



League of Women Voters of Pulaski County

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February Newsletter

Editor: Jogee Detchemendy

Upcoming Events:

- Tuesday February 19th we will hold our yearly program planning meeting at Fletcher Library, 823 N Buchanan St, Little Rock, AR 72205. Networking starts at 5:30 pm and meeting follows at 6. We want to know what you want out of the League for 2019! There will also be openings on the leadership team. If you would like to become more involved, this is a great opportunity. Please contact the current leadership team members if you have any questions about the role of the team. Please see the flyer attached for more information. (*Note: Our meetings are usually every third Monday of the month, however this one has been changed in honor of Presidents' Day.)
- [Arkansas Legislative Session](#) is still going! To watch online, click the link and then click on the cameras under "Today's Meetings." It is always a good time to stay in touch with your public officials, but especially during Session. Let them know you are watching them, and give support for good bills. Be sure to explain why you oppose a bill, using facts, not opinions. You can always go to lwv.org for information from the national League on many bills that are introduced at the state level. Please contact your legislators regarding the bills listed under **Bills to Watch**.
- Tuesday February 26th we will host an Advocacy Day at the Legislature with our partners, American Association of University Women, Citizens First Congress, and Adult Learning Alliance of Arkansas. We hope to meet in the AEA building across from the Capitol and offer lunch or breakfast to legislators. More info to follow.
- Drinks and Dialogue: exact date to be announced but tentatively planning for March. Please contact Pat Landes at landes.pat@gmail.com to get involved!

Upcoming Events continued on next page.

- Saturday April 27th [The League of Women Voters of Arkansas](#) will hold their Convention in Conway. The newly formed [Faulkner County LWV](#) will be the host. Our national league liaison, Catherine Cotton, will attend and there will be workshops on several topics. An optional Friday night social activity is also being planned. Come meet Leaguers from other leagues, learn how the three levels (local, state, and national) work together to make democracy work!



Bills to Watch:

- [HB1059](#) is a “Stand Your Ground” bill. While in theory this bill would help people defend themselves, opposers state this “shoot first” law would contribute to increased violent crime rates (specifically in domestic disputes). Please read this [study](#) by the Violence Policy Center that supports opposition to this bill. This bill is currently reportedly correctly engrossed *(see explanation about what this means below the **Bills to Watch** list) and will be discussed 2.12 at 10 am by the Judiciary Committee of the House.
- Two bills that may limit free speech are [SB156](#) (which is reportedly currently engrossed and will be discussed 2.11 at 1 pm) & [SB118](#) (which has been referred to the Education Committee of the Senate).
- [SB115](#) is an act to add exclusions to the state minimum wage act which passed in November 2018. This bill would roll back minimum wage increases for anyone employed by a business with less than 50 employees, anyone employed at a school, college or nonprofit organization and anyone under the age of 18. Due to major opposition, this act has been put on the deferred list however it is still a threat. Please help by signing this [petition](#) to oppose this bill. To sign petition click the link.
- We support [SB145](#) to expand renewable energy in Arkansas. Benefitting both small consumers and large corporations by allowing them to lease net-metered solar, wind, hydroelectric and geothermal electricity-generating equipment, versus purchasing it. The bill will increase the maximum allowable size of a solar energy system to one megawatt, from the current low limit of 300 kilowatts. It is in the home. This bill will be in the Insurance and Commerce Senate on 2.12 at 10 am.

Bills to Watch continued on next page.

- We also support [HB1004](#) to improve voter registration and elections. This is a part of the legislature's responsibility to set the standards for voter photo ID, the newly passed constitutional amendment. LWV Washington County and LWV Arkansas are hoping to get laws passed that will allow online voter registration, among other voter modernization laws

***Thank to Citizen's First Congress for creating the above list. CFC's positions align with the LWV opinions on these issues.**

***When a bill is "correctly engrossed" it simply means the bill is being updated/amended as it makes its way through the house or senate. Therefore, if it is still being engrossed, it has not yet been fully passed and our representatives will still be open to hearing from us about such bills.**

Notes from LWVPC Observers by Ruth Bell:

Little Rock City Hall

Many thanks to our members who were some of the 500 applicants who applied to serve on Mayor Scott's transition committee sub-committees. Congratulations to Furonda Brasfield who was appointed to the Mobility sub-committee. Names of all sub-committee appointees can be viewed online at [FrankScottJr.com](#). These sub-committees have no formal connection to City of Little Rock. The subcommittee recommendations go to Mayor Scott's transition committee to evaluate and share with the Mayor.

Little Rock City Board is in process of setting up a committee to study forms of city governance. Little Rock City Board passed a resolution to study our current and other forms of city governance about 3 months ago and in January each Board member was asked to name one member to the proposed governance study committee. Committee member names have not yet been announced. This Committee will be staffed by City employees, will utilize City resources and make recommendations to Little Rock Board of Directors.

The Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Growth Study commissioned by LR City Board in early 2018 was received by LR Planning and Zoning Dept last fall and presented to the LR Planning Commission in an informational meeting. A public comment period followed the monthly presentation. LWVPC commented emphasizing the need to maintain some form of planning and zoning in the ETJ districts abutting the City's boundaries. The Planning Dept. staff will present the comments to the LR City Board along with the Study. This is scheduled to happen in early March.

Central Arkansas Water

Within a few weeks Central Arkansas Water (CAW) will present proposed rate changes to LR City Board and NLR Aldermen (CAW is required to have LR and NLR approval for rate changes and appointment to CAW Board). Among the rate changes to be proposed is increasing the current monthly .45 cent Watershed

Protection fee. Since the Watershed Protection fee was first collected proceeds have been used to buy undisturbed woodlands and grasslands close to Lake Maumelle and to purchase easements along important creeks and rivers that drain into Lake Maumelle. This way of protecting our drinking water supply is very effective and economical. It is cheaper to keep the water clean, than clean it up after it is dirty. It also provides an attractive natural landscape for all our enjoyment.

Observing Opportunities:

Please click links for calendar of each committee's meetings. I am also putting names of current League members who observe these meeting. If you have any interest in observing these ladies would love your help! If there are any other committees/observation opportunities you would like to suggest to the League, please let us know and we will add it to the next newsletter.

[Little Rock Planning Commission](#)

Meets every other Thursday at 3:30 for agenda meeting and the commission public meeting meets same day at 4 at Little Rock City Hall in the City Board Room. Contact Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net.

[Little Rock Board of Directors:](#)

Meets the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month at 6 pm. Agenda Board (to look at the items that will be discussed at the next board meeting) meets 2nd and 4th Tuesday at 4 pm (so the next agenda meeting will be Jan 29th). Both meet at Little Rock City Hall, 500 West Markham Street, Board of Directors Chambers, 2nd floor, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351.

[County Planning Board](#)

Meets the 4th Tuesday of every month. Agenda discussion starts at 2:30 pm and actual meeting follows at 3pm. Held at Jeffery Hawkins Conference Room – Pulaski County Regional Center. 501 W. Markham Street, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351.

[Quorum Court](#)

Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month for agenda and then the full court meets 4th Tuesday. Both meetings start at 6 pm at 201 S. Broadway 4th Floor Quorum Court Room. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351 or Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net

[Central Arkansas Water Board](#)

Meets the 2nd Thursday of the month at 2 pm at the 221 East Capitol, Little Rock. Contact Kathleen Oleson at 501.664.2351 or Ruth Bell at 501.225.2538 or rfbell@aristotle.net

Observing Opportunities continued on next page.

[Water Reclamation Commission](#)

Meets the third Wednesday of each month at 4 pm in Little Rock Wastewater Offices, 11 Clearwater Drive. Currently no one is observing so we need someone to volunteer!!!!

Pulaski County Election Committee

Meets at Pulaski County Election Commission, 501 West Markham St., Suite A, Little Rock. Contact Mary Wildgen at mzwildgen@ualr.edu

Little Rock School District

Meet 5:30-6:30 at 810 Markham, Little Rock. Next Feb.28, March 28, April 28th and then May 16th. Contact Norma Johnson at norma_johnson58@yahoo.com

[MetroPlan](#)

Executive Committee meets at 501 West Markham St., Suite B, Little Rock on the 3rd Thursday of every other month from 10 am-12 pm (next meeting is March. 21st). Board meets last Wednesday of every other month from 10 am to 12 pm (so next meeting is Feb 27). Contact Mindy Morrell at 501 951 7773 or mindymorrell@hotmail.com

[North Little Rock Planning Commission:](#)

Meets the second Tuesday of every month at 4 pm at North Little Rock City Hall. Next meeting is Feb.12.

[North Little Rock City Council](#)

Meets every other Monday at 6 pm at City Council Chambers at City Hall. 300 Main Street, North Little Rock. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting.

[North Little Rock School District:](#)

Meets the 3rd Thursday of every month from 5:30 to 7 pm at 2700 North Poplar St., North Little Rock Administration Board Room. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting. Not certain if anyone is observing this meeting.

[All Boards and Commissions for North Little Rock Government](#) are broken down at this link.

League Links:

[League of Women Voters \(National\)](#)

[League of Women Voters \(State of Arkansas\)](#)

[League of Women Voters of Pulaski County](#)

***Special thanks to Michelle Rhoden for taking over the LWVPC website. Please take a few minutes to visit the LWVPC's [updated site](#). From now on you will be able to find this monthly newsletter and an active calendar of our events on the website!**

Leadership Team

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Newsletter Help:

If you would like to add any anything to the March newsletter please contact Jogee Detchemendy at jogeeduzzi@gmail.com.