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**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA**

The Virginia Voter Express

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“Honoring Our Legacy With Action”

Second Call for the LWV-VA Convention

June 10-11, 2017

**Clarion Hotel, Leesburg, Virginia®
(Hosted by Prince William and Loudoun Leagues)**

The program will feature inspiring speakers, helpful break-out sessions, and opportunities to exchange ideas with Leaguers from around the state. The business session will elect a new Board, approval of the 2017-2019 budget and adoption of the program for the coming year.

Registration Fee: \$125 (each)
Hotel Room: \$90 (double occupancy)

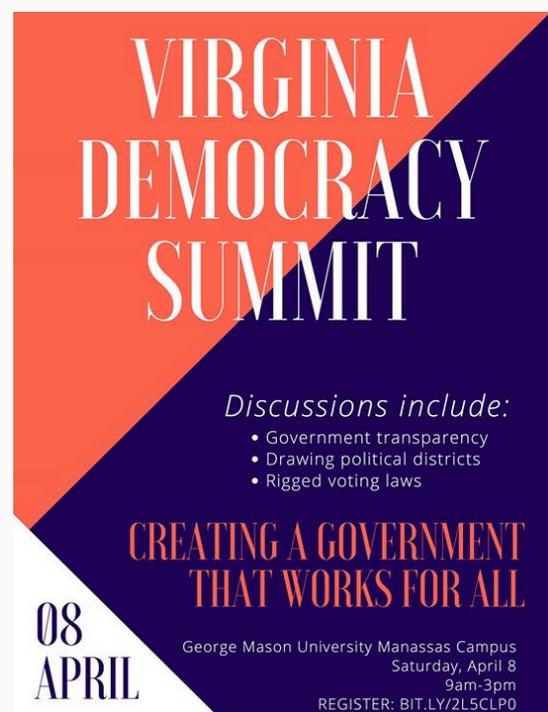
Additional information will be forthcoming in early April

Mark Your Calendar today and join us on June 10-11.

Virginia's Democracy Needs Some Help

This message comes from Julie Emery, Executive Director of Virginia Civic Engagement Table and a League coalition partner:

"If you spent much time in the General Assembly this year you probably often shook your head at the ugly way our democracy often functions. There's still a notable lack of transparency. Elected officials still rely on districts they drew, with voters they chose to protect them from taking bad votes. Some 3000 bills get heard in what is not really a 45-day session. We agree that it's time for the citizens of Virginia to reshape our democracy in a way that works better for all of us. Join us to start the movement to reboot democracy in Virginia! It's April 8th at George Mason University Manassas Campus. The registration link is [here](#) and there's a flyer attached [here](#). We hope you'll share this information widely."



League Support for Redistricting Reform Continues; Events In Fairfax And Montgomery County Attract Large Crowds

Recent League events featuring redistricting reform have attracted enthusiastic public participation, in spite of the Virginia Legislature's dismissal of all proposals leading to reform once again in the recent session.

LWV Fairfax Area had to show OneVirginia2021's documentary "GerryRigged" twice in order to manage all the people who wanted to attend. Brian Cannon, Executive Director of OneVirginia2021, and Olga Hernandez, former president of LWV-VA, served as panel after both showings. Close to 500 people saw the film.



LWV Montgomery County had shown the film earlier in the year and held a redistricting town hall in Blacksburg in coalition with the Lifelong Learning Institute at Virginia Tech. Panelists included Shannon Valentine, a founding member of OneVirginia2021, former journalist Bob Gibson, and former Montgomery County Delegate Jim Shuler.

LWVMC member Jane Sprague wrote: "We had a full house for the event; Nancy Warren counted 110 participants. I think it was a huge success, coming on the heels of the screening of the OneVirginia2021 documentary, 'GerryRigged.' I am so hoping that we'll see this push for redistricting in Virginia come to fruition in the next few years!

She included the link to the following article about the event that appeared in the Roanoke Times:

http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/montgomery_county/blacksburg-meeting-hears-about-gerrymandering-s-harms/article_a76dab99-3281-5973-af75-674857b13e28.html#.WLtRcxzDnd8.email

A number of other Virginia local Leagues have shown Gerry Rigged and hosted panel discussions. A major push is underway to have 250,000 signatures on the OneVirginia2021 petition. As their recent "Next Steps" email said: "Two years ago we were a small band of 3,500 supporters. As of this moment, we are 44k strong. Imagine how unstoppable 250k supporters would be! Help us get there by getting five neighbors or friends to also engage on this issue. Step one for everyone is to tell your legislators (and us) they support reform. **Exercise your First Amendment right to petition your government.** ([Click here to sign the petition](#))"

March to Mother's Day Campaign in Support of the VA Women's Monument!

"Help us honor Virginia women, including suffragists like Adele Goodman Clark by supporting the Virginia Women's Monument!" stated Secretary of Administration, Nancy Rodrigues, "This monument pays tribute to 400 years of Virginia Women's History that has long been ignored."



Plans for the proposed Virginia Women's Monument are moving along. Sixty percent of the funding already has been raised and the

committee hopes to break ground for the plaza by the end of the year.

Adele Goodman Clark, one of the women to be included in the monument, is Virginia's leading Suffragist. She was selected as the first chair of the League of Women Voters of Virginia in 1920 and served as president in 1921–1925 and 1929–1944.

To donate, go to

<https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/VirginiaCapitolPreservationFo/womensmonument.html>

Olga Hernandez Named Democracy Defender By LWWUS

The right to vote is something Olga Hernandez, a League member, has never taken for granted. Maybe because she was born in Cuba. Maybe because she was 18 before she became a U.S. citizen.

And maybe because, as one of the driving forces in the League of Women Voters of Virginia for more than 20 years, she has seen how the faces of new voters—from high school students to new citizens—light up when they get their first voter registration card.

That's why Olga has invested so much of her time and energy into defending voters' rights and expanding citizen access to the ballot ...

... and *that* is why she's the second of three **Democracy Defenders** the LWWUS is highlighting in March as part of our celebration of Women's History Month.

Olga became involved with the League of Women Voters of Virginia shortly after she and her husband moved to Fairfax, just outside Washington, DC, in 1995. After serving as President of the LWW of the Fairfax Area from 2000 to 2005, she went on to serve as Vice President and then President of the LWW of Virginia.

She has organized and moderated senatorial and gubernatorial debates, lent her energy and expertise to the State Board of Elections and many civic organizations, and has become a respected source for reporters from the *Washington Post* and other media covering controversial election law proposals. Thanks in large part to leaders like Olga, over the last decade the League has tirelessly advocated to protect the rights of millions of Virginians and directly empowered hundreds of thousands to successfully cast a vote.

She is, in other words, the perfect example of why the League of Women Voters has been the country's preeminent advocate for voters and defender of voters' rights for more than 96 years!

Congratulations to Olga Hernandez for being a **Democracy Defender!**

Sincerely,
Chris Carson,
President, LWWUS

Olga Hernandez is carrying forward the League's 96-year legacy of fighting for voting rights.



The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization encouraging informed and active participation in government. It influences public policy through education and advocacy.

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