



League of Women Voters®  
of Virginia



# Voter Express

August, 2017

Making Democracy Work

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League of Women Voters®  
of Virginia

# Fall Workshops

Fredericksburg, VA  
22 September 2017

Go to [www.lwv-va.org](http://www.lwv-va.org) for more information

## Fall Workshops: Brushing Up Your League Skills

Come spend a day in Fredericksburg and learn some new skills, compare notes, and trade ideas. The LWV-VA Fall Workshops provide you with the perfect opportunity to discover different ways of doing things, whether it is using a new technology, adding fun to your voter registration efforts, or encouraging the next generation of Leaguers.

This year's Fall Workshops will focus on "League Basics"--how to keep your local Leagues happy, healthy, and, most importantly, active--and on our three major studies: Mental Health; Women's Rights and Virginia Law; and Preparing LWV-VA for Advocacy regarding School Choice Legislation. The Fall Workshops bring folks, from across the state, together to network and to GET INVOLVED!

Watch for more information on this year's Fall Workshops on the [LWV-VA website](http://www.lwv-va.org) and in the September issue of the *Virginia Voter*.

## Around the League

The dog days of summer suggest that all activities come to a grinding halt, but not so with the League of Women Voters of Virginia. For many of our Local Leagues, August signals the start of election season.

The [League of Women Voters of the Richmond Metropolitan Area](#) will be holding a voter registration training session on August 19th. The session is being led by Garry Ellis of the Virginia Department of Elections.

Indeed, most of the Leagues in Virginia, whether they have formal events in August or not, are busy working on Fall projects: collecting information from local candidates; planning forums, debates, and open houses; setting up voter registration drives to encourage local residents to "get registered and get involved"; and updating [Vote-411](#). Contact your [Local League](#) to see how you can join and help out.

Not everything, however, is quite so serious. On the lighter side, [LWV of Falls Church](#) is hosting a second Civics Game Night on August 8th. Civics Game Night is being held at Victory Comics in Falls Church. Sharpen up your trivia skills and join in the fray. If you are from outside of Falls Church, but would like to give this a go in your own community, Amy Hjerstedt has written instructions for setting up your own Civics Game Night. Watch for her article in the September *Virginia Voter*.

Check out our full calendar on [www.lwv-va.org](http://www.lwv-va.org) and discover the activities in your Virginia neighborhood.

### Plan Ahead!

[National Voter Registration Day](#)  
is September 26, 2017



Sue Lewis

especially relating to voter service. I hope you have been contacted by your State Board liaisons and plan to keep in touch with them. And stay in touch with me!

*In League,  
Sue Lewis*

## Understanding the Unregistered Voter

After last year's election, the folks at Pew Charitable Trusts asked "[Why are millions of citizens not registered to vote?](#)" Pew released their report in June, and their findings are surprising.

First, the statistics. Following each federal level election (every two years), the US Census Bureau releases a [report on voter registration and voting habits](#). According to the US Census Bureau 70.3% of eligible citizens are registered to vote and of those 87.3% voted in the 2016 election. In Virginia, our numbers were higher: 75.8% of eligible citizens are registered to vote and 93.4% showed up to polls last November. If, however, you look at the percentage of those who could have voted (both registered and unregistered), the numbers are a bit more grim. Nationally, only 61.4% of eligible citizens voted; in Virginia, the number is better (76.6%) but still leaves room for improvement.

Not surprising, according to the US Census, there are significant age gaps in terms of voter registration. Nationally, 78% of those 65 and old are registered to vote. There is a steady decrease in the percentages, by age group, with 74% for those 45 to 64, 69.8% of 35 to 44 year olds; 64.5% of 25-34 year olds; and 55.4% of those 18 to 24. It should be noted that Virginia has done a much better job of registering voters across the age groups, with 67.9% of citizens 18 to 24 currently registered. If there is a surprise in the Virginia numbers, it is that a greater percentage of 18 to 24 year olds are registered than those who are 25 to 34 (64.3%).

Virginia is also doing a much better job of registering folks within the minority communities. Nationally, 69.4% of African American citizens; 56.3% of Asian citizens; and 57.3% of Hispanic citizens are registered to vote. In Virginia, the numbers are much higher-- 71.9% of African Americans; 73% of Asian Americans; and 70.1% of Hispanic Americans. As with age, however, we still have a long way to go.

## Mark Your Calendar

August, 2017

- 5 [LWVNCA Workshops](#)
- 8 [LWV-FC LWV Civics Game Night](#)
- 19 [LWV-RMA Voter Registration Training](#)
- 26 [Women's Equality Day](#)

The questions remain: why are there so many unregistered voters and why are folks reluctant to register? According to the Pew Report, 62% of those who are not registered to vote said that they have never registered because "they have never been asked to register." The remaining 38% of unregistered voters acknowledged they had been offered a chance to register and declined (6% at schools; 5% by a candidate or a political group; 3% by a religious group; 14% by a friend or a family member; 5% by a civic organization; and 16% at a government office). When asked why they did not take the time to register, 44% said they didn't want to vote; 27% just never got around to it; 25% were uninspired by the candidates; 11% were afraid it would violate their privacy; 9% said it wasn't convenient; 6% did not know how to register; 5% cited felony convictions; and 1% cited language barriers.

While League members may not be able to overcome some folks' clear lack of desire to vote; we can and do address many of the other concerns raised in the Pew Report at our voter registration tables.

Join the League of Women Voters® of Virginia & Become a Force to be Reckoned With!



<http://lww-va.org/join.html>

## From the President

Welcome to the new LWV-VA Voter Express! You can expect to receive this in your email baskets near the first of every month, except for those months when you'll see an expanded *Virginia Voter*. This is my first President's letter, and I thank the new Communications Team, Meghan Dorsett and Carol Lindstrom, for all the work they have put in to get this off the ground.

League life has been busy since our convention in June! We had a board orientation and meeting in early July, where we set the date for the Fall Workshops (not an easy task, given availability of venues), and finalized plans for those workshops. We welcomed new board members Meghan Dorsett, Carol Lindstrom, Anne Smith and Valarie Fillgrove, and set the calendar for the upcoming League year.

The People's Debate, with partners AARP, WVPT, and CBS, got off the ground in early July; it has hit a snag due to the political party campaigns not on the same page concerning the number of debates each is interested in.

We will be continuing to work with our partners to get the issues resolved, and hopefully, allow the Debate to happen on October 9th.

We are pursuing every avenue we can to find a venue to have our Pre-session Roundtable on December 6th, and to secure a place for our signature events, the weekly Women's Legislative Roundtable. The demolition of the General Assembly Building and the relocation of legislative offices to the Pocahontas Building are really putting obstacles in our planning!

I hope that each of your local leagues is off to a good start, with orientations and board training events, getting ready for the fall activities,