

# THE VIRGINIA VOTER



### In this issue:

- Secret Agents of Change 1
- Your Help Needed in the Push for Redistricting 2
- Virginia General Assembly: February 2020;  
Pre-Crossover, Crossover and Post-Crossover 3
- League Day Recap 4
- Save the Date for LWV-VA Council! 5
- What Sparks Political Activity? 6
- March 3 President Primary FAQ 6
- Report on Human Rights Legislation in this Year's  
General Assembly Session 6
- Join the Celebration! 8
- Deaf History Month March 13th – April 15th. 8
- Some Special Photos from  
This Legislative Session 9

**Special WLRT reminder. The last WLRT for this year was held on February 26th.**

### Secret Agents of Change

Deb Wake, LWV-VA President

On **March 8, International Women’s Day**, the Virginia Museum of History and Culture will open its Exhibit, [Agents of Change: Female Activism in Virginia from Women’s Suffrage to Today](#). The

exhibit updates the iconic 1915 photo of the Equal Suffrage League (which became the League of Women Voters of Virginia in 1920) by exploring who is an “agent” of change. The updated photo expands the scope of issues as well as highlighting a more diverse group. Among those featured are League member and first US Congresswoman from Virginia, Leslie Byrne; VARatifyERA Campaign Coordinator Kati Hornung; Christy Coleman, Executive Director of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, who spoke at our convention last May when she was Executive Director of the American Civil War Museum; Chelsea Higgs Wise who covered marijuana legislation at our Women’s Legislative Round Table in January; and me as president of the League of Women Voters of Virginia. I stood where Adèle Clark, our first president stood.



The day of the photo shoot was a heady day full of powerful women. I enjoyed getting to know some of the participants a little better; they inspire me with their accomplishments. Afterwards, I commented to a friend that my claim to fame is my current title. The office that I hold is the reason I was included in this group of luminaries—I hope to have a legacy one day—but for now, I don't have a pedigree. I stand on the shoulders of those who came before me. My friend pointed out that I represent all the nameless, faceless volunteers that do lots and lots of good, but will never be known. That is a powerful legacy. Who are the nameless, faceless, voiceless that you represent when you advocate on behalf of the League? Most of us will never know fame, but our accomplishments have a lasting impact. Thank you for all you do!

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## Your Help Needed in the Push for Redistricting

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Julia Tanner, LWV-VA Action Coordinator

Please ask your legislators to support the Constitutional Amendment for fair maps, [SJ18](#), and the ballot referendum that accompanies it [SB236](#).

The Amendment was passed by the Senate! As of this writing (February 23), it is in the House Privileges & Elections Committee. It needs the Committee to "report it out" and then for the House of Delegates to hold a vote for it on the floor.

Please ask [Speaker Eileen Filler-Corn](#) and [Committee members](#) to send the redistricting amendment package to the floor. Even if you have contacted them before, it is helpful if you do so again.

The amendment is the only way to secure lasting change supporting fair districts.

It will add citizens to the process and provide a citizen chair for the commission. This benefits voters!

It will also preserve compliance with existing laws providing racial and ethnic fairness by placing compliance provisions into our state constitution.

→ Call your Delegate. Voicemail is fine.

- For contact information, enter your address at [whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov](http://whosmy.viriniageneralassembly.gov)
- Let them know your name and address.
- Ask them to support and vote for the Constitutional Amendment, SJ 18 and for SB236.

### Talking points:

- We need a long-lasting redistricting system.
- Voters will remember. We have worked hard for a lasting amendment instead of gerrymandering.
- This will put Voting Rights Act protections in our constitution.
- Bring it to the floor for a vote and give voters a chance at the ballot box!

Call now and log your action:  
[bit.ly/LogYourAdvocacy](http://bit.ly/LogYourAdvocacy).

→ Sign The Petition:

Sign the petition at <http://bit.ly/SupportFairMaps> and forward to friends and groups.

We look forward to seeing your results!

Questions? Contact [actioncoordinator@lwv-va.org](mailto:actioncoordinator@lwv-va.org).



## Virginia General Assembly: February 2020; Pre-Crossover, Crossover and Post-Crossover

-Carol Noggle, LWV-VA Volunteer Lobbyist



Assembly? The General Assembly—or “GA” is an “Assembly”—of what? 100 elected Delegates from 100 parts of Virginia and 40 Senators represent 8 million Virginians. These 140 legislators operate co-operatively (generally), in a high-pressure atmosphere, in one building, for just over two months. They have now convened in our beautiful Capitol building and Pocahontas Building every weekday since January 8th.

Number of bills?: More than 3,000

Number of committees?: the House has 14 full committees; each has at least 3 subcommittees for a total of at least 50 committees; the Senate has 11 full committees and over 18 subcommittees. Thus, 25 full committees and at least 68 subcommittees! It must take a small miracle to develop the weekly schedule and the bills for each meeting!!

Committee assignments?: Legislators have complex schedules because of their committee assignments and times to present their bills.

Committee meetings?: early and late: 7:00 AM to 11:00 AM; Caucus at 11:30; more Committee meetings start 15 -30 minutes after session adjourns, others convene throughout the afternoon; some start at 6:00 PM—and, frequently, even later.

No wonder it is hard to find a Delegate or Senator in their office!

Can this system really produce results? Can every resident of every jurisdiction—county, city, town—of Virginia really be represented? Can 140 legislators work together in one building?

Where else in the world could 140 legislators—many who are strangers on the first of 60 days—convene every day for orderly, respectful discussion, debate and decision-making? There is a high degree of respect for order, rules and protocol. By Feb 12th—Crossover Day—thousands of bills had to be processed—assigned to committees, heard in subcommittees, heard in full committees, passed (or failed), and scheduled for 3 days of floor session processing. Now the successful Senate bills are before the Delegates; Delegates’ successful bills are before the Senators. Legislators are often scheduled to be in two committee meetings at the same time—one meeting as a committee-member and the second meeting to present their own bill.

Where else can members of such widely different—origin, age, education, religion, family, discrimination experiences, culture, inequalities, goals, and beliefs—assemble peacefully to debate? Where else could the debate yield votes to approve hundreds of laws—laws to benefit 8 million Virginians?

Nor are the issues trivial: the death penalty, abortion, discrimination, promoting clean air, lack of affordable housing, health, firearm safety, funds for education, parole and sentencing changes, marijuana legalization, removing or keeping historic statues, gender identity, voting rights, environmental justice, roads, and redistricting.

To fully appreciate the remarkable variety and function of this Assembly, it is ideal to be present to watch and listen, but the live and archived videos provide a high-quality substitute. Passionate “Points of Personal Privilege” statements are made by legislators during floor sessions. February, as Black History Month, has meant there are memorable stories of personal experiences and of heroes. There was drama this session. For example, see February 11th [House Session video](#) at 11:01AM and

3:45:49PM. There are others that are not so controversial: 3:02:20PM.

Hundreds of Virginians, young and old, come to speak at committee meetings on issues vital to them. The General Assembly Committee meetings are open to all Virginians... and they come!

We all have a voice.

This is Virginia's General Assembly. We should be proud.

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## League Day Recap

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Joan Porte, 1<sup>st</sup> VP LWV-VA, Events and  
Julia Tanner, LWV-VA Action Coordinator

What a week! The League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA) celebrated our Centennial in a big way in Richmond. Our theme was the "Yesterdays and Tomorrows of Nonpartisan Voter Action" and we certainly experienced both during our celebrations.

Our League Day festivities began on Feb 12 with an expanded session of the Women's

Legislative Roundtable. Here we learned how our new legislation could influence our many tomorrows, and what needs doing for good legislation. We heard from Delegates Vivian Watts, Danica Roem, Sam Rasoul, Nancy Guy, and Sally Hudson. Our legislative team filled us in on legislation the LWV-VA is supporting, and why. Then we spread out to visit with our legislators and their aides.

We reconvened at the House and Senate galleries. On velvet-cushioned benches in these balconies above the legislators, we had a fine view of their proceedings. Senator Janet Howell and Delegate Vivian Watts recognized the League from the floor, citing its achievements. Senator Howell then met with us to present LWV-VA President Wake with a framed set of resolutions commending the League on its 100th Anniversary. A similar set of resolutions will be provided by Delegate Watts.



Senator Howell presenting us with the Senate resolution.

The highlight of our League Day luncheon was the presentation by A'Lelia Bundles, an award-winning journalist and great, great granddaughter and biographer of Madam C J Walker. Madam Walker rose from poverty to become the wealthiest self-made woman in America. She made her fortune by developing and marketing a line of [cosmetics](#) and [hair care](#) products for [Black women](#) through the business she founded, [Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company](#).

Ms. Bundles gave an amazing presentation of Madam Walker's journey, and also discussed early African American women's rights activists. Hers was a presentation of strength, hope and perseverance despite the most difficult of odds.

That evening we welcomed legislators including Senator Favola and Delegates Plum, Rasoul, and Guy to our informal reception, with live music and good food and drink. It was a great time to discuss issues in a relaxed setting.

The next day was all about history. We toured the home of Maggie L Walker, the first African American woman to charter a bank and serve as its president in the United States. Mrs. Walker registered African American women to vote and worked to provide secretarial skills and jobs to Black women--offering them a way out of domestic employment.

We capped our festivities with a private lunch, curator presentation, and guided tour of the wonderful American Civil War Museum. There were so many moving highlights of the tour. We learned about the bread riots and the lack of labor laws protecting factory workers--mostly girls--to the story of the Dabneys, a slave couple who devised an ingenious system to relay information about Confederate troop movement to the Union forces. Because of the important roles women played in the Civil War, support for suffrage increased.

Thanks to everyone who made the trip to celebrate our special anniversary and our wonderful speakers and tour guides. This time together was a wonderful way to step into our next century of activism.

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## Save the Date for LWV-VA Council!

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Joan Porte, 1st VP, Events

Get ready to pack your bags for historic Lynchburg for LWV-VA Council on June 6.

We will kick off with a welcome reception on the evening of June 5 at our host hotel, the Hilton Garden Inn. This is a great way to mingle with League members from all parts of Virginia.

After our plenary session on the morning of June 6, we will have many wonderful speakers and breakouts lined up-- including Lynchburg Mayor Treney Tweedy. In addition to being at-large mayor of Lynchburg, Ms. Tweedy serves on the Lynchburg Redevelopment & Housing Authority, Horizon Behavioral Health Services Advisory Board, Step with Links Board, and is a member of the Lynchburg Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. We will also hear from Allison Robbins, Director of Elections & General Registrar for Wise County, VA and President of the Virginia Registrars Association of Virginia (VRAV).

League members will get updates on our two ongoing policy studies dealing with housing and with election security. There will be additional

breakouts on ranked choice voting, the National Popular Vote Compact, the upcoming Constitutional amendment on voting rights in Virginia and gender parity.

LWV Lynchburg is planning many wonderful programs including the curated tour Sunday afternoon of the *Lynchburg Historical Museum* exhibit honoring the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment and the role of Lynchburg women in the suffrage movement. League members will be working with a local Girl Scout troop to introduce them to LWV and will be assisting them in getting civics badges!

There is much to see and do before and after the official events (see attached visitors brochure.) Even if you are not an official delegate for your League, you will want to partake in this great event!

Reservations are open:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lwv-virginia-2020-council-meeting-tickets-91841224575>

To book your hotel click here:

<http://group.hiltongardeninn.com/LWVofVirginia>  
Please contact me at [events@lwv-va.org](mailto:events@lwv-va.org) if you have any questions.

See you in Lynchburg!!!



*Editorial Note: There is a visitor's guide available: [https://www.lynchburgvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/VisitorsGuide-2018\\_V10.pdf](https://www.lynchburgvirginia.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/VisitorsGuide-2018_V10.pdf) you can view or download depending upon your browser setting. You can find many of the wonderful things to see and do in Lynchburg in that document.*

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## What Sparks Political Activity?

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Many of our members participated in a grad student's research to explore what pushes women to advocacy. An article based upon her research can be found here: [5 Insights to Politically Active Women in 2020](#). How can we use her findings to harness the power of women?

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## March 3 President Primary FAQ

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Q: Do I have to be a registered Democrat to vote in the Presidential Primary?

*A: No. Virginia holds "open" primaries. You do not have to be registered with a party in order to vote in its primary.*

Q: Why isn't there a Republican Primary?

*A: Chairs of the state political parties notified the State Board of Elections before their December 18, 2019 meeting to tell them how they would select delegates to their party's national convention. The Republicans opted to hold a caucus; you have to be a registered member of the party in order to participate in their caucus. The Democrats chose to hold a primary; you do not have to be registered with the party in order to participate in their primary.*

Q: There are 14 names on the ballot but didn't some of these candidates drop out of the race?

*A: Candidates must officially notify the state that they are ending their candidacy before ballots are printed.*

Q: Can I still vote for my candidate even if he/she is no longer running?

*A: Yes. Your vote will be tallied. However, you may wish to choose a candidate who is still running a campaign.*

Q: A lot of election laws are being passed. How will I know what the new laws are?

*A: We will give an update in the April Voter.*

*Any of the new laws being passed will not go into effect before July 1 and some will have a delayed enactment or be reconsidered in the next session.*

Please be sure to check your voter registration to know where you are registered to vote: <https://vote.elections.virginia.gov/VoterInformation>

Candidate information can be found at [VOTE411.org](http://VOTE411.org).

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## Report on Human Rights Legislation in this Year's General Assembly Session

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Mary Crutchfield, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP LWV-VA  
Legislative Chair.

### ERA Ratification

The Equal Rights Amendment states: Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Some LWV friends of mine have been advocating for Equal Rights Amendment ratification in Virginia for over 50 years! For the past two years, VAratifyERA Campaign Coordinator, Kati Hornung and team worked tirelessly to lobby legislators and organize rallies with all of the ERA activist groups in Virginia. Many Leagues also worked to raise awareness about the ERA. This year we were finally successful in getting the Equal Rights Amendment passed in committees and then passed on the floor of both the House and the Senate in the first three weeks of the session. What contributed to the success this year compared to previous years? The November election resulted in a shift from Republican to Democrat control in the General Assembly—which meant a change in who was chairing important committees, for example, the Privileges and Elections Committees. In addition,

there was the huge effort to increase public awareness and to put pressure on legislators. The result is that Virginia was the 38th state—and the final state needed to achieve passage by 2/3 of the states—to ratify the US Constitutional Amendment.

### Women’s Reproductive Health Protection Act

HB980 Delegate Charniele Herring  
SB733 Senator Jennifer McClellan

The Women’s Reproductive Health Protection Act will:

- Remove political interference between a patient and her doctor
- Remove medically unnecessary restrictions for a patient seeking access to safe & legal abortion including:
  - Requiring patients to have an ultrasound
  - 24 hour mandatory delay
  - Mandated biased counseling
- Remove the requirement that abortions be provided only by physicians
- Remove targeted regulation of abortion providers (TRAP laws) that unfairly single out abortion providers

Delegate Herring presented HB 980 in the Courts of Justice Committee and argued that nurse practitioners should also be allowed to perform abortions.

Senator McClellan spoke to SB733 on the Senate floor on its second reading. She argued for elimination of the ultrasound and gave an example where it was better for the patient not to see the ultrasound of a grossly deformed fetus. She emphasized that the decision of whether or not to have an ultrasound needs to be between the doctor and patient. After further discussion with Senators Dunnevant and Kiggens, opposing the bill, Sen. McClellan moved that the bill be engrossed and advanced to its third reading. On Jan 29, the bill had its third reading and long discussion on the

Senate floor. Senators Dunnevant, Peake, & Suetterlein spoke to oppose the bill. Senator Boysko spoke to support, “People believe that women should be safe and should not be shamed. We are talking about medically necessary decisions. Nobody in this room has a right to make that decision.” Senator Locke said, “Most of us know why most of these bills were passed. These bills with medically unnecessary barriers have impacted women of color—women like me. I am perplexed by people who are opposed to repealing unnecessary medical procedures. I am perplexed by people here that think women are stupid and can’t make decisions for themselves.” Senator Janet Howell said, “I’m one of the few people here that was around before “Roe v. Wade.” I had a friend who got pregnant and asked what could she do? We didn’t know what to tell her. She killed herself. Another friend had to have a back alley abortion and got a bad infection. I will never go back to those days!” The vote was 20 yeas to 20 nays. Lieutenant Governor Fairfax broke the tie so the bill passed.

### The Virginia Values Act

SB868 Senator Adam P. Ebbin  
Prohibited discrimination; public accommodations, employment, credit, and housing: causes of action; sexual orientation and gender identity.

The Virginia Values Coalition, a group of organizations led by Equality Virginia that includes ACLU of VA, Human Rights Campaign, and Virginia Civic Engagement Table, describes this bill as a commonsense update to Virginia law that will protect LGBTQ Virginians from discrimination in employment, housing, and public spaces like restaurants and shops. When this bill was being discussed on the Senate floor Senator Jill Vogel (R-27th) gave a compassionate speech ending by saying “It’s time for Virginia to embrace Equality!” The bill was passed in the Senate on its third reading with a vote of 30 yeas, 9 nays. It has been read twice on the House floor but since February

18, it has been passed by for the day for four days in a row.

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## Join the Celebration!

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March 8th, meet at Monroe Park around 2:30pm. Festivities including speakers and music start at 3:00pm.

A parade is being organized into 4 sections, each with a theme and color:

1. 1920 19th Amendment/ Women's Suffrage
2. 1970 Title IX
3. 2020 Virginia's ratification
4. Future - When we add the ERA to the Constitution

LWV members will be in the first section celebrating the 19th Amendment/ Suffrage and led by a large Maggie Walker Parade Puppet. Please wear white in honor of the suffragists and bring banners and signs. We will also have 24 signs that can be used.

The parade will start at Monroe Park, head to the State Capitol 2.5 miles away where a group photo will be taken on the Capitol steps, then return to Monroe Park.

Learn more about Celebrate!38 by going to the [VARatifyERA website](#).

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## Deaf History Month March 13<sup>th</sup> – April 15<sup>th</sup>.

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Most month-long awareness “celebrations begin at the first of the month and stop at the end of the month, not so with Deaf History Month. Why? Because National Deaf History Month has three significant dates during that timeframe. (adapted from The Fascinating Origins of Deaf History Month (*The Fascinating Origins of Deaf History Month* | . (2020). *Deaf-interpreter.com*. Retrieved 28 February 2020, from

<https://www.deaf-interpreter.com/the-fascinating-origins-of-deaf-history-month/>)

- March 13, 1988 – the Deaf President Now movement drove the Gallaudet University to hire it's first deaf president.
- April 8, 1864 – President Abraham Lincoln signed the charter of Gallaudet University
- April 15, 1817 – First public school for the deaf opens in Hartford, Connecticut

We encourage you to take the time to learn more about deaf history month by using some of these resources:

- <https://www.deaf-interpreter.com/the-fascinating-origins-of-deaf-history-month/>
- <https://www.verywellhealth.com/deaf-history-month-1046528>
- <https://blogs.loc.gov/teachers/2013/03/national-deaf-history-month-exploring-deaf-culture-with-library-of-congress-primary-sources>

Now, let's move on to continuing to help the Deaf and Hearing Impaired individuals continue to make history far into the future by taking a look at the importance of their voting. Again, we hope that you will read what you will from this list that we found informative. Some of older while others are current. All of them offer good information for helping those who are Deaf (or have other disabilities) to register and vote.

- [New website helps the deaf participate in voting process](#)
- [City Launches Pilot Voter Guide for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing New Yorkers](#)
- [Deaf Voter Participation Day Makes Voting Easier in Montgomery County](#)
- [Encouraging Deaf Communities to Participate in Political Processes](#)
- [ASL Voter Hotline](#) If you watch the video, be sure to set your viewer to display closed captions unless you know sign language.

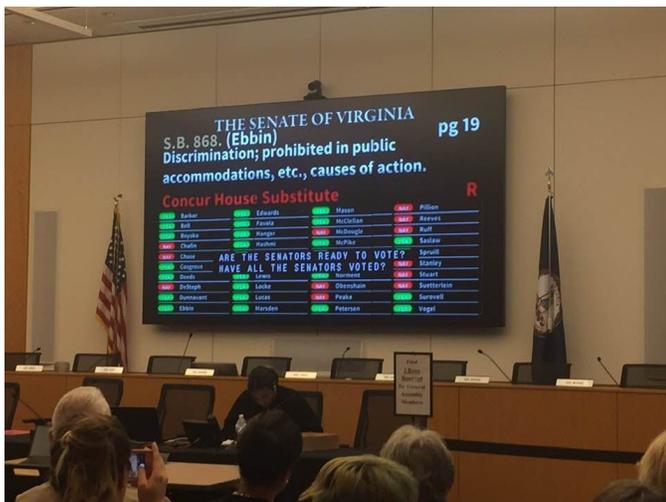


If you can think of any ways that we at LWV-VA may be able to help get deaf and hearing impaired voters more informed and engaged, please let us know at [communications@lwv-va.org](mailto:communications@lwv-va.org).

### Some Special Photos from This Legislative Session

For those of you planning on attending the LWVUS Convention, registration is now available at: <https://www.lwv.org/registration2020convention>

For accommodations: <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/council-convention/reserve-your-hotel-room>



February 24, 2020 - Regular Session 12:00 m.