

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF VIRGINIA

The Virginia Voter

— 100+ Years Strong —

President's Message

Taking on the General Assembly

- Joan Porte, President, LWV-VA

Happy New Year! 2024 is going to start off busy as the General Assembly session begins on Jan.10 and early voting for Super Tuesday on Jan. 19! Let's savor the few remaining calm times we have.

The schedules for League Day and all of the WLRTs are listed below in Advocacy Chair, Denise Harrington's article.

Also, don't miss the information below about our special screening of "Invisible Warriors: African American Women in WWII," which is a fascinating and long untold story of Black Rosie the Riveters.

Our new website is being built - maybe by elves?? – and we should be able to premiere it early in 2024. It will feature information and connections to our local leagues along with some other new and interactive segments. We hope you will like it!

As you know, LWV Virginia, Nolef Turns and the New Virginia Majority are investigating the erroneous removal of several thousand returning citizens from the voting roles. I can report that we had a productive meeting on December 20 with the Department of Elections, and we hope to continue our work to be sure that this issue is resolved.

I hope to see many League members in Richmond during this "long session." As always, your work is so deeply appreciated.

With hope for a peaceful and productive New Year.

- Joan

LWV-VA Advocacy

Flipping the Switch

- Denise Harrington, Chair, LWV-VA Advocacy

Virginia once again has “flipped the switch;” that is to say, that Virginians voted for issues that were near and dear to their hearts. As a result, it appears that the Legislative Branch and the Executive Branch of Virginia’s government will have differences of opinion on issues. In addition, the 2024 General Assembly session has many new delegates. As a nonpartisan organization, this is a tremendous opportunity to make new friends and to forge ahead with our legislative priorities. This is why I referred to this session as a “High Stakes” session. Thus, it is imperative for each member to remain engaged with this general assembly.

The **first way** that we can remain engaged is to join one of our Issue Groups. Our Legislative Issue Group leaders and members have provided the research, knowledge, and expertise on all of our Legislative Priorities. Every member is welcome to join, Issue Groups – League of Women Voters of Virginia (lww-va.org)

The **second way** you can make a difference is to respond in a timely manner to our Action Alerts that will be sent out requesting your help to respond to legislation that is being proposed (even if it’s one of our positions). Even if you think the legislation will pass, if you don’t respond, the opposition could be fierce, and respond with overwhelming numbers.

The **third way**, utilize our tools of Advocacy: Make sure that you know how to contact your legislator whenever an Action Alert has been sent out to the membership. Here are the Legislative Tools: <https://lww-va.org/members-corner/legislative-tools/> .

In order to prepare for our Advocacy work, each year we have the Women’s Legislative Roundtables (WLRTs) and each week different legislators and special advocates will come and share with the membership the “news of the day” that pertains to the League’s Issues and the General Assembly. Here is the link to RSVP: <https://LWWWLRT2024.eventbrite.com>

The live part of the WLRTs will be held in the new General Assembly Building. The address is on the invite.

- WEEK 1-/Hybrid/ January 10, 2024 - Voting Elections
- WEEK 2-/Hybrid/ January 17, 2024 - Gun Violence Protection and Domestic Violence Protection
- WEEK 3-Hybrid/January 24, 2024 - Education
- WEEK 4-/Hybrid/January 31, 2024 - Childcare
- WEEK 5- In person only: Feb 6 and 7, This is League Day – see below for more information.
- Week 6 – Hybrid/February 14, 2024 – Affordable Housing

- WEEK 6- Hybrid/ February 21, 2024 - Environmental Justice
- WEEK 7-/Hybrid/ February 28, 2024 - Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice
- WEEK 8-Virtual Only /March 6, 2024-Wrap Up!

League Day will be held on **Feb 6 and 7**. We start off with a reception to welcome the members of the General Assembly and their aides, on Feb 6 at 6p – 8p at the Omni Richmond. Our legislative breakfast is from 9am – 10:45am on February 7, also at the Omni. After you can make appointments to visit your delegates. We will be honored on the floor of the House and Senate at noon as usual which you can attend if you wish and then make appointments after.

More information and RSVP link is here: <https://LWVLeagueDay2024.eventbrite.com>

The reception is \$10 with a cash bar and breakfast is \$25.

See you in Richmond!



The Right to Vote

The Mental Capacity to Vote

- Carolyn Caywood, LWVSHR, member Right to Vote Study

Whenever I've done voter registration in a high school, some student will make a joke about the question of have you been judged mentally incapacitated. "Yeah, according to my math teacher," or "Hey Mike, guess *you* can't vote!"

That question, however, disenfranchises about twelve thousand adult Virginians according to a 2021 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) report, [*Improving Virginia's Adult Guardian and Conservator System*](#). This happens because when a court decides a person needs a guardian to manage

their affairs, it may not differentiate between the decisions where the person needs help and other rights, like voting, that the person may still want to exercise independently.

Consider an older person who is mislaying checks and bills and fearful she's about to run out of money. She knows she needs help with finances but she still has strong opinions about who should be president.

Or consider a young man with Down Syndrome who lives with his parents and has a job at a grocery store. He is vulnerable to exploitation but he also is a strong self-advocate who has testified about why he should receive minimum wage.

There are, of course, people who do not have the mental capacity to understand what voting is. An unscrupulous guardian could register such a person just as a way of voting twice themselves. But someone who would do that should not be a guardian and have control of another person. The JLARC report points out the need for more oversight of guardians.

So, how can a court decide in a guardianship case whether a person should be "judged mentally incapacitated and disqualified to vote?" You might think the judge could use a simple test like being able to name who is now president. But tests for voting have a long, evil history and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 barred literacy and other tests that have been used to disenfranchise racial minorities.

The American Bar Association in 2007 suggested that all that should be needed is that the person "communicate, with or without accommodations, a desire to participate in the voting process." The proposed Virginia constitutional amendment, [HJ2/SJ2](#), picks up that idea and speaks instead about, "the capacity to understand the act of voting."

Being judged mentally incapacitated is just one of the ways people are disenfranchised. The LWV-VA Study of the Right to Vote is discovering more about who is prevented from voting in Virginia. We have a position supporting automatic restoration of the civil rights of all returning citizens and we will be advocating for [HJ2/SJ2](#), but if voting is truly a right, who are we willing to leave out? What do you think?

JOIN US ON DEMOCRACY DAY

VIRGINIA  **GOOD GOVERNANCE**



Raise your voice for campaign finance reform and fair representation of voters

January 23, 2024 in Richmond



Democracy Day!

LWV-VA and BigMoneyOutVA

New Year's Resolution Let's get some good governance bills passed in our next Virginia General Assembly. LWV-VA is joining with other Good Government groups for a Democracy Day to support reforms that include strengthening disclosure of campaign donations, empowering the state Department of Elections, offering a public campaign financing option, and restricting the personal use of campaign funds. **Join us on Democracy Day on January 23rd, 2024 in Richmond.** Organized by nearly a dozen non-partisan groups, it should be great fun! **For more information, click [here](#). You can also raise your voice by taking one minute and signing our "[Democracy is Brewing in Virginia](#)" petition.** We will be sharing this with your legislators on Democracy Day. We need everyone to raise their voices to demand a government which works for all citizens, not just special interests. For more information, send us an email at moneyoutva@gmail.com.



Invisible Warriors

The LWV of Virginia presents a virtual special screening of the documentary: "Invisible Warriors: African American Women and World War II" March 20, 2024 - 7 PM.

Spend an evening with Gregory S. Cooke, producer and director of the documentary "Invisible Warriors, African American Women and World War II."

Mr. Cooke will introduce the film and give us perspective on the contribution of these "Invisible Warriors" before the movie is shown.

Invisible Warriors tells the important story of women who have been ignored for too long due to their race, gender, and class. African American "Rosie the Riveters" highlight the resilience, tenacity, dedication, and pride of a people, with lessons that transcend the barriers between us and that resonate today.—Amber Mitchell, Asst. Director of Public Engagement, The National World War II Museum.

Gregory S. Cooke has dedicated his career as an educator and historian to help relocate African Americans to the main pages of history. Invisible Warriors is his directorial debut following a successful stint as Associate Director of Chocolate Soldiers from the USA.

RSVP here: <https://LWVVAInvisibleWarriors.eventbrite.com>
To defray costs we are asking for a \$5 tax deductible donation.

Start of 2024 Elections

- Janet Boyd, Director of Voter Service

The New Year has just begun; and yes, Virginia, we have an Election! All Virginia voters are facing the start of Early Voting on January 19 for the Presidential Primary on March 5. In fact, many of you are already in Early Voting for one of four Special Elections scheduled for January 9 (State Senate District 9, State House of Delegates District 48, Alexandria City School Board District A, Virginia Beach City Council District 1). This short article reviews key information available on Virginia's 2024 Elections.

First, the LWV-VA website has useful details on how to vote, and don't forget all the election resources you have on Vote411.org. Additionally, here are the key dates for Virginia's three regular elections this year (more details on the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) website.

- March 5 Presidential Primary (dual, both Republican and Democratic ballots): Early Voting begins January 19
- June 18 Congressional (includes statewide Senate race) and Local Primaries: Early Voting begins May 3
- November 5 General Election (Presidential, Congressional, Local): Early Voting begins September 20

Many Officers of Election will be needed throughout Virginia. Please consider volunteering to serve for one or more of these Elections. You can reach out to your Local Jurisdiction's Registrar for more details.

Questions? Please contact me: Janet Boyd, Director of Voter Services, voterservices@lww-va.org

Focus on Health Care

Health Care Access and Equity

The recently created Health Care Access and Equity Task Force wants to develop ways for the League to collaborate with local and regional efforts to improve health and health care in Virginia. We are writing to ask for your input as we undertake this work.

The Task Force is aware of groups in northern Virginia and the Charlottesville area with which members of leagues in those areas are involved. Please help us identify other entities seeking to improve health care generally and health care access and equity in particular, and those with which leagues in Virginia are working in alignment with the National Position.

[\(https://lwwhealthcarereform.org/lww-position/\)](https://lwwhealthcarereform.org/lww-position/)

Click here to complete the

survey: <https://forms.gle/N2jLjsQCfMynUJMq9>



Partner Organization - National Organization for Women

**Virginia Needs to Defend Its Historic
38th State Status!**

- Lisa Sales, President, Virginia National Organization for Women

Last month, we commemorated the 100th anniversary of the first introduction of the Equal Rights Amendment in Congress. December 10, 1923 marked the introduction of the [ERA Resolution](#) in the U.S. Senate while December 13, 1923 was the day of [introduction](#) in the U.S. House (Our [VIDEO](#)). And so, we marched from the White House to the Department of Justice, then to the National Archives and ended with a press conference and reception with Members of Congress at the Capitol.

We are vigilantly keeping the spotlight on the need and demand for the ERA, now more important than ever in light of the Dobbs decision and a confusing patchwork of laws proliferating across our nation. Together with League president, Virginia Case Solomon, and her counterparts at the ERA Coalition, National Organization for Women, American Association of University Women, YWCA, and past and present bill sponsors and champions--Representatives Ayanna Pressley and Cori Bush and former Representative Carolyn Maloney--we gathered not to celebrate, but to demand our constitutional equality be recognized by Congress as the 28th Amendment and published by the first woman National Archivist, Colleen Shogan, a Biden appointee. As Pressley stated at the press conference, "Come rain or shine, we will enshrine!"

ACTION! ACTION! ACTION!

Here's How You Can Help – [Sign4ERA](#) and Share with Friends and Family Members Across the Country

Please sign the petition in support of the Equal Rights Amendment or you by clicking the link [HERE](#). **Forward to others everywhere!**

If you have already signed a petition for the ERA, I assure you this is a unique one! Launched in 2023 by Hunter College students and their professor, none other than former Representative Carolyn Maloney and Senator Chuck Schumer (NY) were the first signatories. To date, we have nearly 100,000 signatures and are aiming for well over a million so we can not only be a force to be reckoned with, but so that we can identify supporters down to congressional districts across the country. That's right, we are tracking the data so that we can identify those elected officials who stand with the people of their districts and those who do not. As the Equal Rights Amendment is supported by over 80% of the country, we need to know our elected officials stand with *We The People* and this extremely popular Amendment.

The Mayors4ERA Campaign Launches – Touching People at the Grassroots

Another way to get involved is to get your local mayor to [Sign4ERA](#). The "Mayors4ERA Campaign" is underway and it is as simple as taking a photo with your mayor as they are signing the petition and submitting it to team@sign4era.org. We'll write up a press release and get it out to local

news entities to give your mayor props such as with Mayor Anthony Ford of Stockbridge, Georgia [here](#) and with our very own Virginia Mayors Levar Stoney (Richmond) and [Deanna Reed](#) (Harrisonburg) [here](#). With your help, we can defend Virginia's historic 38th and final state status and work to realize our dream of full equality for everyone!

LWV-VA and Nolef Turns


Restoration of Rights Postcard Project

- Joan Porte, President, LWV-VA

We undertook a project with Nolef Turns to postcard some 7000 returning citizens who have not yet had their rights restored or have had them restored but are infrequent voters. It didn't surprise me at all when, within a week of me informing the local presidents of this project, all of our 3500 postcards were spoken for!

These cards will be sent throughout January and will encourage them to vote and provide returning citizens contact information on how to start that process.

Thank you to everyone who is partaking in this very important program.



The Randolph College Department of Media and Culture and
the League of Women Voters Lynchburg present

How Can We Bring Back America's Center?



with Meg Heubeck, Director of Instruction
UVA Center for Politics

Friday, January 12
6-7:30 pm
Leggett Building 537

free and open to the public
parking behind Leggett near the tennis courts



Local League - LWV-Lynchburg

Conversation in a Polarized World

- Jennifer Gautier, President, LWV-Lynchburg

This month, the Lynchburg League will be hosting a talk by Meg Heubeck at UVA's Center for Policies about re-establishing the middle ground. Meanwhile, our very own Carolyn Caywood was quoted on the question of dealing with polarization in an article in Cardinal News, [here](#).

Partner Organization - Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy

Encourage Communication with the Incarcerated

- Kim Bobo, VICPP

The League of Women Voters stands for fair elections, good government and care for all the Commonwealth's residents. Providing no-cost access to communication for people incarcerated to communicate with their families is smart public policy, good government and an important support for low-income families.

Numerous studies have documented the benefits of ensuring that people incarcerated can regularly communicate with their families and support networks. Doing so:

Reduces financial burdens. People who are incarcerated are disproportionately low-income. Families bear the brunt of the excessive fees.

Makes prisons safer. Increasing communication for people incarcerated reduces serious incidents by around 20 percent. This makes a better environment for those incarcerated and correction officers.

Reduces recidivism. Those who remain connected to family and friends do better when they return to the community and thus have lower rates of recidivism.

Helps children. The children of men and women incarcerated do better in school and are more engaged and well-behaved in school.

Enhances public safety. If returning citizens are more connected to families and communities, they will be less likely to recommit crimes. If their children do well in school, they too are less likely to get into trouble. The society at-large benefits.

Unfortunately, instead of encouraging communication, Virginia's prisons discourage it by charging excessive fees for phone calls, video calls and email communication, creating a financial burden upon the family members of incarcerated people. One in three families with an incarcerated family member goes into debt to communicate with them. Access to phones is also causing people incarcerated to line up and tempers to flare when people cannot talk to their loved ones.

The current cost for phone calls is \$.0409 per minute. Illinois, with a comparable prison population charges only \$.009 per minute (1/4 the cost). Video calls are \$4 for a 20 minute call and \$10 for a 50-minute call. Email rates range from \$.39 to \$.25 per email – to or from those incarcerated. Together these fees cost families hundreds of dollars and for-profit companies make profits.

The Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy has joined with the LWV-VA, ACLU, SALT, The Humanization Project, Sistahs for Prison Reform and others to

pass a bill to provide no cost phone calls, video calls and emails to people incarcerated in Virginia's prisons and ensure reasonable access to phones, videoconferencing and emails. The bill will also expand access to phones and increase how many people can be on a person incarcerated call list. Senator Jennifer Boysko is the bill patron. Organizations interested in joining a list of organizations supporting the bill can sign-on [HERE](#).

Partner Organization - Associated Press

Election Day Voter Turnout Pilot Project

- Reid Magney, Associated Press

If you are planning to vote on Election Day for the Presidential Primary on Super Tuesday, March 5 (or if you are working at the polls), please sign up to volunteer. It's easy to do and will only take a few minutes of your time. You'll be helping the Associated Press provide faster and more accurate results on Election Night.

You can sign up by sending an [email](#) to the AP with your name, your county, and your precinct location to the project. I will confirm your participation and send you detailed instructions shortly before the election. Here's a sneak peek:

- When you vote on Election Day, make sure you ask the poll worker what number voter you were (i.e., you were the 250th voter so far today).
- Also, remember exactly what time you voted.
- After you vote on Election Day, report that information to the AP's Election Call Center at the toll-free number you will be provided. Tell them your name, the name of your county and precinct, the time you voted, and your voter number.
- If you are working at the polls on Election Day, you can call the AP a few times throughout the day and provide the number of voters so far at your precinct.
- That's all!

The information you share about voting will help the AP refine its voter turnout data models throughout the day before the polls close. That helps them know how far along they are in tabulation after polls close and helps with accurate and timely race calls.

You might ask why the AP can't get this turnout information directly from Virginia counties. Most county election offices do not have any process in place to collect turnout information during the day from precincts. They're focused on counting ballots after the polls close. That's why the AP asked to partner with the League on this project.

The League of Women Voters and the Associated Press share many of the same

values. We're both independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit and fact-based organizations. We hope you will consider participating in this research project designed to improve Election Night report.

Our Members Hold Up Our Mission During Giving Tuesday

- *Andrienne Konstas-Salvette, LWV-VA Treasurer*

In the current political climate, there are a lot of places where members can give their resources. Whether to a political party, candidate or specific issue, there are many organizations asking for your attention and resources. So, when our membership donates nearly \$9000 to the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA) on Giving Tuesday, the State Board is honored and humbled by such generosity. The State Board recognizes that each donation is an investment in the League's mission. We are committed to providing our members and Virginia voters with returns.

In 2024, LWV-VA will be busy providing voter education throughout the presidential primaries, congressional primaries, and general election. Throughout the year the State Board will continue to partner with organizations committed to empowering voters and defining democracy. Each dollar donated to LWV-VA's Education Fund (EF) will go to these efforts. Several people gave to LWV-VA's Operating Fund (OF) which helps LWV-VA members advocate for our legislative priorities at the State Capitol and maintain costs such as insurance and our virtual presence. With a board that is completely voluntary, donations made to LWV-VA's EF are spent on the issues and not the board.

Members support LWV-VA in many non-financial ways – and without that support LWV-VA would not exist. When members offer financial support that says that LWV-VA is moving in the right direction, it is truly an honor. The LWV-VA Board will work with these donations and use them to make democracy work for the voters.

Important Dates in January 2024

Slavery and Human Trafficking Month

Jan 9 – Carrie Chapman Catt Birthday

Jan 10 - Women's Legislative Roundtables begin

Jan 15 - Martin Luther King Day

Jan 23 - Democracy Day



[Click Here to Support the Work of the League of Women Voters of Virginia](#)

Copyright © 2023 League of Women Voters of Virginia, All rights reserved.
You are receiving these email notices because you have signed up for membership in the League or asked to receive information from the League.
The League of Women Voters was founded in 1920 when U.S. women won the right to vote. We work to encourage informed and active participation in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League is dedicated to empowering voters and defending democracy. We are proud to be nonpartisan, neither supporting nor opposing candidates or political parties at any level of government, but always working on vital issues of concern to members and the public.

For more information, visit the League of Women Voters of Virginia at lww-va.org and on social media @lwwva and @leagueofwomenvoters.

Our mailing address:

League of Women Voters of Virginia
1011 E. Main Street
Suite 214A
Richmond, VA 23219

[Add us to your address book](#)

[Update your email address here.](#) This must be the same email address as you have on file with your local League.

Would you like to change how you receive these emails?

You may [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

Attachments area

Preview YouTube video 100 years, not one more



