

League of Women Voters
of Dallas

VOTER



A nonpartisan organization that encourages informed participation in government and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

A SALUTE TO ELEANOR SUTHERLAND

by Linda Wassenich

Eleanor Sutherland came to the April board meeting and announced that she was retiring. Oh, my! How can this be?



Eleanor has been a League leader for as long as I can remember. She served as President of LWVD in 1975-77 and was subsequently on the LWV-TX board. She also worked as the office

manager in between holding volunteer positions with the League.

Most recently, she has been the editor of the VOTER and an active member of the Awards Committee.



Eleanor's age is easy to remember. She was born in 1920, the same year the League was formed. We've celebrated her birthday on numerous occasions with special events ranging from hearing a presentation about the U.N.'s Conference on Women in Beijing to the tea at Jane Pak's house



last year that featured Rena Pederson talking about her book on Aung San Suu Kyi.

When Eleanor mentioned that she is retiring, she cited her age and the fact that she is now legally blind from macular degeneration.



Knowing Eleanor, we are confident that she'll still be available with her wealth of experience and wisdom to help as she is able. After all, as one of the first people to have her name placed on the Local League Leaders plaque in the LWV Texas office in Austin, she has "been there, done that" and is still doing it.



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**JOINT RUNOFF ELECTION
SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2017**

**THE MAY 6, 2017, JOINT ELECTION
OFFICIAL RESULTS**

can be found at www.dallascountyvotes.org,
click on Election Results.

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**2016 - 2017
LWV Dallas
Board of Directors**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

In my report to you in 2016, I discussed how becoming a 501(c)3 nonprofit could change things for the League. We hoped we would receive more donations, and I think we have. We changed the start of our fiscal year from January 1 to June 1. It runs through May 31; so we had to establish a 17-month budget for one year, ending May 31, 2017, to bridge the change. With one budget instead of two, it is easier to track income and expenditures, prepare future budgets, and determine how much money we need to raise to support our activities.



We now have one LWVD board meeting instead of two meetings. For those of you with past experience on the board, you may remember how confusing two meetings could become. The days of having two sets of minutes, two budgets, and the inevitable *oops* when something was supposed to be discussed in the other meeting are over.

The League board has been very active this year. Elizabeth Walley and her crew, working with Faith in Texas, LULAC, NAACP, and DALCO as well as many other organizations, registered thousands of potential voters. Our research shows that speaking directly to potential voters about the importance of voting raises the probability that they will actually vote.

To implement that finding, the League has partnered with the Dallas County Community College District's LeCroy Center to produce a series of videos about the importance of voting and how to vote for high school, community college, and university students. Grant funds will be sought to cover that project and disseminate the videos widely.

The League board has been very involved in numerous ways. Susybelle Gosslee and Elizabeth Walley were especially helpful in filling in since we did not have a Program VP. Sandy Thornton completed the year as Treasurer when we lost our elected treasurer due to a high-powered job offer she couldn't refuse. Dominique Torres and Lisa Sherrod did an outstanding job planning the SBA Luncheon. I want to thank Cecilia McKay, Elaine Wiant and Linda Wassenich for taking the lead in correcting parts of our bylaws.

League members have come out to general meetings, participated in unit meetings, helped on committees, registered voters and volunteered their time. As we go out in the community, we attract new members who want to help any way they can.

Thank you for your support these past two years. I look forward to volunteering with you.

Best regards,
Eileen Rosenblum PhD

Mark - Your - Calendars

**The 22nd Annual Susan B. Anthony Luncheon
will be held Thursday, February 8, 2018,
at the Lakewood Country Club**



CALLING ALL VOTERS



ELECTION OPTIONS

By Elizabeth Walley

We talk a lot about poor voter turnout in our area and work at informing and motivating prospective voters. A factor that doesn't get as much attention is the process itself. Is the voting process efficient and logical? Today's voters mostly lead very busy lives and already are burdened with long ballots and confusing rules over registration, ID, types of elections and polling locations. We should continuously search for ways to minimize unnecessary procedural inefficiencies so that voters can focus on the things that matter – candidates and issues.

Another consideration affected by different election processes is fairness. Different voting processes may favor greater or lesser minority representation, may lead to outcomes more or less reflective of the will of the people, or may skew in favor of rural or urban populations.

On April 12, speakers presented a program on the pros and cons of some of the options available to us at the Lochwood Branch Library. Toni Pippins-Poole, Dan Eckam and Dr Matthew Wilson discussed various election options.



Holding Local Elections in November Instead of May: Some local jurisdictions in other parts of the state have recently begun holding elections in November. Some, like Houston ISD, have opted to hold elections in November of odd-numbered years, coinciding with nonpartisan

constitutional amendment elections. Others, like the city of Austin, recently began holding elections in November of even-numbered years, coinciding with partisan elections.



Houston ISD's turnout of registered voters was noticeably higher in its most recent November election compared to Dallas ISD's turnout for its most recent May election (see **Exhibit 1** on the next page).

In the city of Austin, turnout after the move to November was very sharply higher compared to before the move (see **Exhibit 2** on page 5).

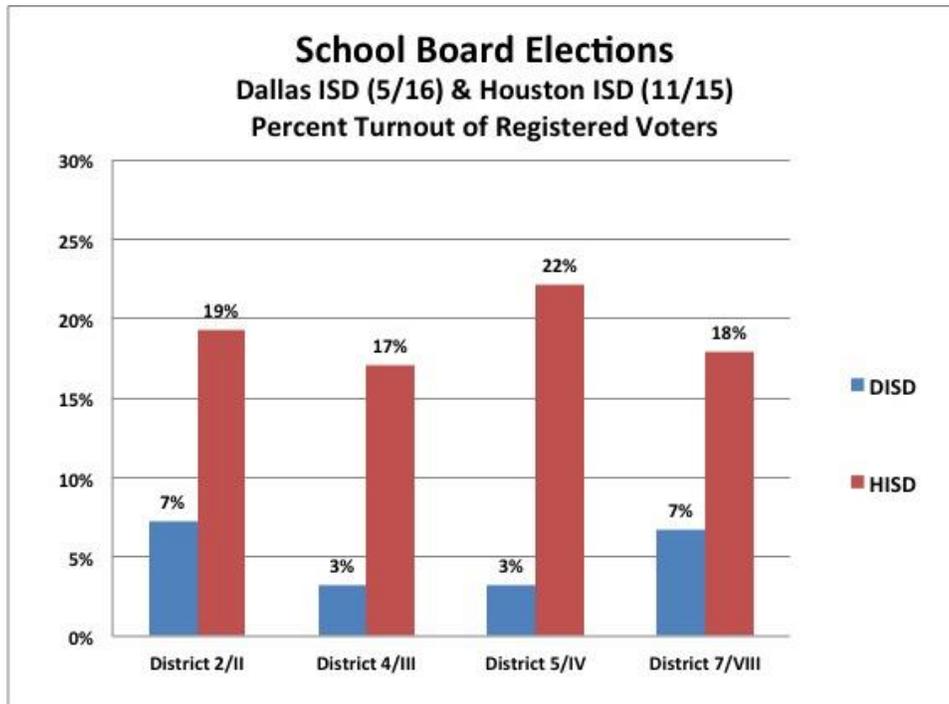
Some of the pros of switching to a November election date are:

- (1) less expense due to fewer elections,
- (2) more citizens will participate,
- (3) it's easier for voters to remember when it's time to vote, and
- (4) minorities are usually better represented when turnout is high.

Cons are that:

- (1) local elections may be less visible at the bottom of the larger ballot,
- (2) less voter and media attention might be paid to local contests which are in competition with larger ones,
- (3) voters may be less informed,
- (4) advertising rates go up making local campaigns more expensive, and
- (5) a factor in even-numbered years but not odd-numbered years could be partisan "noise" in traditionally nonpartisan contests.

Exhibit 1



DISD elects trustees to staggered 3-year terms every May. HISD elects trustees to staggered 4-year terms in November of odd-numbered years.

Ballot Options that Obviate the Need for Runoffs:

While runoffs result in a winner selected by majority, they are expensive for both jurisdictions and candidates, turnout tends to be even lower than for regular elections, and it is possible that the eventual winner would not have been the choice of the majority due to the “spoiler” effect.

There are a number of ballot options where winners are chosen that avoid runoffs. The way we choose our governor for example, by plurality instead of majority, avoids a runoff, but not the “spoiler” effect. There are also forms of majority election besides the runoff type that avoid runoffs. One type of “instant runoff” election is called “ranked choice”, in which voters indicate their preference in order when there are more than two candidates for an office, then the winner is chosen through a mathematical process. “Ranked choice”, however, is not approved by our Texas constitution.

We also see a different form of voting in countries like England, which have multi-member districts wherein representatives are chosen in proportion to the votes cast for parties. Multi-member districts with proportional representation make multiple political parties viable instead of just the two as in our partisan system and avoid the

“spoiler” effect.

An option called “cumulative” voting is currently allowed in Texas school districts. This option also obviates the need for runoffs. In our area, the Carrollton Farmers-Branch district has begun using cumulative voting. In Carrollton Farmers-Branch ISD, voters may cast as many votes as there are places open in an at-large election, including multiple votes for the same candidate. The winners are the top vote getters in the pool of candidates. The district and Dallas County undertook a comprehensive education process to prepare voters – and election workers - for the new system. The system was first used in 2016, and the education process is on-going.

Electoral College Options: In addition to learning about different types of elections, we also learned about the electoral college, its history and the options that states have under our constitution. Some pros and cons of the electoral college are:

Pros:

- Makes sure small states are not ignored
- Requires multi-regional coalitions
- Respects the federal character of our union

Cons:

- Potential divergence from popular vote (1824, 1876, 1888, 2000, 2016)

Cons (continued):

- May depress turnout in some states
- Decreases influence of urban areas and, hence, minorities

We learned that the reasons the popular vote and the electoral vote diverged so widely in the 2016 election were that (1) most states award electoral votes on a “winner takes all” basis regardless of the proportion of votes caste for candidates within that state, and that (2) the number of electoral votes a state gets corresponds to its US representatives plus US senators, which gives low population states relatively much greater clout.

We also learned that our constitution is silent on the way states may allocate their electoral votes. We have options. Overwhelmingly, states have opted to allocate electoral votes on a “winner takes all” basis, but there is no requirement to do so. One alternative is that states may allocate electoral votes based on the outcome of the election in congressional districts.

States also have the option to allocate electoral votes in proportion to the popular vote in that state.

Another option a state has is to pledge to allocate all electoral votes to the winner of the national popular vote. To date, ten states accounting for 165 electoral votes have signed a compact to do so, effective when the electoral votes of states that have that have signed the compact equal at least 270, the number required to win an election. If enough states eventually sign the compact, it will have the effect of nullifying the electoral college.



Exhibit 2

Austin voters in 2012 decided to move local council & mayoral elections to November of even-numbered years.

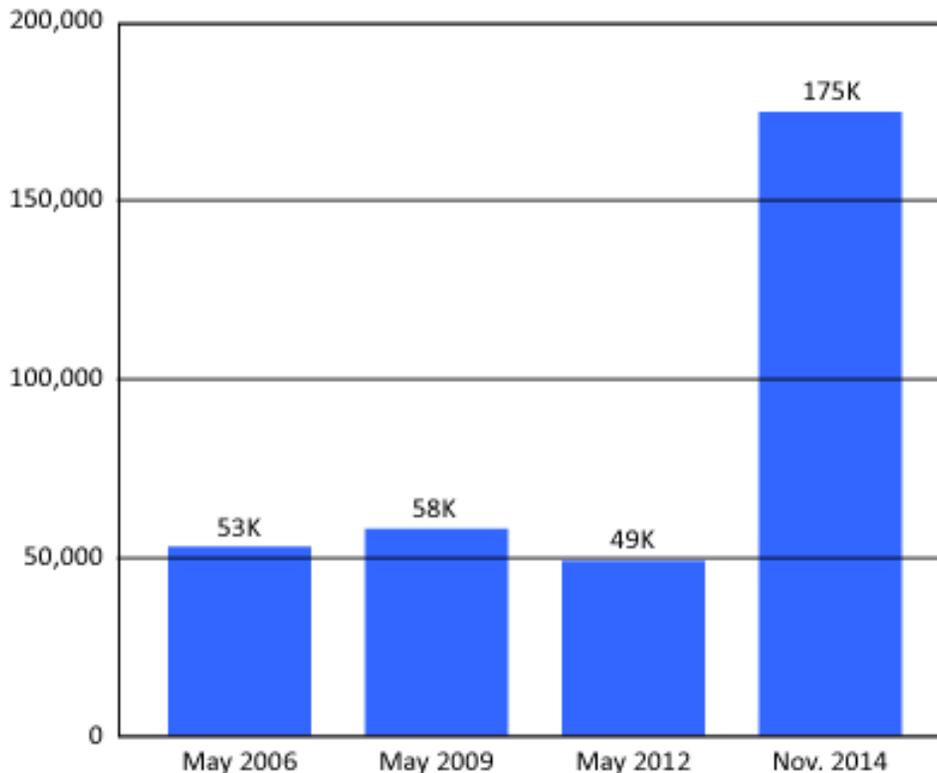


Table by Dan Eckam

I Wish the League Would...

LWVD 79th Annual Meeting on April 29, 2017

The Summer VOTER will have articles and pictures from the Annual Meeting, plus you will get to meet the new board.

I Wish the League Would...

Add another big fundraising event focused on women and political office. Collin County does this and it's a huge success.

I Wish the League Would...

Do trainings on how the League functions - it is complicated!

I Wish the League (MEMBERS) Would...

Bring your daughters, nieces and granddaughters to the League.

I Wish the League Would...

Create a one-pager - Why I Should Join the League.

I Wish the League Would...

Develop a regular group of volunteers for the office.

Organize a carpool process for members who want it so that they can go to unit and general meetings.

I Wish the League Would...

Promote and disseminate via email and at unit and general meetings the advocacy work done by LWV Texas during the legislative session.

Re-send ACTION ALERTS that come from LWV Texas.

I Wish the League Would...

Put an agenda in the Annual Meeting workbook.

I Wish the League Would...

Have meetings and programs on different days and times of the week.

Thursdays are difficult for some members. Also, meetings only during the daytime can be difficult.

I Wish the League Would...

Develop programming focused on exposing youth and underserved to civics.

I Wish the League Would...

Focus on Police Pension.

I Wish the League Would...

Translate the *Voters Guide* into Spanish.

HONOR YOUR MOTHER (and others)

By Linda Wassenich

When I was preparing the Annual Meeting report on Development, I was delighted to see that our giving has increased in every category—undesignated gifts, scholarships, Patron and Benefactor memberships—except one. For some reason, giving has fallen off in the category of honor and memorial gifts. Now, the good news is that we have lost fewer members this past year from death.

Gifts in honor of someone can be for a variety of reasons: birthday, anniversary, congratulations on a job well done, receiving an award, a simple thank you. LWVTX even has a plaque in the state office honoring Local League Leaders. For \$200, you can honor someone who has been there, done that, and is still doing it. (Eleanor Sutherland and Pat Vaughan have been so honored.)

Mother's Day is this month. Make a donation (tax-deductible) to LWVD in honor of your mother or someone else who is or has been a special person to you.

DONATIONS

A round of applause for the following donors to LWVD:

Benefactor: Carol Winkleman

Patrons: Monica and Gabriel Fried, Eileen and Harvey Rosenblum, and Linda and Mark Wassenich

Scholarship: Mary Ann Redmond, Eileen and Harvey Rosenblum, and Linda Wassenich

In Honor of: Eileen Rosenblum, Eleanor Sutherland, Susybelle Gosslee, and Fran Morris by Linda Wassenich

In Memory of: Georgene Taylor, Lynda Ender's mother, by Linda Wassenich

Donors: Kathryn Tucker, Melanie Voss, Madeleine Crouch, Ann Folz, and Becky Sykes

ONE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IS TO KEEP OUR ENVIRONMENT CLEAN AND SAFE

By Susybelle Gosslee

North Texans recycle a measly 22% of the nine million tons of the solid waste materials they produced in 2010 (the most recent data reports), according to the NCTCOG. Zero Waste DFW Project by Texas Campaign for the Environment just published its report, *Dallas-Fort Worth State of the Region Recycling Report*.

To read the report, go to:

<https://www.texasenvironment.org/fund/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2017/04/Dallas-Fort-Worth-State-of-the-Region-Recycling-Report.pdf>

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| <p>The report provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information on current waste and recycling trends in DFW, • environmental and economic impacts, • case studies, • public opinion research, and • makes recommendations to improve the environment. |
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The report says that by reducing the volume of discards going into the landfills in North Texas, valuable resources and dollars will be saved. Recycling is more efficient and economical now and for future generations.

MAY 14 - June 17, 2017 (No Summer Unit Meetings)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MAY 14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Memorial Day holiday Office CLOSED	31	31	JUNE 1 Office CLOSED 1/2 day	2 Office CLOSED	3 *Board meeting 10 am - 12 pm Meadows Conference Center
4	5 Office CLOSED	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 VOTER articles DUE	14	15	16	17

***NEW LWVD Board Meeting Day, Time and Location** - 1st Saturday of each month (excluding July) from 10 am - 12 pm at the Meadows Conference Center (formerly the Center for Community Cooperation) at 2900 Live Oak Street, Dallas 75204. (League members welcome.)

Participate!

<p>Tom Thumb/Albertson's Good Neighbor Program Good Neighbor #: 2917 1st Quarterly Payment: \$109.45</p>	<p>Donate While You Shop! Smile.Amazon.com Click "change your charity", Type "League of Women Voters of Dallas"</p>	<p>Kroger Community Rewards Community Rewards #: 95073 NEW: Sign up at Kroger</p>
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Join the **League of Women Voters of Dallas**

where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DALLAS DIVERSITY STATEMENT

The League of Women Voters of Dallas (LWVD), in both its values and practices, affirms its belief in, and commitment to, diversity and pluralism.

LWVD welcomes any person to participate in any activity of LWVD, regardless of gender, race, religion, age, sexual orientation, national origin, disability or political persuasion.

LWVD recognizes that diverse perspectives are important and necessary for responsible and representative decision-making.

LWVD subscribes to the belief that diversity and pluralism are fundamental to the values it upholds and that inclusiveness enhances its capability to respond more effectively to changing conditions and needs.

LWVD affirms its commitment to reflecting diversity in its membership, board, staff and programs.

It's not for women only!

Membership Levels

___\$60/year Individual ___\$30 additional member at same address

___\$150/year Patron ___\$500/year Benefactor

___Scholarship information available upon request. Call 214-688-4125

___\$25/year Student \$___ Contribution to LWVD Scholarship Fund

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phones: Home _____ Work _____

Cell _____ E-mail _____

**Mail your payment to -
League of Women Voters of Dallas**

2720 N Stemmons Frwy, Ste 812 S
Dallas, TX 75207

**League of Women Voters of Dallas
2720 N. Stemmons Freeway, Suite 812
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