President’s Message

Sue Lewis

Welcome, March! Women’s History Month, International Women’s Day (8th), Daylight Savings Time begins (10th), several religious special days, and best of all, the Spring Equinox (20th). I assume we are all ready for March!

There’s a lot to read in this issue of the Virginia Voter - I hope you’ll take the time to read everything! What I want to do this month is follow up on our activities during this session of the General Assembly (GA) which gratefully adjourned on Feb. 24th and will come back on April 3rd to deal with any vetoes by the Governor, some of which we are supporting.

Our League Day on Feb 6th was very well attended with leaguers coming in from most of the local leagues. The Women’s Legislative Roundtable (WLRT) that morning had drop-ins from Delegate Vivian Watts and Senator Creigh Deeds, a nice surprise. The lunch at the Berkeley Hotel was also well attended where we heard from Tim Cywinski on engaging younger voters. All of the WLRTs were well attended – a shout-out to the Williamsburg Area league for bringing the most members and attending every one of these events!

At our Board meeting on Feb 5th, we appointed a new board member, Pat Collins, as Voter Editor – she jumped right in and, with the help of Carol Lindstrom, is putting out her first publication today! We also named Deb Wake as a new member of our Legislative Team, and she has been putting out those excellent Action Alerts. I hope you thank all of the team for the work they’ve done this session (Carol Noggle, Mary Crutchfield, Valarie Filgrove and Deb Wake).

As to the issues that disrupted the GA session, we did make a statement in relation to Governor Northam’s situation. We heard from members that we needed to say something, so we prepared a statement that condemned the actions, but did not ask for his resignation. After several conversations with staff at the LWV-US office, we acquiesced to their point of view and issued a short statement which ended in asking for him to resign. (That statement has been moved to the archives on our website.) After much feedback from members, we decided to make no more statements about the other elected members of the Executive Branch relating to their alleged and/or admitted activities. I attended a meeting of leadership from several of our partners in the Virginia Civic Engagement Table (VCET) where similar sentiments were expressed, particularly about the need to allow due process to proceed for all of those who were being pressed to resign, which would have created some interesting implications for the rest of the General Assembly session. As president, I accept the fact that not all members of LWV-VA agree with the path we took, but hope that you see how and why, and that we can move forward to doing the work that needs to be done in Virginia to Protect Voters and Defend Democracy.

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League of Women Voters – Virginia Biennial Convention
Friday, May 17 through Sunday, May 19, 2019
Norfolk Waterside Marriott, Downtown Norfolk, Virginia
235 East Main St., Norfolk, Virginia 23510

Come to Norfolk in May 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. Caucuses are scheduled for Saturday evening after the banquet. Come for the whole weekend to network with Leaguers from all 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. Join fellow Leaguers for a “dine-around” in downtown Norfolk or Portsmouth coordinated by the LWV of SHR, the Convention host League.

After the Convention on Sunday, stay for a casual lunch in the same Meeting Room, and participate in a SPECIAL SESSION with host local league. (See next page for details)

Sherry’s Magical History Tour
Join Leaguer Sherry Warren for a ferry ride and a one-hour walking trip through the 18th, 19th, & 20th centuries! Olde Towne Portsmouth is the site of dozens and dozens of beautifully maintained residences from three centuries, all within easy walking distance of the Norfolk-to-Portsmouth ferry!

Meet in Lobby of Norfolk Waterside Marriott in Downtown Norfolk on Friday at 5:15 p.m. and please wear walking shoes!

Ferry to Portsmouth: $2 each way ($1 for riders 65 years and older) — exact change only!

Come early and stay late – SHR has Friday and Sunday activities!

- Explore a bit. Choose your own dining destination downtown using our information and directions. You'll find Seafood, International, Southern, oh my!

- Ride The Tide – Norfolk's light rail – with host Leaguers and find some of Norfolk's many restaurants, shops and historical features.

- Ride the Elizabeth River ferry to Portsmouth and take Sherry’s tour of Olde Towne Portsmouth. Olde Towne is the site of the original town of Portsmouth, founded 1752, and boasts homes from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, considered the best representation of such architecture between Alexandria, Virginia, and Charleston, South Carolina. Participants can choose to take the one-hour walking tour before dining, or walk directly to a variety of restaurants, from breweries to continental dining.

- How many will join local Leaguers for a sunrise walk-run on the Elizabeth River Trail on Sunday morning?
For information about any additional days beyond or before the convention, contact Martha Rollins mgr757@aol.com.

LWV-VA Biennial Convention
Norfolk Waterside Marriott, Downtown Norfolk, Virginia
Friday, May 17 through Sunday, May 19, 2019

Register for the Convention at the Marriott on Friday and join us for a fun and productive weekend. Norfolk’s beautiful Waterside Marriott is offering us a special discount rate for sleeping rooms from Thursday, May 16 to Tuesday, May 21. So make it a full weekend with League friends!
Call by April 25 at 757-627-4200 and ask for the LWV-VA Convention rate.

LWVSHR SPECIAL SESSION

Meet the Rising Tide

Stay for lunch Sunday and attend an important statewide Special Session sponsored by the LWV of South Hampton Roads featuring Rear Admiral (Ret.) Ann C. Phillips, Special Assistant to the Governor for Coastal Adaptation and Protection.

Sunday Special Session
Rear Admiral (Ret.) Ann C. Phillips
will give a firsthand statewide update on early results from her newly appointed Cabinet position, plus a review of resilience-focused legislation from the 2019 Virginia General Assembly Session.

Joining Admiral Phillips is Christine Morris, Chief Resilience Officer for the City of Norfolk. Ms. Morris will describe the soon-to-be constructed $112M federally-funded disaster resilience grant won by Virginia for one of Norfolk’s historic areas.

Sunday, May 19, 2019
12:30-2:30 pm
Norfolk Waterside Marriott

Cost to join this Special Session is $25 for a casual lunch and the presentations. Check the “Special Session” box on the Registration Form to attend. The LWV of South Hampton Roads’ annual meeting will begin after the presentations. Details will be sent separately to members.
LWV-VA CONVENTION

Just a bit about Convention ....
Anne Bradstreet Smith, LWV-VA Program Director/Convention Chair

As everyone knows, we have the 39th LWV-VA Convention at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott on May 18 and 19. Come early and stay late ... the League of South Hampton Roads has planned a superb “Dine Around” with super fun activities for Friday evening the 17th and an amazing Bonus Session after adjournment on Sunday. You won’t want to miss either one!

And some words about a few of our speakers....
• On Saturday our lunch speaker on Diversity is Christy S. Coleman, the CEO of the American Civil War Museum, which combines several historic sites in Richmond. In previous roles she was President and CEO of the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit, MI, and Director of Historic Programs for Colonial Williamsburg. She was named by Time as “One of 31 people changing the South”.

• We have some outstanding breakouts planned. Presenters will include Skip Stiles, Executive Director of Wetlands Watch on “What About this Weather” and Walt Latham, York County Director of Elections/General Registrar and President of the Voter Registrars Association of Virginia.

• For the evening, Rachel Bitecofer, who spoke at our last Council, returns. Dr. Bitecofer is the Assistant Director of the Wason Center for Public Policy at Christopher Newport University, where she teaches classes on political behavior, campaigns, elections, and political analysis. She is the author of The Unprecedented 2016 Presidential Election.

• And before our Sunday morning Plenary Session we are fortunate to hear Ron Carlee speak on Defending Democracy on All Levels. A current professor at Old Dominion University, Dr. Carlee is the past County Manager of Arlington, Virginia, and City Manager of Charlotte, NC. He travels widely as a presenter for the International City Managers Association (ICMA), promoting a participatory democracy that assures opportunity and respect for all people.

Delegates from each League are welcome!
Friday evening, 5 pm May 17 to Sunday, May 19, 2019
Norfolk Waterside Marriott
235 E Main St, Norfolk, VA 23510

Room Rate: $139/night (plus state & local taxes)
Call to reserve rooms now (757-627-4200), mention League of Women Voters
Deadline for room reservations is Thursday, April 25, 2019

This room rate is available for 3 days before and 3 days after the LWV-VA Convention to give you ample time to enjoy all the sites and features of the Norfolk area.
Convention Registration Fee: $150.00* per person, including Saturday Lunch and the Saturday evening reception & banquet.

Special Session on Sunday: $25 casual lunch and presentations organized by host SHR League

The State Board is planning the convention which is hosted by LWV South Hampton Roads. Delegates will adopt program and elect officers and members of the Board of Directors.
Workshops, Caucuses, and Info Sessions will keep everybody busy! Leagues will need to field teams to cover all the events and take home some of every session.

Featured presentations include:

Election Security & Integrity
Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion
Let’s Talk About the People
(Communications, DEI, Engaging Membership)
It’s All About the Money (fund-raising)
Defending Democracy on All Levels
Redistricting

Convention is an opportunity for League Members to learn, to have a voice and enjoy the camaraderie of other engaged and concerned Virginians. So come, participate, and enjoy!
Here are some examples of how LWVUS/Education Fund (EF) spread the word about VOTE411:

1. LWVEF was able to secure several prominent partnership opportunities with organizations around the country to promote VOTE411. Some examples of these partnerships are:
   a. ProPublica promoted VOTE411 to its subscribers’ multiple times before Election Day; it was picked up by Apple News and pushed out to 9 million Americans!
   b. Council of Great City Schools (serving the nation’s largest urban school districts) promoted VOTE411 to hundreds of school leadership personnel nationwide.
   c. Proof.org (a social justice organization) provided posters promoting VOTE411 and put up billboards in key cities.
   d. National Voters Registration Day leaders featured VOTE411 in promotional materials sent to thousands of partner organizations.
   e. The Election Protection hotline/coalition heavily relied on VOTE411 to protect voters in real time on Election Day.
   f. VOTE411 was featured in an article in the American Librarians Association magazine, reaching thousands of librarians.
   g. LWVEF ran Spotify ads promoting VOTE411 to African American voters in SC, TX, FL and GA – reaching 1.3 million impressions in the days before Election Day.
   h. LWVEF partnered with a leading agency to pilot a first-of-its kind texting program to remind new registrants to vote.

2. LWVEF worked to get some prominent celebrities to promote VOTE411 in the weeks leading up to Election Day. America Ferrera posted about VOTE411 on her Instagram page and asked followers to use our guides to become more informed. John Oliver used the last two minutes of his HBO show to promote VOTE411 and asked viewers to use our tool to become more informed. Amy Schumer promoted VOTE411 right before Election Day on her Instagram post showing a video of her baby ultrasound, ensuring that the story and VOTE411 would be picked up by other entertainment news sources (which it was).

3 LWVEF and e.thePeople (ETP), the organization that manages the software we use to create the voters’ guides on VOTE411, partnerships are extremely beneficial to the Leagues since they ensure the candidate data gets in front of more voters (our ultimate goal), the Leagues get resources from the media partner and this opens up more partnership opportunities with the media partner (League advertising, candidate forum partnering, etc.). **If you have a media outlet in your area you think might be willing to partner**
in coming years, please let me know! We’ve worked with TV, radio, print and online media outlets so anyone is welcome!

4. ETP were able to set up four new League/Media partnerships where the media partner used the ETP product and the Leagues candidate data to display the information on the media outlets website. These partnerships are extremely beneficial to the Leagues since they ensure the candidate data gets in front of more voters (our ultimate goal), the Leagues get resources from the media partner and this opens up more partnership opportunities with the media partner (League advertising, candidate forum partnering, etc.). **If you have a media outlet in your area you think might be willing to partner in coming years, please let me know!** We’ve worked with TV, radio, print and online media outlets so anyone is welcome!

5. Actively managed ongoing LWVEF Google Grant that provided VOTE411 with approximately $440,000 worth of free search-term advertising on Google Search. LWVEF was able to target these ads in the state and focus on the various parts of the election cycle (registration, absentee/early voting, candidate information published, election day, voter ID rules, etc.) depending on where each state fell in that cycle.

6. Through outreach to national partners and media etc. over 5,200 different websites linked to VOTE411 in some way, either through a direct link or through the free VOTE411 widget.

7. Piloted sharing the VOTE411 candidate information widget with State Leagues to provide the candidate information directly on the State League website. This enabled these state Leagues to provide the VOTE411 candidate information directly on their League website and captured voters who turned to the State League for information as opposed to the VOTE411.org website. LWVEF hopes to expand this pilot program in the 2019 cycle to allow more State and Local Leagues to utilize the candidate information widget. **If you’re interested in using the widget on your League website please let me know!**

8. Used Facebook and Twitter to spread the word. Throughout the year we posted on the VOTE411 Facebook page promoting VOTE411 and the voters’ guides. We currently have over 14,000 “likes” on this page and continue to reach out to new partners to help spread the word. (Please note: the Facebook page referenced here is for the public and does not refer to our internal Facebook page for VOTE411 administrators). And the VOTE411 Twitter handle currently has nearly 7,400 followers. These VOTE411 specific activities are in addition to the VOTE411 posts on the LWVUS Facebook page (nearly 112,000 likes) and sent out via the LWVUS Twitter handle (over 24,000 followers).

These are some examples of how LWVUS/EF helped promote VOTE411 nationally with the goal of creating an ongoing drumbeat about VOTE411 that increases as we approach each Election Day. We know that you were working just as hard to promote VOTE411 in your local community! Together, these efforts contributed to the huge success we had this election educating millions of voters! If you have any examples of the types of promotion you did in your community (bookmarks, press releases, newspaper ads, etc.), please send them to Megan Brown (mbrown@lwv.org). We like to share examples of successful promotional materials with all Leagues through our Facebook group for VOTE411 administrators. If you’re not currently signed up for this, please let me know.

Thank you again for all the hard work you and other volunteers put in during Election 2018! Please let me know if you have any questions about the Google analytics or about VOTE411 in general. And please be sure to share the VOTE411 survey with anyone who helped create your voters’ guide. We really want as much feedback as possible so we can improve VOTE411 for the next election cycle!
Women’s Legislative Roundtables (WLRT)s were held every Wednesday during the regular General Assembly session, at the SunTrust building across the street from the Pocahontas building that houses legislator offices. Members from across the state enjoyed hearing from legislators like Delegate Vivian Watts (who generously gave her time weekly), Delegate Betsy Carr, Senator Adam Ebbin and Senator Creigh Deeds and Secretary of Transportation Shannon Valentine. Leads from our partner organizations also spoke about legislation they were following: Clair Gastañaga and Jenny Glass (ACLU), Bernice Travers (Crusade for Voters), Gigi (NARAL), Brian Cannon (OneVirginia2021), LaTonya Joyner Gregory (Planned Parenthood Advocates of Virginia), Morgan Johnson (Sierra Club), Kati Hornung (VARatifyERA), Tim Cywinski (Virginia21). Our own lobbyists (Carol Noggle, Valarie Fillgrove and Mary Crutchfield) were also available for updates and questions. Pastries and coffee or tea fortified us for meetings with our legislators or their staff after the briefings and many members stayed for a floor session or committee meeting before heading home.

These one-hour sessions armed attendees with vital information to then visit their delegates and senators, to sit in on hearings and on League Day to be recognized in the Senate Gallery.

“Wild Session wraps in Virginia” recent headline could well describe January and February in Richmond. Wild? Whirlwind? Drama? Yes, all of those, but the legislative wheels kept turning. Early morning and late afternoon committee meetings continued unabated. The League attended the proceedings daily to monitor action and to support or oppose bills of particular importance to our Positions and Policies. Choosing items for action was based on timing, need and effectiveness.

Observers could see, during floor sessions, some differences in the House and Senate culture, protocol and decorum. That included some debate obstruction:
“Will the Gentleman yield?” “No, I will not yield.” Each side, in the House, attempted to “hijack the rules.” Strong and frequent Point of Personal Privilege (PPP) statements were very “pointed” from both sides on various bills including those regarding firearms in churches, ERA ratification, bills to limit the power of the Governor, changes to long-standing Rules, teaching Bible literature in the schools, and even on which June Tuesday to have the Primary elections. Were there attempts to “hijack the rules?” The House, with many subcommittees, affects the disposition of bills differently than the Senate. The House subcommittees have been described as “powerful gatekeepers” because a successful bill in the full Senate will fail in a House subcommittee that has only seven members.

Outstanding statements about Black History during February were very welcome in both chambers.

So, what happened?

Elections, Voting, and Voters
(Highlights of 93 election-related bills! Only 24 passed.)
The goal of Voters’ rights and opportunities -- complete and for all -- including those incarcerated was not reached. Success to have genuine No excuse absentee voting, though only for seven days, succeeded with bipartisan support. Absentee polling places will stay open properly for voters who are in line at 7 pm. Preventing split precincts and establishing proper boundary lines advanced. The failure of HB2266 to require verification of citizenship with E-Verify prevented possible improper purges of the voter list. Yet to be determined is whether or not voters will be considered “provisional” while waiting for verification of Social Security numbers -- SB1038. Improved ballot order to list candidates before the ballot questions will ensure that voters see the candidates first. Recount procedures for tied elections were clarified.

Not succeeding:

Requiring Voter Registration and information in High Schools
Restoration of voting rights and voter registration information in regional jails
Increasing Voter security: Eliminate repeating the voter’s address audibly at check-in (HB2204 & HB2781 failed.)
Extending the deadline for receipt of mail-in ballots. (There was concern that “if you give the voter an inch, he will want a mile”)
Adding the Photo ID of a student enrolled at an out-of-state university
Extending the expiration time allowance for a DMV Photo ID

What happened to HB2204? Where did it fail?
This bill, to protect the security of a voter, succeeded in the House and then in the Senate P&E Committee. It was supported by groups that wanted to prevent improper use, such as stalking, of someone whose address was heard when a voter was checking in. An intended audience of the audible statement is party observers who sit near the check-in election officer. Apparently, that use, not security concerns, took priority when the bill was described on the Senate Floor – February 18th – late in the last day of any possible committee action. The Senate recommitted the bill to the Senate P&E Committee that could/would not meet again. In spite of pleas to the Committee chair by the Patron (and me) early the next morning after learning of the maneuver, no mercy was given to reconsider the vote on the Senate floor.

Environment:
Environment improvement and Protection or: Who has power -- the Governor or the Legislators???
Two bills related to regulating carbon dioxide emissions received significant debate. One side insisted that the bills were not about the environment but about who would authorize participation in regional entities that would regulate emissions and cap and trade measures. Supporters of the bills wanted legislators, not the Governor, to have authorization power.

HB2269 from Delegate Poindexter would prohibit the Governor or any state agency from adopting any regulation establishing or bringing about the participation by the Commonwealth in the Transportation and Climate Initiative or any other regional transportation sector emissions program.

HB2611 from Delegate Poindexter: Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI): prohibition on participation by Commonwealth would prohibit the Governor or any state agency from adopting any regulation establishing a carbon dioxide cap-and-trade program or bringing about the participation by the Commonwealth in a regional market for the trading of carbon dioxide allowances. The video of the House debate is worth watching to see and hear statements from each “side” about the causes of flooding – land sinking or water rising. See the January 28 floor session starting at 1:49 PM. It includes reference to Copernicus, Galileo, Einstein and Demosthenes. The Senators had a similar debate.
Both HB2269 and HB2611 passed in the House and Senate and have gone to the Governor who is likely to veto them, as he did with similar bills in 2018.
Other environment-related bills were related to promoting use of solar energy, a moratorium on use of fossil fuels, a greenhouse gas emission inventory, the New Green Deal and coal ash mitigation measures.

1. Solar Freedom: McClellan SB1456 and Keam HB2329 (Failed)
2. Solar energy installation; advisory board: Aird HB2741 Passed House and Senate
3. Coal ash mitigation (Success): Wagner SB1355 Surovell, Chase; Carroll Foy HB2105
5. Solar Energy Demonstration Fund, Rasoul: HB1902 (Failed)
6. Greenhouse Gas Emission inventory, Rasoul HB2501 (Failed)
7. New Green Deal; Rasoul: HJ724 Failed. Stated that the General Assembly supports the movement Green New Deal Virginia, focused on retooling the Commonwealth’s economy with solutions that center on equity and justice.

House vs Senate Protocol
There were unusual, unwanted proposals to affect a bill from the other chamber. Amendments to a bill were proposed without the consent of the Patron in the other chamber. Three instances resulted in rebukes. The amendments were not successful.
1. Senator Peake wanted to change Delegate Cole’s bill on Transportation (HJ581) to add parts from his SJ259.
2. Delegate Byron changed Senator McClellan’s bill regarding World Prematurity Day (SJ299). The amendment attempt was called an “egregious” violation of protocol.
3. Delegate Toscano proposed an amendment to Senator Chase’s bill on affirming Virginia’s equal rights (SJ275) but it was quickly defeated along with the original bill.

Differences in the House and Senate procedures also include how votes are taken in committees when a legislator is absent or not in the room. Proxies are used in Senate Committees. Senators may leave a proxy with instructions to a committee member if he/she needs to go to another meeting. Delegates, however, do not use proxies at all in House Committees. Thus, with just one Delegate leaving the room during a vote in the committee could determine a bill’s fate if there is a close vote. A tie vote means a bill fails.
Senators also object to the power of small House subcommittees to dispose of Senate bills that had succeeded with a large majority of Senators.

Debates: Bills and issues that generated long debates on floor sessions included the following:

**SB1502** relating to adding electives in public schools on the Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament and New Testament. There was concern about its constitutionality and which versions of scripture would be used. Debate in Senate was on 2/4/19.

**SB1458** Regarding firearm safety: the 2/14/19 Senate “Morning Hour” discussion was on the prevention of homicides of children such as at the Parkland, Florida shooting. The bill was referenced because it would have established the “red flag” or Extreme Risk Protective Order (ERPO) but was defeated 7 to 7 in the Courts of Justice Committee. The hour-long debate (from 2:39 PM to 3:28 PM) originated with recognition of the first anniversary of the Parkland shooting (1/14/18) but evolved into a debate about gun control in general. Issues under discussion included the “red flag” bill, the second amendment rights, why Senators want gun control but support “mass carnage” via abortion, suggested solutions are well-intentioned but naïve, the one common “ingredient is a gun so easy access is a problem, that this is not the time for a “political wedge issue”, and which “side” is making this a “political wedge issue.”

**SB1024**: Allowing firearms in churches was debated on the Senate floor where it passed but was never heard in any House Committee.

Opioid-related bills were presented. One success to help mitigate lethal overdoses was **HB2318** that adds individuals who may possess and administer naloxone or other opioid antagonist, provided that they have completed a training program, in public schools. Support was unanimous in both the House and the Senate.

BILLS ON THE WAY TO THE GOVERNOR

Two bills that passed will provide seven days of No Excuse Absentee Voting (NEAV). There will be 7
days for true in-person NEAV starting in November 2020 in Virginia so that all voters will have these convenient options before Election Day.

We will want to help and be sure that there is significant Voter Education in 2020 so voters have full knowledge of days and hours and locations.

The bills are SB1026 (Spruill) [http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=191&typ=bil&val=sb1026] and Rush (HB2790) [http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=191&typ=bil&val=hb2790]

**ONEVIRGINIA 2021 UPDATE**

Brian Cannon, Executive Director, OneVirginia2021

To our dedicated supporters,

Today, OneVirginia2021 is thrilled to report that the Virginia General Assembly has taken the first crucial step toward truly reforming the way Virginia draws its legislative districts, including citizens in the redistricting process for the first time and correcting the hyper-partisan process of the past.

Worked out by a conference committee, this compromise proposal of HJ615 (Cole) and SJ306 (Barker) reconciled both proposed redistricting commission amendments to the Virginia Constitution intended to reform the way Virginia’s districts are drawn after the 2020 Census and beyond.

And although this bipartisan plan does not reflect every provision we urged in our original proposal, make no mistake: This reform will end partisan gerrymandering in Virginia. We are particularly gratified that the General Assembly adopted language that requires the commission to do its work in full public view and follow clear rules that keep our communities together.

ABOUT THE COMPROMISE PROPOSAL

The compromise shares a number of substantive provisions found in the House plan, Senate plan and SJ274, a bipartisan proposal drafted with the help of OneVirginia2021’s Citizens Constitutional Amendment Drafting Committee.

Here are key elements in the reform passed by the House of Delegates and the Senate on Saturday:

- Establishes a Redistricting Commission of 8 legislators and 8 citizens, with a citizen serving as chair
- Requires full transparency of all meetings, minutes and data
- Includes specific protections for minority communities
- Includes impartial review in the selection of citizen members of the commission
- Excludes unelected congressional or General Assembly employees from the commission
- Guards against partisan gerrymandering by requiring a supermajority of commissioners for approval of district maps
- Provides the General Assembly only up-or-down votes on the commission’s maps, without amendments
- Excludes the Governor from the approval process, which would throw off the balance created by the above framework.

OUR GRATITUDE...After five years of grassroots advocacy, bipartisan lawmaker outreach and countless volunteer hours, OneVirginia2021 made a giant leap forward today. This is due in no small part to the dedication of our volunteer leaders, boards, staff and nearly 100,000 supporters across the Commonwealth. On behalf of our volunteer leaders, boards, staff; and nearly 100,000 supporters across the Commonwealth, we would like to thank the members of the Conference Committee for their willingness to compromise and create a plan that gives Virginians a better way to draw district lines than the hyperpolitical process we have now: Senators Jill Vogel, George Barker and John Cosgrove as well as Delegates Mark Cole, Nick Rush, Jay Leftwich and Paul Krizek.

Further, we want to gratefully acknowledge the many legislative champions that have worked alongside us during this legislative session, including Senators Emmett Hanger, Mamie Locke and Glen Sturtevant.
Finally, we would be remiss if we did not mention the recent efforts of Wyatt Durette and the entire bipartisan Drafting Committee, Leadership Council and Governor George Allen -- as well as our dedicated grassroots advocates and volunteers from every corner of the Commonwealth.

Further, today also reminds us of the tireless efforts of one of the biggest early champions we had in this movement, the late Senator John Miller.

NEXT STEPS
This is just the first step to amend the Virginia Constitution. Looking ahead, OneVirginia2021 will work to ensure this reform is passed again by the 2020 General Assembly and then wins Virginia voters’ approval in a statewide referendum in November 2020.

We plan on engaging all our supporters moving forward to ensure these next steps are a success.

And although there’s still a long way to go, the bipartisan victory in this session makes us more determined than ever to end gerrymandering in Virginia once and for all.

Jennifer Boysko. After the rally we went to the Pocahontas building to speak to our legislators.

Every day following the rally VAratifyERA supporters were at the Pocahontas or the Capitol building making visits to legislators and holding signs to remind their legislators that they were not going to be ignored. One day two members of “Equal Means Equal” dressed up as the figures on the Virginia State Seal, one as “Virtus” standing with a foot on the other, “Tyranny.” This reenactment was done to protest the House leadership that was not allowing a vote for ERA to come to the House floor. The woman representing Virtue, because she exposed her breast, (as depicted in the state seal) was arrested and put in jail without bail.

On Wednesday, February 20, during our Women’s Legislative Roundtable Kati Hornung, VAratifyERA Campaign Coordinator, gave us an update. She said that the protester was being held in jail without bail until March 21. She said, “This is not warranted! Virginia is now a battlefield state for ERA!” Kati also informed us about Delegate Hala Ayala’s (D-51st) resolution for a rules change, HR274, which if passed, would allow a vote on ERA on the House floor.

Delegate Gilbert (R-15th) made a resolution, HR279, which reverted the threshold for approval of a vote in the House to a two thirds majority. Delegate Simon (D-53rd) filed a resolution, HR280, for discharging the ERA resolution to the House floor with a simple majority vote. Kati ended by asking Leaguers to go talk to Republican delegates and ask for support on voting yes for HR274 and HR280 and voting no on HR279. Valarie Fillgrove and I went around to most of the delegates on Kati’s list and talked with their legislative assistants.

That afternoon during the House floor session, Delegate Toscano (D-57th) tried to add the ERA to a resolution SJ275 of Senator Amanda Chase’s (R-11th). Del. Gilbert (R-15th) blocked this attempt. Del. Gilbert made a motion to remove the resolution and send it back to committee. Republican delegates voted on and passed this amended resolution by Del. Gilbert. Although Del. Toscano had asked to speak to the amendment before it was voted on Speaker Cox did not acknowledge him or allow him to speak. Del. Toscano said,” We could have had this vote today on the House floor without changing one single rule. But instead you prevented it.”
VAratifyERA members started a vigil for ERA starting Wednesday afternoon at 3:00 pm with supporters lining the hallway in the Capitol holding signs. After 5:00 pm the vigil moved to the back of the Pocahontas building on Bank Street and continued all night long and was live-streamed on Facebook.

On Thursday, February 21, Del. Carroll Foy (D-2nd) gave a floor speech where she accused powerful men opposing the ERA of using fear just as they had in the past during Virginia’s Resistance movement against school desegregation. She said, “Fear has caused this body to be on the wrong side of history too many times and for far too long.” Del. Gilbert responded saying that ERA supporters had engaged in fear-mongering by describing Republicans as anti-women. He also said that in other states that have ratified the ERA, pro-choice groups have used equal protection language as a legal basis to expand abortion rights. Delegate Marcus Simon (D-53rd) gave a brief speech explaining that voting against his resolution HR280 would be the same as voting against the ERA resolution. Then the votes were taken. The vote on Del. Ayala’s HR274 was 50 yeas, 50 nays, so it failed by one vote. The next vote was for Del. Gilbert’s HR279 and that failed 1 yea, 94 nays. The vote on Del. Simon’s HR280 was very close, 49 yeas, 51 nays. It was a disappointing outcome, and I felt sad accepting that this was the end of the fight for ERA in Virginia for this year. I have hope that we will continue our efforts to educate legislators and the public on the ERA and that next year we will succeed in getting the ERA ratified in Virginia!

SAVE THE DATE: LWV CONVENTION 2020

National LWV Convention: 100 Years Strong
June 25 – 28, 2020
Washington, DC

What are your plans for our 100th anniversary and Women’s History Month next year?

OPPORTUNITY TO SUPPORT 19TH AMENDMENT MEMORIAL

For the anniversary of the League on February 14th, 2020, please consider a philanthropic donation from your League to a memorial dedicated to the passage of the 19th Amendment that is planning to open on August 26, 2020. The memorial is in Occoquan Regional Park in Virginia, part of the historic prison grounds where scores of suffragists were jailed, kept in inhumane conditions and tortured for picketing the Wilson White House. Currently, the plan for the central statue is Carrie Chapman Catt, highlighting her and the League’s important work in securing the passage of the 19th Amendment. With a $1,000 donation, your name or the name of your League will be included on the donor wall at the entrance. In honor of the 100th Anniversary of women’s suffrage and the League, LWVEF will be supporting the monument with a financial donation. Detailed information about the memorial including design renderings can be found here: https://suffragistmemorial.org/

Reminder: There is a wealth of information on the National League of Women Voters Website with downloadable materials at https://www.lwv.org/

TELL US ABOUT YOUR ACTIVITIES

Local league news and events are most welcome. Please use Times New Roman, 11 point font and submit to Patricia Collins at collinspmaria@gmail.com.

Many hands make light work and text has to be reviewed. Non-partisan events and innovative high school voter registration best practices are most welcome.
March is Women’s History Month

How are you observing this?

Women's History Month

1916 - Margaret Sanger opens the first birth control clinic

1903 - Marie Curie is awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics for the discovery of radioactivity

1920 - With the passage of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, U.S. women get to vote

1848 - Elizabeth Blackwell becomes the first American woman to receive a medical degree

1924 - Mary, Queen of Scots is the first woman to be elected to the House of Commons

1848 - Susan B. Anthony crusades for women’s rights in the United States and internationally

1870 - Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace, writes the first computer programs

2570 B.C. - Queen Nofretari rules Egypt, calling herself “God’s wife.”

#BalanceforBetter
#IWD2019

International Women’s Day Logo
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA
2019 BIENNIAL CONVENTION
Registration Worksheet
Register online at https://lwv-va.org/

Excellent speakers: *Kenneth Alexander, Norfolk Mayor; *Rebecca Green, William & Mary; *Walt Latham, York County and President of Voter Registrars Association; *Skip Stiles, Wetlands Watch; *Ron Carlee, Old Dominion University; *Susan Carty, LWV BOD; *banquet speaker Rachel Bitecofer, Christopher Newport University; *bonus session speaker Rear Admiral (ret) Ann Phillips, special assistant to the Governor; *Christine Morris, Norfolk Reliance Officer

Friday evening, May 17 to Sunday, May 19, 2019
Norfolk Waterside Marriott
235 E Main St, Norfolk, VA 23510
Room Rate: $139/night (plus state & local taxes)
Call to reserve rooms now (757-627-4200), mention League of Women Voters
Deadline for room reservations is Thursday, April 25, 2019
This room rate is available for 3 days before and 3 days after the LWV-VA Convention to give you ample time to enjoy all the sites and features of the Norfolk area.

Convention Registration Fee: $150.00* per person, including Saturday Lunch and the Saturday evening reception & banquet.
Deadline to register for Convention is Thursday, April 25, 2019
Convention host local League LWV of South Hampton Roads has arranged a “dine-around” featuring a wide-variety of local restaurants on Friday evening, including a ferry ride to Olde Town Portsmouth restaurants.

Convention Schedule - *(Please indicate which sessions you will attend.)*

Friday, May 17, 2019 – 5:00 p.m. Registration & 7:00 p.m. Dine-Around

Saturday, May 18, 2019
All day: LWVSHR Silent Auction, winners announced at conclusion of banquet; Wares Tables

8:00 a.m. Registration & Bites
9:30 a.m. Opening Plenary Session Call to Order
  -speaker: Susan Carty, LWV National Board Liaison “Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion”
12:30 p.m. Lunch, included in registration
  – speaker: Christy Coleman, CEO of the American Civil War Museum, Diversity: “Why and How to Be Inclusive”
2:30 – 3:30 p.m. Breakouts - choose 1  
*Living in our world *Women’s Issues *Redistricting

3:45 – 4:45 p.m. Breakouts - choose 1  
*Election Security & Integrity *What about the Wetlands *Grab Bag of Hot Button Issues

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Local League Presidents Meeting
5:00 – 6:00 p.m. Reception with Cash Bar
6:00 p.m. Banquet (choose entrée)  
– speaker: Rachel Bitecofer, Christopher Newport University, Wasson Center for Public Policy

Resolution Committee & Caucuses: 15 minutes after conclusion of Banquet  
*Budget *Women’s Rights Position *Bylaws *Centennial Celebration Brainstorming

Sunday, May 19, 2019
6:00 a.m. Walk along the Elizabeth River Trail (optional)
7:30 a.m. Registration & Continental Breakfast
7:30 – 8:15 a.m. League Management Workshops (please indicate which session you will attend)  
*Let’s Talk About People (Communications, DEI, Engaging Membership)  
*It’s All About the Money (Fund-raising)  
*Working with League Partners

8:30 a.m. Plenary Session  
*Keynote Speaker: Ron Carlee, PhD., Old Dominion University: Defending Democracy on All Levels”  
• Adoption of Budget and Program  
• Election of Board for 2019-2021  
• Resolutions  
• Guidance to new board  
• Date & Location of LWV-VA 2020 Council  
• Date & Location of LWV-VA 2021 Convention

Noon: Convention Adjourns

12:30 p.m. Special Session, hosted by League of Women Voters of South Hampton Roads  
Casual Lunch (separate fee); Meet the Rising Tide  
Speakers:
• Rear Admiral (ret.) Ann Phillips, special assistant to the Governor of Virginia for Coastal Adaptation and Protection
• Christine Morris, Norfolk Resilience Officer
Session “Meet the Rising Tide” (includes deli lunch) .....$25.00

Online registration is required.  
To register go to https://lwv-va.org/39th-biennial-convention/;  
PayPal or Check payments will be accepted. All payments must be received by May 1, 2019.