



Voter Express

June, 2018

Empowering Voters, Defending Democracy

Volume 64, No. 10

From the President:

June – the month of graduations, weddings and conventions. Also, the Summer Solstice, although I think it actually happened in May this year. And another Primary election!

This month’s Voter Express has information about Council on June 16, LWVUS Convention starting on June 28, and updates on Medicaid Expansion, redistricting and Metro funding. And a brief “annual report” from LWV-VA that was presented at the NCA Convention in May.

The League of Women Voters of Virginia wishes to thank the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Senators, Delegates, Groups, and citizens who were part of making Medicaid Expansion happen. I hope that each of you will identify the elected officials who were responsive to the voice of the people and let them know you appreciate their efforts and congratulate them on providing health care to approximately 400,000 Virginians who did not have it previously.

Registration for Council will have ended by the time you read this, so I hope your leagues will be sending at least their two voting delegates. Early-bird registration for Convention will also end on June 1, but there is still time for local leagues to register. I’d love to see a large delegation from Virginia in Chicago!

Sue Lewis

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LWV of the National Capital Area Liaison Report

League of Women Voters of Virginia Annual Report
Highlights of the 2017-2018 league year:

- Had new board retreat and planning meeting July 6&7, 2017, and held four more board meetings (one more on June 15, 2018).
- Held Fall Workshops in Fredericksburg September 22, 2017, and planned Council to be held June 16, 2018.
- Started Get Out The Vote postcard initiative.
- Dropped LEW and rolled out new website created by our Communications team.
- Sponsored two days on VPAP highlighting National Voter Registration Day (9/26) and Vote411.org.
- Held annual Pre-Session Roundtable at new location and continued the WLRT at same location during the 2018 session of the General Assembly.
- Held League Day with our long-time partner AAUW.
- Changed our scheduling of *The Virginia Voter* by adding Voter Express in between publication. We mourned the passing of Meghan Dorsett, our co-Communications Coordinator.
- Welcomed new recognized League in the Fredericksburg Area, and MAL Unit in the Roanoke Valley area.
- Presented three task-force and study committee positions on School Funding, Behavioral Health and Women’s Issues for action at Council.

Sue Lewis, President LWV-VA

MEDICAID EXPANSION GOES TO THE GOVERNOR'S DESK!

Governor Northam Statement on Biennial Budget that Expands Health Care and Invests in a Stronger Economy:

“Today the General Assembly sent a budget to my desk that will improve the lives of all Virginians. It will expand health care for up to 400,000 people who need it. It will invest in schools, workforce training, public safety, and an economy that works better for every Virginian, no matter who they are or where they live.

“This budget is the culmination of five years of effort to bring our taxpayer dollars home from Washington and expand Medicaid. As a doctor, I’m so proud of the significant step we’ve taken together to help Virginians get quality, affordable care.

“This budget doesn’t just expand healthcare access to those who need it most, it also invests in core economic priorities like education and workforce training and significantly increases the cash reserves that insulate our state finances from economic disruption.

“This is the best reflection of what we can accomplish when we do things the Virginia Way, and I want to thank the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates for their good faith efforts to come to this historic agreement.

“The loudest voices in this long-standing conversation on Medicaid expansion have been those of Virginians. We have heard you. Thank you. I also want to acknowledge Governor Terry McAuliffe for his unrelenting effort to expand healthcare access while he was in office, and every member of the General Assembly who stood up today and did the right thing for their constituents. This is a victory for all Virginians.

“Going forward, my team and I will review this budget when it reaches my desk to ensure that there are no technical issues or unintended problems that may warrant an amendment and act upon it as quickly as possible.”

From Georgetown University Health Policy Institute Center for Children and Families:

Why Virginia Expanded Medicaid: Five Key Reasons [<http://bit.ly/2LLPZUI>]

(excerpt: Virginia decided today to expand Medicaid, which will allow the state to start to cover approximately 400,000 people who are unable to afford health plans yet too poor to get tax credit subsidies to buy insurance. This is a significant win for Virginians and for bipartisan cooperation in an increasingly partisan age as a newly-elected Democratic governor worked with Republican majorities in Virginia’s House and Senate on a compromise plan to make Medicaid expansion happen. Unfortunately, this win also includes

a provision instructing the Governor after initial expansion of coverage to attempt development of a Medicaid waiver that would include more red tape and complicated work rule requirements for people needing health care. However, this Medicaid waiver provision did not play a decisive role in Virginia’s Medicaid expansion decision. Why did Virginia finally agree to extend health coverage to low-income residents? I see five main reasons:”)

The author goes on to discuss “Elections matter”, “Community forums on Medicaid expansion in more rural areas of the state”, “Obama who? Obamacare what? Medicaid is popular”, “More policy, less posturing”, and “Lots of very committed advocates”.

From The Daily 202: Why Virginia's Medicaid expansion is a big deal (Washington Post, 5/31/18, James Hohmann)

(excerpt) “THE BIG IDEA: As Joe Biden put it a little differently when Barack Obama signed the Affordable Care Act eight years ago, Virginia’s expansion of Medicaid on Wednesday is a big dang deal. And not just because 400,000 low-income citizens will now have access to government health insurance.” [[click here to read full article](#)]

This is certainly not the end of the ongoing war for affordable healthcare for all, but it is a very important battle. Let us keep our focus and continue to strive for the best possible solutions at local, state, and national levels.

The LWVUS history and position on healthcare can be found in its short form in the 2016-2018 Positions in Brief [[click here to see this document](#)]

Health Care Promote a health care system for the United States that provides access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents, including behavioral health, and controls health care costs (page 85-88 of full Impact on Issues). [<https://wapo.st/2kKrk6e>]

Redistricting Update: From ONE VIRGINIA 2021

May 31, 2018

Supreme Court of Virginia Issues Decision in Redistricting Legal Challenge

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The Supreme Court of Virginia issued a decision in

Vesilind v. Virginia State Board of Elections today declining to set aside the ruling of a Richmond Circuit Court that the question of whether eleven state legislative districts were drawn in violation of the Virginia Constitution was “fairly debatable” and the districts therefore should be upheld. The plaintiffs in the case had argued that the legislature failed to give priority to the Virginia Constitution’s requirement that districts be “compact” and instead subordinated compactness to “discretionary” redistricting criteria, such as protecting incumbents.

Gregory Lucyk, a former Senior Assistant Attorney General and now President of the Board of OneVirginia2021, the advocacy organization backing the lawsuit, said they were “disappointed” with the Court’s decision. “The Courts and the legislature have never defined the standards for compactness to enable the line drawers to apply the Constitutional requirement fairly. This lack of clarity in the law has thwarted the purpose of creating compact legislative districts, which is to provide a meaningful restraint on extreme partisan gerrymandering.”

Lucyk stated “the Court’s decision shows how important it is that the citizens take action now to amend the Virginia Constitution in order to provide clear and well-defined standards for drawing legislative districts.” Lucyk added that while the court case did not result in the ruling sought by plaintiffs, “it was successful in educating voters about the harm caused by extreme partisan gerrymandering, and it has generated vigorous bi-partisan efforts to reform the redistricting process.”

The Court’s opinion can be found online here <http://www.courts.state.va.us/opinions/opnscvwp/1170697.pdf> (PDF). Information about the legal challenge, images of the specific districts in question, and briefings can be found online here: <https://www.onevirginia2021.org/about/compact/>.

For more news on the Redistricting ruling check out: <http://bit.ly/2J2CotQ> for an article in the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

2018 LWV-VA Council: June 16th

Many of you have already registered for the LWV-VA 2018 Council. The deadline for registration was 5/31/18.

With a wonderful guest speaker and 2 super breakout sessions to consider, do not forget about the luncheon with special topic tables and presentations from the 3 task force/study groups. Of these 3, Behavioral Health

and Schools Task Force proposed changes will be voted on during Council. You can get links to those documents and a lot more information on our LWV-VA 2018 webpage on our website. [<http://lww-va.org/lww-va-2018-council/>]

2018 LWVUS CONVENTION



League of Women Voters of the United States
53RD NATIONAL CONVENTION

CREATING A
**MORE
PERFECT
DEMOCRACY**



The next major event is the 2018 LWVUS Convention for which there is a great deal of excitement as we approach the 100th birthday of League of Women Voters and there is a lot of change in the air.

So, just what is national Convention and, why do we have it? A full description of Convention is provided in Article IX of the LWV bylaws. Some things I found to be of interest when I perused that article are:

1. Sec.1, B – When the total number of MAL (Members at Large, not members of a local league) members reaches 50 voting members, the state is entitled to an additional delegate. This continues to increase by each 50 with the MAL list.
2. Section.5 – Quorum: Twenty percent of the possible number of voting delegates other than members of the national board shall constitute a quorum provided that local Leagues from at least 25 states are represented.

In the League Update sent via email on May 24, 2018, we were provided some updates to Convention and here they are for you again:

Convention 2018

Speakers

Along with our previously announced speakers we are excited to announce the following who will be speaking during plenary:

1. **Alfreda Brown, Ed.D.**, Vice President, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Division, Kent State University
2. **Keesha Gaskins-Nathan**, Director for the Democratic Practice–United States Program, Rockefeller Brothers Fund
3. **Commissioner Thomas Hicks**, EAC
4. **Rosie Rios**, 43rd Treasurer of the United States
5. And more! Please check forum.lwv.org or updates.

Resolutions Committee Appointed

The Resolutions Committee for the 2018 LWVUS Convention has been appointed. Toni Larson (CO) will serve as chair with Sondra Cosgrove (NV), Helen Hutchison (CA), Amy Hjerstedt (LWVUS), and Jessica Lowe Minor (LWVUS). Please visit the League Management Site for additional details on [the 2018 resolutions process](#). The [resolutions submission for](#) is live and resolutions must be submitted at least four weeks prior to convention.

Upcoming webinars

- **Budget:** [Join us](#) on Wednesday, May 30 at 2pm ET. This webinar will discuss the 2018-2020 biennium budget that will be presented and voted on at Convention and provide an opportunity to ask questions of the Budget Committee.
- **Navigating Convention:** [Join us](#) on Wednesday, June 6 at 2pm ET. Our Convention Parliamentarian will guide us through parliamentary procedure and how to make the most of your plenary experience.

Vote on the 2018 Convention Awards

The "Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy." Awards reflect the League's vision for a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate.

Applications were reviewed by a panel of LWVUS staff and the finalists are listed below. [Voting on the winners is open through June 1.](#)

Host a Viewing Party for our Thursday Evening Program

Not able to attend Convention but want to participate in our Thursday evening program, A Conversation on Redistricting with Nick Stephanopoulos and Ruth Greenwood? We will be live streaming this program so that all League members can participate in this timely and engaging discussion.

This event is a great opportunity to host a viewing party for your fellow League members and others who are interested in this topic. Interested members should fill out [this survey](#) to receive more information from us on planning and hosting your party.

Join Us For Trainings on Thursday and Saturday

We are excited to announce more information on our special training sessions that will allow convention attendees to learn skills related to their League and take home valuable tools to share with their fellow League members.

Developing and Mobilizing Skills to Win in 2018: Thursday, June 28: 2:00pm – 4:30pm

Training conducted by Wellstone Action. Participants will learn the fundamental differences between mobilizing and organizing and how mobilizing skills can increase our impact.

Using Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Lens to Strengthen Social Impact and Collaboration: Saturday, June 30: 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Training conducted by Diversity Dimensions. This interactive training is designed to discuss the importance of self-awareness, intention and impact when applying a diversity, equity and inclusion lens to social impact work at the national, state and local level and to leadership and culture across LWV.

From LWV-VA

Here are a list of some of the more important links for members:

- [Register For the 2018 Convention 2018 Convention Schedule At A Glance](#)
- [Proposed 2018 Bylaws Amendments](#)
- [Resolutions Process for Convention 2018](#)

- [2018 Convention Rules and Procedures](#)
- [View the 2018 Convention 101 Webinar](#)
- [Proposed 2018-2020 LWVUS Program](#)
- [List of Not-Recommended Items 2018](#)
- [2018-2020 LWVUS Board of Directors and Nominations Committee Nominees](#)
- [Proposed 2018-2020 LWVUS and LWVEF Budgets](#)

It should be fairly safe to guess that the “Transformation Journey” and the “Transformation Roadmap” will be flavoring just about everything happening at Convention as you will find references to it throughout the documents listed above. You can get a little bit of an idea of what this process is about by watching these two videos:

- A Transformational Journey
<https://youtu.be/iWXf90WieHs>
- A Transformational Journey 2
<https://youtu.be/Zt9YsQaLvXg>

IN LIEU OF ANY OFFICIAL LEGISLATIVE REPORT FROM LWV-VA

A google search shows that there are many different groups that provide legislative session updates. Some of those represent our own interests and some are in opposition to our interests. Here are a few of the ones that you can find online:

- [Virginia: 2018 Legislative Session Update – NRA-ILA \(Institute for Legislative Action\)](#)(gun safety): “Following crossover, over 60 anti-gun bills failed to move forward in the Virginia General Assembly. These bills include mandatory “universal” background checks, a bump stock ban, one-gun-a-month gun rationing, bans on commonly owned firearms and magazines, mandates on reporting lost or stolen firearms that put the burden on law-abiding gun owners and not the criminal, among many other attempts at gun control legislation.”
- [Chesapeake Bay Foundation \(environmental\)](#): “During the 2018 session CBF stayed engaged

on dozens of legislative proposals, supporting those that are good for water quality and opposing harmful bills. Here are some of the results. “

- [Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals](#) (education): “During the 60-day period of the 2018 General Assembly, legislators introduced and considered 3,722 bills and resolutions, passed 1,833 of those bills and failed to pass 1,683 bills. VASSP maintained a daily presence in Richmond during the Session and followed over 250 bills that related directly to public education. “Legislation by anecdote” was, as is usual, on full display; and close to half of the bills introduced failed in committee or on the Floor. Overall, K-12 public education fared well this year, with a major exception – the budget. Delegates and senators failed to reach a budget deal so salary increases, funding for services rendered and programs in the works for K-12 are on hold as they are for all state-funded services. Without a budget, legislators were unable to adjourn sine die on March 10 and will be forced to return to Richmond to debate a budget. As noted in previous updates, the House budget currently includes Medicaid expansion while the Senate budget does not.”
- [Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy](#) (many different issues including but not limited to health care, justice, school lunches, weapons in worship, and more): “The Virginia Interfaith Center’s top priority issue for 2018 (and the last four years) has been Medicaid expansion, and the issue is still in play. The final version of the state budget needs to include the language to draw down the federal dollars to expand Medicaid eligibility to cover an additional 400,000 working Virginians who “fall in the gap,” unable to afford health insurance or quality for Medicaid under the present rules. The House of Delegates passed a budget that included Medicaid expansion, passing with 49 Democrats and 19 Republicans supporting it. ...”

There are many more such reports and we often use them in our member's Facebook Groups to keep folks informed. If you have not joined one or more of these

groups, you will find information at <http://lwv-va.org/members-corner/facebook-working-groups/> (You must be a member of LWV in order to access these groups.)

METRO RECAP from Deb Wake

Metro existed more than forty years without a dedicated source of funding because everyone thought it would be too difficult to get Virginia, Maryland and D.C. to agree on funding. Last summer, the League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area joined with more than twenty other grassroots organizations to form the Fund It--Fix It coalition (or FIFI for short). After a lot of hard work on all sides, the Virginia, Maryland and D.C. legislatures passed dedicated funding bills.

To recap the legislation that made this happen, Delegate Sullivan (D) and Senator Saslaw (D) sponsored complimentary Metro-funding bills: HB1319 and SB856. However, Sullivan's bill was rolled into a Republican Delegate Hugo's Metro-funding bill, HB1539. The house and the senate preferred their own bills so a conference committee of Delegates Hugo, Sullivan, and Peace and Senators Saslaw, Norment, and Wagner was formed. House Republicans were adamant about not raising taxes in order to fund Metro but instead diverted money from NVT A (Northern Virginia Transportation Authority), which mostly funds roads projects, and gave the money to NVTC (Northern Virginia Transportation Commission) to be used for Metro. This was not ideal but did allow the legislators to provide dedicated funding for Metro for the full \$154 million to cover Virginia's share of costs.

On April 9, Governor Northam proposed two amendments that would apply just to Northern Virginia. His amendments would raise the hotel tax to 3% and increase the real estate sales tax 5 cents per \$100 of assessed value. There was bipartisan support for these amendments with three Northern Virginia Republican lawmakers issuing a strong message via the [Washington Post](#). The authors--Matt Latourneau (supervisor, Loudoun County and chair of COG--Washington area Council of Governments), Marty Nohe (supervisor, Prince William County and chair of NVT A) and John Cook (supervisor, Fairfax County and member of NVTC who chaired the work group that explored WMATA board reform at LaHood's request)--urged support of the governor's amendments.

The League also worked hard to garner bipartisan support. The amendments would allow Northern Virginia to continue to fund road projects that were either already underway or already in the planning

stages. There was concern that Northern Virginia would be forced to compete with other parts of the state for road-funding dollars because of the cuts to NVT A. The amendments would allow Northern Virginia to tax itself in order to fund repairs and to enhance infrastructure projects. We thought the amendments would pass, but they failed along party lines.

In 2013, HB2313 failed to establish a floor to the gas tax, resulting in a loss of revenue of about \$20 million annually. Senator Wagner's SB896 and Delegate C. Jones's HB768 sought to establish a floor to the gas tax for Hampton Roads and Northern Virginia. Although both sponsors are Republicans, both chambers preferred their own bills and the details were worked out in conference committee (composed of Senators Wagner, Norment, and Saslaw and Delegates C. Jones, Habeeb, and Filler-Corn). Again these are bills the League supported and we are pleased to see these pass.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 12th Virginia Primary Elections
- June 15th LWV-VA Board Meeting
- June 16th: LWV-VA 2018 Council
- June 28th -July 1: LWVUS Convention
- June 30: End of League Fiscal Year

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

Check our Behavioral Health Task Force web page (<http://lwv-va.org/action-advocacy/behavioral-health-task-force/>) for a special statement of thanks on Medicaid Expansion.

Our "Members Corner" web page as been redesigned as the dropdown menu was getting too cumbersome with the number of pages we have for you. <http://lwv-va.org/members-corner/>

Traveling this summer? Do not forget to stay current on all of our activities by making sure you are receiving our emails and/or make use of our website or our Facebook Page and Groups. Travel safely and Make Democracy Work® where ever you are!

If you, or a League member that you know, might be interested in writing articles for the Voter/Voter Express or for our Blog, contact us at communications@lwv-va.org. Guidelines can be found on the "Members Corner" web page <http://lwv-va.org/members-corner/>.