.scvotes.gov) or your local Election Commission for local details. In-person Early Voting is October 19-31, Mondays-Saturdays, 8:30am - 6:00pm. **The League strongly encourages you to vote in person — early or on election day — rather than by mail-in absentee ballot.**

— Matthew Saltzman, LWVSC Director, Elections Systems & Technology

SAVE THE DATES

League Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD)
Saturday, January 23, 2027
Columbia

LWVSC Convention
Friday & Saturday, June 25-26, 2027
Charleston

The SC General Assembly will begin the 2027 Legislative Session on January 13, 2027.

EXPECT EDUCATION CONTROVERSIES NEXT SESSION

Upcoming Issues

Public School Funding and Accountability. Funding and accountability for the Education Scholarship Trust Fund (ESTF), also known as the voucher program, are the two issues that are likely to be most critical in the next session. The South Carolina Education Oversight Committee met on Sept. 21, 2026, and heard a report from the Department of Education stating that the relevant data on the program from 2024-25 were insufficient and therefore unreportable, prompting Representative Neal Collins to complain forcefully about the inadequacy of the data on the program. Part of the failure can be laid at the feet of the Department of Education, but the provisions for accountability in the legislation were never sufficient.

Student Discipline. Teachers have reported that discipline is an important concern and that in many cases administrators have not been giving teachers adequate support with chronically serious behavior problems. There was a student discipline bill last year, but advocates of special needs students said it did not give special needs students adequate protection, so it did not pass. At least one of the teacher organizations is working to draft a new bill about student discipline that will be introduced in the next session.

Parental Rights. A related concern is the proliferation of bills with language about parental rights. These tend to be copycat bills with much of the language provided by conservative think tanks. These bills frame the issue as a conflict between parents and school systems, but the danger is that students are not the property of their parents and in some dysfunctional families, students may need protection from their parents.

Teacher Recruitment and Retention. We can commend the Legislature for the improvements they have made in teacher salaries over the past 5 years. The reports on teacher shortages have improved as well, but some teachers say more help is needed. Smaller class sizes generally lead to better outcomes and the way to have

smaller classes is to hire more teachers.

Mobile Panic Alarms. Last session, the Legislature passed a bill for mobile panic alarms (ID cards that teachers can use to summon help in an emergency), but they did not fund it fully for all districts. Adding more funds for that would improve school safety.

Coercive Control. This is mostly about domestic violence, but can also be relevant for vulnerable children and elderly people. Two Senate bills were proposed last year to establish a law against coercive control. Since it was written in a way that could backfire and hurt victims, it could not move out of committee. The Netflix 3-part series called *Death of a Pastor's Wife* about the suicide of Mica Miller of the Myrtle Beach area is relevant to this topic.

Culture War Issues. These include restricting instruction related to controversial issues and prohibiting controversial books and instructional materials, such as materials related to race, slavery, sex, gender identity and religious freedom. There are already restrictions in a budget proviso and we could see more attempts to codify some of those in the next session.

Social Studies Standards. The Legislature will eventually be asked to approve the new social studies standards for South Carolina.

- One criticism is that the draft standards emphasize memorization and recall without adequately addressing critical thinking skills such as recognizing propaganda and evaluating bias.
- Reviewing the draft standards is a bigger task than most citizens will undertake. Some early reviewers have reported concerns that the proposed emphasis on adding Western Civilization courses might be a cloaked way to introduce white Christian nationalist ideas.
- Many people think we need two years of United States history rather than just one. The rumor is that the Department of Education overruled the drafting committee on their recommendation to increase the

United States history requirement in high school. Civics instruction could be increased from a single semester to a whole year of US Government and Economics in high school as an alternative.

- Any content-related debates will happen at the State Board of Education or possibly in the Education Oversight Committee. By the time the proposed standards reach the Legislature, approving the Social Studies Standards document will be an up-or-down vote.

With national midterms scheduled for November and with the political divisions that currently exist in our country, we can anticipate some surprises. We'll keep you informed.

— Janelle Rivers, LWVSC
Education Advocacy Specialist

How to Share a Post on Facebook

Step 1. Tap or click the arrow to Share.



Step 2. Choose where to Share it. (choosing Feed and Public will reach the most people.)

Step 3. Add a message, then select Share Now.



This simple action can reach hundreds of potential voters.

For more information on Facebook share, visit <https://bit.ly/4ANiAAY>

LWVUS MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES

Membership Toolkit

www.lwv.org/league-management/membership/membership-toolkit

This resource is hot off the press and is the result of a series of intensive discussions between LWVUS staff and local and state League leaders from across the country who shared their insights and ideas about membership.

Subjects covered:

- Member Recruitment
- Member Engagement
- Leadership Development
- Member Retention

The References section at the end of the toolkit provides links to dozens of adaptable templates, slides and handouts including a membership brochure, new member welcome emails, and Canva tutorial. Download the toolkit for easy reference. Send in your ideas and materials for future updates. This new resource is worth using!

Groups.io for Local Leaders

www.lwv.org/league-management/league-fundamentals/groupsio

Find a list of all of the Groups.io available to League members. I am subscribed to the Membership group and have chosen to receive all communications to the group in a digest form sent to me via email, but communication methods and frequency are customizable. Subjects of recent posts to the Membership group have been the auto-renewal feature in the portal (there are, as you might imagine, many comments and questions about the portal) and student memberships (I learned that some Leagues provide gift memberships to students). The groups' main purpose is to give League members across the country an opportunity to communicate with each other, but LWVUS staff are part of the groups and make helpful contributions to the conversation. It is easy to sign up.

Please let me know if you find either or both of these resources useful. In addition, I would love to hear from you about other resources you find important to your work with members.

— Christine Hait, LWVSC Director, Member Services

GOVERNANCE MOMENT

What does it mean to be an all volunteer organization?

It means a nonprofit organization in which volunteers manage the organization and do most or all of the work. As board members, we have volunteered not only to work, but also to be responsible for the organization.

As a group, we elect a board of officers and directors who take on the legal, ethical and leadership obligations of the organization to our donors, our members and our communities. Volunteer board members manage and lead other volunteers with our ideas, hands and energy.

When we serve as a local or state League board member, we wear two hats — as trustees and as managers and leaders. The Board Responsibility Matrix below explains more. Governance is the responsibility of the board as a whole while managing, leading and working are the responsibility of individual board members. Thank you for serving and reach out to me if you have questions or need support.

— Dahlia Handman, LWVSC Director, Governance

THE BOARD RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

The board as the governors or trustees of the organization	The board as managers and leaders of the organization
Responsibilities	
In the governance role, the board fulfills its responsibilities by acting as a collective body...	In its management and leadership roles, board members fulfill these responsibilities through their actions as individuals...
Objectives	
To ensure that the organization fulfills its legal and financial responsibilities to the community.	To ensure that the organization's work is accomplished and to represent the organization to the community.
1. Handle the money and file the forms. Safeguard assets from misuse, waste and fraud. 2. Keep it legal and safe. Ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, and contractual obligations. 3. Make big decisions for the future. 4. Make sure the organization is accountable and protect the organization's reputation. 5. Get help when you need it.	6. Plan for arrival and departure of individual members. 7. Get the work done. 8. Support other volunteers so they can successfully contribute to the work. 9. Be ambassadors to the community. Lend names and personal credibility and reputation to the organization. 10. Provide leadership in spirit and support for the mission.

Adapted from: Masaoka, J., (1999) *All Hands on Board*, BoardSource and CompassPoint
www.boardsource.org

YOUR GENEROSITY HELPED US INCREASE LOCAL LEAGUE SUPPORT

With support from so many generous donors, we exceeded our fiscal year (FY) budgeted contribution goal and finished FY25-26 with a net income of \$24,336. At the recommendation of the Management Team, the board voted in August to use a portion of the net proceeds to give Midterm Mini-Grants to all local Leagues for Get Out the Vote (GOTV) activities leading up to the November 3 midterm elections.

In September 2026, **we granted a total of \$8,400 in Midterm Mini-Grants** to all South Carolina local Leagues. Grants of \$400, \$600 and \$800 were given based on local League membership size. Local leadership was given discretion on what GOTV activities to fund with the grants.

Our annual Empowerment Grants remain in the budget for the current fiscal year and are not impacted by the GOTV mini-grants.

— Laurel Suggs, LWVSC Treasurer

FY25-26 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

We're pleased to let you know that donor contributions were used solely for mission impact activities and, as shown below, membership dues more than covered our operations and development expenses. Thank you again to our members and donors for your support!

FY25-26 INCOME		FY25-26 EXPENSES	
Membership Dues	\$35,222	Management/Operations	\$10,649
		Development	\$19,481
Contributions	\$63,793	Mission Impact Activities	\$53,894
LWVUS Grants	\$4,250	Advocacy (Vote411, lobbying, other)	\$32,185
State Meeting Registration	\$4,255	Member Education & Meetings	\$15,709
Other	\$840	Local League Empowerment Grants	\$6,000
Total Income	\$108,360	Total Expenses	\$84,024

This financial activity includes the combined income and expenses July 1, 2025-June 30, 2026, for both our 501(c)3, League of Women Voters of South Carolina and our 501(c)4, LWVSC Action.

Include the League in Your Year-end Giving



Give a Gift of Membership

Help us build the future of our League by introducing new South Carolina women (or men) to LWVSC. You can purchase a gift membership through the **online Member Portal**:

- Visit lwvsc.org
- In the upper left corner, select **LWV Member Portal**
- Sign in or set up your member account and then sign in
- In the **Grow Our Community** section, purchase the gift membership



Donate to Support 2027 Legislative Advocacy

The 2027 SC Legislative session begins soon, and your year-end donation will support our advocacy efforts fighting against anti-democratic initiatives.

Donate via:

- Venmo: [lwv-sc](https://venmo.com/lwv-sc)
- Zelle: league-sc (no processing fees)
- PayPal: www.lwvsc.org
- Check payable to:
LWVSC, PO Box 8453,
Columbia, SC 29202



Establish a Bequest in Your Will or Trust

Make the League part of your philanthropic legacy by including us in your estate planning. Your gift will help ensure that we can continue to protect democratic values in South Carolina no matter what challenges the future holds.

If you have already included us in your estate plans or would like help to do so, **contact Laurel Suggs at treasurer@lwvsc.org**.

Around the State



For the second year in a row, LWV Georgetown County participated in the Georgetown Art and Wine Walk Saturday and Sunday September 12 and 13. It is a great venue for increasing our visibility in the county. We were able to recruit some new members and distribute voter information. Pictured are Mary Holberton, who has just ended her term as Treasurer and Colleen Fennell-Gordon, our new Treasurer.



LWV HHI-BA and Lowcountry Immigration members distribute voting information in English and Spanish at a popular Bluffton market.

Passing the English proficiency test for citizenship is one thing; understanding the particulars of SC voting is another level entirely. During the Aug. 8 weekend, LWV of Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Area (HHI-BA), in partnership with the Unitarian Universalist Congregation and Lowcountry Immigration Coalition, reached out to Spanish-speaking voters at local markets to provide voting and election information in English and Spanish.



VOTE411 selfie boards, Superpower stickers and Future Voter stickers attracted families to the League's voter information tables at LWV Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Area summer events. Adults placed a dot on their highest concern on an issue board, opening powerful opportunities to discuss the relevance and importance of voting.



LWV York County has been busy with Back to School events across the county. They also partnered with the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity for voter outreach at the football game between Rock Hill and South Pointe.





LWV Beaufort offered voter registration and education at the Technical College of the Lowcountry in Beaufort's Constitution Day event with an ice cream truck and interactive activities.



LWV Spartanburg County has partnered with area nonpartisan groups to present Candidate Meet & Greets, both in the primaries and for the general election. These events invited all candidates for related elections to share briefly about themselves, set up tables and chat with voters one-on-one. John Baucom, Director of Spartanburg County's Registration and Elections, also shared information on voting and addressed voters' questions and concerns.

LWV Charleston Area collaborated with community sponsors to host in-person candidate forums for nine state, county and school board races over five events. All forums were in advance of the early voting period.

Since voter turnout in SC is historically a greater challenge than voter registration rates, LWV Charleston Area is also working on Get Out the Vote efforts through eye-catching yard signs to promote voting and Vote411 as well as a series of flyers for bulletin boards, coffee shops, libraries and store windows throughout the area.



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SC VOTER

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Established in 1920, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages people to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. League membership is open to any person who subscribes to the purposes and policy of the League. All members receive the *SC Voter*, email communications and news from their local League.

Prefer a digital newsletter only? Email us.

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Marching to Midterms Fundraising

There's still time to help us reach our Midterm goal!



\$3,000, February 14
LWVUS 106th Birthday



**Fiscal Year-end
Goal Achieved!**

\$52,510, Fiscal Year-end
June 30, 2026

\$15,200 as of 10/17/26



**View ways to
donate on page 5**



**+ \$20,000, Election Day
November 3**



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF SOUTH CAROLINA