

**LWV** LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup>  
OF VIRGINIA

**THE VIRGINIA VOTER**




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## Focus on COVID

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Deb Wake, president, LWV-VA

Three months into a pandemic, we are still adapting and continuing our work to educate voters and defend democracy. In addition to changes in election laws that will go into effect July 1, COVID-19 has forced changes in election dates. Record numbers of voters are opting to cast absentee ballots. We're informing voters of their options and innovating ways to register voters in the absence of usual in-person opportunities.

Many of the issues we care about and advocate for have been impacted. The pandemic has brought into sharp focus inequities—with wage workers and minorities bearing the brunt of the impact of the virus. On top of the economic and health struggles, many are also the target of racism.

What can you do? [Contact Advocacy Chair](#), Julia Tanner, to join one of our issue groups. Fill out our [skills survey](#). Renew your [membership](#) or give a membership as a gift. Make a [donation](#) to support our work. Interested in an internship? [Contact Intern Coordinator](#), Erni Bridges.

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**Staying Home, Staying Safe, and Pondering what it Means to be Asian American During COVID-19**

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Portia Chan, LWV-VA Member at Large



It was a Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> in March, and my son turned 6 years old that day. I had made prior arrangements at work to leave early so that I could be the mystery reader for his kindergarten class. Two days before, on May 11<sup>th</sup>, the World Health Organization characterized the COVID-19 as a global pandemic. In the weeks leading up to this announcement, events, both large and small, were cancelled, leaving disappointment, confusion, and even frustration in its wake.

When I arrived at my children's school, I could feel the uncertainty in the air. Looking back, I cannot even remember what books I read to my son's class that afternoon. All I can really recall are the sweet faces in his class and their teacher who made all of the children feel as safe as she could. Even though, social distancing measures were already in place, I hugged the teacher before we left. We were not sure when we would see each other in person again. As we walked home, both my son and my daughter were full of questions but also very quiet.

As we made adjustments in our family's schedule for my husband to teach online, for me to work remotely, and, later, for our children to take their classes on Zoom, my heart broke slowly each day. It was a collective grief with lives lost, jobs lost, and finding hope. Then, when I started reading about the rise in attacks on people who appear Chinese, I was scared. As much as we try to shield our children from our anxieties, we are not perfect, and our children are always watching and listening.

One morning, we had a plan to get out, to avoid cabin fever, and to get some fresh air. Our plan was for all four of us to go for a drive to the grocery store, and my husband would go inside alone to do our weekly shopping while the rest of us stayed in the car. My daughter said something that made us realize the gravity of the situation. She said, "but I thought we couldn't go out." We asked her why she thought that, and she replied, "because we are Asian." My heart froze.

The rhetoric about "Kung Flu" or the "Chinese Virus" has led to an increase in racist and violent acts against Asians and Asian Americans. The most chilling report was the one about the family who was stabbed at a Sam's Club in Texas, and two of the victims were ages 2 and 6. Then I saw more reports about elderly Asian Americans being physically assaulted, and I learned that Asian American women were the most likely targets of this type of violence. In summary, the targeted victims were individuals who looked like me. With each report I read, my anxiety levels rose to the point of panic.

These feelings are real, as well as the racism. As a member of the Asian American Psychological Association, I joined many webinars and town halls. Every time I saw that one was offered, I signed up, but then I was overwhelmed by all of the information and astounded by the statistics. Panic was leading to paranoia, so I

forced myself to take breaks from the news, the emails, and some of the online programs. And, in my reprieve, I started to reach out to others whom I thought would be experiencing similar thoughts.

Great comfort came from a [list of resources from the Asian American Psychological Association](https://www.kqed.org/news/11800025/to-be-asian-with-a-face-mask-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak). Connecting and relating with other people gave me even more hope and relief. I was especially touched by Dr. Sherry Wang's interview, "To Be Asian With a Face Mask During the Coronavirus Outbreak," on KQED (<https://www.kqed.org/news/11800025/to-be-asian-with-a-face-mask-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>). Like Dr. Wang, I, too, was afraid to wear a face mask in public. I agree with her when she wrote that, "I think that this is also an opportunity to remind each other about the historical legacy of racializing infectious diseases against People of Color."

So where does the legacy lead? We have a tremendous opportunity to be compassionate toward our vulnerabilities to this virus, and we also have a chance to coalesce in our collective will not only to live but to live well. In short, we are called to see each other as human.

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### State & Local LWV Support COVID-19 Justice Coalition

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Kit Murphy McNally, LWV-CVA Justice Reform Committee Chair



In this time of COVID-19 in Virginia, the state League of Women Voters (LWV-VA) and Charlottesville Area League (LWV-CVA) joined forces with more than 50 diverse organizations throughout the state seeking action to empty prisons and jails of all women and men who can be *safely sent home*.

The activist initiative, headed by the ACLU of Virginia, is open to any concerned organization or individual. Meeting online bi-weekly, organization representatives use their collective

strategies, actions and power to influence state and local policy makers and justice systems.

In a special session of the General Assembly in late April, Governor Northam won approval for the early release of more than 2000 eligible inmates in Virginia. However, by mid-May fewer than 250 had gone home. There are counter forces to early release from within the system and in some communities, both for those previously eligible and those who could be.

However, some local jurisdictions were already taking action by April. In Charlottesville, Commonwealth Attorney Joe Platania reported, "Prosecutors in the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle, along with judges, court clerks, defense attorneys, law enforcement partners, and the superintendent of the local jail, have undertaken aggressive and proactive measures to release 113 individuals from custody, reducing our jail population from 421 to 308 in under four weeks." It's a start.

Beginning in the 1970's a "tough on crime" edict came down from the Federal Government and launched the surge of mass incarceration for great and small infractions. Increasingly people of color, diverse origins. . . and women filled the jails and prisons of the United States in numbers exceeding the rest of the world. The League

of Women Voters has a long history of advocating for justice, fairness and safe, effective alternatives to mass incarceration at all levels, fully understanding the disastrous impact of incarceration on women and their children.

Demands of the COVID-19 Justice Coalition include:

- Release any person in custody who does not pose a demonstrable imminent threat of bodily harm to someone else.
- Release people as soon as possible.
- Statewide and local decision makers must hold themselves accountable and share information daily with the public.

The Justice Reform Committee of the Charlottesville Area LWV focuses its education and advocacy on the front end of the justice system, examining how the positions of local police, sheriff, magistrates, prosecutors, judges and juries impact women and their families as well as the residual impact on the greater good of the area.

At the same time, the committee studies the potential for alternatives to incarceration needed now, such as Charlottesville's successful Georgia's House, founded by LWV member Dorothy Tompkins. Georgia's is a successful example of a frontend diversion for women. However, Georgia's can provide services to only 12 women at a time. The LWV Justice Reform Committee advocates for significant expansion of the Georgia's House concept, along with other community based programs that assist women with drug addictions, health care, job training, childcare and safe affordable housing.

The spread of COVID-19 underscores the need for immediate action followed by broader reform and community alternatives to mass incarceration. League positions and actions emphasize safe, effective, humane alternatives to incarceration.

For more information about the Justice Reform Committee of the LWV- Charlottesville Area, contact: Committee Chair, [Kit Murphy McNally](#) or LWV-CVA President, [Pat Cochran](#).

For more information about the COVID-19 Justice Coalition, contact [Deb Wake](#) or visit <https://acluva.org/en/covid19behindbars>.

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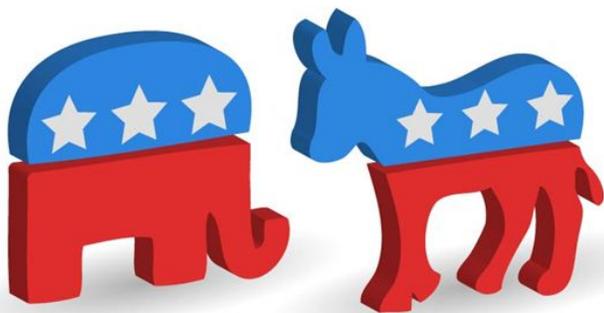
## What is a Primary Election in Virginia?

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Janet Boyd, LWV-VA Voter Services Chair

Virginia has Primary Elections scheduled for June 23. I want to give you a quick primer on what a Primary Election is in the Commonwealth.

First, the June elections are not General Elections like we will have in November, for example. It is easy to confuse the two, particularly as many cities and towns in Virginia just finished a General Election for selecting their local officials.



In a Primary Election, you vote for candidates from only one political party. Many localities in Virginia will have two primaries on June 23 – one for the Republicans, and one for the Democrats. All Virginia localities will have the Republican Primary, as more than one Republican candidate is seeking an opportunity to run against US Senator Mark Warner, a statewide office.

The Primary Elections allow the political parties to choose (or nominate) candidates that will be on the ballot of a General Election. Winners of the Primary Elections on June 23 will be on the November 3 General Election ballot.

Virginia is considered an Open Primary state, allowing voters to pick and choose what Primary they want to vote in, and that choice can change from election to election. Some localities have both Republican and Democratic Primaries. This is called a Dual Primary and when on the same day, like we will have on June 23, you have to choose one Primary, even though the offices involved are not the same. You can't vote in both. For example, in many Virginia localities, the Republican Primary ballot has the US Senate race, and the Democratic Primary ballot has a US Congressional race. Other jurisdictions have only a Republican Primary, with both the US Senate and US Congressional races on the ballot. Still other jurisdictions only have the US Senate race on the ballot. The decision to have a Primary is made by the local political parties.

If you want to vote by mail, you will need to choose the Democrat or Republican Primary when you complete your application to receive an absentee ballot for the June 23 Primary Elections. The correct ballot will be mailed to you from your local registrar. Follow the instructions carefully when you receive your ballot, but you will not need to have a witness for the June 23 Primary.

If you want to vote in-person, either absentee or on Election Day at a polling location, you will need to tell the election official whether you want the Republican or Democratic ballot. As a reminder, the political parties are allowed to receive a list of voters that voted in their respective Primary.

If you still have questions, send me an email: [voterservices@lww-va.org](mailto:voterservices@lww-va.org).

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## Coronavirus and the Environment

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Tyla Matteson, LWV-RMA



We are about two months into the worst pandemic to hit the US since the Spanish Flu of 1918. As I write, we in Virginia are seeing more cases and deaths every day, with no downturn yet. Day after day, on the news, we see the suffering of so many due to loss of jobs, sickness and death. Many of us older folks are staying home as much as possible, doing our part to not spread the virus.

Unfortunately, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is using the pandemic to institute a rule saying that there will be no penalty for an unlawful violation to the air and water, as long as the company claims that the violation was in some way caused by the pandemic. Testing and monitoring is also waived, and this ruling is in place indefinitely.

Also, during this pandemic, the EPA moved to eliminate Obama-era automobile fuel efficiency standards. This rollback will cause more air pollution and impact people's health, as well as put more carbon into the air.

Interestingly, several major automakers objected, adding to the public outcry, and the standards were simply weakened.

Locally in Virginia, the two pipeline projects, the Atlantic Coast Pipeline and the Mountain Valley Pipeline are opposed by many of us, as unnecessary and destructive. Under the present health crisis, the potential staging of hundreds of workers brings significant risk of transporting the virus to the nearby rural communities, which have limited medical resources. Pipeline opponents are requesting that the two projects be declared as non-essential.

A cornerstone of democracy is the right for public input into making permit decisions. There are public hearings held on a great variety of environmental and related issues, such as permits for a natural gas pipeline extension or for the spreading of sewage waste across Virginia's countryside. We will need vigilance to insure the right for public input is not cast aside during the pandemic, and new methods are found to allow for public participation.

Coronavirus and climate change are the two monumental global crises we are now facing. Recalling recent history, at the end of the market failure of 2008, global emissions surged to an even higher level, as nations relied heavily on fossil fuels to restart their economies. It will be essential to switch to clean energy in the recovery phase of the coronavirus pandemic. At a meeting at the end of April with national leaders, German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged them to invest in technology such as solar and electric vehicles and to always keep an eye on the climate.

During the pandemic, emissions have dropped, with people not driving, flying, taking cruises, and the air quality has improved. The prediction is that greenhouse gases will drop 8% for 2020. This is good news, except that emissions must continue to drop by that amount every year over the next 10 years in order for the climate to stabilize and not spin out of control. The particulate air pollution in China, for example, has fallen over the last two months and the cleaner air has likely saved the lives of some 70,000 young children and elderly adults.

Not only are our cities quieter during coronavirus, but so are the oceans, which benefits marine life, at least for a while. Researchers have found that when ship traffic stops, there is a drop in the stress-level hormones of the whales. People are noticing the birds are singing louder, or perhaps it seems that way because it is quieter. The director of the National Botanic Gardens in Dublin, Ireland, noticed that the ravens became more relaxed when the gardens closed to the public.

Recently I watched an interview with Bill McKibben. He is the founder of 350.org, and the author of dozens of books on climate change, some going back 30 years. He said we can look at the pandemic as an opportunity, and recalled a line from poet Robert Frost, saying we can take the path less traveled. The last lines from the poem, "The Road Not Taken" are:

"Two roads diverged in a wood and I-  
I took the one less traveled by,  
And that has made all the difference."

We will emerge from the pandemic finding ourselves in a different world. We can shape that world in a way that gives space to nature, to less noise, with a kind heart to all people and living creatures, allowing them a just and fair chance to live.

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**COVID-19, Human Rights, Women's Rights and the ERA**

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*The following article is written by the Human Rights Team, a coast-to-coast network of League members regularly researching and publishing on the synergy between human rights and League positions and priorities. Please see the first edition of our Briefing Book on Human Rights: Synergy Between Policies of the League of Women Voters and the United Nations Human Rights Conventions. It may be found on the Fairfax Area LWV website at <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/lwvun> (center column). Jill Follows (VA); Michele Thorne (IL); Anu Sahai (VA); Kathleen Montgomery (CA); Sheila Denn (NC); Susan Sherer (PA); Savanna Mapelli (PA); ErinLeigh Darnley(NY)*



The COVID-19 pandemic affects everyone everywhere, but it affects each person differently and heightens existing inequalities. The ERA is a rule of fairness that strengthens everyone's rights.

### Human Rights are Women's Rights

"We simply cannot return to where we were just a few months ago," the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said in a recent informal briefing to the UN Human Rights Council, urging nations to take a more "cooperative, global and human rights-based approach" to the crisis.

"Gender equality and women's rights are essential," said UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, "to getting through this pandemic together, to recovering faster, and to building a better future for everyone." He urged governments to "put women and girls at the centre of their efforts to recover from COVID-19."

The impact of this pandemic is disproportionately harsh on women throughout the world. On the frontlines, women make up the majority of workers in the health and social sector globally. The informal worldwide economy is composed of nearly 60% women, according to the UN, who earn less, save less, and are at greater risk of falling into poverty. As markets fall and businesses close, millions of women's jobs have disappeared. Women's caregiving responsibilities have increased, including care for children at home, the elderly, and the sick- work that in most countries is undervalued and often unpaid. The UN reports that nearly one in five women worldwide has experienced violence in the past year, and now many of these women are trapped at home with their abusers.

During this pandemic, women's access to pre- and post-natal obstetric care and family planning has been curtailed, especially in countries with authoritarian governments. The crisis has an even greater negative impact on women facing intersectional forms of discrimination, such as women with disabilities, elderly women, indigenous women, women in underrepresented groups, and women living in rural communities. There are few shock absorbers to cushion women from this crisis, and progress on gender equality is tenuous.

This disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women highlights a failure of governments to embrace human rights and respond to the needs of all people in a fair and equitable manner. Even a cursory look at visionary human rights documents, such as the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, reveals the precise words proclaiming, "*All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.*" Those words, especially in time of crisis, can inspire governments formed of the people and by the people to meet the needs of all people equally and fairly, and to leave no one behind. Governments must take this opportunity to transform the systems that hold women back and amend the laws that deny women equality.

### The Equal Rights Amendment

The gendered impact of the pandemic in the United States can be addressed, in part, through adoption of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution, which 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.*" The ERA is a rule of fairness that strengthens everyone's rights. Here are three examples of where the ERA could lessen the impact of COVID-19 on women.

First, women face the specter of domestic violence while sheltering. An analysis of data by *The Economist* from five big American cities indicates that although most types of crime have fallen in recent weeks, reports of domestic violence have increased.

The ERA can address domestic violence by serving as a catalyst for re-authorization of the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which lapsed a year ago. Even more, the ERA provides a constitutional basis to strengthen VAWA, which has been limited by the United States Supreme Court, in part because sex discrimination is not expressly prohibited by the Constitution.

Second, women face the brutal reality of their economic disparity in the pandemic. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell recently said, "The people who're getting hurt the worst are the most recently hired, the lowest paid people. It's women to an extraordinary extent."

The ERA helps address the disparate economic impact by prohibiting pay and similar economic discrimination against women that is done by governmental bodies. The ERA should also be an impetus for the government to

extend the ERA to the private sector by rule-making, executive orders, federal contracting, and leadership examples.

Third, women face serious threats to their healthcare. Women in the U.S. hold 76% of healthcare jobs, according to the U.S. Census Bureau; and in nursing, where workers are on the COVID-19 frontline, women make up more than 85% of the workforce. Women's health is at risk in other ways as well. At state and national levels, government actors have taken advantage of the pandemic to restrict women's access to reproductive healthcare. Unintended pregnancies will rise. According to the CDC, the rate of teen pregnancy in the United States is already higher than in other western industrialized nations. During COVID-19, pregnant women have been unable to secure their usual support networks. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, the United States is the only developed country where maternal mortality is rising, with women of color most affected.

The ERA can address some issues with women's access to healthcare. As an example, about half of the states have "mini-ERAs" in their constitutions and in those states, courts have ruled that the promise of constitutional equality extends to government-funded healthcare which cannot be denied on the basis of sex. Additionally, the ERA should serve as a needed push for women to be well-represented wherever healthcare – especially women's healthcare – is discussed.

#### What is happening with the ERA and what can you do?

On January 27, 2020, the Commonwealth of Virginia became the final state necessary to ratify the ERA; league members were key to that success. There are now arguments over a ratification time limit mentioned by Congress but not part of the amendment itself and not part of the official Article V amendment process set forth in the U.S. Constitution.

According to Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring, the ERA became an Amendment to the Constitution AUTOMATICALLY upon Virginia's ratification of the Amendment. In usual circumstances, after three-fourths of the states ratify an Amendment, the Amendment is sent to the U.S. Archivist, who is required by federal law to certify the Amendment as part of the Constitution.

In very short order, on January 29, 2020, the U.S. Archivist said he would NOT certify the ERA, opting instead to follow the ERA policy position of the current U.S. Department of Justice.

One day later, the State Attorneys General for Virginia, Illinois, and Nevada filed suit in the U.S. District Court in D.C. to compel the Archivist to perform his purely ministerial duty under the law and certify the ERA and, once and for all, declare that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged on account of sex." The League of Women Voters of Virginia is one of many organizations that joined an amicus brief to the suit filed by the three Attorneys General.

On May 8, 2020 the current U.S. Department of Justice filed a Motion to Dismiss the State Attorneys General lawsuit. It is likely the District Court will rule on that motion this summer. But first the District Court must rule on whether to allow legal briefs in opposition to the ERA from the Attorneys General of Alabama, Louisiana, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Nebraska. Once a final decision is rendered by the District Court, appeals can be filed. Any eventual appeal will be heard in the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit and thereafter, if indicated, in the United States Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the League urges Congress to proactively remove its time limit for ratification. In February 2020, the United States House of Representatives passed a resolution removing the Congressional time limit for ratification. A companion bill - SJRes6 - is now in the United States Senate waiting to be heard. PLEASE contact your United States Senators TODAY to tell them you support the ERA. Here's an easy-to-use form: <https://tinyurl.com/lwvsenateERAbill>.

We MUST keep the ERA at the forefront of all legislative advocacy this election season, including in our candidate forums, voter guides and constituent interviews.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides clarity on what is important. There is no better time than the present to support the equal human rights of all persons under the law.

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## Will We Have More Voter Participation In Spite of Covid-19?

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Linda Rice, LWV-WA



In April 2020, Governor Northam signed landmark legislation to expand access to voting. Some of these bills include: removal of the requirement for a photo ID, making Election Day a state holiday, no excuse absentee voting will no longer require a voter to state a reason for voting early, and automatic voter registration at DMV for anyone applying, renewing, or replacing a driver's license. All of these are noteworthy but occurred before the ravages of Covid-19 were fully understood.

Let us think about how working at polling places will likely change. The in person voting experience will be less celebratory and more an exercise in stamina and determination. Masks, gloves, face shields, and hand sanitizer will abound. Voters and workers will need to practice safe distancing so large spaces will need to be used to accommodate the voting equipment and supplies. Plexiglas barriers will likely separate poll book workers from the voters. Workers will no longer be able to bring offerings of cupcakes or dips to help energize them for the long day. Also, I doubt the "I Voted" stickers will be handed out. Too bad because they really allow voters to express pride in their action.

Mail-in voting is an alternative to in person voting, and will likely gain more popularity. Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington, and Utah conduct elections entirely by mail. People want to exercise one of their most important rights of citizenship, but they will balance that desire against exposure to the virus. Several advantages to mail-in-voting are that you can vote at your own pace, not wait in line (remember social distancing requirements), and focus on other demands on your time.

Virginia appears ready to use voting-by-mail as an option. Of course, this will require new expenses such as printing costs, and equipment to read paper ballots at a variety of sites. It would likely reduce costs with needing fewer in-person polling locations. It remains unclear how mail-in-voting in conjunction with in-person voting may affect the workload of the local registrars.

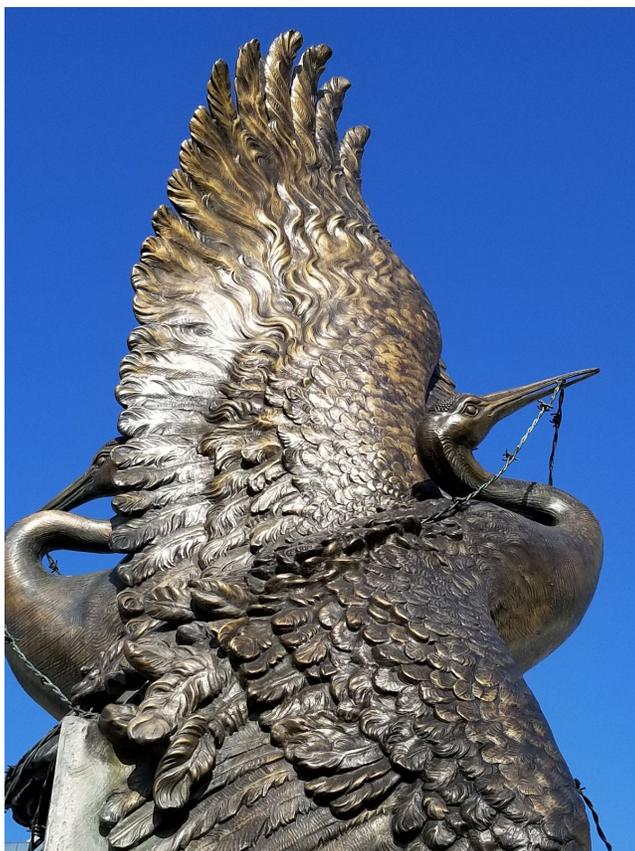
We should remain hopeful that we will see an increase in participation regardless of which option voters choose to cast their vote. We want our elections to be more open but also more robust.

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A More Perfect Union

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Chris DeRosa, LWV-ARL



May is Asian Pacific Heritage Month. It's a time to celebrate Asian-Pacific Islanders and their vibrant culture. It's a time to explore their history and contributions. Sadly, threads of justice denied weave through much of that history.

Today, we hear of increasing cases of xenophobia as we fight the covid19 pandemic. Even medical professionals that are (or look) Asian-American have experienced racism, as noted in this [video](#). This is very sad and upsetting.

"We, the people of the United States, in order to create a more perfect union" are the opening words in the Preamble to our Constitution. They reflect the hope that our new country would find a way to build a better nation, a "more perfect" democracy.

"A More Perfect Union" was also the title of an extensive exhibit at the Smithsonian History Museum from 1987-2004. It explored the history of Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Over 120,000

Americans were forced to abandon their homes and nearly everything they owned to move to remote areas. There, they lived behind barbed wire fences, guarded by soldiers with guns aimed into the camps. Their loyalty was questioned.

The stories of immigrants from Asia were highlighted in the recent [PBS documentary series, "Asian Americans"](#). The stories of their struggle for democracy – for citizenship and equality – were powerful and enlightening. Even though I am third-generation (*sansei*) Japanese-American, I realized that there was much I didn't know. I dug a bit more deeply, and discovered that Asian-Americans, like so many others, have faced decades of uphill battles to establish themselves as Americans. Let me share a brief timeline of their struggles:

§ **1760's**: Filipinos settled in coastal areas of the mainland U.S. – the first-known immigrants from Asia

§ **1790**: Congress passed the Naturalization Act of 1790, restricting citizenship to "any alien, being a free white person"

§ **Late 1800's**: Thousands of Chinese and Japanese laborers immigrated to the U.S.

§ **1859**: Oregon became the first of 15 states to enact “alien land laws” that barred “Chinamen” and other immigrants from owning land. Many of these laws remained in effect until the Supreme Court ruled them unconstitutional in **1952**.

§ **1882**: The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed. It barred further immigration by Chinese and barred Chinese immigrants from obtaining citizenship.

§ **1898**: The Supreme Court (U.S. v Wong Kim Ark) ruled that the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment grants birthright citizenship to all persons born in the U.S. (this will be challenged several times for the next 100+ years)

§ **1907**: the U.S. barred Japanese laborers from entering the U.S.

§ **1920**: the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment granted suffrage to women – but not all women

§ **1922**: the Supreme Court (Takeo Ozawa v. U.S.) ruled that naturalization is limited to “free white persons and aliens of African nativity”; the Court further defines “white” as “what is popularly known as the Caucasian race.”

§ **1922**: Congress passed the Cable Act, which ruled that women who marry an *Issei* (1<sup>st</sup> generation who were born in Japan, and immigrated to the U.S.) or other alien “shall cease to be an American citizen.”

§ **1924**: Congress passed the Immigration Exclusion Act, barring all immigration from Japan.

§ **1942**: President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 – 120,00 Americans of Japanese ancestry are rounded up, and incarcerated behind barbed wire fences. Later, the *nisei* (2<sup>nd</sup> generation, 1<sup>st</sup> to be born in the U.S.) were declared “enemy aliens” and were barred from serving in the U.S. military

§ **1942-1947**: Many of the *nisei* who were incarcerated attempted to vote, but faced many challenges

§ **1943-1945**: An estimated 33,000 Japanese-Americans served in the U.S. military; the 100<sup>th</sup> Bn/ 442<sup>nd</sup> Infantry became known as “The Purple Heart Battalion.” In the Pacific theater, the Philippine Scouts, attached to the 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry RCT, served on the front line.

§ **1946**: Congress granted Indian immigrants the right to naturalized citizenship

§ **1952**: The McCarran-Walter Act granted all Asian-Americans the right to become citizens and vote; it also upheld national origin immigration quotas which favored immigrants from Northern and Western Europe

§ **1959**: Hawaii became the 50<sup>th</sup> state; Hiram Fong and Daniel K. Inouye became the first Asian-Americans to be elected to Congress

§ **1965**: The Voting Rights Act expanded voting rights for Asian-Americans and others

It is clear that Asian-Americans, like many other minority groups throughout history, have faced hurdles in their pursuit of the “great American Dream.” They struggled for decades before acquiring the right to full citizenship and voting. Asian-Americans have become full-fledged members of their communities – becoming

doctors, lawyers, business owners, educators, and elected officials. Their stories are a reminder that we must continue to work to guarantee that we are working towards “a more perfect union” for all people.

I remain hopeful that we, the members of the League of Women Voters, will continue to defend democracy for *all* Americans for the next 100 years!

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## VOTE411 is a Voter’s Best Tool

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Janet Boyd, LWV-VAVoter Services Chair

We just finished the May 19 elections, but the election season this year for Virginia is far from over. We still face the Primary Elections on June 23, Special Elections in July (for two jurisdictions), and the federal General Election on November 3 (which will also include local elections and a Constitutional Amendment). VOTE411, which just won the [People's Voice Webby Award](#), will be your best friend as you manage the challenges of educating voters throughout 2020. Registration deadlines for each of these races are included on the [VOTE411](#) landing page for Virginia.



VOTE411 also has information on the June 23 Primary races. All Virginia voters can vote in the US Senate Republican Primary (three candidates are vying for the opportunity to be on the ballot against US Senator Warner in Virginia) *or* in the Democratic Primary (if one is being held in your locality). We have been working with the local Leagues to include information on each of the US Congressional Races. There are Republican Primaries in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> US Congressional Districts and Democratic Primaries in the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> US Congressional Districts. We have added language to VOTE411 explaining that some jurisdictions have Dual Primaries requiring voters to select the Republican or Democrat ballot they want to vote. [*See also article about primaries in this newsletter.*]

VOTE411 has updated COVID-19 information, including how to vote by mail. This information is in both English and Spanish.

We have started work on the November General Election, where we will have information before the end of summer on the federal and local races. I will be reaching out to each of the local Leagues for assistance with the non-statewide races in your areas. Remember, you can include information on VOTE411 if you schedule debates for your local candidates.

Thanks to everyone who has helped make VOTE411 useful for voters. I welcome suggestions on this tool, as well as other Voter Services important to your area.

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## LWV-VA Council is June 6

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[Register](#) for LWV-VA Council to be held on June 6, 2020 starting at 9:00am. This is a great way to learn about so many issues – and at no cost! Our keynote speaker is Allison Robbins, President of Voter Registrars of Virginia (VRAV). We will also learn about ranked choice voting, national popular vote compact, a

constitutional amendment for the right to vote and voter education plans. The full agenda and meeting materials can be found [here](#). Pick up some LWV swag at our [store](#).

You must register to receive the login information for Zoom, two days prior to the meeting.

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## LWVUS Convention June 25-27

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Registration for LWVUS Convention is open. Virtual Caucuses and Info Sessions will be held June 22-24; more info [here](#). The Convention will be held virtually June 25-27; registration link, schedule and materials can be found [here](#).

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## Making an Impact: Internship Program

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Erni Bridges, Intern Coordinator LWV-VA



Our New Internship Program is designed to provide students an opportunity to work for a limited period with a League of Women Voters of Virginia member or team.

[Contact me](#) for more information.

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## Membership Skills Survey

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Andrienne Konstas-Salvette, Membership Chair LWV-VA



We are committed to empowering voters and advocating for safe voting. While Coronavirus (COVID-19) has changed how we do business, it hasn't changed or slowed our mission. In fact, COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of League work. Now more than ever we need volunteers to support our efforts throughout the state. The LWV-VA Board is asking members to complete the [LWV-VA SkillShare Survey](#). By completing the survey you will be sharing your skills and interests with LWV-VA leadership and will further your engagement in LWV-VA activities and advocacy work. Help LWV-VA empower Virginia's voters by sharing your skills, complete the [LWV-VA SkillShare Survey](#) today! Contact Andrienne at [membership@lwv-va.org](mailto:membership@lwv-va.org) with questions.