

League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area



LEAGUE LINES

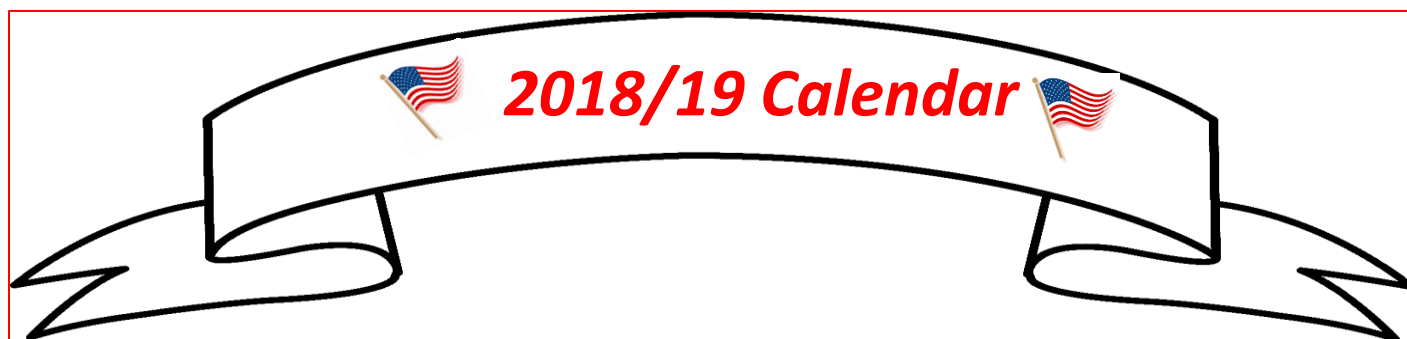
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September 2018



September 5, Wednesday - **Planned Parenthood** begins a month-long exhibit at Tapps: *Figure Out*, an art exhibit celebrating the human body and showcasing local artist talent in photography, drawing, painting, sculpture, and mixed media. At least 50% of the proceeds of art work go to Planned Parenthood South Atlantic and the patients they serve. <http://www.tappsartscenter.com/event/figure-out-2018-first-thursday-opening-reception/>). There is a preview party on Wednesday, September 5; the exhibit opens Thursday, September 6; "Panel Lunch on Art and Sexuality" Wednesday, September. 19 - RSVP at foluncheon.ppsat.org.

September 24, Monday - **Public Service Commission**, Hearing Room, Night hearing for public comments. [page 8](#).

September 25, Tuesday - **September Public Policy Evening Forum, "The Need for Women's Voices in Today's World"** 5:30-7:00. Co-hosted by LWV, Women's Rights and Empowerment Network (WREN), and the Richland County Library System. A forum with three-person panel and Q & A audience participation (National Voter Registration Day)

October - Candidate Forums - No Public Policy Luncheon

October 23, Tuesday - **Anita Hill Party**, 701 Whaley Street

November 1, Thursday - **Public Service Commission** begins a hearing on two issues: how much SCE&G's electric rates should be rolled back permanently, and whether Dominion should be approved to acquire SCANA/SCE&G. See [pages 6,7,8](#).

November 15, 2018; February 21, & April 18, 2019 - **Future Public Policy Luncheons**. **Thursdays** – Lourie Center. **Mark your calendar**

December - **Annual Member Holiday Social**, time and place to be determined

January - Annual Planning meeting in the evening, possibly at a restaurant

May - **Annual Members Meeting and Social** - place to be determined

May 4-5, Friday and Saturday, 2019 - LWVSC Convention in Charleston

VIEW FROM RIVERS' EDGE

Janelle Rivers

After much anticipation, I finally had an opportunity to see *Hamilton* in June. Broadway's creative rap presentation of the heroism, treachery, and tragedy that marked the beginning of our nation is truly wonderful; but the songs from *Hamilton* aren't earworms. You don't find yourself singing them over and over. After months of listening to the anger and vitriol in our public discourse, I've been wondering, "Where is the music?"



During a lunchtime break at the LWVUS convention, Christina Goodwin and I participated in the Chicago protest over the separation of refugee parents and their children. The crowd was twice the anticipated size--over 60,000 people. There was music from a band with a sound system, but the protesters weren't singing along.

Fifty years after the protests of the 1960s, with many hidden facts now exposed, I'm truly grateful for those who protested. One outstanding memory of that era of protest is the folk music, including "We Shall Overcome." The tune and lyrics are simple and easy to learn. No wonder it became the theme of the Civil Rights cause.

With the passing of Aretha Franklin, we were reminded of the powerful message she provided for the feminist movement. At our August 16 kickoff Member Social, local League members remembered her message. Their response to the call, "Find out what it means to me," was an unhesitating, "R-E-S-P-E-C-T."

Popular music also fueled the Vietnam protests. Bob Dylan denied that "Blowin' in the Wind" was a protest song, but some people would argue that it is the most famous Vietnam protest song.

*How many ears must one man have,
Before he can hear people cry?
How many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind,
The answer is blowing in the wind*

So where are the composers and artists who can put the current cause to music? We heard one response at the national League of Women Voters convention in Chicago. Vivian Harte, an author, music teacher, and Arizona League member, performed an original song that is her gift to America. She has adapted the music and lyrics from an earlier version of her work to fit the current political context. The song is titled, "Let's All Vote!" You can listen to it on her web site at <http://letsallvote.us>. She has a succinct message and she presented it well. The question is, "How can we use it?"

Let's All Vote! Music and lyrics by Vivian Harte, arrangement by Duncan Stitt

**In 2018, you need to be seen, it's time to come to the aid of America!
In 2018, be part of the team, it's time to come to the aid of America!
Go to the polls and cast your vote, time to have your say.
Let your voice be heard now, you can make such a beautiful way,**

We can create such a beautiful day.

In 2018, let's dream the dream, it's time to come to the aid of America!

In 2018, you need to be seen, it's time to come to the aid of America!

We need your vote, we need it right now to help democracy.

Vote for the people you like the best. You are the key to keep America free!

In 2018, you can create the dream, it's time to come to the aid of America!

In 2018, you need to be seen, it's time to come to the aid,

Come to the aid, come to the aid of America!!

NATIONAL LWVUS CONVENTION IN CHICAGO: Transforming LWV for the Future



The national convention sets the focus and program of the League of Women Voters of the United States for the next two years and beyond. A recent transformation study has updated and summarized the League's focus in three statements:

- **Mission:** Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.
- **Vision:** We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.
- **Values:** We believe in the power of women to create a more perfect democracy.

Three core elements of the organization will not change:

- The League will continue to focus on its mission impact work, summarized in four easy-to-remember words, "**Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy.**"
- The League will remain **non-partisan**; that is the **non-negotiable** part of the League's brand.
- The League will remain a **membership** organization while exploring new ways for individuals to join and engage with us.

The League will change by:

- Fostering a **welcoming culture**.
- Increasing focus on **diversity and leadership**, beginning with a half-day training for all delegates at the 2018 national convention.
- Improving efficiency of **communications and coordination** among the national, state, and local Leagues while maintaining the emphasis on local League strengths and autonomy.
- Making computer and social media **technology seamless** among national, local, and state levels to (1) improve **media visibility** and (2) coordinate and **improve data entry and reporting**, including member dues and profiles.
- Updating the **VOTE411.org** web site.

The National LWV Program for 2018-2020 adheres to the core mission of the League. The Campaign for Making Democracy Work®, includes ensuring a free, fair, and accessible electoral system for all eligible voters by giving highest priority to the following issues:

- Voting Rights
- Improving Elections, including advocating for the National Popular Vote Compact
- Campaign Finance/Money in Politics
- Redistricting

- Continuing support for the Equal Rights Amendment

The convention voted to retain all current LWVUS positions and approved six resolutions, which reflect a second level of lobbying priorities:

- Advocating for gun safety through gun control, and gun ownership limitations
- Removing of time limits for ERA ratification
- Abolishing the Electoral College
- Pricing carbon emissions
- Supporting the constitutional right of privacy regarding reproductive choices
- Aligning energy policies with current climate science

MORE ON THE CONVENTION, from Christina Goodwin: I had the honor and pleasure of attending the league of women Voters National Convention in June as a voting delegate with **Janelle Rivers, Laura Woliver, and Keller Barron**. Attending Convention gave me a greater understanding of how the League makes its decisions as an organization.

At Convention, we approved the 2018-2020 National Program “Making Democracy Work.” It will guide our lobbying efforts over the next two years by: improving elections for all voters, including protecting voting rights, fighting gerrymandering, and tackling money in politics.

We voted to retain all current LWVUS positions in the areas of representative government, international relations, natural resources, and social policy. We also approved six resolutions as recounted above.

One of the themes I noticed from many of our speakers is that we’re in a fight for our democracy, and we need “all hands on deck.” Whether it’s fighting gerrymandering or making sure voters can vote, we need everyone to be invested in the fight. Further, we must make sure we’re intentionally including everyone if we want to be successful at defending democracy. Representation matters.

As our incoming LWVUS CEO Virginia Kase said, “We are the League of Women Voters. We didn’t back down then, and we won’t back down now.”



AND THE LAST WORD ON THE CONVENTION, from Laura Woliver: An important aspect of the LWV national meeting in Chicago was discussion of the “Transformation Roadmap.” You may download an executive summary of the Transformation Roadmap report at http://forum.lwv.org/sites/default/files/transformation_roadmap_exec_summary_april_2018.pdf or the complete report at http://forum.lwv.org/sites/default/files/lwv_transformation_roadmap.pdf.

The LWV will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2020. The centennial helped us to focus attention on “what we want the League to look like in the next century.”

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OTHER NEWS



OBSERVER CORPS UPDATE:

Lady June Cole

06/14/18 - Richland County Board of Elections & Voter Registration observed by Robin White.

Agenda items: Certification hearing; Primary runoff; Election preparation; Potential Primary special election (John Courson's seat); Update on Employee Suggestion Box.

10:00 - The Certification hearing had no significant findings. County-wide voter participation was 21%. Twenty-seven ballots were reviewed that had some form of error. Thirty-two ballots were rejected for various errors, and nine were accepted as a valid trail could be determined.

4:30 - The Board went into executive session to discuss the use of an Employee Suggestion Box that had been held in abeyance since the last meeting. The board voted three to two to abandon the use of the suggestion box and indicated that the suggestions previously placed in the box should be destroyed. Commissioner Mack objected stating that the suggestions were official county records and subject to county record retention. The majority disagreed. Commissioner Mack indicated that she would discuss the matter with legislators. A citizen asked the board to consider an advertising campaign using multiple forms of media to promote Richland County voting. The Director indicated that he would take the request as an action item.

07/10/18 – City of Columbia Board of Zoning Appeals observed by L. J. Cole

10:00 - The Board heard three requests. The first was for a special exception to permit a physical fitness facility at 1531 Laurel Street. The motion to approve the request carried. The other two agenda items were requests for variances to the off-street parking restrictions. The request at 1001 Washington Street was approved. The request at 1315 Calhoun Street was denied. In other business, Mr. Salley nominated Gene Dinkins, Jr. as vice-chair. The motion carried, and he was elected.

* * *



VOTER REGISTRATION REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEERS:

We are interested in registering at near-by high schools who have invited us: Chapin High School, Dutch Fork High School, Irmo high School, and Spring Hill High School. We are hoping to register some eligible students by October 5, so they can vote in the November 6 election. By taking turns and working together. We hope this will not be too much work for any one person. Contact me at rsayling@gmail.com or 803-908-9698. *Sharon Ayling*

UPDATE FROM NEW VOTER REGISTRATION DIRECTOR: *Midterm on My Terms* is the catch phrase for the 2018 National Voter Registration Day campaign on Tuesday, September 25. We would love to have your ideas and participation in this event. **Sharon Ayling, Rosa Bennet, Gladys Coles, Elizabeth Jones, and Elizabeth**

McLendon have volunteered to be on the Voter Registration Committee. I greatly appreciate their eagerness, enthusiasm, and talent. Please help us be successful!

We have been registering teachers and parents at Back to School Nights at Richland County schools, high school students at Lexington schools, educating social studies teachers about voter registration, registering voters at the Tasty Tomato Festival, and the Cola Market. We have planned an activity for National Voter Registration Day. I look forward to hearing from ALL of you.

The last day to register for the November general election is October 6. Register online at SCvotes.org. Driver license addresses can be changed at the DMV website. Candidate information is available at the LWV-sponsored vote411.org, where candidate answers to LWV questions are available unedited. If your candidate doesn't participate, we encourage you to go to his/her webpage/Facebook and ask that they assist you in making your decision. If you wish to learn how to register voters, contact me, and then register everyone you can (remember we are nonpartisan).

Think of the future. There are roads to fix, schools to fund, districts to draw, ethics to ensure. Barbara Beeler babsbeeler@gmail.com, or phone or text me at 423 580 2165



At White Knoll High School in August, Janelle Rivers, dressed as an 1890's suffragist, talks with four women in leadership positions: Debbie Poole, principal of Pelion Elementary School, and three elected officials: Cindy Smith, Debbie Knight, and Anne Marie Greene, members of the Lexington County School District One Board. .

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SOUTH CAROLINA'S UTILITIES: THE BIG PICTURE

Lynn Teague (LWV Facebook)

The League became involved in advocacy on utility regulation in 2015. This is a summary of the regulatory landscape within which that advocacy is developing.

Most of our energy is generated by big investor-owned utilities (IOUs) and a public agency (Santee Cooper). These large utilities have direct delivery systems and also sell to smaller entities, most conspicuously ratepayer-owned co-ops. In every local area, electric energy is a monopoly, regardless of ownership model. SC utilities of all kinds have been in trouble because of questionable management, and are causing users to pay for bad decisions at the top as well as extravagant provisions for board members and executives. The protective measures supposedly in place in each case have not been effective.

Some thoughts on this big picture:

Economists take it as a given that monopolies require regulation to protect the public interest, broadly defined as a fair price for stable reliable energy. However, although all of our utilities are monopolies, only IOUs have been subject to rate review and evaluation of major decisions by state regulatory agencies, and

even that regulatory framework has been excessively biased by law and political pressure toward the interests of IOUs. Santee Cooper and the co-ops have no mechanism in place to protect the public interest when their boards fail to do so.

The closest thing we have to an overall oversight group is the state regulation of the Public Utilities Review Committee (PURC), a legislative body made up of six legislators and four members of the public appointed by legislators. Having watched PURC in action before, during, and after the VC Summer meltdown, it is apparent that PURC has operated largely by faith in the benevolent management of utilities rather than accepting a basic economic principle -- monopolies tend to serve their own interests unless constrained by government regulation. In the case of IOU's, that interest is focused rather heavily on returns on equity of more than 10% on their capital investments -- including the failed V. C. Summer Nuclear No. 2 and 3 plants. (It is V. C. Summer that has led many of us, including the League, to take a long hard look at the system for regulation of utilities in South Carolina.)

Since PURC vets candidates for the Public Service Commission (PSC), the Public Service Authority (PSA, overseeing Santee Cooper), and the Director of the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS); conducts annual evaluations of individuals and regulatory agencies; and has other planning functions in utility regulation, the message sent by PURC to regulators and the regulated industries matters a great deal. That message has been one of excessive confidence in utilities. This is what economists recognize as "regulatory capture."

In the closing moments of Senate debate on utility bills this year, one PURC member argued for the Dominion offer for SCANA as a "free market solution." It is not. Monopolies do not permit free market solutions. The Dominion offer for SCANA is a deal offered by two private companies with billions at stake for themselves a deal that unsurprisingly heavily protects shareholders at the expense of ratepayers. Our regulatory system must recognize this distinction and act accordingly.

Some progress was made in the 2018 General Assembly session. The ORS mission has been reformed for greater consumer focus, and a consumer advocate has been established in the Department of Consumer Affairs. That is only the beginning. PURC, the PSC, and the PSA require greater attention than they have received. We must also look at the need for improvements in electric co-op governance, which is democratic in principle but has degenerated too often into a self-perpetuating closed system that is profitable for board members, less so for ratepayer/owners. We need reform of all of our utility systems in ways that support public accountability and transparency. The League will continue to work towards that goal.

SCE&G/SCANA OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN & PARTICIPATE: The testimony of Dr. Mark Cooper has been prefiled: "In short, there are four bases to disallow costs, any one of which, alone, would support the finding of imprudence. Combined they present an overwhelming case for disallowance: Mismanagement of the project, Misrepresentation of the chaos in the construction process, Misunderstanding of the economic reality in the electricity sector, and Misinterpretation of the Baseload Review Act." More at <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Attachments/Matter/85d221da-dd3e-4a61-93a5-77af9ca391ce>

November 1, Thursday - Public Service Commission begins a several-week hearing on two important issues: how much SCE&G's electric rates should be rolled back permanently, and whether Dominion should be approved to acquire SCANA/SCE&G.

See also Frank Knapp, SC Small Business Chamber of Commerce: "According to the ads, Dominion promises to give the average family a check for \$1,000 as a rebate...However, this 'generous' offer is available only if the PSC approves Dominion's purchase of SCANA/SCE&G and allows the Virginia-based utility to continue charging for much of the abandoned nuclear plant construction debt. -- That's what Dominion's

multimillion-dollar marketing campaign is now about—influencing the seven Commissioners of the PSC. More at <http://www.statehousereport.com/2018/08/10/my-turn-knapp-dominions-ad-campaign-clouds-coming-psc-decision>

September 24, Monday - Public Service Commission night hearing in hearing room 1 Executive Center Dr # 100, Columbia, SC 29210. Individuals shall be permitted a maximum of three (3) minutes for oral presentations. All testimony will be given under oath and entered into the record of the case. More at <https://dms.psc.sc.gov/Attachments/Matter/67c33414-6c5e-4b5c-89ae-75ea3d59014f>

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VOTE411.org®

ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED



L to R: Keller Barron, Anne Mellen, CheChe Goldman, Elizabeth Jones, Melissa Augsburger, photographer Debbie Dickinson.

VOTE 411: LOOK FOR US ON SCIWAY! LIKE US ON FACEBOOK! The VOTE411 Committee met August 15 to plan coverage of the general election. Prior to the primaries, the site was visited by 15,000 individuals statewide and by 2600 in Richland and Lexington counties. Winning primary candidates who have not responded to the LWV questions will be solicited. Non-partisan candidates for the school boards in Richland and Lexington counties and the mayor of Lexington will be invited to respond to questions submitted to the Columbia Board for approval. Publicity events are scheduled for St. Luke’s Church, September 4; Okra Strut, September 29; Soda City, November 3. Members will be asked to distribute VOTE411 business cards and participate in a Facebook blast.

CONTRIBUTORS Many thanks to our generous donors this year. Many have given “early and often” to either or both the Educational Fund or directly to the League during our FY17-18 (as of May 1). LWV Columbia Area programs depend upon contributions. We thank you very much! Ann Maletic, Treasurer

Sharon Ayling
Barbara Beeler

Nancy Bradley
Duncan Buell

Melissa Caughman
Lesley Coggiola

Allen Coles
 Candace Coon
 Pamela Craig
 JoAnne Day
 Margaret DuBose
 Cynthia Flynn
 Sharon Fratepietro
 John Grant
 Lilla Hoefler
 Horace Holloman
 Deborah Hotchkiss
 Karen Huelson
 Sally Huguley

Sharon Jacenko
 Phyllis Jones
 Maryann McGrath
 Jane McGregor
 Ann Maletic
 Charlotte Moore
 Lucille Mould
 Elizabeth Oakman
 Jean Prothro
 Zara Rabnawaz
 James Rabon
 Suzanne Rhodes
 Janelle Rivers

Chester Sansbury
 Eve Moredock Stacey
 Laurel Suggs
 Marcia Synnott
 Vicki Vance
 Judy Thompson
 Jan Urban
 Candy Waites
 Janie White
 Joanne Williams
 Laura Wolliver

INTERN ASSISTANCE: In the spring semester of 2018 the League of the Columbia Area was aided by a USC student, **Max Grandstaff**, a senior in the Honor’s College. Max majored in economics and minored in chemistry. Max felt affinity with the League based on his awareness of the practical and foundational results the League achieved in Florida regarding fair districting.



During the spring semester Max helped the League register voters and think about ways to GOTV (get out the vote). He attended many events, including “March for Our Lives” organized by area high school students in response to the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida. With Max’s help we registered voters, discussed voter suppression issues, and networked with various fellow civic organizations.

Laura Woliver and Max Grandstaff

Max also assisted us in upgrading our social media efforts, securing items for our spring voter registration and turnout projects, and gathering public information on redistricting issues and possible reforms. Max graduated in May. We appreciated his presence, energy, insights, and enthusiasm for the LWVCA and our mission to Make Democracy Work. Max is now on the State Board. *Laura Woliver.*

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA): In response to a request for comments on NEPA, the LWV Columbia Area submitted comments in conjunction with LWVSC supporting Southern Environmental Law Center/North Carolina comments. The statement says, in part:

In these comments, we share our collective experience with the current NEPA regulations, which are working very well. We question the need for an overhaul of the regulations, and we insist that CEQ provide the data and analysis on which this proposed rulemaking is premised.

Furthermore, we explain that the current regulations have proven remarkably durable and stable because they already provide the most efficient means of implementing NEPA's statutory requirements. Changes that weaken the existing framework could only decrease efficiency over time, even ignoring the profound disruption that would be caused by discarding longstanding rules and the well-settled case law interpreting those rules.... We encourage CEQ to review the guidance documents it has issued in the past two decades—documents that directly address the same concerns animating this rulemaking—and ask why federal agencies may have failed to apply the existing regulations as intended....This rulemaking began in backroom discussions that have not been shared with the public. Without any hard data or consensus among stakeholders justifying change, it is supported only by the rhetoric of political leaders—the same leaders who refuse to adequately fund agencies to do their jobs responsibly.

Chester Sansbury also commented on the NEPA proposal, in part: "Your proposed issues for review and possible revision are extensive and complicated. The average citizen interested and involved in the NEPA process would likely find it very challenging to provide detailed comments and suggestions. Even myself, who administered State Water Programs at the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control and coordinated programs with the EPA, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the USGS for decades, find it challenging."

PLASTIC UPDATE: Plastic water bottles, bags and packaging are taking a toll on the environment, prompting consumers, governments and corporations to rethink plastic. "Whether it's used for take-out food, bottled water or household products, plastic is an ideal material; it's light, durable and cheap. Yet, the same qualities that have increased global demand for single-use plastic twentyfold since the 1960s are also taking a toll on the environment and our health. "While the world is tackling the plastic predicament, production of virgin plastic is likely to pick up before it slows down." Chester Sansbury More at https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/02/has-the-environment-reached-peak-plastic.html?sr_source=lift_sharethrough

HOW DO WE KNOW WHAT'S TRUE? Leagues in Northern California distributed information at the convention which was developed with the assistance of Google, Facebook, and others. It focuses on elections, online search, and social media. Go to: goo.gl/jxjH7v, and goo.gl/RRh558. Also from NewseumED <https://newseumed.org/stack/media-literacy-resources/>

SHORT-TERM HEALTH INSURANCE: If you or someone you know is looking for health insurance, a must-read is the 8/17/18 *Statehouse Report*: http://www.statehousereport.com/2018/08/17/8-17-full-issue-short-term-health-insurance-plans-state-surplus-joshie-the-giraffe/?utm_source=wysija&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=18_0817_issue



MEMBERS' CORNER - LEAGUE MEMBERS IN THE NEWS:

Chester Sansbury Letter to the Editor in the *Irmo News*: “As one who has been actively involved in our society through government programs, military command responsibility, national security programs, emergency preparedness programs, political activities, environmental protection and conservation efforts, and community support, I am very concerned about our current political atmosphere and the ignorant display of facts and the lack of objectivity of many of our citizens and politicians.....Blind loyalty to someone in power, regardless of political party, is not a good thing for a country or its future and there are many historical examples of this....”

Suzanne Rhodes in *Statehouse Report*: “Although the volume of liquid nuclear waste has been reduced in some of the tanks and 8 of 51 tanks have been closed at the Savannah River Site, the total volume of waste has stayed about the same during the last 40 years. When tanks, some more than 60 years old, develop cracks, the wastes are thinned to enable pumping to a level below the cracks into more dependable tanks South Carolina’s members of Congress have failed to adequately fund SRS cleanup. Rather, they are promoting huge construction projects that run over budget, are always behind schedule, and at risk of failure.” More at <http://www.statehousereport.com/2018/06/22/my-turn-rhodes-more-waste-comes-to-savannah-river-site>

Sally Huguley Note: McClatchy is now using a regional editing site in Charlotte to edit all its newspapers in North and South Carolina. There are editing mistakes. The following article is what Sally submitted. We are including the entire article rather than the usual highlights and a link because of the errors in *The State* and also because it is good, entirely in line with League policies, and relatively short:

“*The State’s* recent series documented that South Carolina is facing thousands of vacant teaching jobs and very few young people willing to fill them. Statewide, there’s been a 30 percent drop in college students seeking an education degree.

No surprise, considering South Carolina has the lowest average beginning teacher salary in the Southeast and fifth lowest nationally. Why enter a profession that might require a second job to make ends meet?

Besides low pay, our current generation grew up during 20 years of non-stop teacher bashing. As state Education Supt. Molly Spearman observed, "We've had twenty years of blame it on the teacher." Why seek a job that is the constant target of blame?

South Carolina has never considered public education a valuable commodity. Its state Constitution promises only a "minimally adequate education," and the old Sunbelt strategy of "cheap land, cheap labor" is the foundation of its economic development.

There have been some progressive years. The 1984 Education Improvement Act increased teacher salaries to the Southeastern average. Since then, however, education funding has remained a low priority.

For two decades, public schools and teachers have faced legislative cheapness and bullying by politicians, out-of-state ideologues, gambling interests and businessmen. The devaluation of public education is all our current twenty-somethings have known.

Three years before No Child Left Behind, South Carolina was among the first states to use standardized test scores to judge students, teachers and schools. The 1998 Education Accountability Act required yearly testing beginning in third grade, and school report cards based on student scores.

Soon after, researchers at Clemson University pronounced the report card system as "inherently unjust." Why? They found the new school grading system focused solely on student test scores without factoring in poverty, long considered the foremost predictor of academic performance. Without acknowledging student poverty, the mandated report cards were not only "unjust," but a foregone conclusion.

That same year, "We be gots de wurstest skools in de United State" billboards appeared along South Carolina highways. Sponsored by the burgeoning video poker industry, gambling promoters cynically suggested video poker might be a way to better fund state education.

Eventually, video poker was struck down as illegal, but by then, thousands had seen billboards proclaiming "the wurstest skools."

About the time our current young people entered kindergarten, the state began 14 years of libertarian governors, whose approach to public school funding was private school vouchers. Starting with former Gov. Mark Sanford, national school voucher organizations flocked to South Carolina with the sole purpose of diverting public tax dollars to private schools.

Funded by deep pocket out-of-state ideologues, Statehouse lobbyists quickly scared legislators into enacting a private school voucher law. Although public money was appropriated to fund school vouchers, the law required no standardized testing, no school report cards, and no teacher credentials to educate special needs children using the voucher system.

With libertarian politicians in power, similar thinking businessmen were appointed to state education and accountability boards. They pushed the "business model of education" with student

test scores as the bottom line. Dismissing education degrees and teacher experience as worthless, they recommended using test scores to determine teacher pay raises with bonuses for top scorers.

Our current generation was choosing college majors when former state School Supt. Mick Zais vigorously promoted teacher salaries based on student test scores and recommended using student scores to grade individual teachers. He denied teacher grades would be publicized, but his obvious contempt for educators hardly made him trustworthy.

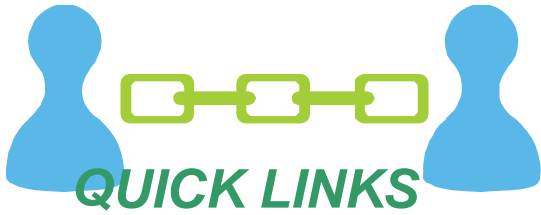
Bracketing these two decades was the 1993 *Abbeville v. South Carolina* lawsuit brought on behalf of 39 poor rural districts. The suit sought equitable school funding over the constitutional ‘minimally adequate’ standard.

For 21 years, state attorneys fought the *Abbeville* lawsuit until in 2014, the S.C. Supreme Court decided in favor of the plaintiff districts. The victory was short-lived. Last year, a legislatively-stacked state Supreme Court overturned the *Abbeville* decision.

With this history, why would any twenty-something think teaching a promising career? Plus, current gubernatorial and legislative candidates either ignore the issue of better beginning teacher pay or offer no specifics.

To attract new prison guards, salaries were raised. To attract beginning teachers, perhaps we should pay them better than prison guards.”

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Websites:

National: www.lwv.org/

State: <http://lwvsc.org/>

Columbia: www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Facebook: *To see our Facebook Page:*

1. Go to YOUR Facebook page and begin typing "**League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area**" in the search box until a list pops up.
2. Click on the name **League of Women Voters of Columbia, SC** with the familiar blue LWV Logo on the left.

That's it!


Twitter:


1. Go to YOUR Twitter account and search for the League of Women Voters Columbia Area and connect.


Facebook and Twitter email address:

@LWVColumbiaSC

* * *

 **Columbia City Council**
 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM City Hall 1737 Main Street Columbia, SC 29201
 Check website at www.columbiasc.net for more information.

 **Lexington County Council**
 Meet: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:30 PM 2nd Floor County Administration Building 212 South Lake Drive Lexington, SC 29072
 For confirmation of meeting dates, please call 785-8103 or check website www.lex-co.com

 **Richland County Council**
 Meet: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM 2nd Floor County Administration Building 2020 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29202.
 For more information, please contact the Clerk of Council Office @ (803) 576-2060 or check: www.richlandonline.com

