



2018 - 2019

LWV-TC
Board of Directors
President

Leslee Barnes
Secretary

Nancy Stevens
Treasurer

Mike Baldwin
Vice Presidents

Organization — TBD
Program – TBD

Voter Service – Erin Merkel

Directors

Carol Cordell
Dawn Ellison
Carolyn Kitchens
Steve Epstein
Peggy Hendon

Office Hours:

T W Th 9:30-1:30 p.m.

Mailing Address

P. O. Box 100175
Fort Worth, TX 76185

Telephone

817-348-VOTE (8683)

E-mail Address

lwvtarrantcounty@sbcglobal.net

Web site

www.lwvtarrantcounty.org

Facebook

www.facebook.com/LWVofTarrantCo
www.facebook.com/LWV ArlingtonAreaTX

Encourage your friends, family and colleagues to visit us at ~
WWW.LWVTARRANTCOUNTY.ORG

Remind your friends, family and colleagues to LIKE us at ~
WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/LWVOFTARRANTCO

March 2019



The mission of the League of Women Voters is to encourage informed and active participation in government and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

President's Message



We need volunteers! The board has been functioning for several **years** with a deficit of officers. We have had current board members take on multiple roles on the board. At times, events or things on our “wish list” just don’t happen because of our lack time capacity. Our new administrative assistant, Sandra Knight, is still learning how to manage the information coming into the office in her new role.

This goes without saying, but the 2020 election is predicted to have high voter registration and voter turnout, and the volume of information that the League will be making available to the public will increase. Candidates have already begun to announce that they will be running for office, so the 2020 election season is upon us. We are working on and will also remain focused on all local and state elections, not only spring 2019 but also upcoming fall 2019 and spring 2020 elections. I realize that we just celebrated the League’s 99th birthday, but in the next few months, plans for the 100th year celebration will need to be underway. We learned a lot from the 99th birthday celebration a few weeks ago and we plan to make those adjustments. 2020 will be an exciting time to be a member of the League, but we really need help filling our board positions since we will not be able to function at full capacity with a deficit of officers.

The nominating committee is being formed now and I need you to do one of two things. If you get a call from a member of the nominating committee asking you to consider taking on a role as a member of the board, please give it serious thought. If you want to be a part of the board, please contact me or another current board member to volunteer. You don’t have a wait for an invitation to serve. I want you to know that your knowledge and expertise is enough to take on the role. I was a member of the League for 2 ½ months before joining the board, and I learned a lot. You don’t have to know everything about the League before joining the board. All you need is a willingness to serve.

Training for Forum Moderators and Timekeepers

LWVTC is receiving many requests for moderators and candidate forums for the upcoming May elections. If you are interested in becoming a forum moderator or timekeeper, we could really use the help. If you have already been a moderator and want an update, please feel free to join in.

Location: Pam Wright's Home, 1402 Chelsea Circle, Southlake, TX 76092

Date: Saturday, March 16, 2019

Time: 2:00 PM

The next elections are in May. Can you help?

Erin Merkel, Vice-President for Voter Services, needs many volunteers to help assemble candidate information for Vote411 before the next set of elections on May 4.

Those elections will choose city councils and school boards across Tarrant County, as well as Tarrant County College trustees and Tarrant Regional Water District board members. Community usage of **Vote411** grew substantially during the 2018 elections, and we need to continue providing quality voter information for local elections this spring. Erin needs many volunteers to help gather candidate information and follow up with candidates prior to launching Vote 411 prior to early voting. This is one of the core services of the League of Women Voters, and volunteers can work from home, by phone and computer, to help with this important task.

If you can help, please email Erin directly at erinlynn75@sbcglobal.net as soon as possible. It is time for the League to get to work providing the best possible information for the next election.

Become a Tarrant County Volunteer Deputy Registrar

Want to become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar but couldn't catch the training that we hosted? No problem! Complete the training online at your own convenience. You'll need to register with the Tarrant County Elections Administration at <http://vdr-tarrant-tx.training.clarityelections.com/SelfRegistration.aspx>. They will send you an email with instruction on how to complete the training. After you've gone through the training you can either pick up your supplies at the office or have them mailed to you.

Is an online training not for you? You're in luck! Visit the Tarrant County Elections Center located at 2700 Premier Street in Fort Worth for immediate appointment as a Volunteer Deputy Registrar. You will need to participate in a training program prescribed by the Secretary of State before receiving your appointment. This training is available any time between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on regular business days (no appointment necessary) at the Tarrant County Elections Center.

If you are unable to attend during the hours listed above, training is also available (by reservation/appointment only) at 5 p.m. and 6 p.m. on most Thursday evenings (may not be available during holidays). To schedule a Thursday evening Volunteer Deputy Registrar training session, you must contact Nickie Weaver at 817-831-6453 no later than 4 p.m. on Wednesday.

March 2019 Unit Topic ~ The Equal Rights Amendment: Where Are We Now?

The Equal Rights Amendment:

Section 1: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

Section 2: The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article.

Section 3: This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.

A Brief History

In the 1970s, as Congress and the states debated passage of the Equal Rights Amendment, its supporters lobbied, marched, rallied, petitioned, picketed, went on hunger strikes, and committed acts of civil disobedience in the 1970s. Many of them probably were not aware of their place in the long historical continuum of women's struggle for gender equality in the United States.

From the very beginning, the inequality of men and women under the Constitution has been an issue for advocacy, and the fight for equal rights in the United States has a rich history of advocacy and activism by both women and men. As an outgrowth of their anti-slavery advocacy, Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott made the first visible public demand for women's suffrage in 1848 at the first Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York. In 1923, in Seneca Falls for the 75th anniversary celebration of the Woman's Rights Convention, Alice Paul first introduced the first version of the Equal Rights Amendment, which was called the "Lucretia Mott Amendment" at the time. The proposed amendment stated: "Men and women shall have equal rights throughout the United States and every place subject to its jurisdiction."

In her remarks as she introduced her amendment, Alice Paul sounded a call that has great poignancy and significance more than 80 years later:

If we keep on this way they will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of the 1848 Convention without being much further advanced in equal rights than we are...If we had not concentrated on the Federal Amendment we should be working today for suffrage... We shall not be safe until the principle of equal rights is written into the framework of our government.

The amendment was introduced in Congress the same year. The National Woman's Party and professional women such as Amelia Earhart supported it, and in the early 1940s, both the Republican and Democratic parties added support of the Equal Rights Amendment to their political platforms.

However, reformers who had worked for protective labor laws that treated women differently from men were afraid that the ERA would wipe out the progress they had made, and social conservatives considered equal rights for women a threat to existing power structures. Twenty years after she first introduced it, Alice Paul rewrote the ERA in 1943. It was given a new title — the "Alice Paul Amendment" — to better reflect the language in both the 15th and the 19th Amendments. The new version stated: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex." The amendment languished in Congress, however.

In the 1960s, more than a century after the fight to end slavery fostered the first wave of the women's rights movement, the civil rights battles of the time provided an impetus for a second wave of support for gender equality. Women organized to demand their birthright as citizens and persons, and the Equal Rights Amendment rather than the right to vote became the central symbol of the struggle. Finally, organized labor and an increasingly large number of mainstream groups joined the call for the Equal Rights Amendment, and politicians reacted to the power of organized women's voices in a way they had not done since women gained the right to vote.

The Equal Rights Amendment passed the U.S. Senate and then the House of Representatives, and on March 22, 1972, the proposed 27th Amendment to the Constitution was sent to the states for ratification. But as it had done for every amendment since the 18th (Prohibition), with the exception of the 19th Amendment, Congress placed a seven-year deadline on the ratification process. This time limit was placed not in the words of the ERA itself, but in the proposing clause.

Like the 19th Amendment before it, the ERA barreled out of Congress, gaining 22 of the necessary 38 state ratifications in the first year. But the pace slowed as opposition began to organize: there were only eight ratifications in 1973, three in 1974, one in 1975, and none in 1976.

Throughout the mid-1970s, arguments by ERA opponents such as Phyllis Schlafly, right-wing leader of the Eagle Forum/STOP ERA, played on the same fears that had generated female opposition to woman suffrage. Anti-ERA organizers claimed that the ERA would deny woman's right to be supported by her husband, privacy rights would be overturned, women would be sent into combat, and abortion rights and homosexual marriages would be upheld. Opponents surfaced from other traditional sectors as well. States-rights advocates said the ERA was a federal power grab, and business interests such as the insurance industry opposed a measure they believed would cost them money. Opposition to the ERA was also organized by fundamentalist religious groups.

Pro-ERA advocacy was led by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and ERAmerica, a coalition of nearly 80 other mainstream organizations. In 1977, Indiana became the 35th state to ratify the ERA. That same year, Alice Paul died at a nursing home in Mt. Laurel, New Jersey, near her childhood home — now a National Historic Landmark and nonprofit organization dedicated to working for gender equality. Like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony before her, she never saw the Constitution amended to include the women's rights she had worked for all her life.

As the 1970s came to a close, hopes for victory continued to dim as other states postponed consideration or defeated ratification bills. Illinois changed its rules to require a three-fifths majority to ratify an amendment, thereby ensuring that their repeated simple majority votes in favor of the ERA did not count. Other states proposed or passed rescission bills, despite legal precedent that states do not have the power to retract a ratification.

As the original 1979 deadline approached, some pro-ERA groups, like the League of Women Voters, wanted to retain the eleventh-hour pressure as a political strategy. But many ERA advocates appealed to Congress for an indefinite extension of the time limit, and in July 1978, the National Organization of Women coordinated a successful march of 100,000 supporters in Washington, DC. Bowing to public pressure, Congress granted an extension until June 30, 1982.

However, the political tide continued to turn more conservative as the 1970s ended. In 1980 — the year Ronald Reagan was elected president — the Republican Party removed their support for the Equal Rights Amendment from its platform. Although pro-ERA activities increased with massive lobbying, petitioning, countdown rallies, walkathons, fundraisers, and even the radical suffragist tactics of hunger strikes, White House picketing, and civil disobedience, the Equal Rights Amendment did not succeed in getting three more state ratifications before the new deadline. The country was still unwilling to guarantee women constitutional rights equal to those of men. It was a significant defeat for all those who has fought so hard for so decades.

The Equal Rights Amendment was reintroduced in Congress on July 14, 1982, and has been introduced before every session of Congress since then as the movement to ratify the ERA continues. Several strategies are in motion to achieve full ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. As the fight for women's rights, specifically equal pay for equal work and freedom from sexual harassment, gained momentum in the 2000s, work for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment has been renewed across the nation. In March of 2017, thanks to the efforts of state Senator Pat Spearman, the state of Nevada became the 36th state — the first state since 1977, and 35 years after the original deadline passed

States that have ratified the federal ERA and have a state ERA or equal rights guarantee (21):

Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, Wyoming

States that have ratified the federal ERA but do not a state ERA or equal rights guarantee (16):

Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin

States that have not ratified the federal ERA but do have a state ERA or equal rights guarantee (4):

Florida, Louisiana, Utah, Virginia

States that have not ratified the federal ERA and do not have a state ERA or equal rights guarantee (9):

Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina

in 1982 — to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. This surge in support was quickly followed by the state of Illinois, which became the 36th state to ratify the ERA in April 2018. State Senator Heather Steans stated that, “By ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment we can provide a strong legal protection for women’s rights and prevent rollbacks from Congress or presidential administrations. This amendment is still relevant and necessary.”

There are current efforts in several states, specifically Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Florida, to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. To learn more about current efforts and the legal challenges to ratifying the ERA, visit www.EqualRightsAmendment.org. For more information about Alice Paul, visit www.AlicePaul.org.

Arguments to Support the Equal Rights Amendment

The Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees equal protection of the laws to all U.S. citizens. However, when legal cases involving women who are discriminated against based on gender come up before the courts across the country, the judgments are often contradictory and not uniform.

The ERA offers a legal standard by which complaints based on gender discrimination may be judged in the same way.

The ERA would clarify the legal status of sex discrimination for the courts, where decisions still deal inconsistently with such claims. For the first time, sex would be considered a suspect classification, as race currently is.

Without the ERA, the Constitution does not directly state that the rights it protects are held equally by all citizens without regard to sex. The first – and still the only – right specifically affirmed as equal for women and men is the right to vote.

The ERA would provide a strong legal defense against a decision that would violate significant advances made in women’s rights made in the past 50 years. Without it, Congress can weaken or replace existing laws on women’s rights.

Without the ERA, women regularly and men occasionally have to fight long, expensive, and difficult legal battles in an effort to prove that their rights are equal to those of the other sex.

The ERA would improve the United States’ human rights standing in the world community. The governing documents of many other countries state the legal gender equality including countries constitutions have been written under the direction of the U.S. government.

Arguments Against the Equal Rights Amendment

U.S. Supreme Court has itself interpreted the federal constitution as prohibiting sex discrimination, without needing the ERA.

The ERA will invalidate all state laws, designed to protect the family and will be replaced by laws making women equally liable for financial responsibilities. The stability of families will be undermined by this drastic change in wives’ legal status.

The ERA would mean that women would also be treated the same as men in a military draft and forced into combat.

The ERA will lower the social security benefits for wives, mothers, and widows. When a husband and wife reach retirement age, the husband receives his social security check based on his earnings, and his wife additionally receives a social security check that is 50% of the benefits paid to her husband. If her husband passes away and she becomes a widow then she will receive the full amount previously paid to her husband. If the ERA was added to the Constitution social security benefits would only go to individuals with paying jobs, not stay at home mothers or wives.

The ERA will eliminate privacy between the sexes in hospitals, prisons, schools, or other public accommodations.

The ERA will wipe out state labor laws and guidelines which benefit women in industry who do heavy, manual work.

Discussion Questions:

1. *What are the main goals of the Equal Rights Amendment?*
2. *Do you think we still need the ERA if the 14th Amendment guarantees all citizens equal protection of the laws?*
3. *Do you think it would significantly impact women’s current or future role in the military?*
4. *What would be the two most significant reasons to pass the ERA?*
5. *What would be the two most significant reasons not to pass the ERA?*
6. *Why have Americans disagreed about granting equal rights to women?*
7. *How can you be an ERA Advocate?*

Legislative Report
Senate District 10
Beverly Powell

Linda Hanratty and Robert Vann met with two aides of Senator Powell on LWVTX Lobby Days (February 5, 2019).

Ari Holland-Baldwin is Senator Powell's Legislative Aid for Health and Human Services issues. This is a large workload because Senator Powell is on the Senate Health Committee. Ms Holland-Baldwin recently obtained a graduate degree and this is her first job as a legislative assistant. She said she had worked with LWVTX prior to graduation.

Ms Holland-Baldwin was supportive of the League's positions on Women's Health and Reproductive Rights. She said she is specifically working on making implantable birth control devices more available. The cost at between \$500 and \$1,000 is an issue, as is the availability of the devices in doctor's offices. Often doctors have to order the device after a patient's first visit, necessitating two office visits, a problem in terms of costs and patient time. She is hoping that they can work on some way to improve the availability of the devices, though up-front costs may still be an issue, despite their long-term cost savings.

She thinks bills to expand Medicaid coverage for postpartum women beyond the current 30 days have been proposed in House and Senate bills, with Senator Zafarini being the likely sponsor of the Senate bill. She does not know what the chances are of it passing.

In addition to the League's priority issue, we asked what other issues she was dealing with. She said Medicaid and Medicare salaries for personal aides was only \$8.00 per hour, and nursing home aides make only around \$9.00, making it difficult to attract staff to provide quality care.

We told her that Louise Hytken, LWV Women's Health Chair, had scheduled a meeting with Senator Powell's chief on February 5, 2019, so this report should supplement hers.

We also met with Avery Martinez, Senator Powell's Legislative Aid for Education. She is also a first-time legislative aide, which is probably to be expected since this is Senator Powell's first year in office.

Ms. Martinez said that Senator Powell is concerned about unfunded mandates and has filed legislation to allow secondary schools to get credit for career programs that prepare students to study subjects such as engineering in college. Senator Powell would like state funding for counselors to address student's mental health issues, not just advise students on college preparation. Ms Martinez was not particularly familiar with the bills that Senator Powell has filed, but she is reaching out to all the school districts in district 10 frequently to see what they need. Senator Powell is mindful of proposing bills that require fiscal notes, since they must pass through the Finance Committee where she has little influence.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

We are the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County (LWVTC), one of the hundreds of local Leagues across the nation whose members — men and women — are committed to Making Democracy Work. Our nonpartisan political organization encourages informed and active participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy. LWV does NOT support or oppose any political party or any candidate. Your membership automatically enrolls you in LWV-Texas and LWVUS at no additional cost and provides publications from all three.

Mail your membership application, dues, and contributions to:

LWVTC, P. O. Box 100175, Fort Worth, TX 76185 or enroll online at <http://lwvtarrantcounty.org/join.html>.

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Basic Membership:

- \$75/yr **Regular** full voting member
- \$115/yr **Family** (two members in one household)
- \$5/yr **Student**

Or consider one of the following:

Supporting Membership:

- \$100/yr **Sustaining** Membership: Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- \$150/yr **Advocate** Membership: Carrie Chapman Catt
- \$200/yr **Patron** Membership: Mary McLeod Bethune
- \$300/yr **Benefactor** Membership: Eleanor Roosevelt

THE VOTER NEWSLETTER BY U.S. MAIL

- \$10/yr (*online VOTER is no additional cost*)

Name: _____ E-mail: _____

Address: _____ City/Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) _____ (Work) _____ (Mobile) _____

Would you like to attend one of our Unit meetings? If so, please indicate which Unit would best suit your needs.

- Arlington Area Downtown Fort Worth Area Northeast Tarrant County
- South/Southwest Tarrant County

MARCH CALENDAR

March 16 ~ Forum moderator/timekeeper training, 2 p.m., home of Pam Wright.

March 2019 ~ Units - Topic: Equal Rights Amendment (see pages 3-6 of Voter)

March 18 ~ Arlington Area Unit; 7 PM, Fielder Museum, 1616 W Abram, Arlington.

March 19 ~ NE/Mid-Cities Unit Meeting; 6:30 PM, Barnes & Noble in the Shops at NE Mall; Melbourne Rd. next to Best Buy; Reservations suggested. Call Carolyn Kitchens, 817-312-6872, for information

March 21 ~ Fort Worth Downtown Lunch Unit; NOON, Trinity Terrace, 1600 Texas Street; Blue Spire Room, Reservations suggested but not required. Lunch is optional, cost is \$16.payable by cash or check made out to Marjorie Montgomery only. Call Marjorie Montgomery, 817-885-8372 for reservation.

March 21 ~ South/Southwest Dinner Unit; 6 PM, Meeting room at La Madeleine on Hulen at I-20, in the shopping center. Reservations suggested. Call Mike Baldwin, 817-249-2193, for information.

April 8 ~ Board meeting, 5:45 p.m., conference room at League office

May 21 ~ Annual Meeting, Diamond Oaks Country Club, 7 PM,

All Members and Guests are welcome and encouraged to attend any League event.

League Office Hours: T, W, TH / 9:30am—1:30pm

~ we are on the web! ~

www.lwvtarrantcounty.org