The LWVSC board established three priorities for the 2018 session: redistricting, ethics reform, and utility regulation reform. We were able to make significant progress on only one of these, utility regulation reform. Utilities consumed the 2018 session as South Carolina faced a financial disaster of unprecedented proportions. We also advocated on additional issues of importance to the League.

The 2018 General Assembly of South Carolina

We supported a bill by Rep. Laurie Funderburk to extend the time available to register to vote before elections.

continued on page 3
As we approach our 100th birthday, the LWV stands at a crossroads: remaining as always a strong, nonpartisan, trusted force for good government and fair voting practices, but striving also to become a more flexible and nimble organization and one more diverse and inclusive. We’re shedding the image of the League as “white, older, and privileged” and as structurally complicated, formal, and — dare I say — hidebound. The national LWV transformation strategy adopted two years ago purposefully moves us in that new direction.

As a result, this is an exciting time to be co-president of a state league! I personally would like to see the League in South Carolina work towards the “one, seamless league” model envisioned in the Transformation Roadmap,* reducing barriers between the three levels as much as possible. This involves making it easier to join the League and fostering a closer relationship between local and state leagues, and between the local/state leagues and national.

LWVSC has seen great growth in membership during the past year and a half, and we have several new leagues or MALs eager to form. LWVSC will actively facilitate this and welcome new groups.

In addition, our highly energized citizenry is eager to voice its views; LWV now shares space with many advocacy organizations, and we must be responsive and visible in order to engage our members, new and old. The LWVSC’s creation of two board directors of State Issues and of National Issues — will enable us to reach out more effectively regarding educational and advocacy efforts, especially those on topics backed by LWV positions but not currently in active play in our Statehouse (the Statehouse being the domain of our expert lobbyists, Lynn Taylor). Close communication and coordination — national with state/local, state with local, local with local — will be key, I believe, in the LWV Campaign for Making Democracy Work.

Christie McCoy-Lawrence, Co-President, LWVSC

Stop the Gerrymander

South Carolina Redistricting 2020

Show your love for redistricting in bumper sticker form!

This conversation-starting bumper sticker was designed by the Clemson League member and graphic designer Christine Prado to help raise awareness of the redistricting issue.

We are accepting orders, minimum of ten bumper stickers, at $2 each, postage paid.

Send your orders with a check made out to the LWVSC to: Holley Ulbrich

2 Birch Place

Clemson SC 29631

Questions? Call 864-654-6828

LWVSC Council Meeting

LWVSC met at the Doubletree Hotel in Columbia on Saturday, April 28, 2018 for their biennial Council Meeting. Thank you to the Columbia League for assisting with hosting details. Co-presidents Holley Ulbrich and Julie Hussey called the meeting to order at 9:15. Six local Leagues were represented, (Beaufort, Charleston, Clemson, Columbia, Darlington, Greenville, and Hilton Head Bluffton) sufficient for a quorum. The treasurer’s report and proposed budget were presented.

Highlights of the morning included talks by Dr. Robert Oldendick, USC Professor of Political Science who spoke on ‘Primary Watching and the Changing SC Political Landscape’; and former Sen. Joel Lourie who spoke about ‘Redistricting from a Former Legislator’s Perspective’. Both sessions were lively with many questions from members. Virtually all of Dr. Oldendick’s predicted winners did in fact win their primaries, with the exception of Mark Sanford whom he predicted to win. Sen. Lourie discussed what might happen to even the remnants of the two party system in South Carolina if the current Republican controlled legislature gerrymanders the 2020 redistricting. He envisioned a black-white party split as a possible outcome. He feels the best possible outcome for redistricting would be a non-partisan citizen’s committee drawing the lines, a proposal the League fully supports.

After lunch the participants were invited to attend two of five breakout sessions. There was a ‘President’s Roundtable’ chaired by Janelle Rivers and Christine McCoy-Lawrence; ‘Ready for the Primaries’ chaired by Sally Huguley; ‘Member Engagement and Leadership Development’ presented by Joyce Franklin; ‘Redistricting and Fundraising’ led by Julie Hussey and Lynn Teague; ‘Planning an Issues-based Program’ with Holley Ulbrich and Nancy Williams; and ‘Vote 411’ coordinated by Lawson Wetli.

Following these sessions, the 2017-2018 LWVUS board, but remains on the LWVSC board as Voter Service director with Jane Turner as her partner, and Janie Shipley took on the role of national issues director. Sally Huguley, state education director, takes on expanded responsibilities as state issues director. She will work with local leagues on state issues, including public programs, coordinating state issues specialists, and planning for proposed state program at the 2019 convention.

LWVSC Board— New Faces, New Titles

It’s been a big year of changes on the state board. Dee Woodward and Phyllis Jones left the board last fall, and Pat Forbes, who was (and still is) our representative to the Women’s Rights Empowerment Network (WREN), resigned this summer. Jean Wood joined the board as Voter Service director with Jane Turner as her partner, and Janie Shipley took on the role of national issues director. Sally Huguley, state education director, takes on expanded responsibilities as state issues director. She will work with local leagues on state issues, including public programs, coordinating state issues specialists, and planning for proposed state program at the 2019 convention.

As we approach our 100th birthday, the LWV stands at a crossroads: remaining as always a strong, nonpartisan, trusted force for good government and fair voting practices, but striving also to become a more flexible and nimble organization and one more diverse and inclusive. We’re shedding the image of the League as “white, older, and privileged” and as structurally complicated, formal, and — dare I say — hidebound. The national LWV transformation strategy adopted two years ago purposefully moves us in that new direction.

As a result, this is an exciting time to be co-president of a state league! I personally would like to see the League in South Carolina work towards the “one, seamless league” model envisioned in the Transformation Roadmap,* reducing barriers between the three levels as much as possible. This involves making it easier to join the League and fostering a closer relationship between local and state leagues, and between the local/state leagues and national.

LWVSC has seen great growth in membership during the past year and a half, and we have several new leagues or MALs eager to form. LWVSC will actively facilitate this and welcome new groups.

In addition, our highly energized citizenry is eager to voice its views; LWV now shares space with many advocacy organizations, and we must be responsive and visible in order to engage our members, new and old. The LWVSC’s creation of two board directors of State Issues and of National Issues — will enable us to reach out more effectively regarding educational and advocacy efforts, especially those on topics backed by LWV positions but not currently in active play in our Statehouse (the Statehouse being the domain of our expert lobbyists, Lynn Taylor). Close communication and coordination — national with state/local, state with local, local with local — will be key, I believe, in the LWV Campaign for Making Democracy Work.

Christie McCoy-Lawrence, Co-President, LWVSC

*LWVSC has seen great growth in members during the past year and a half, and we have several new leagues or MALs eager to form. LWVSC will actively facilitate this and welcome new groups.

In addition, our highly energized citizenry is eager to voice its views; LWV now shares space with many advocacy organizations, and we must be responsive and visible in order to engage our members, new and old. The LWVSC’s creation of two board directors of State Issues and of National Issues — will enable us to reach out more effectively regarding educational and advocacy efforts, especially those on topics backed by LWV positions but not currently in active play in our Statehouse (the Statehouse being the domain of our expert lobbyists, Lynn Taylor). Close communication and coordination — national with state/local, state with local, local with local — will be key, I believe, in the LWV Campaign for Making Democracy Work.

Christie McCoy-Lawrence, Co-President, LWVSC

We're shedding the image of the League as “white, older, and privileged” and as structurally complicated, formal, and — dare I say — hidebound. The national LWV transformation strategy adopted two years ago purposefully moves us in that new direction.

As a result, this is an exciting time to be co-president of a state league! I personally would like to see the League in South Carolina work towards the “one, seamless league” model envisioned in the Transformation Roadmap,* reducing barriers between the three levels as much as possible. This involves making it easier to join the League and fostering a closer relationship between local and state leagues, and between the local/state leagues and national.

LWVSC has seen great growth in membership during the past year and a half, and we have several new leagues or MALs eager to form. LWVSC will actively facilitate this and welcome new groups.

In addition, our highly energized citizenry is eager to voice its views; LWV now shares space with many advocacy organizations, and we must be responsive and visible in order to engage our members, new and old. The LWVSC’s creation of two board directors of State Issues and of National Issues — will enable us to reach out more effectively regarding educational and advocacy efforts, especially those on topics backed by LWV positions but not currently in active play in our Statehouse (the Statehouse being the domain of our expert lobbyists, Lynn Taylor). Close communication and coordination — national with state/local, state with local, local with local — will be key, I believe, in the LWV Campaign for Making Democracy Work.

Christie McCoy-Lawrence, Co-President, LWVSC


The Environment

The environment and citizen rights experienced significant losses in 2018. The General Assembly chose to restrict citizen rights to the automatic stay of destructive land altering activities and to restrict nuisance suits, the only redress citizens have when affected by industrial noise and smells.

Constitutional Conventions

We testified against a bill in support of a federal constitutional convention to require a balanced budget. We were amused by the heated overreaction to a bill by legislative freshmen proposing a state constitutional convention. Neither bill advanced.

Send your orders with a check made out to the LWVSC to: Holley Ulbrich

2 Birch Place

Clemson SC 29631

Questions? Call 864-654-6828

Stop the Gerrymander

South Carolina Redistricting 2020

Show your love for redistricting in bumper sticker form!

This conversation-starting bumper sticker was designed by the Clemson League member and graphic designer Christine Prado to help raise awareness of the redistricting issue.

We are accepting orders, minimum of ten bumper stickers, at $2 each, postage paid.

Send your orders with a check made out to the LWVSC to: Holley Ulbrich

2 Birch Place

Clemson SC 29631

Questions? Call 864-654-6828

Facebook.com/LWV

Twitter.com/LWV

Looking for resources? Visit:

LWV.org

Want to stay up to date with the latest news and events?

Legislative Update continued from page 1

Reproductive Rights

We backed a bill filed by Rep. Kirkman Finlay to allow women to obtain a full year of contraception at once, a proven means of reducing unwanted pregnancies. It passed the House by a wide margin but under pressure from the insurance industry the Senate refused to take the bill up. We also were involved in advocacy against the method ban (prohibiting dilation and extraction) and personhood (every fertilized egg a legal person) bills. The first of these was a much greater danger since it had more support. However, a filibuster by Sen. Marlon Kimpson and Sen. Margie Bright Matthews saved the day.

Constitutional Conventions

We testified against a bill in support of a federal constitutional convention to require a balanced budget. We were amused by the heated overreaction to a bill by legislative freshmen proposing a state constitutional convention. Neither bill advanced.

Lynn Teague

VP for Program and Action
The 53rd convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States offered opportunities to reflect on our accomplishments, focus our energy, and prepare for the most significant celebration of women’s progress in our country.

The speakers were wonderful. Former U.S. Treasurer, Rosie Rios, reminded us that what is not seen is silent, as she noted the lack of women on our currency, in our public park statuses, and even in toys available for girls. Both Rios and Elaine Weiss, the author of "The Woman’s Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote," reinforced the importance of the centennial celebration of the 19th Amendment and LWV’s birthday.

Nick Stephanopoulos, the creator of the Efficiency Gap Theory, and Ruth Greenwood, a member of the Campaign Legal Center’s team for the U.S. Supreme Court Case Gill v. Whitford shared their experiences fighting redistricting in the courts and their concern about the lack of a Chief Justice Kennedy. The chair of the Election Assistance Commission, the Associate Director of the Carter Center, and the CEO of Asian Americans Advancing Justice talked about protecting and monitoring our election process to get out the vote. We were reminded the greatest threat to our voting process is low voter turnout.

We met LWV’s new Executive Director, Virginia Kase, who has been the Chief Operating Officer of CASA, the largest Latino and immigrant rights organization in the mid-Atlantic region. We voted to commit funds to the implementation of LWV’s Transformation Journey, including more money in pass through grants to local leagues.

LWV’s first Director of Information and Technology, Jason Johnson, promised improvements to our Salesforce router management system and Sarah Cooper, LWV’s Director of Communications & Digital Strategy, begged us to collect our data and share our stories both for reinforcing our brand and obtaining outside funding.

We had up to 865 voting delegates representing 49 states and the District of Columbia voting on the 2018-2020 LWV program to ensure a fair, free, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by focusing on voting rights, improving elections including advocating for the National Popular Vote Compact, campaign finance/money in politics, and redistricting. We added a focus on the ERA after it is duly ratified by the 38th state. Motions were passed to make gun control, gun safety, and gun ownership limitations a priority in LWV’s lobbying efforts; reaffirm LWV’s long-standing position that the Electoral College should be abolished; stand united with efforts to price carbon emissions without a position on how the revenue generated is to be used or espousing any single method of pricing carbon; and support climate assessment criteria that ensure that energy policies align with climate science; and reaffirm our commitment to the constitutional right of a majority of an individual to make reproductive choices.

The 2018-20 budget was approved with no increase to the national per member payment for the Chert two years.

We also added six new LWVUS Board members including Julie Hussey from South Carolina (yes, I am now on the LWVUS Board so if you have questions or ideas please call/text 843-224-1096 or email jhussey@lwv.org). For more information go to www.lwv.org.

Julie Hussey, LWVUS Board Member

T he current Election Systems & Software (ESS & S) election system (Votronic voting computers and the Unity software package for county headquarters) was purchased by South Carolina between 2004 and 2006 using federal funds from the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). These computers are now getting old by technology standards. South Carolina is looking for replacements as are many other states. The State Election Commission (SEC) has repeatedly asked the legislature for escrow funds totaling $40 million for a replacement system. In a recent State newspaper article, that number was given as $55 million. Comparisons with bids and contracts from other states suggests that a new election system could be acquired for about half that. Estimates based on bids to Ohio and Michigan and previous estimates for Iowa would put the cost at about $20 to $25 million.

(After adjusting for numbers of voters and numbers of machines purchased.) Given the difference, League members are encouraged to discuss this with citizens and legislators.

Apparently a number of SC county election directors would like to return to voter-marked paper ballots and optical scanners. The new technology from many vendors is for a ballot-marking-device (BMD) that provides touch screen for the voter but prints a paper “ballot” that is then scanned. One point of contention is that all BMDs seem to count votes on a bar code, not based on the English text the voter sees. In the absence of robust audits to follow the lead of several other states and require robust post-election statistical audits.

South Carolina will have no choice but to acquire a new system at least before the 2020 general election. Since many other states have preceded us in acquiring new systems, we should not be doing this alone but should be taking advantage of the information provided already to and the analysis done by other states. Importantly, states are moving back to hand-marked paper ballots and statistical audits that together provide transparency and the ability to verify that the computer hardware and software are functioning as expected.

Duncan Buell

LWVUS Convention 2018 — Celebrating Progress!

Update On Voting Machines
LWVSC Welcomes You to the World of the Well-informed Voter!

With the addition of VOTE411.org, the League of Women Voters is providing South Carolina voters with the tools they need to make informed, sound decisions at the ballot box.

The Greenville County League began using VOTE411 for the 2016 presidential election year. They chose to not participate in 2017 during the city elections, but the Charleston Area League produced a VOTE411 voter guide for last year’s Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester County races.

The 2018 midterm elections brought Charleston and Greenville together for a combined push to convince the state League to participate through VOTE411 in the state-wide elections, to offset the costs of participation for local Leagues, and to encourage as many local Leagues as possible to get on board. Claire Bush with the Charleston League offered to handle the technical setup for statewide races on the ballot, in addition to federal and local races in the Charleston area.

Barbara Zia quickly organized a statewide team of interested members. Candidate questions were generated for each race by each League. Emails were sent to candidates inviting them to answer the questions and post their responses. The Charleston League shared publicity items they had developed in the 2017 election season and Greenville added a new VOTE411 poster to the mix.

Local Leagues organized promotional activities. Lawson Welli, president of the Greenville League, prepared a VOTE411 op-ed and shared it with other local Leagues. The Columbia League launched VOTE411 with a press conference at the Richland County Library that included an online walk-through of the website. One highlight of the Columbia event was the State Library’s announcement of a statewide team of VOTE411 partners.

South Carolina Leagues are committed to providing VOTE411 to their communities in the future. We want to make sure VOTE411 is seen as a vital part of the South Carolina elections. The League of Women Voters has a continuous goal, as well. VOTE411 is good for the state. Contacts ranged from phone calls and emails to personal visits. Candidate responses to VOTE411 statewide ran from 50 to 67% for contested races and 45 to 57% for non-contested races for the primaries.

South Carolina Leagues are committed to providing VOTE411 to their communities in the future. We want to make sure VOTE411 is seen as a vital part of the South Carolina elections.

The ERA Rises Again!

Our mothers’ fight, our sisters’, our aunts’, and in some cases ours — the fight for the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment), waged so passionately during the 1970s. Reading “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 Equal Rights Amendment was ratified by 35 states by 1977, but, falling three short of the required 38, it seemed doomed. Now, however, the struggle has been rejoined. In March 2017, Nevada ratified the ERA, followed by Illinois in May 2018. When one more state ratifies (possibly North Carolina or Virginia), the battle will go to Congress and the courts, since the deadline has long expired.

LWV sees the ERA as critically needed. Women are not adequately protected today; unequal pay, violence against women, pregnancy discrimination, and other forms of unequal treatment are pervasive. What laws exist are inconsistently interpreted and applied, and what progress has been made can be rolled back.

By acclamation, the recent LWVUS National Convention adopted as a program priority that when the 38th state has ratified, the LWVUS will “take the required steps to see the Amendment through whatever judicial or other challenges may occur until we see the ERA added to the U.S. Constitution...” Further, the Convention resolved that, even before a 38th state ratifies, the LWVUS will “support efforts to remove the time limits for ratification” and “support an emphasis on the ERA this year and every year until the ERA is ratified and becomes a U.S. Constitutional Amendment.”

South Carolina is not likely to be the 38th state to ratify (although guess what? In March 1972, the South Carolina House of Representatives voted to ratify the ERA by 83 votes to zero; unfortunately, the Senate did not go along). But we can educate the citizenry all over the state with programs such as that now being presented by League member Barbara Fry in the Charleston area. When the fight goes to Congress, LWVUS will promote national lobbying and advocacy. In addition, Representative Gilda Cobb-Hunter has declared her intention to introduce the amendment in the S.C. House during the next session. Stay tuned...

August 26 is Women’s Equality Day
Will you be one of the 33 to take advantage of the NEW TAX LAW and help to fund LWVSC fully this year?

Thanks to the new tax law, tax preparation will change for most of us this year. And, that’s good news for the League because now you can give as much to the League as you want to – and not worry about whether it is tax deductible! The standard deduction for couples is now $24,000 (and $12,000 for singles). With this new standard deduction, most of us won’t bother to keep records and itemize. And that means that you can choose to give to the LEAGUE (advocacy organization that it is) and not limit yourself to the ED Fund (LWVEF) for its tax deductible status. So, how about we celebrate?

LWVSC has a number of needs as we focus on redistricting and voter access. We want to fund a student to work with Duncan Buell on our website; we want to have an intern next spring; and, we want to provide support for smaller and emerging local Leagues. So to celebrate this new freedom to support LWVSC, why not go to the LWVSC website and sign up for a monthly contribution via PayPal or a credit card? $10/month would be greatly appreciated! It would take only 33 members giving $10/month to reach our $4,000 goal for member contributions in next year’s budget! Will you be one of those 33? I’m on my way to the website to be #1!!! Who will be second?

Linda Bilanchone, Communications Director, LWVSC