



SC Voter

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Volume 65, Issue 4

Spring 2016



Lynn Teague, LWVSC-VP and Attorney General Alan Wilson.

At the end of January, almost 60 League Members gathered in Columbia for LEAD 2016. The agenda was designed to spend the morning getting to know each other and the League and the afternoon reflecting on what we can do together for SC's future.

The amazing Sarah Leverette kicked

LEAD DAY Roundup

By Julie Hussey, LWVSC Co-President and Dee Woodward, LWVSC VP Community Relations

off the day sharing her fifty-five plus years of experience. She challenged us to keep plugging away with the work of improving government and never forget that old fashioned face to face communication beats social media and email every time. After Sarah spoke, League members used a Membership and



Representative Kirkman Finlay, House District #75.

Leadership Development (MLD) exercise to talk about what brought them to the League and shared their best stories.

LEAD DAY: *continued on page 5 –*

Calling all League Members to.....

League of Women Voters of South Carolina Council Saturday, May 14, SCEA Building in Columbia

Look for information in your In-Box soon

Spring 2016 is here and with it comes the biennial meeting in Columbia. Plans are underway for an exciting, energizing, educational time for LWV members from across the state.

This will be the time for you to help set the path for the League for the next year. We will adopt the new budget and much more. You will attend hands-on, how-to workshops on League voters service and study and action, presented by experienced League leaders. You will network with other

Leaguers and learn from them as well as share your successes with them.

Council is a time for serious work and organization building as well as a time to connect with Leaguers from across South Carolina. This is a chance to be inspired and educated. This is a chance to feel the strength of the League statewide.

If you have any questions before you receive your CALL TO COUNCIL please contact Julie Hussey at copresidentlwvsc@gmail.com or 843-224-1096.

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LISTENING AND LEARNING -

Presidents' Perspectives:



Julie Hussey
Co-President, LWVSC

Leadership Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD) was not just an opportunity to listen to great speakers and network with each other, it also offered your state board valuable information about our members and feedback for future programming. Here are some of the things we discovered about you.

After Dee Woodward spoke about reaching out, LEAD attendees were asked to write down their affiliations outside of the League on Post It notes and then place these notes within different categories: religious, social, political, professional, environmental, service, governing and advocacy.

This simple exercise offered some interesting insights not just for the State board but for all League's looking for new members, building partnerships and coalitions, as well as scheduling activities. The 57 members present at LEAD associated themselves with 215 organizations. Their responses told us:

- League members live active social lives and balance their League memberships with social activities/groups such as book clubs, bridge clubs, drinking clubs, knitting groups, etc.

- Church – We were almost as involved in religious organizations as we are in social ones.
- League members are loyal and stay connected and active with professional organizations.
- League members, at least those at LEAD, are often involved with other advocacy organizations and political parties. While we do have a lot of Democrats, we also have Republicans in our ranks so don't forget to reach across your community when approaching others who are politically engaged.
- AARP, the Sierra Club, NAACP, and ACLU make great partners for the League because we share a lot of members.
- League members are often leaders, not just in the League but also within the other organizations in which they are members.

Advocacy cards at each table offered the opportunity for LEAD attendees to let us know about their advocacy skills and willingness to support ethics reform and other League issues at the SC Statehouse. From these cards, we are not only able to get a list of members who are comfortable writing a letter to elected officials or local newspapers, but also members who are comfortable calling elected officials, attending legislative days, using social media to advocate, speaking on TV and radio about an issue, testifying to a legislative committee, developing an advocacy campaign, or training others on advocacy. We learned:

- We have a lot of experience contacting elected officials either by letter, phone call, and even meeting with them in person.
- Responders with the most experience advocating were willing to share their lessons learned with others.
- While several people expressed a willingness to use social media to advocate even more were willing to email or call friends about League issues.
- We have League members all around



JoAnne Day
Co-President, LWVSC

the state with expertise on lots of issues and several members who understand the process because they have served as elected officials.

Not only did we learn a lot about what you were doing in the community and how you could help the League, we also learned more about how we can serve you in our programming. The online evaluation survey after LEAD will be used to shape Council in May and other statewide gatherings in person and maybe even online through webinars.

- Legislative Update and Speakers were the top two draws at League gatherings and most prefer a day with a balance of League training, Issues, Legislative Updates, Advocacy training, and Governing Issues.
- Time for talking with other League members was seen as important to 80% of those surveyed.
- The \$20 fee for lunch and materials was considered to be a great value by 80% of attendees and no one considered it a waste of money, but cost

PRESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE

continued on page 3 –

PRESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVE:

continued from page 2 –

- was ranked important to just over 50% of those surveyed.
- Getting a ride to the meeting does not matter to everyone, but is important for 20% of attendees. We did notice that Leagues, which provide mileage and carpools, were able to get more people to attend.
- Most responders felt that a daylong meeting was appropriate, but several said that it was slightly or somewhat too long. No one said 9-3 was too short.

- While a few League members like tea, lemonade and juice, coffee and water are must haves while we can leave the sodas behind.
- We are split into thirds about lunch preferences between hot lunch, sandwiches, with a slight edge for soup and salad.
- Almost all responders said that LEAD 2016 was excellent (60%) or very good (33%).

Bottom line, 100% of your state board and co-presidents are honored to count you as a fellow League member, grateful for the advocacy you are willing to share, and committed to delivering programing and support which meets your needs.

Looking forward to seeing you at Council back at The South Carolina Education Association meeting room on May 14th and maybe even at National Convention June 16th to the 19th in Washington, DC.

ACTION (?) AT THE STATE HOUSE

By Lynne S. Teague, LWVSC VP, Issues and Action

There have been successes on the environmental front, including passage with substantial bipartisan support of a bill to require enhanced storage of coal ash brought into South Carolina from out of state.

Much the energy in the State House so far in 2016 has been consumed by transportation, or more specifically, roads. Public transit has not figured prominently in discussions. The League has not been prominent in this debate, although we at times have made quiet contributions to the dialogue. The House passed a bill with a gas tax, accompanied by an income tax cut to offset the gas tax, and some relatively weak reform of the SCDOT and the Infrastructure Bank. This bill responds to the demand by Governor Haley that any gas tax be offset by an income tax cut and reform. Although we support a gas tax, the income tax reduction makes this a regressive approach that would hurt those who must buy gas but benefit little from shifts in the upper levels of tax policy. At the same time, it diverts money needed for everything from schools to public safety.

The Senate has spent much of the session on the roads issue, and has produced a sound reform package tied to a very unfortunate raid on the general fund for \$400 million in funding for road repair. Neither approach satisfies all of the League's wish list: a gas tax to have users pay for road repairs, solid reform of DOT and the Infrastructure Bank to take

decision making about road priorities out of the hands of legislators, and no raid on the general fund that would make other state priorities harder to achieve.

It is quite possible that the outcome will be no roads bill at all, or one so watered down that it is not very useful on any front. In the meantime, it is important to remember that gas tax supporters who refused to support reform of the DOT and STIB contributed significantly to the Senate impasse.

Both houses have had committees working on the education issue in response to the Abbeville decision. We can expect no action on this in this session. This is heavy lifting at any time, but with the prospect of general revenues being eaten up to fill potholes it is an especially formidable issue.

The good news on the ethics reform front is that the current ethics bill finally has special order priority status in the Senate, thus overcoming the minority report placed on the bill by Senator Brad Hutto. This version of ethics reform addresses private income disclosure by public officials and independent investigation of complaints against legislators. However, taking up ethics has to take a back seat to a bill that is intended to make any Middle Eastern refugees who arrive in South Carolina as miserable as possible.

The bad news on the women's reproductive health front is that "free

conference" (the ability for the joint House-Senate conference committee to make significant changes in the bill from either the House or Senate version) on the ban on abortions after the 19th week made it out of the Senate, with all Republicans and half of the Democrats voting for it, despite the absence of any exceptions for rape and incest. As this is written, "free conference" for this bill has failed in the House once, by one vote, again with many Democratic votes joining the Republicans.

The League is engaged on other issues as well: problems in the implementation of the Base Load Review Act, fighting against commercial nuclear waste storage at the Savannah River Site, legislative study of new voting technology for South Carolina, proposed changes in absentee voting, closing the health care gap that leaves about 123,000 people uninsured because South Carolina did not accept federal funding for Medicaid, and other issues. Violence prevention is on the horizon, but we do not expect action on that this session, with both the Senate and House up for election this year.

It is unlikely that this session will go down in the history of our General Assembly as a productive one, but we can cling to our state motto: "dum spiro spero." While we breathe we hope. The League will keep fighting as long as necessary to make progress on these important issues.



Educating Our Children

By Jane Pulling, LWVSC Education

Abbeville Update - The following bills addressing issues related to plaintiff school districts and the Abbeville case have passed the House:

- **H4941 Fiscal Oversight** requires the State Department of Education, in consultation with superintendents and district financial officers, to develop and adopt a statewide program for identifying poor fiscal practices and advising districts using this statewide plan. The plan calls for 3 levels of concern: fiscal watch, fiscal caution, and fiscal emergency.
- **H4938 Survey College Students** - survey all education students at state colleges and universities as to whether they have considered teaching in a rural district and what incentives it would take for them to work in one.
- **H4939** asks the SCDE to create a committee to review all state education laws, determine those that are outdated, and report them to the General Assembly. The bill also requires the SDE to develop a system to provide regional technical support to districts by December 2016. Finally the bill requires the SDE to monitor school boards and professional development in poorly performing districts to determine what changes need to be made.

In addition, **Proviso 1A.64 (Rural Teacher Recruiting Initiative)** is under consideration. This proviso would create a program within CERRA (Center for Teacher Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement) to recruit and retain teachers to rural and underserved school districts. Incentives may include: Salary

supplements, education subsidies (ex. covering the cost of a master's degree), student loan forgiveness for both undergraduate and graduate degrees, and support for a teacher mentoring program.

Please note: all that the proviso requires here is the development of a plan, not implementation.

The Senate has been slow off the mark in education this session, delayed by their seemingly endless palavering about roads. As everyone knows, they did finally pass a roads bill **H3579** which dedicates \$400 million of the general fund annually to roads improvement. Unfortunately, any reduction to the general fund negatively impacts education funding. The Senate Education Committee and K-12 Subcommittee are meeting this week.

The bills that have passed the House seem to be peripheral to the larger issues of the Abbeville case. None of them allocate any real money to solutions recommended by the House Committee. Some call for further study of areas that have been studied to death already (teacher recruitment and retention; surveying education students to see what would get them to apply to rural districts). The House has kicked the can yet again. It remains to be seen whether the plaintiff districts and the SC Supreme Court will accept these limited measures as adequate response to their needs.

Other bills address the school starting date, appointing the Superintendent of Education, private school tuition credits, AdvancEd accreditation, and base student cost for Education Finance Act distribution.

H1014 would allow school to start the second week of August.

H3041 has passed the House. This bill seeks voter approval to amend the state constitution to allow the governor to appoint the state superintendent effective January 2019.

H4537 (Private School Tax Credits) has passed the House and moved to the Senate. This bill would make permanent a proviso that has been in effect the last two years. It allocates \$12 million to provide tax credits to individuals who donate to scholarship-granting organizations that provide tuition scholarships for exceptional needs students to attend private schools. We oppose this bill because it uses public funds to support private education or homeschooling. Opposition to the bill should now turn to the Senate. Concerned members should contact their senator and members of the Senate Education Committee and K-12 Subcommittee (John Couson, John Matthews, Luke Rankin, Harvey Peeler, Larry Grooms, Gerald Malloy, Vincent Sheheen, Paul Thurmond, Tom young, Nikki Setzler, Wes Hayes, Mike Fair, Brad Hutto, Greg Hembree, Floyd Nicholson). **Sen. Larry Grooms authored the previous provisos and is supporting this bill.**

H4778 Advance Ed Accreditation - all school districts must be accredited by Advance Ed (formerly the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools).

Base Student Cost for 2016 - the budget sent to the floor from House Ways and Means committee includes \$2,350 as the base student allocation, an increase of \$250 from last year. The final amount may change in the budget debate. Also remember that, according to the Education Finance Act, the inflation-adjusted BSA should currently be \$2,800.

PROUD HERITAGE, LWVSC history from 1920 – 1976 now available digitally:

A digital version of the history of the LWVSC, Proud Heritage, by Mary L. Bryan, is now available on line from the University of South Carolina.

The main "portal" page for the digital book is:

<http://libcat.csd.sc.edu/search~S7?/XProud+Heritage&searchscope=7&SORT=D/XProud+Heritage&searchscope=7&SORT=D&SUBKEY=Proud+Heritage/1%2C35%2C35%2CB/frameset&FF=XProud+Heritage&searchscope=7&SORT=D&2%2C2%2C>

When it opens, click on the "Connect to - USC All libraries" link, and then chooses to connect with the USC Columbia library, after which this page comes up with all the front matter and chapters available:

<http://asp6new.alexanderstreet.com/was2/was2.object.details.aspx?dorpid=1000637453>



LEAD DAY

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Dee Woodward, LWVSC Board Member

LWVSC board member and president of the Sumter League, Dee Woodward spoke about being an African American in the League and challenged us to take our meetings out of the kitchen and into every community. The power of our reach and alliances became evident when attendees listed the other organizations to which they belong and the total was over 200.



Sarah Leverette and JoAnne Day.

The latest happenings at the SC Statehouse were the focus of the afternoon at LEAD. SC Attorney General Allan Wilson talked about Judicial Reform and the recent Attorney General's Ruling on Pascoe's request for an opinion about ethics violations. SC Representative from Richland County Kirkman Finlay talked about passing ethics reform in the house and the challenges in the SC Senate. Lynn Teague ended the day with an update on all of the League's issues at the Statehouse and how we work with coalitions. League members used cards at the tables to share their advocacy

experiences and preferences. Now we have a solid list of letter writers, phone callers, and policy wonks we can put into action.

Thanks to all who were able to attend LEAD. Anyone who wasn't able to attend but wants to learn more is encouraged to check out the morning and afternoon Powerpoint presentations at the LWVSC website under LEAD. If you are interested in getting the lists of allied organizations or advocacy expertise, please email or call Julie Hussey- 843-224-1096 or copresidentlhwsc@gmail.com

Healthcare Actions

By David Ball, LWVSC, Healthcare

LWVSC Study: Palmetto State of Health, our state League's 2- year Study on healthcare is well under way. Eight local Leagues, at four events, have sponsored listening tours entitled, Healthcare Conversations. These were held July 14th (Charleston), August 29th (Clemson, Greenville), September 23rd (Hilton Head, Bluffton), and February 25th (Darlington, Sumter, Florence). It generated a great deal of useful discussion with providers, hospitals, patients and families.

A draft packet will be circulated among healthcare caucus committee members for their input before finalizing the packet for local Leagues, which will be available at State Council on May 14. It will contain

essential background material required to understand the issues involved as well as a set of consensus questions with supporting notes. It will then be the responsibility of local Leagues to educate their members, debate the issues, and report their consensus to the state League.

Legislation: At the Statehouse, the Senate passed a 20-week abortion ban with no exceptions for rape and incest. According to our lobbyist Lynn Teague, half of the Democrats even voted for it. It then went to the House where they fell one vote short. The House and Senate bills to create Universal Health Care in the state will most assuredly die by the end of the session. We made a serious push on

several occasions recently with Rep David Mack to have it brought up in committee for testimony the first week in March but with no result.

Medicaid Expansion: The League continues to participate in CloseTheGap.Org in an effort to encourage the state to expand health coverage to the poor. The coalition continues to make modest progress; the general feel is that expansion will happen after all other ideas have been exhausted. The latest effort is to frame the proposed expansion as a job creation bill that will siphon the cream off to private insurers. If there is any money left, it can be used for the poor.

SRS Update - German and Other Wastes??

By Suzanne Rhodes, LWVSC Nuclear Specialist

Four decades ago League leader and organic chemist Dr. Mary Kelly introduced me to the issue of abandoned wastes in 45 underground tanks at the Savannah River Site (SRS). At that point tanks were leaking at SRS and also at other old weapons facilities, and no one was paying attention. In the 1980s, cleanup finally began at SRS. A few tanks have been closed. Other tanks can spring leaks, and when they do, SRS staff thins the wastes and pumps them into an intact tank so that no wastes remain above the crack. Although curies have been removed from the tanks, the volumes have not been reduced as much as we all would like. It will take about 40 more years to complete the task, if Congress and the Department of Energy provide the funding.

The wastes would hopefully be sent off site to permanent storage. The current plan for storage is tentative and temporary, with serious political as well as technical challenges. SRS wastes as well as any new wastes accepted are very likely to remain at SRS for the foreseeable future.

Several years ago, spent commercial fuel from a failed German reactor was relabeled 'research' fuel and secretly proposed to be shipped to SRS. The Germans offered payment to the US Treasury, and SRS staff began looking into ways to separate out the ingredients in the fuel. The separation of the German fuel in the SRS H canyon would occupy a major contractor and a few hundred employees for a few years and generate yet another waste stream challenge.

On February 4th a public meeting addressed the proposed German shipment. The Department of Energy (DOE) and SRS both made presentations, and the public was invited to make brief comments. Those opposing the SRS proposal were more numerous than those welcoming it. All proponents expressed pride in the SRS safety culture. Other locals were concerned that Congress and DOE had not taken responsibility for wastes already at the site. I represented LWVSC in opposition to receiving the wastes.

I plan to make some written follow-up comments on behalf of the League, along the following lines:

- According to a recent NRC document entitled *Nuclear Reactors*¹, research and test reactors by definition do not produce electricity. The US has about 31 research and test reactors for a variety of objectives. The German reactor was not listed as a research reactor until it was proposed to move its wastes to SRS. The German reactor did produce a net output of 34 MW electricity intermittently over its 20-year operating period, generating a modest amount of revenue.
- The US has 99 operating commercial reactors. We have about 50 more reactors, many experimental, some preliminarily licensed, and operated briefly, if at all, including one similar to the German reactor. Although the industry has learned from many of these reactors, we do not classify

them as research reactors, and neither should Germany.

- German willingness to pay the US to experiment with separations is not a good reason for SRS to pursue this proposed project. There is no necessity for the product or new waste streams. The Germans should proceed with previous plans to entomb the spent fuel, as the US plans to do with our similar reactor wastes in Colorado.
- The community is shortsighted to support import of more waste to SRS. It will take decades to take care of what is already at SRS IF Congress responsibly appropriates cleanup funds .

In addition to the German wastes, other proposals include Japan sending U.K. - origin plutonium to SRS, Canada shipping liquid wastes, and a shipment of commercial Exelon spent fuel from Illinois to SRS. Apparently SRS stopped the Exelon fuel shipment. LWVSC is considering participating in a lawsuit to require an Environmental Impact Statement before the unprecedented shipment of about 100 truckloads of liquid wastes from Ontario to Savannah River Site.

1 <http://pbadupws.nrc.gov/docs/ML1525/ML15254A456.pdf>, page 17

2 http://www.srswatch.org/uploads/2/7/5/8/27584045/legal-opinion_export-avr-juelich_rw%C3%84nderungen_manu_bund_friends_of_the_earth_germany_september_2014.pdf page iv

Youth Voter Registration Grant Awarded to LWVSC

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina applied for and received a grant of \$1000 to register young voters this spring, with a focus on schools serving underrepresented communities.

Four of our local Leagues agreed to participate in the grant and have set goals for youth voter registration. The participating Leagues and their goals are listed below:

- Darlington** (6 schools)
- Georgetown** (6 schools)
- Spartanburg** (7 schools)
- Sumter** (7 schools)

This grant will help ensure that our local Leagues have the resources they need to do the important work of registering and engaging young voters. We will look forward to hearing the results of these efforts from our local Leagues in the coming months. Our last Youth Voter Registration grant met and exceeded the goals set in the grant, and we are confident this year's grant recipients will have the same success. We applaud these Leagues and all of our local Leagues that do the most important work of registering and informing voters in our state.



Keller Barron and Sarah Leverette's Archives Opened in the University of South Carolina Political Collections at the Hollings Library

By Laurel Moxon Suggs

What a true honor it was for me to introduce two of the most important women in my life and the lives of many of you, **Keller Barron and Sarah Leverette** at the USC Hollings Library on March 10th. In celebration of Women's History Month, their important archives were on exhibit and became available to the public. The almost record crowd of 150 friends of the Library and Keller and Sarah, came to honor these two remarkable ladies and to hear them share reminiscences of their years working for the common good.

Keller and Sarah both gave insightful, humorous and rousing talks about their lives. We wish we had room in this VOTER to share their wonderful remarks and their extensive and impressive biographies that were shared with the attendees that night. (If anyone should want a copy of their remarks or bios you can email me at lsuggs@imgsc.com and I will happily send to you.)

I was introduced by my friend and the Director of the Collections, Herb Hartsook. Herb's opening remarks below will summarize why the opening of the Barron and Leverette Archives is so important to all of us.

Herb Hartsook's Introduction:
"Welcome to the Hollings Library and this event to celebrate Women's History

Month. I have long believed that the papers of the League of Women Voters is one of our most important holdings. The League's archives document their work to encourage informed and active participation in government, to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and to influence public policy through education and advocacy.

Nothing important happens in South Carolina government without gaining the League's attention. The League's selfless dedication to improving government and citizenship represents all that is good in politics.

In addition to preserving the League's archives, we also collect the papers of community and League leaders, such as **Barbara Moxon, Mary Kelly, and Nancy Moore and now today we add the papers of Keller Barron and Sarah Leverette**. These collections document their important work with the League and their other interests and activities. These collections will be used by scholars ranging from high school history day students to journalists to historians and others researching contemporary society.

One of the great blessings about my job is that I usually get to know our collection donors. I have known Keller since the 1980s and have known of

Sarah for ages and we began our close association in 2002 when I conducted an oral history interview with her for the SC Bar Foundation. I am proud to call these remarkable women good friends. They inspire me and I am so glad you have joined us today

I want to take this opportunity to thank those of you who have contributed to our **Sarah Leverette League of Women Voters endowment**. You'll find endowment fliers in the gallery and we hope to build this fund. Our work is labor-intensive and the endowment supports our work with collections like Sarah's and Keller's as well as with the League's archives.

Laurel Moxon Suggs will introduce Keller and Sarah. Laurel has held a number of positions in the League of Women Voters serving as state League President 1999 to 2005. She is the daughter prominent League leader, Barbara Moxon, who served as state president from 1971 to 1977. Some of you might have noticed Mrs. Moxon's patriotic dress, that she made, that is exhibited in our gallery. She proudly wore this on every election day and we are so pleased to have it in our collection.

Laurel has unique perspectives of Keller and Sarah as she has known each of them for over 50 years."

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CALENDAR

IMPORTANT DATES:

June 14th

State and Local Primary election for both parties

June 28th

State and Local Primary runoffs as needed

November 8th

General Election



LWV SC Voter

Post Office Box 8453
Columbia, SC 29202

The SC Voter

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Established in 1951, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages citizens 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. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. All members receive the National Voter, the SC Voter, and a newsletter from their local League.

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Julie Hussey

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Keller Barron



Sarah Leverette

Keller Barron and Sarah Leverette's
Archives Opened in the University
of South Carolina Political
Collections at the Hollings Library



Laurel Suggs

Laurel Suggs poses with the mannequin that holds Barbara Moxon's VOTE dress she made and wore often.