



The Virginia Voter

100+ Years Strong

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

September 2026 Vol. 75 No. 3

President's Message

As we get closer to election season, it is important that we all amplify League social media messages. This is one way that we can get pertinent election information out as well as alert people to polling place changes – and mis and dis information that will surely increase.

Whether you are on X, Facebook, Threads, BlueSky, Instagram, please follow your local league, the Virginia League, LWV US and even other local Virginia leagues to amplify their messages.

Don't forget to follow LWV Virginia's YouTube page. We have all of the WLRTs, Pre-Session and training sessions there, not to mention our Youth Council Podcast, "DemocraZy." **(BE SURE TO READ BELOW -**

The front page article on the "Richmond Times Dispatch" on the Podcast!!!)

Thanks for all you do.

Joan

September is National Disability Month

Carolyn Caywood - LWV DEI Committee

Roughly one in four adult Virginians have a disability. Some disabilities are visible and some are not. People living with a disability are one of our largest minority groups and one that you or anyone can join at any time. The League's DEI lens reminds us that diversity includes disability and that disabilities are intersectional with other kinds of diversity. These are facts we need to remember as we register voters, promote voting, and protect voting rights.

Disability Voting Rights Week was created by the American Association of People with Disabilities and its [REV UP](#) initiative. REV UP stands for Register, Educate, Vote, Use your Power and there are now state coalitions around the country. REV UP Virginia launched in 2021, and the League of Women Voters quickly became part of the coalition. During [Disabilities Voting Rights Week](#), September 14-18 in 2026, and really all month, there will be voter registration and education events, local proclamations, editorials and op-eds.

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reestablished.” This narrower definition will prevent disenfranchising someone simply because they have a guardian. One more reason to vote YES!

National Voter Registration Day

Janet Boyd, LWV VA Voter Services Chair

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Jackie Rivas at the Arlington & Alexandria City League has created a tiny booklet (called a zine) explaining the 3 amendments. These are very popular at voter registration events--they're short, easy to comprehend, and fit right into your pocket. They print as a one-pager, which then needs to be folded and cut to form the zine. Let the [Arlington League Voter Service](#) folks know if you'd like a copy of the file and a tutorial in how to turn it into a zine.



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Use [this signup sheet](#) and be sure to check off that you got this from a VCET partner and put our name in the next line so they know how many signups came from the League.

EVENTS

Disability Voting Rights - Sept 14



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA

LWV-VA DEI COMMITTEE
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

SAVE THE DATE!

DIVERSITY INCLUDES DISABILITY



EMPOWERING EVERY VOTER, EVERY VOICE.



WEBINAR DATE
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14
7:00 PM



DISABILITY VOTING RIGHTS WEEK
SEPTEMBER 14-18



A webinar focusing on how we can ensure people with a disability can exercise their right to vote and build power as a community.



FEATURED SPEAKERS

★ Lucy Beadnell
ARC of Northern Virginia

★ Nichole Davis
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PLUS:
Members of
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REGISTER HERE



EDUCATE ★ EMPOWER ★ ENGAGE



lww-va.org

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ICE Arrests and Deportations

ICE Issue Group

Did You Know ... that nation-wide, ICE agents arrested 51,000 people in July? That 590,600 people have been deported since January 2025? How did we get here?

In her new book, *Undue Process*, Julia Ainsley, NBC News' Senior Homeland Security Correspondent, devotes a chapter to answering that question. The first drivers are global-political instability, gang violence, and famine caused by climate change and combined with an increasingly connected world through smart phones and social media. All this created 110 million refugees who were on the move by 2023, the highest number of displaced people globally since World War II.

In 1996, legislation under Clinton increased punishment for border crossing; later under the Bush administration, local law enforcement was allowed to share immigrants' information with the federal government. Then the 9/11 terrorist attack yielded a dramatic increase in the size and funding of the Departments of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

By 2013, the Obama administration had deported more than 430,000 people, and the President was being condemned as the "deporter-in-chief." What was once a political liability for Obama became a winning campaign issue for Trump. The first Trump administration launched a travel, aka "Muslim ban," family separation policies, and the Remain in Mexico program. Still, the numbers surged until Covid-19 brought a public health order that closed the border. After Covid, that surge returned and grew under Biden. The administration rescinded some Trump policies, allowed unaccompanied minors to enter, constructed tent shelters for children, and tried to match children with adult sponsors. Ultimately, more than ten million people crossed the border illegally under Biden's administration, breaking previous records.

In all, Ainsley concludes, "layers of bad policies and in some cases neglect of the issue by multiple administrations has left our immigration system unable to respond to global realities."

The ICE Network Issue Group is building a database of the locations in Virginia. We have just begun. You can sign up for issue groups on the website [here](#).

Department of Elections To Inform Newly Enfranchised Voters of Their Right to Vote

After conversations between the Campaign Legal Center, on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Virginia and Bridging the Gap in Virginia and the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT), an agreement has been reached in which ELECT will contact the almost 200,000 recently re-enfranchised voters in Virginia in advance of the upcoming November elections.

This action comes after a court decision in the case brought by the ACLU Virginia, Protect Democracy and WilmerHale challenging felony disenfranchisements based on the 1870 Virginia Readmission Act, entitled King v. O'Bannon. The January decision in King v. O'Bannon held Virginia may only deny the right to vote for a subset of felony convictions that were common law felonies in 1870. Before the decision, Virginia stripped people of the right to vote for all felony convictions.

The League is grateful to the ongoing work of the Campaign Legal Center assuring that all people eligible to vote get that right and we will keep members apprised of further developments.

Adding Value Through Education: A message from the LWV VA Education Committee

Anna Mason, Chair

In the 2026 Virginia Budget a section was added allowing for a 1 percent local optional sales tax to fund school repair and development ([here](#))

§ 58.1-605.1. Additional local sales tax in certain localities; use of revenues for public transportation, or construction and renovation of schools.

A.1.a. In addition to the sales tax authorized under § 58.1-605, a qualifying locality any county or city not located in Planning District 8, may levy a general retail sales tax at a rate not to exceed one percent as determined by its governing body to provide revenue solely for capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools in serving each such locality county or city. Such tax shall be added to the rates of the state and local sales tax imposed by this chapter and shall be subject to all the provisions of this chapter and the rules and regulations published with respect thereto. No discount under § 58.1-622 shall be allowed on this local sales tax.

2. a. The tax authorized by this subsection may be levied only if the tax is approved in a referendum within the county or city held in accordance with § [24.2-684](#) and initiated by a resolution of the local governing body. Such resolution shall state (i) if the capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools are to be financed by bonds or loans, the date by which such bonds or loans shall be repaid or (ii) if the capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools are not to be financed by bonds or loans, a specified date on which the sales tax shall expire.

The Imperative of Investment

Education is the great equalizer. It is the bedrock upon which equality and opportunity are built. But we cannot expect our children to reach for the stars if the roofs over their heads are leaking. The 1% local option sales tax gives our counties and cities a powerful, democratic tool to add tangible value to our educational system. By diversifying how we fund school construction, we invite everyone who benefits from our local economy—including visitors and commuters—to contribute to the village that raises our children.

How This Helps Our Counties

In Washington County: Projected to generate \$11 million annually in gross revenue before exclusions. This represents a monumental

shift, providing a dedicated stream to clear the backlog of deferred maintenance and modernize facilities, turning temporary fixes into permanent, generational solutions.

In Richmond City: Up to \$47 million annually is nothing short of generational change. It allows us to accelerate the rebuilding of schools that have been neglected for half a century, finally providing facilities worthy of the brilliance of our students.

Evaluating the Balance: Pros and Cons

The Pros: Why We Must Rise

Democracy in Action: The tax cannot be imposed by fiat. It requires a local referendum, ensuring the voices of the people are heard.

Protection for Vulnerable Families: Crucially, this tax does not apply to essential goods like groceries and essential medicines. By exempting the necessities of life, we ensure that we are not balancing our budgets on the backs of families who are already carrying the heaviest financial loads.

Shared Responsibility: It shifts the heavy, singular burden of school construction away from residential property taxes, spreading the cost to anyone who shops in the county.

Protected Funds: By law, the revenue is strictly restricted to capital projects and construction. It is an additive investment, not a replacement for existing funds.

The Cons

Economic Impact: While the exemption for groceries and medicine provides vital protection, a sales tax on retail goods is still inherently regressive, asking families navigating a challenging economy to pay an extra penny on the dollar for other purchases.

State Responsibility: There is a valid argument that the Commonwealth should bear more of the burden for school infrastructure, rather than passing the torch to local municipalities.

The Verdict

While no policy is without sacrifice, the cost of inaction is far greater. If we fail to invest in the spaces where our children learn, we fail them. This tax is a tool of empowerment, allowing us to build the future our communities so richly deserve.

The Ask

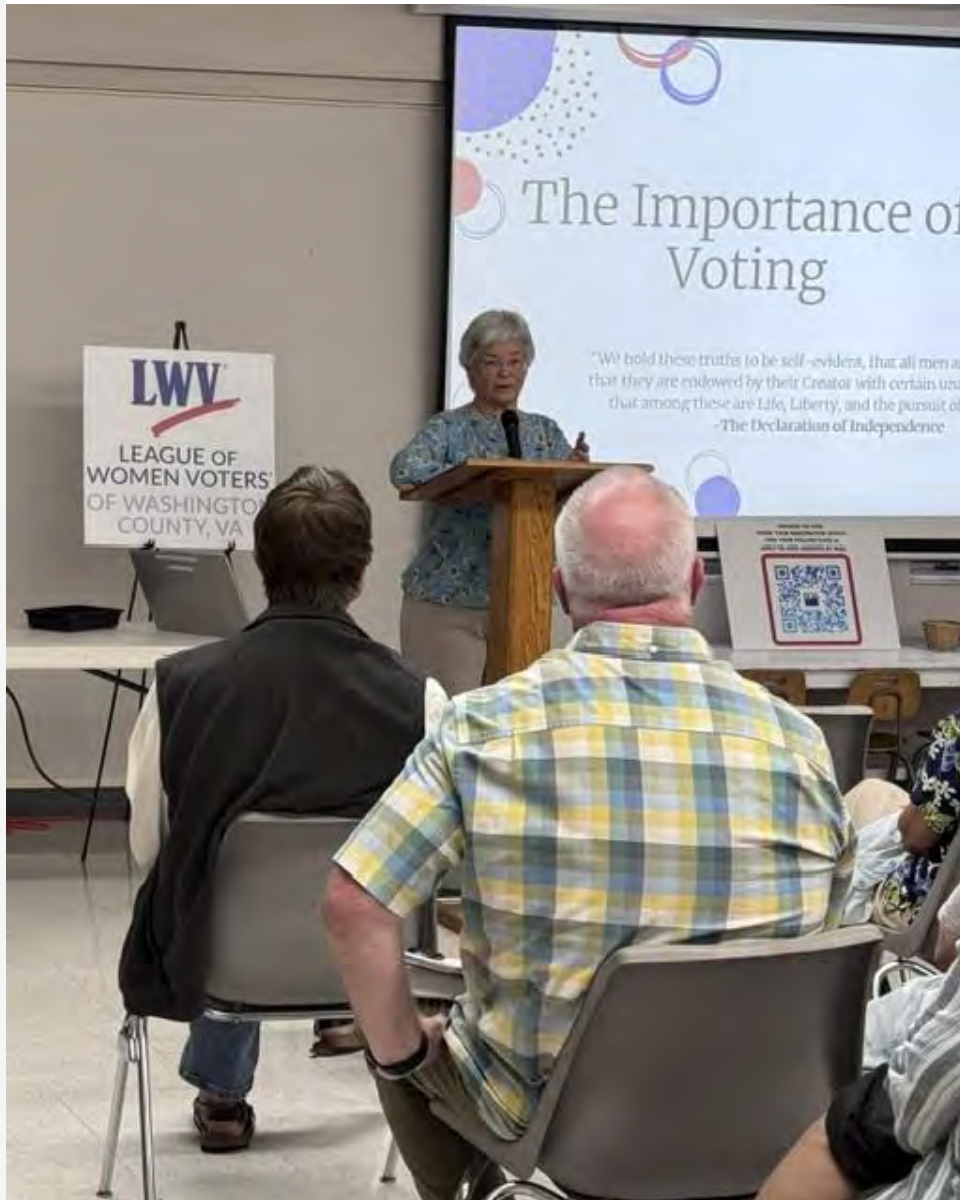
Because this can be done only if your city/county puts a referendum on the ballot, we are asking that you advocate before your city/county board to ask them to allow this on the ballot in 2027.

NOTE: Some areas will have this on the ballot for the November 3, 2026 election, These include York, Fairfax, Chesterfield, Essex, King and Queen, Middlesex, New Kent, Orange, Powhatan, Prince Edward and Sussex counties, as well as the city of Emporia, Richmond, and Martinsville. If you live there or have friends who do, please encourage them to vote yes!

For more information contact Anna Mason, Chair of the Education Issue Group [at her email address](#).

Local Leagues Celebrate Unite and Rise for Voting Rights, August 8.

LWV Washington County



Co-President Merry Jennings speaking about the importance of voting.

Steppin' Out with LWV Montgomery County



Leaguers Carolyn Rude, Margaret Nagai-Singer, and Hilary Lipps did voter registration at the Steppin' Out Festival in Montgomery County.

Busy Unite & Rise in Arlington



Busy Saturday for LWV of Arlington & Alexandria City! Postcard writing at R.E.A.D. Book Nook in Arlington, then back-to-school giveaways with Shiloh Baptist Church at Jefferson-Houston Pk-8 in Alexandria. Great to be out in both communities!

LWV Falls Church Beers, BBQ and Ballots

The LWV Falls Church held a Beers, BBQ, and Ballots event for young adults on Sunday evening, August 2nd. Participants stopped by four

stations (see details below) to learn about the upcoming primary and general elections. In addition, two members from the states DemocraZy podcast were there and put together a Kahoot civics quiz to challenge the participants civic knowledge.

Station 1 - What's on the Ballot?

Station 2 - Amendments

Station 3 - Voter Information

Station 4 - Rock Painting

Participants were given supplies to decorate rocks with promotional voting sayings on them.



LWV Greater Roanoke Valley Celebrates African Cultures with LWV Central Virginia



On Saturday, August 8, 2026, members of the LWV-Central Virginia Unit and the LWV-Roanoke Valley Unit teamed up for the Celebration of African Cultures at the Harrison Museum of African American History in Roanoke. Some LWV ladies conducted voter registration while others gave a West African traditional dance performance.

Right to Vote Kickoff in Norfolk



Left to right: Sally Clarkson, LWV South Hampton Roads; Abby Anderson, LWV Williamsburg, Peninsula Unit; Josie Bergstrom, co-president, LWV South Hampton Roads They were at a kickoff for Virginia's for reproductive freedom campaign to pass the constitutional amendment.

Josie says: "Abby signed up to table at this event; Sally volunteered to assist. They brought the supplies and set up the table. I wandered in and was photographed, but they did all the work." We doubt that, Josie!

LWV Staunton, Augusta County and Waynesboro at a Restoration Event



Members of the League of Staunton, Augusta and Waynesboro Linda Shallash, Marla McIntyre, and Becky Barlow, staffing a voter registration table at a rights restoration event.

And At College...



Students at Emory and Henry University deliver voting information to fellow students.

Turning Point Celebration in Honor of Women's Equality Day

The League was well represented at the August 26 celebration of Women's Equality Day at the [Turning Point Suffragist Memorial in Fairfax](#).



Pam Berg, President of the League of Women Voters of Arlington and Alexandria City, addressing the crowd.



Pat Wirth, former director of Turning Point and President of LWV of Northern Shenandoah Valley, (left) and Nancy Tate, former Executive Director of the League of Women Voters and member of LWV Arlington and Alexandria City.



From the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, Sherelle Carper (left) and Sarah Mayhew.

And in Washington County on August 26



Senior Day at Abingdon Farmers Market. (from left) Jean Hill, Peggy Wolfe, Jane Hill. About 400 people attended.

March on Washington - August 28

On the 63rd Anniversary of Dr. King's march on Washington, the League was there - still marching.



From left, Don Gurney, Chris DeRosa and Susan Bruns for LWV Arlington and Alexandria City



From left, Chris DeRosa (Arlington/Alexandria), Madeline Dabrow (Fairfax Area) and Beth Withers (Arlington/Alexandria.)

September 2026 Calendar

7th - Labor Day

14- 18 - Disability Voting Rights Week

15th - National Hispanic Heritage Month begins

15th - International Democracy Day

15th - National Voter Registration Day

17th - Constitution Day

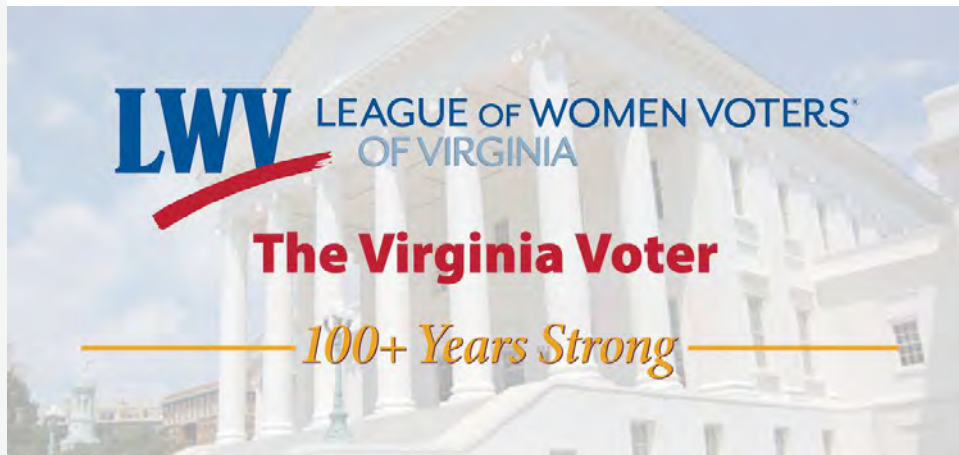
Sept 18 – International Equal Pay Day

Sept 18 - Early Voting Begins in Virginia for November 3 Midterms, Check your voting status by Oct. 23 with our QR code. After that, use Same Day Voter Registration at your early voting site or regular polling place on Election Day.



Register to Vote

[unsubscribe](#)."



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In her new book, *Undue Process*, Julia Ainsley, NBC News' Senior Homeland Security Correspondent, devotes a chapter to answering that question. The first drivers are global-political instability, gang violence, and famine caused by climate change and combined with an increasingly connected world through smart phones and social media. All this created 110 million refugees who were on the move by 2023, the highest number of displaced people globally since World War II.

In 1996, legislation under Clinton increased punishment for border crossing; later under the Bush administration, local law enforcement was allowed to share immigrants' information with the federal government. Then the 9/11 terrorist attack yielded a dramatic increase in the size and funding of the Departments of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

By 2013, the Obama administration had deported more than 430,000 people, and the President was being condemned as the "deporter-in-chief." What was once a political liability for Obama became a winning campaign issue for Trump. The first Trump administration launched a travel, aka "Muslim ban," family separation policies, and the Remain in Mexico program. Still, the numbers surged until Covid-19 brought a public health

order that closed the border. After Covid, that surge returned and grew under Biden. The administration rescinded some Trump policies, allowed unaccompanied minors to enter, constructed tent shelters for children, and tried to match children with adult sponsors. Ultimately, more than ten million people crossed the border illegally under Biden's administration, breaking previous records.

In all, Ainsley concludes, "layers of bad policies and in some cases neglect of the issue by multiple administrations has left our immigration system unable to respond to global realities."

The ICE Network Issue Group is building a database of the locations in Virginia. We have just begun. You can sign up for issue groups on the website [here](#).

Department of Elections To Inform Newly Enfranchised Voters of Their Right to Vote

After conversations between the Campaign Legal Center, on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Virginia and Bridging the Gap in Virginia and the Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT), an agreement has been reached in which ELECT will contact the almost 200,000 recently re-enfranchised voters in Virginia in advance of the upcoming November elections.

This action comes after a court decision in the case brought by the ACLU Virginia, Protect Democracy and WilmerHale challenging felony disenfranchisements based on the 1870 Virginia Readmission Act, entitled *King v. O'Bannon*. The January decision in *King v. O'Bannon* held Virginia may only deny the right to vote for a subset of felony convictions that were common law felonies in 1870. Before the decision, Virginia stripped people of the right to vote for all felony convictions.

The League is grateful to the ongoing work of the Campaign Legal Center assuring that all people eligible to vote get that right and we will keep members apprised of further developments.

Adding Value Through
Education: A message from the LWV
VA Education Committee

Anna Mason, Chair

In the 2026 Virginia Budget a section was added allowing for a 1 percent local optional sales tax to fund school repair and development ([here](#))

§ 58.1-605.1. Additional local sales tax in certain localities; use of revenues for public transportation, or construction and renovation of schools.

A.1.a. In addition to the sales tax authorized under § 58.1-605, a qualifying locality any county or city not located in Planning District 8, may levy a general retail sales tax at a rate not to exceed one percent as determined by its governing body to provide revenue solely for capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools in serving each such locality county or city. Such tax shall be added to the rates of the state and local sales tax imposed by this chapter and shall be subject to all the provisions of this chapter and the rules and regulations published with respect thereto. No discount under § 58.1-622 shall be allowed on this local sales tax.

2. a. The tax authorized by this subsection may be levied only if the tax is approved in a referendum within the county or city held in accordance with § [24.2-684](#) and initiated by a resolution of the local governing body. Such resolution shall state (i) if the capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools are to be financed by bonds or loans, the date by which such bonds or loans shall be repaid or (ii) if the capital projects for the construction or renovation of schools are not to be financed by bonds or loans, a specified date on which the sales tax shall expire.

The Imperative of Investment

Education is the great equalizer. It is the bedrock upon which equality and opportunity are built. But we cannot expect our children to reach for the stars if the roofs over their heads are leaking. The 1% local option sales tax gives our counties and cities a powerful, democratic tool to add tangible value to our educational system. By diversifying how we fund school construction, we invite everyone who benefits from our local economy—including visitors and commuters—to contribute to the village that raises our children.

How This Helps Our Counties

In Washington County: Projected to generate \$11 million annually in gross revenue before exclusions. This represents a monumental shift, providing a

dedicated stream to clear the backlog of deferred maintenance and modernize facilities, turning temporary fixes into permanent, generational solutions.

In Richmond City: Up to \$47 million annually is nothing short of generational change. It allows us to accelerate the rebuilding of schools that have been neglected for half a century, finally providing facilities worthy of the brilliance of our students.

Evaluating the Balance: Pros and Cons

The Pros: Why We Must Rise

Democracy in Action: The tax cannot be imposed by fiat. It requires a local referendum, ensuring the voices of the people are heard.

Protection for Vulnerable Families: Crucially, this tax does not apply to essential goods like groceries and essential medicines. By exempting the necessities of life, we ensure that we are not balancing our budgets on the backs of families who are already carrying the heaviest financial loads.

Shared Responsibility: It shifts the heavy, singular burden of school construction away from residential property taxes, spreading the cost to anyone who shops in the county.

Protected Funds: By law, the revenue is strictly restricted to capital projects and construction. It is an additive investment, not a replacement for existing funds.

The Cons

Economic Impact: While the exemption for groceries and medicine provides vital protection, a sales tax on retail goods is still inherently regressive, asking families navigating a challenging economy to pay an extra penny on the dollar for other purchases.

State Responsibility: There is a valid argument that the Commonwealth should bear more of the burden for school infrastructure, rather than passing the torch to local municipalities.

The Verdict

While no policy is without sacrifice, the cost of inaction is far greater. If we fail to invest in the spaces where our children learn, we fail them. This tax is a tool of empowerment, allowing us to build the future our communities so richly deserve.

The Ask

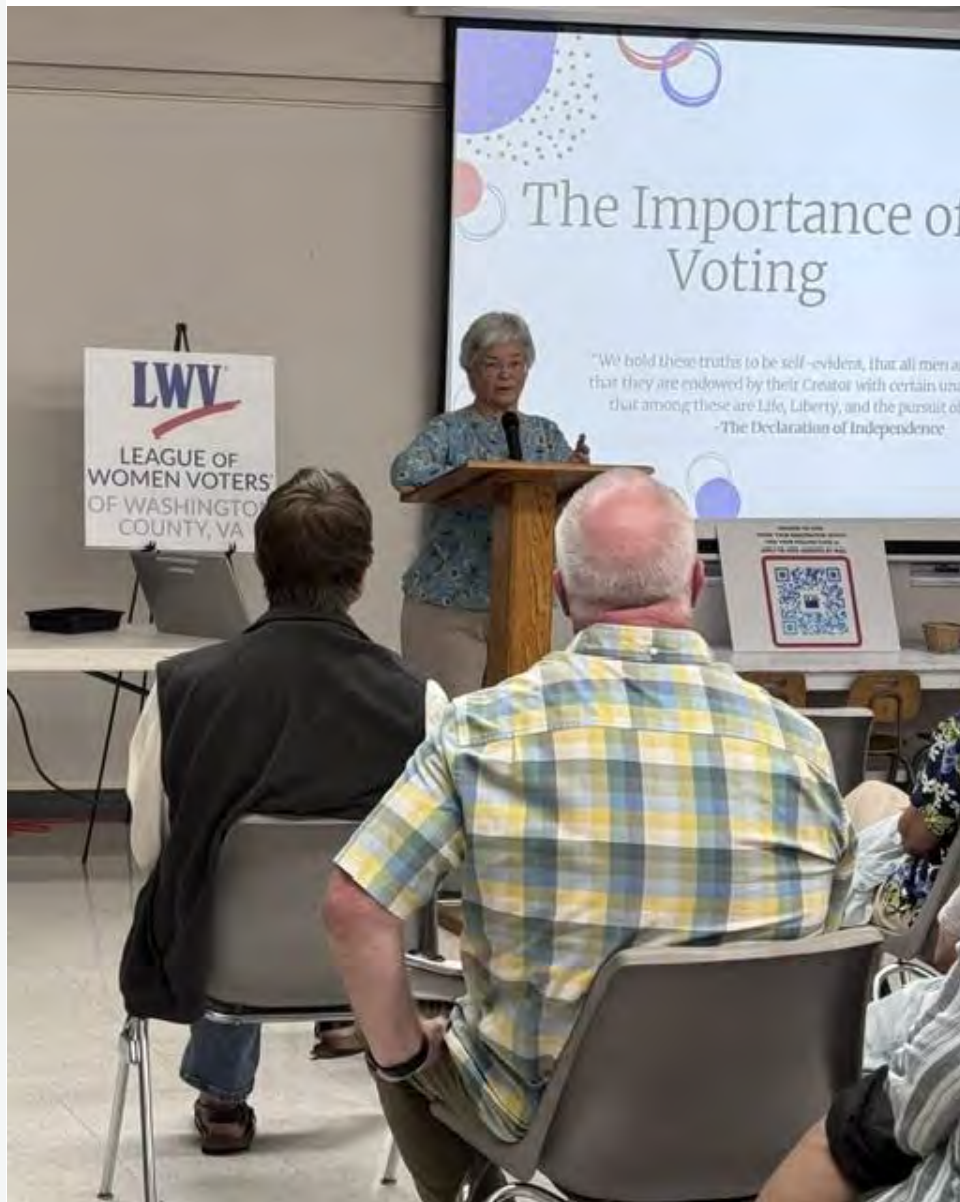
Because this can be done only if your city/county puts a referendum on the ballot, we are asking that you advocate before your city/county board to ask them to allow this on the ballot in 2027.

NOTE: Some areas will have this on the ballot for the November 3, 2026 election, These include York, Fairfax, Chesterfield, Essex, King and Queen, Middlesex, New Kent, Orange, Powhatan, Prince Edward and Sussex counties, as well as the city of Emporia, Richmond, and Martinsville. If you live there or have friends who do, please encourage them to vote yes!

For more information contact Anna Mason, Chair of the Education Issue Group [at her email address](#).

**Local Leagues Celebrate Unite and Rise for
Voting Rights, August 8.**

LWV Washington County



Co-President Merry Jennings speaking about the importance of voting.

[Steppin' Out with LWV Montgomery County](#)



Leaguers Carolyn Rude, Margaret Nagai-Singer, and Hilary Lipps did voter registration at the Steppin' Out Festival in Montgomery County.

Busy Unite & Rise in Arlington



Busy Saturday for LWV of Arlington & Alexandria City! Postcard writing at R.E.A.D. Book Nook in Arlington, then back-to-school giveaways with Shiloh Baptist Church at Jefferson-Houston Pk-8 in Alexandria. Great to be out in both communities!

LWV Falls Church Beers, BBQ and Ballots

The LWV Falls Church held a Beers, BBQ, and Ballots event for young adults on Sunday evening, August 2nd. Participants stopped by four stations (see details below) to learn about the upcoming primary and general elections. In addition, two members from the states

DemocraZy podcast were there and put together a Kahoot civics quiz to challenge the participants civic knowledge.

Station 1 - What's on the Ballot?

Station 2 - Amendments

Station 3 - Voter Information

Station 4 - Rock Painting

Participants were given supplies to decorate rocks with promotional voting sayings on them.



LWV Greater Roanoke Valley Celebrates
African Cultures with LWV Central Virginia



On Saturday, August 8, 2026, members of the LWV-Central Virginia Unit and the LWV-Roanoke Valley Unit teamed up for the Celebration of African Cultures at the Harrison Museum of African American History in Roanoke. Some LWV ladies conducted voter registration while others gave a West African traditional dance performance.

Right to Vote Kickoff in Norfolk



Left to right: Sally Clarkson, LWV South Hampton Roads; Abby Anderson, LWV Williamsburg, Peninsula Unit; Josie Bergstrom, co-president, LWV

South Hampton Roads They were at a kickoff for Virginia's for reproductive freedom campaign to pass the constitutional amendment.

Josie says: "Abby signed up to table at this event; Sally volunteered to assist. They brought the supplies and set up the table. I wandered in and was photographed, but they did all the work." We doubt that, Josie!

LWV Staunton, Augusta County and Waynesboro at a Restoration Event



Members of the League of Staunton, Augusta and Waynesboro Linda Shallash, Marla McIntyre, and Becky Barlow, staffing a voter registration table at a rights restoration event.

And At College...



Students at Emory and Henry University deliver voting information to fellow students.

Turning Point Celebration in Honor of Women's Equality Day

The League was well represented at the August 26 celebration of Women's Equality Day at the [Turning Point Suffragist Memorial in Fairfax.](#)



Pam Berg, President of the League of Women Voters of Arlington and Alexandria City, addressing the crowd.



Pat Wirth, former director of Turning Point and President of LWV of Northern Shenandoah Valley, (left) and Nancy Tate, former Executive Director of the League of Women Voters and member of LWV Arlington and Alexandria City.



From the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area, Sherelle Carper (left) and Sarah Mayhew.

And in Washington County on August 26



Senior Day at Abingdon Farmers Market. (from left) Jean Hill, Peggy Wolfe, Jane Hill. About 400 people attended.

March on Washington - August 28

On the 63rd Anniversary of Dr. King's march on Washington, the League was there - still marching.



From left, Don Gurney, Chris DeRosa and Susan Bruns for LWV Arlington and Alexandria City



From left, Chris DeRosa (Arlington/Alexandria), Madeline Dabrow (Fairfax Area) and Beth Withers (Arlington/Alexandria.)

September 2026 Calendar

7th - Labor Day

14- 18 - Disability Voting Rights Week

15th - National Hispanic Heritage Month begins

15th - International Democracy Day

15th - National Voter Registration Day

17th - Constitution Day

Sept 18 – International Equal Pay Day

Sept 18 - Early Voting Begins in Virginia for November 3 Midterms, Check your voting status by Oct. 23 with our QR code. After that, use Same Day Voter Registration at your early voting site or regular polling place on Election Day.



Register to Vote

[unsubscribe](#)."