



# THE VIRGINIA VOTER

August 2019

Volume 67 Number 3

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## Call for Nominations for the 2020-22 LWVUS Board and Nominating Committee

**Applications are now available for the 2020-22 LWVUS Board and Nominating Committee.**

To learn more about these amazing leadership opportunities, please [review the FAQ](#) and job descriptions for [LWVUS Board](#) and [Nominating Committee](#) or contact the [LWVUS Nominating Committee](#) at [nominatingcommittee@lwv.org](mailto:nominatingcommittee@lwv.org).

Consider [submitting an application](#) or [recommending another leader!](#)

## This is what Democracy Looks Like

Democracy is representative. On July 30, 2019, we celebrated the 400th anniversary of representative democracy at Jamestown, Virginia. Jamestown settlers sought to govern themselves by appointing representatives from among their peers. The model for a representative democracy set up in Jamestown became the basis for our country and for many countries after us. Some of these democracies have endured but many have faltered and failed. While we hold the ideal of representative democracy, not everyone has had a voice or representation: not minorities, not women, not those without education or land, not those living in Washington DC or in territories owned by the United States.

Democracy is messy. [American Evolution](#) has planned a series of events to commemorate the importance of 1619 in American History, one of which was a forum on Representative Democracy held in Williamsburg on July 30-August 1. A number of speakers noted the importance of the right to free speech and to a free press but that these liberties can lead to sometimes uncomfortable situations. In an email, one speaker complained that there was a protester during the President’s speech at Jamestown. Another speaker fumed that foreign agencies are able to set up disinformation channels on our soil but this freedom is not reciprocated. These protected rights cannot be held up only when we agree with what is being said. And in the midst of mass shootings, does one individual’s right to own guns outweigh the right of the community to live free from the fear of gun violence?

Democracy is fragile. Last month, LWVUS lobbied for [SR252](#) which would designate September as [Democracy Month](#) in order to draw awareness and to educate. A majority of Americans don’t believe it is essential to live in a democracy. They don’t see any problem with having the military control our government. Our citizens lack civic education. They don’t know how

many branches are in our federal government, much less are they able to name one. They do not vote because they don't think that their vote matters. When we stop supporting democracy, what will be the model government for the world? Who will be a beacon to those who look for leadership and hope?

Democracy is being threatened. Even though the 15th amendment guarantees the right to vote, many minorities were not able to exercise their right to vote and that led to the passage of the VRA (Voting Rights Act) in 1965. However, a Supreme Court Decision in 2013 (Shelby v. Holder), gutted the protections of the VRA. It is imperative that Congress pass HR 4: Voting Rights Advancement Act to update and provide voting protections. Without this bill, this could be the first redistricting in over 50 years without the VRA in place. Without the VRA, voter suppression and disenfranchisement are on the rise.

Democracy is worth preserving. September 24th is National Voter Registration Day. Do your part by helping citizens register to vote. Democracy is strong when everyone gets a voice--a vote--and uses it. Democracy is fragile when people don't use their voice/vote because they don't have time or they don't think their vote makes a difference. Democracy is imperiled when people are not allowed to use their vote due to suppression (through gerrymandering, purging of rolls, ID laws). Attend the LWV-VA Workshop to learn more about GOTV (Getting Out The Vote), helping with the census (which affects representation and federal funds), and People Powered Fair Maps (LWVUS 50-state redistricting project).  
League of Women Voters: Needed now more than ever.

Deb Wake, President LWV-VA



**September 24, 2019**

**Sign Your League Up [Here!](#)**

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## LWV VA Fall Workshop – Get Ready for Action.

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There is no doubt the League of Women Voters of Virginia will have a full plate in 2020! We have a huge election this November, important legislation to track (such as redistricting during the General Assembly), and the Census, just to name a few.

What better way to position yourself for action than by joining your fellow League members at the 2019 Fall Workshop at the Hilton Garden Inn, Fredericksburg on September 14?

We will kick off the day with a Continental breakfast at 8 AM– and then get right to work at 9 AM with an update from LWV US on their new Get Out the Vote Program for Virginia! We will then hear from Ronald Brown of the US Census Department on how we can insure all are counted #fullcount! The morning will finish off with a program on the new LWV US 50-state redistricting plan and how we can be a part of that.

Lunch will see a presentation on the timely topic of the affordable housing crises in the Commonwealth with Erica Sims of Housing Virginia. Then we swing into the afternoon with our legislative and advocacy team presenting our legislative priorities and giving us some strategy tips.

After a break, you can decide which breakout you would like to attend: an update on our policy changes, a lesson in Google docs, fundraising tips and procedures, or a program on how to run effective board meetings and parliamentary procedure!

We still have some space available. The rate is \$95 including breakfast and lunch. (Scholarships are available; contact Linda at [treasurer@lwv-va.org](mailto:treasurer@lwv-va.org).) We have a few rooms left at the nearby Hampton Inn for anyone arriving on the 13<sup>th</sup>. You must request room reservation by Sept 5. Contact me at [events@lwv-va.org](mailto:events@lwv-va.org).

Final registration for the workshop is Sept. 6.

See you in Fredericksburg!!

Joan Porte, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, LWV-VA

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## 2019 Women's Equality Day Events

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On Women's Equality Day, Local Leagues held events throughout Virginia commemorating how far women have come -- and the distance left to go.

In Arlington, a full library auditorium watched a screening of "Iron Jawed Angels," followed by informative 19th Amendment Q&A led by Nancy Tate, former LWV-US Executive Director, who is leading the Centennial events of LWV-Arlington. She and the library's Diane Kresh discussed the 19 events Arlington County will host for the Centennial of the vote, as well as events from the Turning Point Suffrage Memorial and Washington, D.C. Museums.

The LWV of the Charlottesville Area partnered with the National Organization for Women for a free screening of "Iron Jawed Angels" to commemorate the 19th amendment and launch the next ERA ratification push in Virginia.

In Fredericksburg, holding "Votes for Women" signs, the League marched down Caroline Street to the Central Rappahannock Regional Library. Marchers included Becky Reed, the first woman to chair the Stafford County Board of Supervisors. The League's planned Centennial events include field trips to Richmond for the dedication of the Virginia Women's Monument on October 14 and a visit to the Workhouse Prison Museum in Lorton where suffragists were imprisoned.



Watch a just-released video on the fight for women's right to vote, a journey that did not end for many women with the passage of the 19th Amendment. From Annenberg, part of Vision 2020's Women 100: A Celebration of American Women, the film also touches on the battle for the Equal Rights Amendment and includes Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg.

<https://www.annenbergclassroom.org/resource/the-19th-amendment-a-womans-right-to-vote/>

Julia Tanner, LWV-VA Action Coordinator



The Richmond Area League joined the VAratifyERA Press Conference on the steps of the Capitol announcing the forthcoming year of support for ratification. Speakers included First Lady Pam Northam and former First Lady Ann Holton, now Interim President of George Mason University. Other speakers included Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Incorporated, Equal Means Equal, and student activists from Arlington-based Generation Ratify.

## New VOTE411.org Logo and Website



Have you seen these two new images around? These are the new VOTE411 logos that are part of the "facelift" that LWVUS unveiled on 8/15/19.

There is a VOTE411 Brand Standards document that anyone using these logos should be very familiar with at <https://is.gd/02eG0d>. There is a long list of "do nots" which must be adhered to when using them.

The logos can be downloaded at <http://bit.ly/2Zpw96L> (This will automatically ask you to download. No viewing online.) You will find four of each logo with one being a huge original file, then three others in widths of 300, 500, and 800 for your use.

There is the "new and improved" VOTE411.org website. Like any new product, there are still a few wrinkles to iron out but but everything will get fixed well before the

elections. Those of you attending the Workshops will hear more about the changes being made to the system. Those of us who cannot attend will be counting on you to listen and learn. Then, come back to your local League ready to share your new knowledge. In the meantime, go to the site and explore it.

Carol Lindstrom, Webmaster & More

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## New Voter Service Documents Available On LWV-VA Website!

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Back in September 2018, the LWV-VA Education Fund, Inc. was awarded a \$25,000 grant by the Greater Washington Community Foundation (GWCF). The grant was for use by the local Leagues of Northern Virginia; Arlington, Fairfax Area, Loudoun County, Prince William Area. All have been active participants in a working committee to develop “generic” voter education materials and translate them to multiple languages that are the most prevalent in Northern Virginia.

In this vein, the working group has created a number of documents that can be used by ANY Virginia League to reach minority, immigrant and other low-turnout voters as well as more “regular” voters. These documents endeavor to end hate, encourage civil discourse, and expand voter participation and education. There are no dates so they can be used for many future dates! They have been uploaded to the LWV-VA website <https://is.gd/pBpQjH> and are described below:

**Vote411.org Translations.** In addition to English, VOTE411 documents have been translated into Arabic, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean. These can be used locally at community events and distributed at voter registration events. All translations were done professionally and each was double-checked to assure quality and accuracy.



**YOUR ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR ELECTION INFORMATION.**

- Nationwide candidate info
- Polling place locations
- Online voter registration tool
- ID requirements
- Absentee ballot info
- Ballot measure info
- Early voting options
- Election dates



**GOTV postcard.** this PDF is a nice get-out-the-vote postcard designed to work for primaries and for the general elections. It does not have any specific information on it, but it has a place for local Leagues to enter the election date. In recent elections, GOTV postcard writing "parties," hosted by local Leagues, have proven to be very popular. This attractive, professionally-designed card is flexible for volunteers to write their GOTV messages. Postcard postage is all that is required to mail this card.

The **Disabilities bookmark card** can provide precise voting information for disabled voters. It was designed with the help of the mother of a disabled voter. There are three bookmarks per 8 1/2 x 11" page. Note: This file contains two sets of 2 pages each, front and back sides.

To access these documents, please go to the LWV-VA Website and then to “Members Corner”. Under that go to GOTV Resources. Then go to From LWV-VA “Grant Working Group” and the list of available documents are shown. There is also information on sizing and printing, etc.

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO USE THESE DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR EVENTS!! THEY BELONG TO ALL OF US.**

Kathy Matusiak, LWV Arlington County

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## LWV-VA President Deb Wake Testifies at VSCC

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Links to videos:

[August 19th](#)      [August 20th](#)

President Deb Wake represented the League of Women Voters® of Virginia during the public comments part of the Virginia State Crime Commission hearings on proposed Gun Safety Legislation. Here is her statement:

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization formed nearly 100 years ago out of the Suffragist Movement. After women won the right to vote, it was important to educate the new voters through the study of issues and the formation of positions through consensus. These positions also serve as the basis for advocacy. Our positions on gun safety can be found on the national website: <https://www.lwv.org/impact-issues>. “From its inception, the League ...worked for equal rights and social reforms. In the early years, the League was one of the first organizations to address such issues as child welfare, maternal and child health programs, child labor protections, and laws that discriminated against women....In the 1990s, concern for violence prevention spurred a new League position and brought strong support for commonsense measures to control gun violence. The League supported the Brady bill and sought to close loopholes that undermine consumer safety.”

The League of Women Voters does not support or oppose candidates or political parties. Instead, we focus on issues and policies. Many of these issues, like gun violence prevention, have become hot-button topics. It is important when emotions run high on both sides of sensitive issues, to look for common ground and solutions found effective by the overwhelming body of rigorous research.

This year we are celebrating the 400th anniversary of Representative Democracy. We cherish and embrace a form of government that places power in the hands of the people—people who elect their peers to represent them and to make laws for the common good. We have a public safety health crisis and it is imperative that lawmakers work together for a solution.

Yesterday was spent listening to expert testimony and viewing data relating to gun violence. While it is important to make informed decisions, if we truly care about governance and public safety, there comes a time when lawmakers must make hard choices and pass laws for the benefit of their constituents and for Virginia as a whole. We have not seen legislative solutions in the wake of mass shootings in the 12 years since Virginia Tech or in the two months since Virginia Beach. It breaks my heart that we are teaching 5-year-olds – 5-year-old children– duck and cover drills because we refuse to pass laws to keep them safe. Our representative democracy is failing our children and all those who have been victims of gun violence or are fearful of becoming victims because we have no laws to protect them.

The problem is not gangs. The problem is troubled people with easy access to guns. The League of Women Voters of Virginia has reviewed the studies. We urge you

to support universal background checks with a waiting period, to make sure that those who should not have guns are not able to easily access them. We urge you to support red flag laws to protect those who would harm themselves or the people close to them. We urge you to strengthen permanent protective orders and to provide access to emergency protective orders disarming domestic abusers. We urge you to adopt stronger child access prevention laws. Researchers in Virginia and throughout America have found that these are effective solutions for preventing suicides and homicides.

- <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=4830&context=lcp>,
- <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/144/1/e20183058>,
- <http://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2018/11/lax-state-gun-laws-linked-to-more-child-teen-gun-deaths.html>

*A recent Wason Center poll found that the vast majority of Virginians want true, effective action. (<https://cnu.edu/wasoncenter/surveys/2019-07-03-gun-issues-survey/>) States with stronger gun laws see fewer children dying of gunshots. Gun availability is a risk factor for homicide and for suicide. The facts are clear. As a nonpartisan organization of thousands of Virginians, we urge you to stop delaying and to take action now.*

Deb Wake, President LWV-VA

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## Testimony to VSCC 8/20/19, Morgan Johns

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Morgan Johns’ testimony before the Virginia State Crime Commission hearings on proposed Gun Safety Legislation. Here is her statement:

Good afternoon,

My name is Morgan Johns and I appreciate the opportunity to speak today.

Young people are always looking down at their phones, aren’t they? Scrolling through selfies, sunsets – shooting, shooting, #Gilroystrong, #Daytonstrong, #ElPasostrong, 34 dead, 64 wounded in one week – we are algorithmically predisposed to look down because we are terrified to look up.

I once missed days of school because two students were planning to open fire during an evacuation they’d instigate. They’re still in jail. Earlier this year, I was standing across the wall from shots fired in student

housing. A couple of weeks ago, I was threatened to be “shot in the face” on the street.

By keeping military-grade weapons easily accessible, you are drafting people like me onto the front lines. It should go without saying that more gun usage means more potential for gun violence. That is kindergarten logic – and if you think that comparison is inappropriate, remember that they are currently being told to lay still and act dead in active shooter drills. That is how you are raising the next generation.

In response to the opposition –

If you claim self-defense as a motive, I would ask – from whom are you actually defending yourself? Chances are, it is an irrational, hate-based fear. Of course your individual life is important, but to protect it against a pretense at the expense of hundreds dying weekly is shameful.

Speaker Cox’s original recommendation for Governor Northam to respond to Virginia Beach through our same protocols as Parkland and, more notably, Virginia Tech, is incredibly ignorant to the exponential frequency and normalization since them. Not to mention that those supposed protocols failed to prevent the 11,000 deaths occurring as a result.

Today, the opposition itself has stated that universal background checks, magazine limits, and mental illness checks would not have prevented any mass shootings from VT forward – thus, inherently arguing that the only prevention could have been a lack of gun access. As someone said, sober drivers are not to blame for drunk driving accidents – but alcohol is.

I have witnessed many such as this, where leaders did just that – hearing – not necessarily listening. Remember that the line separating the two is only ever as wide as the thread used to stitch up a bullet wound.

Thank you.

Morgan Johns, LWVRMA

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## VSCC Testimony: Carol Noggle

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Carol Noggle’s testimony before the Virginia State Crime Commission hearings on proposed Gun Safety Legislation. Here is her statement:

Mr. Chairman and Members,

You have been given a mandate to establish urgent and vigorous action to prevent the deaths, the violent deaths, of Virginians by guns.

Accept this mantle of leadership and responsibility to take necessary steps to prevent violence and provide security. It will take energy and perseverance and compromise -- maybe even daring action and new approaches.

Please proceed with unity against this violence and the fear of violence.

Fear – in our schools, at work, in churches, on the street, in neighborhoods, in homes –now prevails without effective changes for safety.

Partisanship and “drawing lines in the sand” are a waste of energy that can block the energy needed for finding solutions.

Former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt said in his State of the Union speech in 1941 that there are four essential Freedoms:

Freedom ... **of** speech and expression

Freedom ... **of** worshipping in our own way

Freedom ... **from** want .... And ...

Freedom ... **from** Fear.

But I do not mean to focus on fear but on hope and on confidence in your leadership, your problem-solving skills, and your dedication that will yield solutions that are best for Virginians.

Resources: These sources of studies and data for decision-making by the Commission are offered as you proceed to make recommendations for legislation.

- Stanford University School of Medicine News: <http://med.stanford.edu/nandews/all-news/2018/11/lax-state-gun-laws-linked-to-more-child-teen-gun-deaths.html>
- New England Journal of Medicine: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMs1804754>
- Statistics from CDC <https://www.cnn.com/2018/06/01/health/youth-injury-death-rate-cdc-study/index.html>

Carol Noggle, LWVPA

*\*Important update from Virginia State Crime Commission:*

[\*\*NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT: Crime Commission August 19th and 20th Meetings Archived and Public Comment Deadline\*\*](#)

*The Crime Commission met on August 19th and 20th regarding legislation introduced during the 2019 Special Session. The live stream of those meetings has been*

archived and is available for viewing at <https://viriniageneralassembly.gov/house/chamber/chamberstream.php>. To access these recordings, you must click on "Archives" on the left column of the page. The Crime Commission meetings for August 19th and 20th are available under the section marked "Week of Aug 18, 2019".

The Crime Commission is currently accepting written comments in regard to the legislation introduced during the 2019 Special Session. Please send written comments and any other relevant information or material via email to [comments@vscc.virginia.gov](mailto:comments@vscc.virginia.gov) or via postal mail to our office (address is below). Written comments will be shared with members of the Crime Commission. The deadline for submission of written comments is September 30, 2019, at 11:59 p.m.

Mailing address:

Attn: Written Comments  
Virginia State Crime Commission  
1111 East Broad Street, Ste. B036  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

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## LWV was well represented at the Democracy Forum

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### ***“American Evolution” Virginia to America 1619-2019***

From July 30 to August 1, the College of William & Mary and Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation held an amazing three-day event in Williamsburg on the *Future of Representative Democracy* to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first legislative assembly in the New World.

After an early morning ceremony in the Historic Jamestown church, a joint session of many members of the Virginia General Assembly followed in the recreated Jamestown Settlement church with special remarks from presidential historian Jon Meacham, followed by a keynote address to invited guests by President Trump in a large tent. Members of the black caucus boycotted the event and Governor Northam only attended the early morning session in Historic Jamestown.

Jon Meacham reinforced that we are not perfect and that we need to “heed our better angels.” The history of Virginia pursues liberty amid enslavement. Commemorating our founding requires us to closely examine not only how we live up to our ideals, but how and when we have failed.

The first meeting of 22 male burgesses in the Virginia Colony from July 30 through August 4, 1619 also saw conflict when two burgesses from John Martin’s plantation (located in present-day Prince George County)



were not allowed to be seated because of a land patent dispute. Thus the model for the democratic government of the United States and the oldest continuous law-making body in the Western Hemisphere began.

Quite a few Williamsburg Area LWV members, and State League president Deb Wake, attended the signature event and heard many voices from across the political spectrum address the challenges and opportunities facing representative democracy today. There were addresses and panel discussions throughout the day and two by-invitation-only evening events. The forum’s “bleacher seating open to the public” was not publicized sufficiently, in my humble opinion, or else more League members would have attended.

Among the speakers and topics were:

- Carly Fiorina, former CEO of Hewlett-Packard, who spoke on *Democracy and Entrepreneurship*
- William & Mary Chancellor Robert Gates, former CIA Director and Secretary of Defense who addressed *Democracy, Diversity and Opportunity*
- Andrew Card, former Secretary of the Treasury and White House Chief of Staff for President Reagan and both Presidents Bush, who joined a panel discussion on constitutions and the rule of law
- Karl Rowe Senior Advisor to President George W. Bush; former Congressman Eric Cantor; former ABC News’ White House Correspondent Ann Compton and George Allen, former Virginia Governor and U.S. Senator, who spoke about *Executive-Legislative Relations in a Polarized Era*
- Senator Mark Warner, Congressman Bobby Scott, Speaker of the House Kirk Cox and University of



David Rubenstein, Co-Executive Director of the Carlyle Group, warned about schools and colleges rushing to build up STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) at the expense of the Humanities. Increasingly, students can graduate with no history, no civics, he said, noting that in a recent Annenberg survey 3/4 of the respondents could not name the three branches of government. Ten percent of college graduates believed Judge Judy is on the Supreme Court.

Rubenstein spoke of the naturalization test immigrants who have resided in the US for at least 5 years must take. Out of 100 questions they *must* get 60 correct — 91% pass. Across the nation the LWV stands ready to assist them in registering to vote, a privilege too many young people eschew, the panelist noted.

Rubenstein also cited what's happening in the absence of a sense of civic responsibility: roughly 50% of eligible voters vote for president; in the primary, 10% vote, and off-year for congress 25-30% vote.

Recognizing as incredible the work of the founders, Rubenstein acknowledged the purpose of this 2019 gathering — 400 years of civic engagement, a legacy to be promoted and protected.

Kit Murph McNally  
Justice Reform Committee Chair  
LWV Charlottesville Area

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## National Popular Vote Interstate Compact: The Electoral College & the Compact

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Virginians have likely been hearing murmurs about something called the National Popular Vote in recent times. If Virginia elects a Democratic state house and senate this coming November, it's also likely that these murmurs will crescendo into a chorus as the National Popular Vote initiative careens to the top - or near the top - of the legislative to-do list in January 2020. As of this writing, Virginia will potentially become the 17th state to enact the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact.

The National Popular Vote initiative is one of those issues that require a well-curated arrangement of talking points in order to successfully transmit a proper understanding of the law. It's similar to the precarious egg transfer between male and female penguins each mating season — misunderstandings resulting from a failure to methodically explain it become difficult to correct. It's

not so much that the National Popular Vote initiative is complicated; it's not. It's our collective tension when someone approaches the electoral college with a pair of tweezers in one hand and a magnifying glass in the other. It's an ingrained part of our national identity that we protect.

Indeed, Dr. Eric Loepp, Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, observed the curious juxtaposition of admiring the founders for the elegant architecture of our system of government over and against the heretical desire to change it, "...people have been educated all their lives to believe our system is the best; so changing it runs counter to our innate sense of propriety."<sup>[1]</sup> Such is the delicate ecosystem of the perennial electoral college vs. popular vote predicament every four years. The mere discussion of it produces a queasiness reserved for things that ought not to be tinkered with.

So where to begin?

For the purposes of this article I'm going to set aside the full-service talking points and save them for when they'll be more useful. Instead, I'll focus on a key point for now. Let's start with the what the National Popular Vote initiative is: "The National Popular Vote Interstate Compact would guarantee the Presidency to the candidate who receives the most popular votes across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The bill ensures that *every* vote, in *every* state, will matter in *every* presidential election. The bill is a constitutionally conservative, state-based approach that preserves the Electoral College, state control of elections, and the power of the states to control how the President is elected."<sup>[2]</sup>

The most common — and important — question that gets asked is: What happens to the electoral college? If this initiative becomes a thing for Virginia in 2020, the electoral college discussion will likely become the third rail of confusion and conflict: touch it and you die. This is because proponents of the National Popular Vote state that the electoral college will stay in place (it will); and, conversely, opponents of the National Popular Vote state that the practical outcome will be a bypass of the electoral college as we commonly understand it (it is). As a result, well-meaning folks on both sides talk past each other and an impasse ensues.

In a sense, both sides are accurate: "Ideally, under the compact's provisions, legislatures of the 50 states and the District of Columbia would pass legislation binding the signatories to appoint presidential electors committed to the presidential/vice presidential ticket *that gained the most votes nationwide* [i.e., in each state]. If all 50 states and the District of Columbia were compact members, this

