

VOTER

Winter 2022 lwvde@comcast.net President: Gwendolyn Miller

www.lwvdelaware.org

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Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Gwendolyn Miller, President, grybm@outlook.com



Women's History Month. As many of you know, Women's History Month is celebrated throughout the month of March. It is a time when we pause to acknowledge the courage of women from past and present generations and celebrate how their efforts, specific achievements, and bravery afforded future generations the opportunities and freedoms we have today. We can share what we learn with our daughters and their daughters, giving them something to live up to, a legacy to respect.

To help expand your knowledge about the lives of the women celebrated, Mary Ann Coe, Kim Wells, and Rain Taylor spent a considerable amount of time researching, uploading, and sharing resources such as videos, books,

articles, presentations (both live and on video), and quotes that can assist you on your learning journey. Please celebrate with us throughout the month by logging on to our <u>website</u> and <u>Facebook</u> page, and enrich your life through the recorded (YouTube) panel discussions and blog posts.

Making the Visible. One of my goals is to increase the League's visibility so all Delawareans know who we are and what we do as an organization. Because so much of our important work takes place behind the scenes, it's time to elevate us and through as many mediums possible, make Delawareans aware of our mission, programs, and progress. Please continue to inform and educate our League members while promoting our events to the community at large and participating in programs facilitated by other organizations.

For example, Ava Perrine, Delaware State University's Department of Mass Communication advisor, and WDSU Radio "The Hive" invited us to take part in a talk radio discussion on voting rights. Two of our League Board members, Jack and Jill (pardon the pun), participated in the interviews with Delaware State University students. Jill and I had met with Ava and the students via Zoom a few months prior. It was clear they were excited about being a part of this endeavor. Jack and Jill agree that the students did an excellent job and hope to do more with them in the future. Thank you both for taking the time to engage with the leaders of tomorrow.

Thank you, Jack, for sharing your insights on council-wide voting in the article "League of Women Voters urges fairness in Sussex council election timing," published in the *Bay to Bay News / Delaware State News*.

Youth Outreach. I am always in search of opportunities to educate and inform a wider audience, especially when it comes to our youth. Delaware Interfaith Power & Light is hosting a statewide essay contest for high school students: Reflective Essays on Nature, Earth, and their Wonders (ReNEW). Lisa Locke has asked the League for assistance in promoting the company's project and those members consider serving as a judge on the League's behalf. The three top winners in each county will receive cash awards of \$1,000, \$750, and \$500. The grand winner will receive \$2,000.

(Continued on page 6-8 **President's Message**)

League Days Forums 2022 - Early Education in Delaware







"The First 2000 Days for First State's First Learners: What We Know. What We Can Do."

Wednesday, March 30, 2022 11a.m. - 12 p.m.

Register for this event »

Rodel's **Madeleine Bayard**, Chair of the Delaware Early Childhood Council, will give an overview of early childhood care and education in DE.

Rodel's **Neil Kirshling** will then moderate a discussion of the impact of COVID on the industry and communities with a panel including...

- o Jamie Schneider, The Delaware Association for the Education of Young children (deaeyc)
- o **Don Parsons**, Rotary Club of Wilmington.
- o Audrey Carey, Supervisor of Early Learning Indian River School District.

This free public program is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Delaware (LWVDE) and the American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Delaware.

League Days 2022: The Case for Declaring a Climate Emergency in Delaware

Tuesday, April 12, 7-8:30 pm

Register here for this event:

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUpf-qsqTwqEtHpjctG2HKagvQkgWZGJjg-

As part of the League of Women Voters of Delaware League Days 2022, the League is pleased to present a Zoom event on the need for climate emergency legislation in Delaware.

James Fletcher, a Board-certified family medicine physician in Delaware and a member of the Medical Society's Environmental Health and Diversity and Inclusion Committee, will share insights on the particular need for climate mitigation in underserved neighborhoods.

Mary Douglas, an environmental lawyer with extensive federal EPA and Clean Air Act experience, will tell listeners why a climate emergency declaration is justified, (Continued on page 3 Climate Emergency)

(Continued from page 2 Climate Emergency)

Dustyn Thompson, Advocacy and Outreach Organizer with the Delaware Sierra Club will tell us what we need to do to get there. He will outline greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and describe actions the state can take to implement these goals.

This presentation is open to all interested members and the public.

Legislators are particularly invited and welcome.

Did you miss League Days forum?

The Wilmington Learning Collaborative: Prospects, Participants, Potential

A panel of five Delaware education leaders discussed Governor Carney's recent initiative for Delaware school districts, successful model programs in other states, the potential gains for teaching and learning, the value of innovative structures, and roles for parents and the public. Click link below to view a recording.

Click here to view a recording of the presentation!

ADVOCACY CORPS REPORT (pages 3-6)

CITIZEN ADVOCACY

Linda Barnett, Advocacy Corps Chairperson

The League's Advocacy Corps (AC) provides an opportunity for League members to closely monitor the actions of our General Assembly. However, understandably, participating actively in the AC requires a level of commitment and time that is not available to all members of the League.

Fortunately, there is another avenue for involvement in public policy – namely, making the commitment to be a **citizen advocate**. Indeed, the hope is that all League members will regard themselves as citizen advocates and take part in influencing public policy.

This is in accordance with one of the key missions of the League: to encourage informed and active participation in government.

We are guided by words of Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandies, who served in the early 20th Century:

"The only title in our democracy superior to that of President is the title of citizen."

One key way members can serve as citizen advocates is to watch for Action Alerts and use them as the basis to contact their State Senator and/or Representative. These alerts will contain a description of the particular policy matter being addressed and often include a suggested message/email draft to use as the basis when contacting one's legislator.

However, the alerts sometimes will call upon League members to craft their own message, which can typically make a greater impact on legislators than if they receive essentially the same message from every League member who contacts them.

In addition, the AC is in the process of developing a series of videos that will provide background information about Delaware's government and include tips on how to participate in public policy making. The videos already available can be found on the League's You Tube channel at this link:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0XbitDtLFrho 3UDVX8WWWdxZbPiJZOk

A link to the recording is also available on the State League website and on Facebook. (If the link doesn't work, search **You Tube** for: Delaware League of Women Voters.) (Continued on page 4 Citizen Advocacy)

(Continued from page 3 Citizen Advocacy)

The channel contains a "playlist" entitled *Citizen Advocacy Training*, which currently contains four videos. In addition, there are videos in this channel covering a variety of other topics of interest to the League. Be sure to take a look!

For information about joining the Advocacy Corps, contact Linda Barnett at: advocacylwvde@gmail.com

Top Priority Pending Legislation in the 151st General Assembly

Prepared by Linda Barnett, Chairperson, Advocacy Corps, LWVDE

The following bills are among those being tracked by the League's Advocacy Corps (AC). There are additional bills that the AC either supports or opposes, but the ones below, all of which we support, are of particular significance.

- ➤ HB 75 would eliminate from the Delaware Constitution the limitations as to when an individual may vote by absentee ballot. It shifts to the General Assembly responsibility for enacting laws to specify the circumstances, rules, and procedures for absentee voting.
- ➤ HB 140 would permit a terminally ill adult to request and self-administer medication to end the individual's life in a humane and dignified manner if both the individual's attending physician or attending advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) and a consulting physician or consulting APRN agree on the individual's diagnosis and prognosis and believe (1) the individual has decision-making capacity, (2) is making an informed decision, and (3) is acting voluntarily.
- ➤ HB 205 would establish the *Delaware Expanding Access for Retirement and Necessary Saving ("EARNS")* program, a voluntary State-facilitated retirement savings program. It targets small businesses unable to offer retirement plans to employees due to the cost and administrative burden.
- ➤ HB 300 would establish mental health services units in middle schools which would be staffed by a school counselor, school social worker, or licensed clinical social worker. Additionally schools with sufficient students would also have a full-time school psychologist.
- > SS 2 for SB 1 would establish a statewide paid family and medical leave insurance program whereby employees can access up to 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave for one of the following: (1) To address a worker's own serious health condition. (2) To care for a family member with a serious health condition. (3) To bond and care for a new child. (4) To address the impact of a family member's military deployment. The wage tax mechanism would be used for employees and employers to pay into the fund at each pay cycle.
- > SS 1 for SB 149 would ensure that the public has access to all serious and substantiated records of law-enforcement misconduct; affirms that such records are public records; specifies that the only materials released will relate to disciplinary issues, not personal information. Enables the creation and operation of community review boards at the State, county, and municipal level.
- > SS 1 for SB 187 would make it easier and more convenient to own an electric vehicle by requiring municipalities with a population of 30,000 or more to develop a procedure to obtain permission for the installation of an electric vehicle charging station on real property zoned for residential use that abuts a residential street.
- > SB 231 would prohibit the use of gender, gender identity, or sex as a rating factor in personal automobile insurance policies.

To check out any of these bills in depth, go to the General Assembly's website: https://legis.delaware.gov/
Note: the information above is accurate as of March 22, 2022. Action by the General Assembly is fluid, and bill status can change at any time.

CLIMATE CHANGE/ ENERGY

Charlie Garlow and Peggy Schultz

Governor Carney agreed in March to adopt the California Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) program in DE. This means that DE will get more electric vehicles sold in our state. Our own Peggy Schultz was invited to the signing, showing the clout that the League has on this topic.

This is also a terrific Environmental victory.

NATURAL RESOURCES/ENVIRONMENT



- A second victory for the environment was the passage of HB212, which was signed in September 2021. It expands the ban on flimsy plastic bags to all stores.
- A third victory was passage of SB 24 which was signed by the Governor, which makes releasing helium balloons a littering offense. No more balloon releases.
- > SB 22 was signed into law in 2021 and will take effect in July 2022. It forbids the sale or installation of non native invasive plants, trees or shrubs.
- A campaign for the future is the passage of SB140, Senator Paradee's bill to ban Styrofoam and plastic single use containers, cups, utensils.

GOVERNMENT, FINANCE AND TAXES

Jack Young

The GFT Portfolio continues to monitor bills before the General Assembly, to work with the University of Delaware on developing a model independent redistricting commission (IRC), and to study proposals for government reform...

Bills of Interest: H.B 109 proposes the first leg of a Constitutional Amendment reflecting the recommendations of the Advisory Panel to the Delaware Economic and Financial Advisory Council (DEFAC) to move the Budget Reserve Account into a newly defined Budget Stabilization Fund; HB 205, as amended, initiated by the State Treasurer proposes the creation of state sponsored employee retirement saving plans (EARNS Act); HB 293, as amended, providing for public comment periods during all public hearings (The General Assembly has its own rules), and; HB 312 allowing a personal income tax credit of up to \$500 for interest paid on student loans.

Redistricting: The goal of the UD/LWVDE project is to study the ten states with redistricting commissions and then to propose the creation of Delaware's own independent redistricting commission for the 2031 elections, following the 2030 decennial census. The creation of a Delaware commission would require an amendment to Article II, § 2A of the Delaware Constitution.

GOVERNMENT REFORM: We are monitoring two proposed government reforms involving:

- 1) The creation of a Public Advocate Office (Maryland and New York are among states with a PA office), and
- 2) The creation of an Independent Inspector General (33 states and D.C. have independent IGs).

Members interested in joining the Portfolio may contact Jack Young at young@ sandlerreiff.com.



(Continued from page 1 Presidents Message)

Essay topics must be related to **climate change**, **environmental justice**, **and our intimate relationship to the natural world**. Participants will write the essays online from their homes or other location with internet access. Interested students must register via the https://delawareipl.org/dev/Competition/ their school email. The contest is open to all Delaware high school students' grades 9–12 attending public, private, parochial, or home schools. Registration ends **May 15**.

This is an excellent opportunity for young Americans to learn about the League and our position on climate change and environmental justice. I am pleased to inform you that Climate Committee members Peggy Schultz and/or Charlie Garlow have agreed to work on this project.

Powering Democracy Awards. And the award goes to...

Leagues will be recognized with the **Powering Democracy Award** for exemplary work over the past biennium during the 2022 Convention.

What's new? The 2022 Awards will offer **separate subcategories for state and local Leagues**. LWVUS staff will select finalists, and the public will choose winners via polls. All winners will receive a cash prize from LWVUS in recognition of their work. *I say let's go for it. You can't win if you don't try.*

There are three categories open for submissions:

❖ Powering Democracy Award

This category showcases how Leagues activated their grassroots network to empower voters and advocate change around critical issues, such as protecting voting rights or increasing voter registration and turnout.

Increasing Power Through Partnerships Award

This category showcases the work Leagues did in partnership with others and how those partnerships empowered our League work and supported our communities. This can include work in which the League was a lead partner, supporting partner, worked with one partner, or worked in coalition with several partners.

Innovating Our Power Award

> This category showcases the way Leagues have had to innovate their work over the past biennium. The catalyst for innovation could be anything from the pandemic to severe voter disenfranchisement to natural disaster or something else that required your League to develop a new way of performing parts or all of your work.

Submissions to each category can be made by members of both state and/or local Leagues. To tell our stories, we need excellent essayists from LWVDE, LWVSC, LWVKC, and LWVNCC. Power up your laptops now as **submissions close on April 21, 2022**. Don't let the date slip by you—mark your calendar! Click this <u>link</u> for more information.

Stand Against Racism Challenge. League of Women Voters of Delaware has partnered with YWCA Delaware to participate in *The Stand Against Racism Challenge* beginning April 4. The YWCA Delaware, in partnership with YWCA National, developed a virtual learning tool designed to create dedicated time and space to build more effective social justice habits, particularly those dealing with issues of race, power, privilege, and leadership.

League members will download the Stand Against Racism app for their phone or tablet or log on to the challenge website where they are presented with 21 days of impactful challenges such as reading an article, listening to a podcast, reflecting on personal experiences, and more. Participation in an activity such as this helps us to discover how racial and social injustices impact our community, connect with one another, and identify ways to dismantle racism and other forms of discrimination.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Black History Month. Black History Month has come to a close, and I want to thank Lori Yadin, Denise Davis, Kathleen Baker, Letty Diswood, and Kim Wells for arranging and organizing the following events for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and Black History Month. Each program differed in its presentation, style, and format, and I am confident they have changed the perspectives of our members in a (Continued on page 7 President's Message)

(Continued from page 6 President's Message)

(powerful way. We appreciate your hard work in making these special presentations possible. For other resources, please click here, <u>LWVDE DEI Programs</u> and <u>DEI Online Training</u>.

"The Sum of Us" DEI Book Discussion continues to enlighten, educate, and engage both League members and the general public as we work through its pages. This book is a powerful exploration of inequality and the lesson that generations of Americans have failed to learn, that is racism has a cost for everyone, not just for people of color. The series of discussions will continue into May 2022.

LWVDE Vice President Kathleen Baker, who beautifully moderates the series, encourages you to attend one, several, or all sessions.

"Discovering Dr. King's Dream, Then and Now" was an uplifting and illuminating discussion and virtual tour of Dr. King's Civil Rights Journey through Selma and Montgomery, led by local storyteller, songstress, and tour guide, Ms. Wanda Battle. A large crowd from various organizations was in attendance. Link to video: https://my.lwv.org/delaware/article/discovering-dr-king%E2%80%99s-dream-then-and-now-video-posted

LWVDE Black History Month Program. Each week, organizers Denise Davis and Lori Yadin provide a resource for participants to learn about and reflect on important issues such as voting rights, education, and health care. All were encouraged to attend the virtual meeting at the end of this month and take part in a robust and lively discussion. Link: https://my.lwv.org/delaware/article/lwvde-black-history-month-program-february-2022

Working Behind the Scenes. I serve on the LVWUS Structure Task Force. Over the past six months, [we] a diverse group of local, state, and national leaders have explored the challenges and solutions to help the League more effectively pursue our mission to building the renewed, larger, and more unified and effective organization presented in the Transformation Roadmap.

As a result of these discussions, the LWV Structure Taskforce, through consensus, is recommending more formal affiliation and membership agreements, and two organizational structure proposals: (1) a modernized membership experience, and (2) an investment in building state League power.

Our immediate agenda is to speak to LWVDE members who wish to assist in championing our mission. I've been tasked to engage members in a 30-minute telephone conversation to help promote the initiative, not challenge it. If you or someone you know is ready to help promote interest in this initiative please contact me, and I will be happy to discuss our plan in greater detail.

New Finance Committee Chair. I am delighted to announce that Marj Johnson has accepted the position of interim chair of the Finance Committee. Thank you, Marj.

Winter 2021 Semi-Annual Survey Completed. Thank you, Sue Claire, for completing the Winter 2021 Semi-Annual Survey. This is an arduous task, and we appreciate your patience and meticulousness in seeing it through.

New Email Design. Letty sends bi-weekly emails to members that included a summary of public interest events, the Advocacy Corps and its subcommittee meetings. The plan is to provide our membership with information and encourage greater participation in our events and committees using a comprehensive format. Thank you, Letty.

LWVUS 2022 Convention. Did you register for the LWVUS 2022 Convention? I did, and would love to see you there, too. The event, a fully hybrid experience, will take place June 23–27, both online and in-person at the Sheraton Downtown in Denver, Colo. For more information including travel info, agenda, and registration, visit **lwv.org/convention**.

Thank you!

Gwendolyn Willer Gwendolyn R. Miller, President

Thank you Thank you Thank you

Thank you to our generous financial contributors to the League of Women Voters of Delaware for FY 2021-22. Kudos especially to all our incredible VOLUNTEERS, without them we could not provide the following services and advocacy.

The IT group who set up and manage all our Zoom forums, the website, Twitter and Facebook, the Advocacy Corps that lobby and educate our membership and the public on our advocacy priorities, Vote411online voters guide for school board elections and the general elections, the committee chairs and committee members that have provided the League Days forums, all board members and the Treasurer who keeps us all on track, and volunteers who conduct book discussion groups. WOW!

| Harriet | Ainbinder | Joann | Hasse | Rashmi | Rangan |
|-------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Michel | Brickner | Janice | Heinssen | Robert | Shea |
| Kathryn | Brickner | Edith | Herron | Elizabeth | Shea |
| Judith | Butler | Jill | Itzkowitz | Barbara | Shope |
| Hays | Butler | Beverly | Jackson | Amazon | Smile |
| Ellaine B. | Butterfoss | David | Jaeger | Christine | Stillson |
| Carol | Conroy | Michele | Jennings | Lester | Stillson |
| Barbara D. | Crowell | Kay | Jensen | Glenn | Strohm |
| Paulette | DeLa Veaux | Joyce | Johnson | Pat | <i>Todd</i> |
| Letty | Diswood | Jennie | Keith | Mary Katherine | Tompkins |
| Larry | Diswood | Janet | Kramer | Carole | Walsh |
| Louise Ann | D'Agostino | Brain | Kramer | William | Walsh |
| Kathleen | Doyle | Ann | Lopez | Nancy | Weldin |
| Patricia | Drago | Matthew | Lynch | Kimberly | Wells |
| Zita | Dresner | Nancey | Lynch | Elizabeth | White |
| Joan | Flahert | Doug | Manley | Jack | Young |
| Chalie | Garlow | Diane | Maxwell | | |
| Connie | Georgov | Sheila | Mensch | DCRAC | |
| Marjorie B. | Green | | Milbury- | Charitable | |
| Marjorie B. Marjorie | Green | Sarah | Steen | Giving | Fund |
| Walter | Green | Gwendolyn | Miller | | |
| Jessie | Green | Eugenia | Nichols | | |
| Jackie Jackie | Harris | Anne | Pikolas | | |



Twitter provides a quick digest of the nation's leading headlines, while Facebook gives us an open forum where we discuss the important issues of the day. All posts and points-of-view are welcome as long as our nonpartisan and inclusive policies are being respected.

To join Facebook, go to www.facebook.com and follow the instructions. Once you join, search for the League of Women Voters of Delaware and send us a "friend request." To join Twitter,

go to www.twitter.com and follow the instructions. Once you join, search for @lwvde and "follow" us!

An updated listing of elected officials THEY REPRESENT YOU that can be found at:

https://my.lwv.org/sites/default/files/leagues/new-castle-county/lwvncctheyrepresentyou2020-22.pdf

VOTE411 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS

The Vote411 team is busy contacting school board candidates for the May 10 school board elections. There are currently 43 candidates running in 14 competitive races. The Vote411 website (https://www.vote411.org/) will be live with school board candidate information on April 11. Look for survey results for your candidates, polling locations, and candidate forum information.



(graphic reflects data as of the March 5 filing deadline)

Jill Itzkowitz (Jillitzkowitz@gmail.com

SDARJ & LWVSC present "Countering Hate Crimes in Delaware"



April 12, 2022 - 7:00pm to 8:30pm

Online: Register for this event »

The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice (SDARJ) will host an online town hall meeting, "Countering Hate Crimes in Delaware." The program is co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Sussex County. Guest speakers include DE Attorney General Kathleen Jennings. The panel

will discuss hate crimes in general, what is being done here in Delaware and what you can do to help counter hate crimes.



March 22 - LWVSC Offshore Wind Presentation

UD Professor Willett Kempton will speak to the Sussex County, Delaware League of Women Voters on March 22, 2022, and our Advocacy Corps Climate Change and Energy Committee thinks this is a perfect topic to bring forth as a League Day event. Offshore wind technology has leaped forward and the cost of power from offshore wind has dropped dramatically. This is a huge resource which can power our electric needs at cheap prices while creating well-paying jobs.

Details here: <u>League Days 2022: LWVSC OffShore Wind Presentation | MyLO</u> Video of this presentation can be viewed here.

HOLD the DATE: LWVDE Criminal Justice Portfolio's League Days Zoom Event: Monday, May 23rd. 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.

Is Delaware fostering debtors prisons through issuing fines and fees to individuals who have already been punished? And why do these charges fall disproportionately on low-income communities of color? Learn more about Delaware's low ranking (47th) among other states and about a bill, HB 244 that proposes to end fines and fees being imposed on children and ends the suspension of drivers' licenses for nonpayment of fees at our League Day event.

CALENDAR LWVDE COMMITTEE SCHEDULES AND STATE BOARD MEETINGS

- **Education Team Mini-Meets** are scheduled for Fridays at 10 a.m. for one hour via Zoom. Contact Kathleen Baker kmbdoremi@aol.com: January 14 & 28, February 11 & 25, March 11 & 25, April 8 & 22, and May 13 & 27, 2022.
- **Election Committee** meets the first Tuesday of the month at 11 a.m. Next meeting Tuesday, April 5, 2022. Contact Jill Itzkowitz, Committee Chair <u>jillitzkowitz@gmail.com</u> or call 302-571-8948 LWVDE office.
- Climate Change and Energy Committee usually meets the first Friday of the month at 3 p.m. starting on April 1, 2022. Committee chair Peggy Schultz, contact schultz peggy@yahoo.com or the LWV office 302-571-8948
- Land Use/Transportation Committee usually meets first Wednesday of the month at 9 a.m. contact schultz peggy@yahoo.com or the LWV office 302-571-8948. Next meeting Wednesday, April 6, 2022, 9 a.m.
- > Criminal Justice Committee usually meets the fourth Wednesday 10 a.m. Next meeting Wednesday, April 23, 2022 at 10 a.m. Committee chair Lori Yadin, 4hoping@gmail.com or LWVDE office 302-571-8948.
- Advocacy Corps meets the second Wednesday, 9:30 am-11:30 a.m. by Zoom. Next meeting Wednesday, April 13, 2022 at 9:30 a.m. Corps chair Linda Barnett, luvchocdog@hotmail.com or 302-571-8948 LWVDE office
- > LWVDE Board meeting schedule for 2022 Contact Gwendolyn Miller, president grybm@outlook.com or call LWVDE office 302-571-8948.
- > State Board Meetings for the FY 2021-22. All dates are for the fourth Wednesday unless otherwise indicated. Time 5 7 pm with check in starting at 4:45 p.m.
 - April 27, 2022 by Zoom.
 - May 25, Council by Zoom



2400 W 17th Street, Clash Wing Room 1, Lower Level Wilmington, DE 19806 (302) 571-8948 https://www.lwvdelaware.org https://www.lwv.org







