

The logo for the League of Women Voters of Virginia. It features the letters "LWV" in a large, bold, blue serif font. To the right of "LWV", the words "LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS" are stacked above "OF VIRGINIA" in a smaller, blue, sans-serif font. A red brushstroke underline is positioned beneath the "LWV" letters. The background of the logo is a faded image of a classical building with white columns.

LWV LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA

The Virginia Voter

100+ Years Strong

League of Women Voters of Virginia
1011 E. Main Street
Suite 214A
Richmond, VA 23219
United States

May 2026 Vol. 74 No. 11

President's Message

Happy June.

I am so happy to announce that we have a new State unit! It is called LWV of Central Virginia and is reconstituted out of the old LWV Lynchburg League with a much broader reach including the counties of Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell. We are so happy to be expanding into more rural areas. If you know friends in those areas please encourage them to join this unit - the QR code is below.

Thanks for all you do.

Joan



Nominating Committee Looking for Members to Join the State Board!

This is your chance to make a difference and help shape the focus of our state League.

Other than two meetings which are held in person (one in NoVa and one in Richmond) all board meetings are held over Zoom.

We are looking for

Officers:

President (we are also open to appointing co-presidents)

VPs

First VP

Second VP

Treasurer

Secretary

And six directors - voter services, program, advocacy, membership, communications/social media/ event planning. We would like to have a youth council person representative. We would love to have someone who is interested in development /fundraising. New

nominating committee chair and 2 members of Nominating committee.

Please consider putting your name into contention. You can recommend someone if you have their permission. Email [here](#).

We need you!

If You are Seeking Guardianship for Someone: Know the Law Has Changed

If you are seeking guardianship for someone, they cannot be automatically be stripped of their voting rights. We are proud of the work of the League of Women Voters of Virginia in assisting in the passage of this legislation and thank Senator Barbara Favola for being the champion of this bill.

See this [FLYER for more information](#).

We Need Your Video Submissions "What Does Freedom Mean to You?"



★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ AMERICA ★
250th
ANNIVERSARY
1776 ★ 2026

WHAT DOES FREEDOM MEAN TO ME?



Your Voice, Our History.

The LWV-VA DEI Committee invites League members and non-members across Virginia to participate in a special video project. We are asking you to submit a short **15–30 second** video reflection answering one simple question:

★ — *“What does freedom mean to me?”* — ★

Your voice will help amplify diverse perspectives from across Virginia and showcase the power of civic engagement, democracy, and community through authentic storytelling.

VIDEO RECORDING TIPS FOR THE BEST QUALITY

RECORD VERTICALLY Best for social media (Instagram Reels, TikTok, Facebook Stories, and more).	USE NATURAL LIGHT Face a window or bright light source whenever possible.	EYE LEVEL Please avoid holding the phone below your face.	LOOK DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA Pretend you are speaking to one person.	SPEAK SLOWLY AND NATURALLY Authentic is always better than perfect.	RECORD IN A QUIET SPACE Avoid TVs, fans, traffic noise, or echoing rooms.	KEEP IT SHORT Aim for 15–30 seconds of clear, focused video.	KEEP IT SHOPLE Wear solid colors and avoid busy patterns.	BE YOURSELF Warmth and sincerity matter on camera.



VIDEO POSTS
JUNE 6, 13, 20, 27



DEADLINE
JUNE 26, 2026



SEND YOUR VIDEO TO
LWVVAFreedom250@gmail.com



FINAL PROJECT
JULY 4TH, 2026



Voting While Trans

- Carolyn Caywood - LWV South Hampton Roads and member of LWV VA DEI Committee

June is Pride Month.

The 1969 Stonewall uprising occurred on the last few days of June. Believe me, people tabling at Pride events in the South wish they'd picked a different month, but history rarely follows our preferred schedule. If your League has never participated in a Pride event, find out what is happening locally and how you can be involved. They are joyous and very colorful events that can benefit from voter information.

A particular aspect of voting where the League can be helpful is the issue of identification. For transgender people, legal transition is often expensive, and transgender people are frequently under or unemployed and may be homeless. The medical care that helps a trans person look the gender they know themselves to be is also expensive and these days may not be covered by any kind of insurance or public health program. That adds up to a lot of anxiety about showing identification which may predate transition.

Additionally, because cross dressing has been treated as a crime in some places and because coping with the stresses of societal rejection can result in addiction, a trans person may have a criminal record. I hope that by the time you read this we will know how the state is dealing with those convictions that are no longer a bar to voting. In any case, be sure to have Restoration of Rights forms available when you do voter registration.

Fortunately, Virginia has come a long way toward making voting accessible for people who are transitioning or non-binary. But some transgender people may still remember how things used to be.

Share the list of acceptable IDs and point out the option of signing an ID confirmation statement. If a person is already registered, explain the option of voting absentee. Make sure they see that Gender on the registration form is a blank, so they are not forced to choose M or F. The asterisk indicates that the Gender question needs to be answered. That being said, by regulatory law (1VAC20-40-70), the gender question is not considered material, so (unlike other questions on the form with an asterisk) leaving it blank will not disqualify the application. Officers of Elections are not supposed to be policing gender.

Young people may be especially wary. In 2020 they were encouraged to be their authentic selves at school. A couple of years later, policies were changed to make it difficult to be openly transgender in school and worse, those who had come out trusting the prior policy felt entrapped. You will need to be gentle and empathetic with their experience of government betrayal. It's worth your extra effort as we need this greatly marginalized group to have a political voice.

Advocates for Trans Equality (A4TE) has a guide [Voting while Trans: Preparing for Voter ID Laws](#) which is national in scope but may be helpful to you and to the trans people you seek to register.

Youth Council Fundraiser for Menstrual Products

Keep Girls in School Even if They Can't Afford Period Products

Uma Raju

A student-proposed period product fundraiser will take place this spring to address period poverty across Virginia. The initiative plans to raise funds for nonprofit organizations serving the Greater Richmond area, Fredericksburg, Northern Virginia, and other regions by providing access to menstrual care.

Menstrual products are often overlooked as a fundamental necessity, and period poverty runs rampant in areas where accessing even basic resources is a struggle. This disproportionately impacts women and girls across Virginia. With 1 out of 7 Virginian girls living below the poverty line, these expensive and scarce products are nearly inaccessible in schools and the workforce.

Studies have shown that a lack of period products leads to chronic absenteeism, where menstruators can miss up to a week of school every month, deeply inhibiting their education. Women in the workforce face barriers as well, as missing shifts due to a lack of

period supplies makes them more vulnerable to job loss. Period poverty has displayed itself as a consistent barrier to equality, as 50% of the population lacks access to essentials.

Period poverty is a widely stigmatized issue, but it must not be neglected. By supporting this effort, participants can help promote health, dignity, and, most importantly, equal opportunity for women and girls in school and the workforce. Even small contributions can make an extremely meaningful impact on a person's life.

NOTE: Virginia has a law that requires school districts to provide period products, but it has never been funded! We will be advocating for funding in 2027.

In the meantime, please make your tax-deductible donation [HERE](#).

Thank you.

Ginny DeSimone



It is with great sadness that the LWV-VA hears of the death of former LWV-VA President Ginny DeSimone. Read more [here](#).

EVENTS

Last Call for LWV VA Council June 6

LWV VA Council will be held virtually on June 6, 2026, from 9 A – 12 P. After a brief plenary from 9a – 9:30 AM we will then hold training for any LWV VA member who is interested. Please only sign up as a

delegate if informed by your local President or unit leader. However, anyone can sign up as a guest to attend training.

9:00 AM - Plenary Begins - budget review

9:30 AM - "How to Motivate Members" conducted by Nile Blass, LWV US organizer

10:30 AM - Break

10:45 - 11:45 AM – “Best Practices for Optimum League Operation,” by me.

Again, anyone who is interested can attend but please use the line marked “guest” if coming for training only.

[RSVP here](#)

Diversity is Disability - Sept 14

Having a disability is the one minority that anyone can join. And yet, people with disabilities have faced many barriers to voting. September 14-18 is Disability Voting Rights Week.

On Monday, September 14, 7pm, the LWV-VA DEI Committee will host a webinar focusing on how we can ensure that people with a disability can exercise their right to vote and build power as a community of active, voting citizens.

Lucy Beadnell is the Chief Advocacy and Policy Officer of the ARC of Northern Virginia. Nichole Davis is the Director of the Endependence Center, the Center for Independent Living serving South Hampton Roads. They are both members of REVUP Virginia, a coalition of

people and organizations that work to protect and expand voting rights for people with disabilities.

This Webinar is one of a series LWV-VA DEI Committee is hosting on aspects of diversity and civic participation.

[RSVP](#)

Calling All Librarians, or Library Friendly Leaguers For the American Library Association Convention - Oct 2026

As we have for the past two years, we are being asked to exhibit at the Virginia Library Association Annual Conference which will be held **Oct 18 - 20, 2026 at the Norfolk Hilton Hotel, Norfolk.**

We happen to have several librarians in the South Hampton Roads League but this is a long, busy conference so we need more people to take shifts staffing the table.

You don't have to be a librarian, of course, but want to have the joy of interacting with these really smart, tough people who join is in our desire to protect free speech and the freedom of thought. If you are in the area and can take a shift please contact Joan.

Thanks

Voter Registration Training

The Department of Elections has several teacher-led trainings available this summer. All League members who do voter registration need to take this training. (Check with your local league to see if they need voter registration forms offered when you complete the class.) These are better than the on-line course because you can ask

questions of the teacher. RSVP [here](#) for the class of your choice. You will find classes under Section B

Wednesday, July 1, 2026 at 7 PM:

Saturday, July 11, 2026 at 10 AM:

Thursday, August 13, 2026 at 2 PM:

Saturday, September 12, 2026 at 10 AM:

Tuesday, October 6, 2026 at 11 AM:

Member Portal Training

Member Portal Training

A lot has changed since the launch of the LWV Member Portal on February 1, 2025 and a lot has changed since portal training was offered in 2024. LWV is offering a three-part training series on May 28, June 4, and June 11 at 4–5 pm ET for League leaders (new and old). Member registration is required!

The Membership Chair/Roster Manager training will cover joining and renewing, as well as navigating the LWV portal and updating the roster. This webinar is helpful for roster managers, membership chairs, and any leader who wants more guidance on using the portal. Click [here](#) to register.

The Treasurer training will cover Stripe, offline payments, League-paid dues, the new Finances screen, the process of making Leagues whole, and the remainder of the PMP cycle. This training is open to any League leader, particularly those who deal with finances. Click [here](#) to register.

The Optional Portal Tools training will focus on using the email tool and the website editor within the portal. This tutorial is for Leagues that are using or considering using the portal emailer or website editor. Click [HERE](#) to register.

**Save the Date: June 4 - 6, 2027 LWV VA Convention - Roanoke
Virginia Theme: Democracy in Full Color**

LWV US NEWS

The SAVE Act is Spent (for now)

The SAVE Act is no longer pending business in the Senate! This is a victory for voters everywhere. LWVUS has launched a new action alert to thank Senators for standing against the bill next week. You can use this [action alert](#) to thank your Senators for opposing it. Please note that if neither Senator from your state opposed the SAVE Act, the action alert will return a message stating that there are no eligible members of Congress for you to contact. We will remain on alert if the bill is brought back to the floor, but for now we are celebrating!

Democracy's Urgent Call" A Poetry Anthology by League Members

A beautiful anthology of poems written by members of LWV - including our own Evette Barton of LWV Virginia - compiled by members of LWV Wisconsin is for sale.

We are taking pre-orders - and will order the books only if we get 50 pre-orders since we have to buy in bulk, Please order by July 1 using this [form](#).

Books are \$18 plus \$6 shipping

MESSAGE FROM CO-CREATORS, CHRISTY SCHWAN & ELOISA GÓMEZ

This anthology celebrates our country's 250th birthday during a time of unparalleled threats to our Constitution and our Democracy. It's a time to remember, reflect and recommit—a time to hope, dream and build—a time to show up, stand solid, and lead with strong voices that cannot be silenced.

As poets, authors, and members of the League of Women Voters, we recognize the power of language to connect people—to stir hearts and minds, and to reaffirm the enduring promise of Democracy. Through poetry, we aim to illuminate its beauty, its fragility, and its strength—at a time when we can no longer afford to take its core principles for granted.

One way we express our love of country and Democracy is by lifting our voices together. Inspired by artist Niki Johnson's series "Pillars of Democracy," this national poetry anthology features poems by League members from across the country. Thank you to all of the contributing poets—your words challenge us, ground us, and carry us forward.

VIEW "PILLARS OF DEMOCRACY" AT: WWW.NIKIJOHNSON.COM



ISBN 978-0-210-91540-7



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**DEMOCRACY'S
URGENT CALL** | A Poetry Anthology
by LWV Members

LWV-VA NEWS

LWV Virginia Statement on Governor Spanberger's Vetoes of Several Voting and Elections Bills

The League of Women Voters of Virginia is dismayed that Governor Abigail Spanberger vetoed important voting and elections bills including one to protect naturalized citizens at the polls and immigrants at schools, hospitals and our courts.

HB650 and companion bill SB351 would have provided naturalized citizens safety at the polls and members of the immigrant community safety in courthouses, schools and hospitals. By prohibiting ICE activities at courthouses, within 40 feet of any polling place or building used as a meeting place for the local electoral board while ascertaining the results of an election, any state-run hospital or other health care facility, or state-run schools, people already under duress (which includes our elections workers) would

have received a modicum of relief. While we understand an executive order is coming, we do not understand why this legislation, which has the power of law, was vetoed.

In addition, HB 111, which set strict limits as to how and by whom voters could be removed from the voting rolls, was another important protection at a time when voter purges are on the rise. It is imperative that voters are protected and the League regrets that the Governor chose to remove this additional safety valve. While we are grateful that the Governor signed a similar bill, HB 972, these two bills could have worked together to provide important protections to voters when most needed.

The final vetoed bill, HB 639, would have removed some of the more onerous parts of legislation passed in 2022 that set outrageously strict limits on contributions and limits cooperation with election officials on voter education programs. This bill would have set a limit of \$1000 (similar to a Georgia bill that has a limit of \$500). It was a commonsense fix to an insidious problem.

The Governor's actions are a profound disappointment, but the League will do what we have always done: persist.

May Rally for Reproductive Rights

Leaguers from around the Commonwealth came to Richmond to say OBOC (Our Bodies, Our Choice) in support of a proposed constitutional amendment securing reproductive rights.





Later, at the Virginia Women's Monument...



Pat Hyer with the Montgomery County LWW, standing with Mary Draper Ingles. Mary Draper Ingles was an American pioneer and early settler of western Virginia. In the summer of 1755, she and her two young sons were among several captives taken by Shawnee after the Draper's Meadow Massacre during the French and Indian War. Ingles escaped with another woman after two and a half months and trekked 500 to 600 miles, crossing numerous rivers, creeks, and the Appalachian Mountains to return home. Statue of Mary Draper Ingles is included in the Virginia Women's Monument.

Voter Reg at the Pow Wow

Thanks to our team headed by LWW VA membership chair, Donnie Carson, we attended for the first time, the Powwow of the Upper Mattaponi tribe!



LOCAL LEAGUES

Fairfax Area League Wins George Mason University Jack Wood Award



Each year, the George Mason University Office of Government and Community Relations presents the Jack Wood Award for Town-Gown Relations, honoring the memory of Jack Wood, a former mayor of the City of Fairfax. Among the 2026 honorees was Arina van Breda, representing the LWVFA's voter registration outreach at GMU.

Per the award presentation this week, "*The **Fairfax League of Women Voters' Arina Van Breda** has been a steadfast partner in strengthening voter engagement across the George Mason University community. Arina serves as a trusted resource on voter registration and election rules, offering training and guidance to students, faculty, and staff. She also plays a pivotal role in maintaining strong connections with the Fairfax County and City of Fairfax offices of elections. Her commitment to student participation is unmistakable. From attending Mason's Convocation to register new students to hand-delivering last-minute forms to ensure voting rights are*

protected, Arina consistently goes above and beyond to support the university's civic engagement efforts.

These Posters Rock

Fringe Fest is a theatre arts festival in Virginia Beach held April 10-12. **LWV of South Hampton Roads** has been working with 2 Tidewater Community College students from a graphic arts class. They have made presentations to the class to prepare them to make posters that would engage young voters. Two of the students created some materials used in the displays. So, this was our display from the festival.



Vote Like a Girl

LWV of Falls Church City brought voter information to the city's celebration of Women's History Month.



Celebrating 250; Defending Democracy



The LWV of Arlington and Alexandria City helped celebrate our country's 250 years by defending democracy, one new voter at a time.



LWV SAW

The LWV Staunton, Augusta County and Waynesboro attended a Community Gathering at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Waynesboro. Unit leader and LWV VA DEI Director, Evette Barton spoke about how diversity acknowledges who is in our communities, equity ensures fair access to civic participation, and inclusion creates spaces where every voice can be heard. She underscored that barriers to voting—whether related to

transportation, documentation, disability access, or language—are DEI issues because they determine who can meaningfully participate in democracy.

June 2026 Calendar

LGBTQ Pride Month

June 2- Anniversary of the Indian Citizenship Act *

June 14 – Flag Day

June 19 – Juneteenth

*On June 2, 1924, President Calvin Coolidge signed the [Indian Citizenship Act](#) (also known as the Snyder Act), granting full U.S. citizenship to all Native Americans born in the United States without requiring them to give up tribal land or rights. While it marked a major milestone, it did not guarantee voting rights, as many states continued to restrict Native suffrage until 1957.

[unsubscribe](#)
