



League of Women Voters®
of Virginia



Voter Express

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EMPOWERING VOTERS, DEFENDING DEMOCRACY

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SAVE THE DATES

**LWV-VA Biennial Convention:
Defending Democracy. Engaging Voters.
Friday, May 17, 2019 thru Sunday, May 19, 2019
Location: Waterside Marriott, Norfolk, VA.
Registration and Dine-Around scheduled for
Friday evening.
BONUS session hosted by LWV of South
Hampton Roads noon Sunday**

Come to Norfolk to elect the new LWV-VA Board, establish the 2019-2021 program, hear excellent speakers, participate in breakout sessions on Saturday afternoon and League building sessions early Sunday am. Caucuses are scheduled for Saturday evening after the banquet. Come for the weekend to network with League members from across the commonwealth. Don't miss this exciting event.

Prior to registration on Friday evening May 17, the State Board will be meeting, and early arrivals are welcome to sit in on the meeting. This will be followed by a "dine-around" coordinated by the LWV of SHR, the Convention host League. Stay Sunday noon for lunch and a BONUS session (extra charge for box lunch). Join us for a fun and productive weekend. The discount rate for sleeping rooms is available from Thursday, May 16 to Tuesday, May 21 – Make it a full weekend with League friends.

Confirmed speakers include:

- Kenneth Alexander, Mayor, City of Norfolk
- Rebecca Green, Professor of Law, William & Mary
- Walt Latham, Director of Elections, York County, Norfolk
- Skip Stiles, Executive Director, Wetlands Watch

- Ron Carlee, PhD, Old Dominion University
- Susan Carty, Board Director, LWVUS
- The Banquet speaker is Rachel Bitecofer, Christopher Newport University, Wason Center for Public Policy.
- The Bonus speaker on Sunday noon is Ann Phillips, Special Assistant to Governor, Coastal Adaption and Protection (Real Adm. Ret.)

The number of delegates for each Local League will be assigned in late February when official membership numbers are confirmed by LWVUS. Observers in addition to delegates are welcome. The registration form and more details will be provided in early March 2019. Save the dates and make your plans to be in Norfolk in May 2019.

LWV-VA LEAGUE DAY FEB 6

Reminder: LWV-VA League Day at the General Assembly on February 6, 2019

- 8:30 – 9:30 WLRT in Tilghman Room, first floor, SunTrust Building (note room change for this WLRT only)
- 9:45 – 10:45 appointments with your Senator and/or Delegate
- 11:00 Go through security at Capitol and line up for entry to either Senate or House gallery
- 12:30 to 3:00 p.m., League Day buffet Lunch at Berkeley Hotel, 1200 E Cary St.
- 1:00 Tim Cywinski of Virginia21 will speak on how to engage with legislators and how to engage young people.

The LWV-VA Block of rooms at the Berkeley is sold out. Registration for League Day lunch closes at noon on Saturday, February 2, 2019; preregistration required. No onsite registrations.

Think Globally, Act Locally

By Jill Follows UN Observer LWVUS & LWVFA member and Anu Sahai, Co-President LWVFA

A newly established team of league members post reviews of cases from the International Court of Justice (ICJ). This new endeavor is part of an effort by Jill Follows, a UN Observer for the LWVUS and Virginia League member, to raise awareness of the confluence of positions held by the UN court and the League. The case reviews are posted to the LWVUS-UN Observers Google group. Please contact jill.follows@gmail.com for sign up support.

To date, the case reviews have focused on human rights (United Arab Emirates unceremoniously kicked out all Qataris with only 15 days' notice), environment (see below) and trade sanctions (Iran vs. USA). Here is a summary of the latest case review:

After nearly a decade of aerial toxic fumigations by Colombia along its border, Ecuador filed suit in the ICJ and argued that the fumigations drifted across the border and caused unmitigated harm to the indigenous people living near the border and harmed the crops, wildlife, water source and air. Eventually, the countries agreed to establish an exclusion zone along their shared border where Colombia could not conduct any fumigation.

The LWVUS position statement, found in Impact on Issues 2016-2018, addresses the memberships' position that we support public policies that "protect the integrity of the world environment" as well as "promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest."

Read full article here <http://bit.ly/2DPKAcO>.

Women's Legislative Round Table (WLRT)

Our League advocate invites legislators of all parties to speak about and explain pending legislation. Non-profit groups are also invited to speak about issues they are tracking and advocating.

Following this is an easy walk to the Pocahontas Building where the Senate and House members have their offices. This is a great opportunity to meet with your delegate and your senator. Our delegates need to hear from their constituents because there are so many bills it is close to impossible for them to review them all thoroughly.

At the first WLRT, we heard from Delegate Vivian

Watts, formerly President of the Fairfax League, who explained the impact of the new tax law on Virginia taxpayers and with charts analyzed how those who make under \$50,000 per year pay a proportionately higher tax rate.

Lori Hass, Director of the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, described her involvement in this work because her daughter was shot and injured at Virginia Tech. There were 1,000-gun deaths in Virginia last year; 2/3 were suicides. She explained that this is now a public health epidemic and pointed out three bills that are relevant: S 1458, S 1196, and S. 1324.

Claire Guthrie-Gastañaga, of American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Virginia discussed the need to support the ERA for Virginia and the barriers to voting rights for those convicted to non-violent crimes. VA, IA, and KY are the only states that prevent voting rights for this cohort. This represents a racialization of voting rights and there is a lengthy pathway for rights to be restored. The only way to fix this is to amend the constitution. ACLU plans a major campaign this year on the right to vote.

Tim Cywinski, Director of Engagement for VA 21, an advocacy group for Virginians ages 18-35, conducted a survey that showed the average student debt to be from 25 to 50K. Tuition is now ten times the amount it was in 1979 and doesn't include room and board and books. The economic impact of tuition affects career choices away from teaching and social work, delays starting a family, and is leading toward only those from elite backgrounds being able to afford higher education. Currently millennials are the most diverse generation in the history of the world and are the most educated generation that is carrying a debt of 1.5 trillion dollars.

The above is the caliber of presenters at the WLRT. There is ample opportunity to attend committee and subcommittee hearings, a chance to meet face to face with other League members, League lobbyists, and fellow advocacy champions. In addition, it is an ideal opportunity to get first-hand experience of how our government works in Virginia. I wish that all League members would take advantage of this experience.

WLRTs continue through February 27, at 8:30 am in the Tidewater Room on the 4th floor of the SunTrust Building at the corner of Main and 10th Street in Richmond. Contact Lynn Johnston to get a hotel room at the Berkeley Hotel, 1200 Cary Street.