

League of Women Voters of Virginia  
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United States

**April 2026 Vol. 74 No. 10**

### **President's Message**

Hello all,

It was very tempting for me to make an April Fool's joke, but I resisted. Speaking of resistance – LWV Virginia was well represented at the March 28th No Kings March – and we have some pictures below.

Now that we are almost done with the General Assembly with just the April 22 Reconvene Session and the April 23 Budget Session on the agenda, we can look ahead and do some more in-depth planning.

One thing we do need is to build our social media team. We have some good members of the Youth Council doing our posts, but we can use a few more people. It is our goal to have someone do all of the necessary posts needed every month and then have someone “on call” for late breaking changes or breaking events (since that never happens these days.) Let me know if you are interested – thanks.

Finally, I just want to acknowledge National Volunteer Week that starts on April 19. We would be absolutely nothing without our volunteers as we operate almost solely on volunteer power. When I say, “thanks for all you do,” it is not just a platitude. I am deeply aware of the hours and hours of work you all put in to “register, educate and advocate” and know you are at the root of all we do....and I deeply appreciate it.

THANKS for all you do.

Joan

P.S. We have lots of great events coming up - so don't miss the section below!

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### **Another Youth Council Fundraiser - Menstrual Equity**

Thanks to our Youth Council member, Uma, we have another fundraiser underway, this for menstrual equity. Many young women cannot attend school because they lack the ability to purchase menstrual products.

We are raising money to go to Sylvia's Sisters in Richmond and the Junior League's period pantries throughout the state.

[PLEASE DONATE HERE](#)

The first Youth Council fundraiser made more than \$6000 for Virginia food banks.

Uma has also joined our Reproductive Rights Issue Group to work on an important piece of legislation. In 2020, Virginia passed a law requiring schools to provide free menstrual products but failed to fund it!

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### **No Kings!**

On Saturday, March 28, Leaguers showed up for Democracy at the third No Kings Day events.



From the **Richmond LWV**, this is (left to right) Mary Lee Clark, Paige Birch, and Heidi Silver-Pacuilla from the Voter Services Committee tabling with voter information.

In **Lynchburg**, they also provided voter registration help.



In addition, Bethany Mickles, spoke at the Lynchburg No Kings Day. You can view it [here](#).



**LWV Arlington and Alexandria City** picked the I-95 overpass favored by Bill Nye, the "Science Guy."





Above is **LWV South Hampton Roads** showing up! Evette Barton of the **LWV Staunton, Augusta County, Waynesboro** (below) reminds us of the Aristotle quote, "It is during our darkest moments that we **MUST** focus to see the light."



**LWV Washington County** members Jessica Watts, Dede Goldsmith, and Jane Hill out in Abingdon!



**LWV of the Greater Roanoke Valley** was on hand with voting materials.



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## **Lessons from Selma**

*Selma Still Speaks: Honoring the Past, Continuing the Work*

By Evette Barton, LWV-VA DEI Chair

### Opening Reflection: A Journey Rooted in Purpose

During Women's HERstory Month, I traveled with Karen Perham-Lippman and Paige Birch representing the League of Women Voters of Virginia at the 61st Selma Bridge Crossing Jubilee.

We stood on ground embodying sacrifice, courage, and the pursuit of justice. Selma is more than a place—its experience endures.

### The Legacy of Selma

The Jubilee commemorates Bloody Sunday and the Selma-to-Montgomery marches—pivotal events that exposed voter suppression and led to the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, removing barriers that had long denied Black Americans the right to vote.

Being in Selma makes history feel present and powerful today.

### The League's Mission in Action

Serving as LWV-VA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Chair, I found this experience aligned closely with our mission. The League stands at the intersection of democracy and access—ensuring every voice is heard, and every vote counts. In Selma, our mission came alive.

### A Defining Question: What Is Your Selma Moment?

Amid these experiences, a profound question challenged us as advocates.

During the Jubilee weekend, we were asked: What is your Selma moment?

The question stayed with me.

The Jubilee coincided with International Women's Day. After crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge, we gathered at Foot Soldiers Park near the memorial honoring Amelia Boynton Robinson and Marie Foster, two leaders of the voting rights movement.

Surrounded by legacy, I felt clarity and a sense of belonging.

### Reflections from the Bridge

My Selma moment was not just crossing the bridge, but recognizing its responsibility.

Karen's reflection deepened that understanding. She shared:

“During the Jubilee, someone asked, ‘What is your Selma moment?’ After crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge, my Selma moment came when we gathered at Foot Soldiers Park, where one of the memorials honors Amelia Boynton Robinson and Marie Foster. I knew I was exactly where I needed to be.

The foot soldiers did not cross that bridge alone. They crossed it in coalition and in community. That is how we will continue their work in the times ahead—we will do it together.”

Paige reflected on the experience as a newer member, sharing:

“As a new member, attending the 61st Jubilee was truly inspiring and meaningful. The knowledge gained and the friendships formed were invaluable. I am deeply honored to have witnessed this powerful tribute and the role it played in the Civil Rights Movement.”

These reflections reminded us: our mission outlives us, continuing through each contribution.

### Where We Are Today

National leaders and civil rights advocates addressed current voting access.

While we honor the victories of 1965, we must also acknowledge the continuing barriers to voting.

The message was unmistakable:

And the League of Women Voters remains a critical part of that fight.

### Empowering Voters Through Action

Seeing the League present in Selma reinforced our legacy of education, advocacy, and empowerment. Through VOTE411, we

equip voters with nonpartisan information to actively participate in our democracy. This builds stronger, more informed communities.

### Connecting Selma to Virginia

Reflecting on this experience, I am reminded how directly Selma connects to the work we are doing here in Virginia.

Through the LWV-VA DEI Committee, we are centering inclusion—developing a statewide DEI Toolkit, expanding outreach, and creating space for all communities in the democratic process.

Through the launch of our LWV-SAW unit, we are building grassroots connections and engaging new voters across Staunton, Augusta, and Waynesboro.

This is how we continue the work.

#### A Call to Lead

Selma calls us to act.

It calls us to be present.

It calls us to act intentionally.

It calls us to lead with purpose.

My Selma moment is this:

I choose to continue with purpose, courage, and commitment—educating, engaging, and advocating.

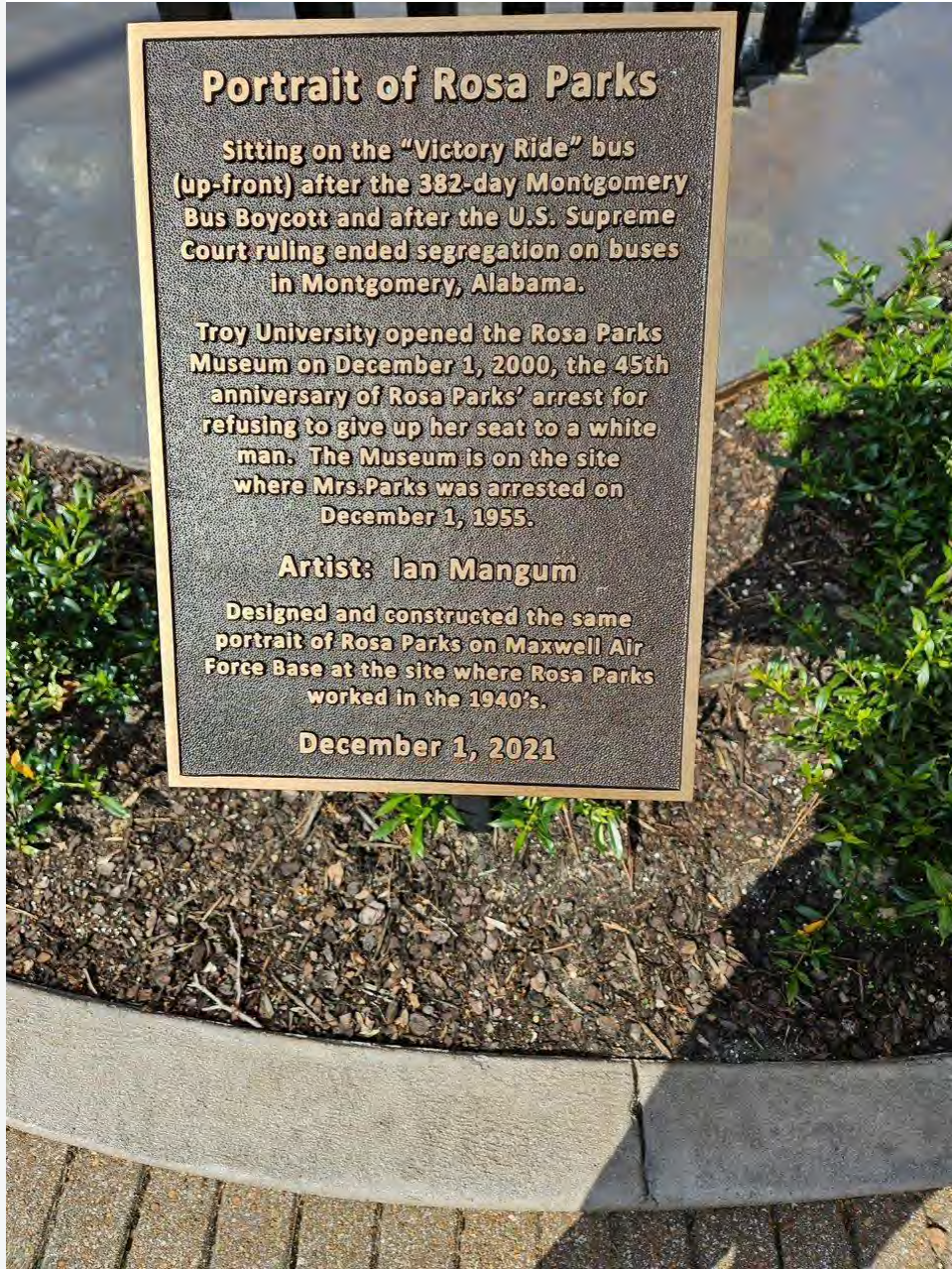


LWV VA Team with LWV US President Dianna Wynn at the Edmund Pettis Bridge. From left, Paige Birch, LWV Richmond Metro., President Wynn, Karen Perham-Lippman, LWV South Hampton Roads, Evette Barton, LWV Staunton, Augusta County and Waynesboro and Chair of LWV VA DEI Committee. More scenes below.









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**This Photo Says It All**



We put a photo in last time but failed to give context. The people in the circle in this screenshot from the "Rachel Maddow Show" are members of LWV Richmond Metro speaking out against an ICE concentration camp in Hanover County. The facility was defeated.

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## **LWV VA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee Representation Matters: A More Inclusive Virginia General Assembly**

*Carolyn Caywood*

Virginia's General Assembly continues to make meaningful strides in representation, with **57 women** now serving across both chambers and **49 legislators identifying as something other than white** bringing a wider range of lived experiences into the policymaking process. The **House of Delegates** includes **42 women** and a growing number of members from Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian, and other diverse backgrounds.

The **Senate of Virginia** includes **15 women** and **10 members of color**. This expanding diversity-across gender, race, ethnicity, and religious affiliation-strengthens our democracy by ensuring that more Virginians see themselves reflected in their government and that policy decisions are informed by a broader spectrum of perspectives. The League of Women Voters of Virginia remains committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion so that our democracy works for everyone.

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### **Governor Spanberger Returns Virginia to ERIC: The Electronic Registration and Information Center**

LWV Virginia applauds Governor Spanberger for returning us to ERIC.

Read the [Executive Order Here](#)

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### **EVENTS**

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#### **LWVCO's Position on Religious Freedom and the Threat of Religious Nationalism: A Presentation: April 9**

The League of Women Voters of Colorado recently passed a position on the threat of religious nationalism in the United States. LWVCO is asking local and state Leagues to urge the LWVUS to adopt this position by concurrence at the 2026 LWVUS Convention in June.

The LWV-VA Board voted to hold an educational session **on Thursday, April 9th from 6 to 7pm to hear a summary of the LWVCO study and subsequent position. You can register for this session ([here](#)).**

The goals of the LWVCO study were:

To describe the history of the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, noting the importance of the steps taken in our country's history to ensure and enshrine secular governance and free exercise of all religions.

To describe how contemporary religious nationalism may threaten the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment.

To articulate the proposed position statement of LWVCO related to current challenges to the Establishment and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment.

The April 9th session will be presented by Jeff Oster, LWVCO Study Committee Chair. The full study can be viewed [here](#).

For questions, contact Alice Tousignant, Program Chair, [here](#).

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### **LWV DC Special Presentation and Movie: "The Last Battlefield" April 16**

Join the Washington DC LWV at the movies on **April 16 at 6:30 pm** to watch "The Last Battlefield," concerning the struggle for DC Statehood. To register, click [here](#).

There will be a discussion of DC Statehood by members of LWV DC as well.

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### **Special Election April 21**

There is a special election on April 21. The question on the ballot is :  
"Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to allow the General Assembly to temporarily adopt new congressional districts to restore fairness in the upcoming elections, while ensuring Virginia's

standard redistricting process resumes for all future redistricting after the 2030 census?”

To find out voting information go to [this link](#).

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## Silent Witness: Enslavement in Lynchburg

### Challenges to Voting Rights

**Wednesday, April 22, 2026 @ 7:00 PM**

A virtual program that lets us examine our past. Join us to learn of the history of enslavement in Lynchburg. Register [here](#).

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
League of Women Voters of Virginia  
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

**SILENT WITNESSES**



# Silent Witnesses

## Documenting the History of Enslavement in Lynchburg


### Zoom Presentation • April 22 • 7:00 PM


Hosted by LWV-VA Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Committee

Exploring the Silent Witnesses public history project preserving sites connected to the enslaved experience in Lynchburg, Virginia.

**Ramona Battle David Neumeyer**

  
bit.ly/41h7x2t

  
Learn more about LWV-VA

Scan left QR code or visit link to register to attend. Scan middle QR code for LWV-VA info.

**Rescheduled "Challenges and Controversies in Voting Rights**

**May 6, 7 - 8 PM.** This was rescheduled due to technical difficulties.

[RSVP](#)

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LWV-VA DEI Women's Webinar Series

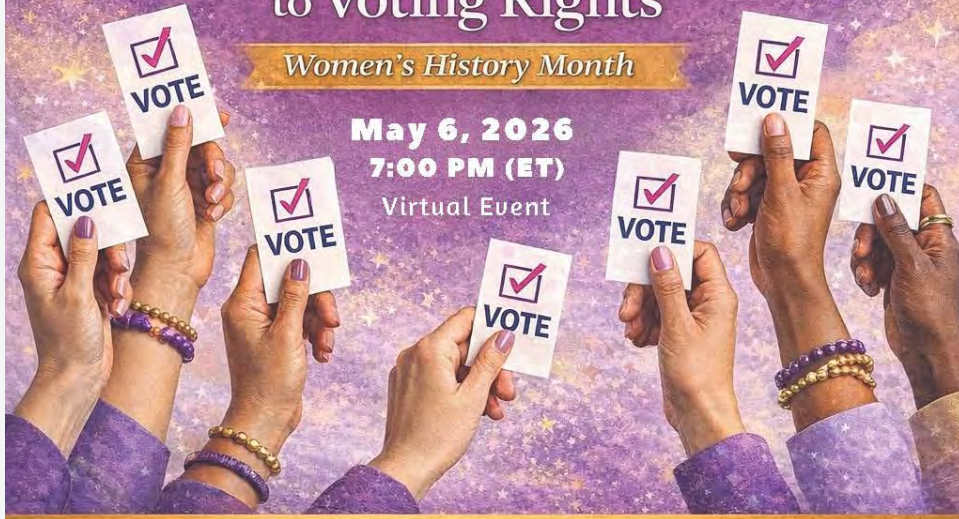
# Challenges & Controversies to Voting Rights

Women's History Month

May 6, 2026

7:00 PM (ET)

Virtual Event



Join us for an important conversation on  
the evolving challenges to voting rights in United States.

This webinar will feature a nationally respected political scientist and voting rights advocate with more than two decades of experience examining the intersections of democracy, race, gender, and public policy. ★★☆☆

Our guest brings deep expertise in conflict resolution, civic engagement, and voter access issues. ★★☆☆

✓ Registration Required • All Are Welcome

League of Women Voters of Virginia  
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Committee

To register & attend, Scan QR code  
or visit link: [bit.ly/4ILSAiA](https://bit.ly/4ILSAiA)



Repro Rights Kick Off, May 16

Our push to educate the public on the Reproductive Rights Constitutional Amendment kicks off on **May 16 in Richmond at 12p.**

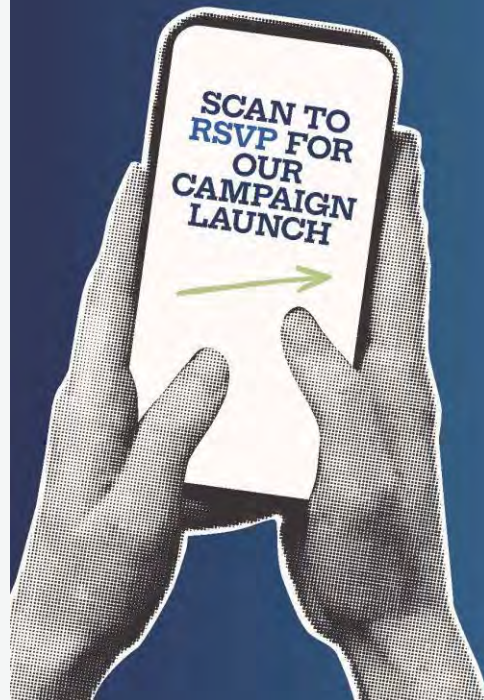
Use the QR code below to register - more details will follow.

Let's get this across the goal line in November!!

VIRGINIANS FOR REPRODUCTIVE FREEDOM • CAMPAIGN LAUNCH

# JOIN US MAY 16

Richmond, Virginia  
12:00pm  
RSVP for more details!



[TINYURL.COM/LWVREPRO](https://tinyurl.com/LWVREPRO)

**BE A PART OF HISTORY.**

*The campaign to put reproductive freedom in Virginia's Constitution is beginning.*



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LWV-Loudoun is hosting Lindsey Cormack



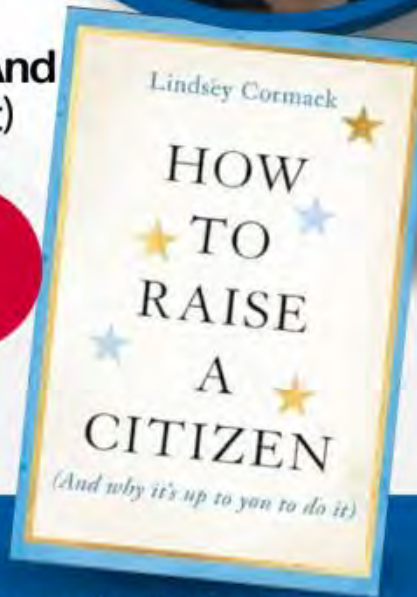
*Presents*  
**LINDSEY  
CORMACK**

**How to Raise a Citizen (And  
why it's up to you to do it)**

**Saturday, May 16, 2026, 2 pm  
Ashburn Library  
43316 Hay Rd, Ashburn**

Parenting is hard.  
Raising a citizen is *heroic*.  
Get the toolkit.

<https://www.lwvloudoun.org/how-to-raise-a-citizen>



How to talk with kids about politics  
and government in the United States

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LWV US NEWS

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## **To Protect Democracy, We Must Protect Voting Access for Women**

Click [here](#) to read this article, originally published in *Time*.

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## **Federal Immigration Enforcement Kit**

LWV US has a kit to help Leagues take action when ICE and Border Patrol folks are present. Please note that the law varies state to state. You can access the kit [here](#).

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## **LWV-VA NEWS**

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### **Fund Schools, Not Data Centers**

LWV VA joined fellow members of Fund Our Schools, to support removing tax exemptions for data centers to use that money for needed social services.

[Read the letter here.](#)

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## **LOCAL LEAGUES**

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### **Meet Team Young Voter**



For the last few years the League of Women Voters South Hampton Roads (LWVSHR) has been presenting voting information to graphic arts students at Tidewater Community College (Norfolk Campus.) The students then create posters encouraging their peers to VOTE, and their professor organizes an exhibit of their artwork on campus.

**Team Young Voter** - students from TCC who are now LWVSHR members - will present an exhibit of their original student VOTE posters at:

Zeiders American Dream Theater

Fringe Festival

**April 10 - 12, 2026**

**Virginia Beach Town Center**

4509 Commerce Street

Virginia Beach, VA

LWVSHR mentors and other League volunteers will assist the students with handing out voter information, including student designed stickers and business cards.

To get into the Fringe Festival to see the exhibit, you'll need to buy a Fringe Festival ticket. If you've never been to a Fringe Festival, it will be a cornucopia of talent and entertainment! Passes are available for single shows, single days or the entire Festival!

Find out more about Zeiders American Dream Theater's 2026 Fringe Festival [here](#)

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### **Williamsburg League in the News**

LWV of the Williamsburg area, was featured in the “Virginia Gazette” for their very successful “Great Decisions” weekly lecture program.

SEAMLESS, ... visit  
LEAD ...  
tv-hs.org for future  
events. DIANE FREEMAN



## League of Women Voters-Williamsburg Area

Great Decisions Co-Chair Abra Smith, Sudie Watkins, who coordinates Zoom, and Rich Watkins, who introduces the speakers, line up for treats at one of the weekly lecture series sessions hosted by the League of Women Voters-Williamsburg Area. The lecture series has been setting attendance records. "I don't know if it's the state of the world driving interest in foreign policy, the ease of parking at our new location, or the good refreshments," said Co-Chair Dennis Litallen, "but we've been getting a good crowd every week, both in person and on Zoom." **BECKY SIPOS**

St. Andrew's ...

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**LWV-Loudoun County Galentine's Day**



Connection, conversation, and civic engagement made our Galentine's Day Social one to remember!

On Friday, February 20, members and friends of the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County gathered to sip, connect, and celebrate community. As we chatted and met new friends, we also discovered how many shared “people” connections we have across Loudoun.

Of course, it wouldn't be a League gathering without a little democracy in the mix. Throughout the evening, we exchanged voting information about the upcoming Virginia April 21, 2026 Special Election and even had the chance to share voting details with curious passersby who stopped to learn more.

Friendship, fellowship, and informed voters—just the way we like it.

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### **April 2026 Calendar**

National Child Abuse Prevention Month

Sexual Assault Awareness Month

National Volunteer Week April 19 -25

April 11-17 Black Maternal Health Week

April 17 – World Health Day

April 22 – Earth Day

April 22 - General Assembly Reconvene Session

April 23 - General Assembly Special Budget Session

April 25 - Barbara Jones Day

[unsubscribe](#)

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