

THE VIRGINIA VOTER



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Vote Yes on Referendum 1 in November

Deb Wake, [President, LWV-VA](#)



I grew up in the “Breadbasket of the South”—the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia—specifically Rockingham County. For those of you not familiar with the characterization, it relates to where a large portion of crops were grown that supplied confederate troops during the Civil War—despite the fact a large portion of the farmers were Mennonite and Brethren and did not support war. The Valley is still largely agricultural and at one time Rockingham laid claim to be the “Turkey Capital of the World” because of its poultry industry. The processing

plants relied on cheap immigrant labor and migrant workers were an annual labor source during the fall apple harvest. Many of the migrants were from Mexico and were exploited for their labor more than for their vote.

However, as Latinx populations continue to grow in Virginia, we can expect map-drawers to attempt to control Latinx influence by employing gerrymandering. We’ve already seen an attempt to depress census response in immigrant communities. This will directly impact the entire community—immigrant or native-born—by decreasing the amount of federal dollars available to provide services for ALL who live there. These same numbers are used to draw lines on the map to determine Virginia House and Senate districts and US Congressional districts. Gerrymandering is when map-drawers manipulate these lines to protect the lawmakers in power.

In November, Virginia voters have the opportunity, for the first time in our history, to vote for a redistricting commission that allows citizens a voice in drawing these maps. The constitutional amendment forces legislators from both parties to give citizens a seat at the table. It requires transparency and public comment on the proposed maps before they are adopted. The constitutional amendment also enshrines voting act protections in our Virginia constitution so that voters cannot be discriminated against on the basis of race. This is a huge step forward for Virginia and one that protects the power of the vote in determining who represents us.

On October 8, at 7pm, LWV-VA, LWVNC, and LWVGA will hold a forum about racial gerrymandering. Moderator will be Dr. Deborah Turner, president of LWVUS. Details to come.

Important Election Dates

Janet Boyd, [Voter Services, LWV-VA](#)



ASAP	Check your registration*
ASAP	Request Absentee Ballot*
September 18	Absentee Ballots mailed
October 13	Deadline to Register to Vote
October 23	Deadline to request Absentee Ballot
October 31	Last day for in-person early voting
November 3	Election Day

**To use the online system through Virginia Department of Election's Citizen Portal, a voter must have either a driver's license or a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) ID card, plus a social security number.*

DMV will automatically register an individual who comes in to obtain a driver's license or ID card. If a voter does not have this ID number, they must register with a paper form. That form is available online or can be requested from the voter's local registrar. Additionally, voters with disabilities should remember that they can register to vote through the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) and the Centers for Independent Living (CIL).

All voters need to be more patient for final results to be announced after the polls close on Election Day. Vote by Mail ballots now can arrive at the local registrars' offices as late as noon on the Friday after an election, if the completed ballot is mailed by the close of the polls on Election Day. Many races and ballot proposals may not be settled until the end of election week.

LWV-VA Fall Workshop: Increase your Political, Leadership and League Skills

Joan Porte, [First VP, LWV-VA](#)

As we move into fall and the zenith of the 2020 election season, that can only mean one thing—the League of Women Voters of Virginia virtual Fall Workshop is coming up soon! We will start off the workshop with a reception on the evening of Sept 11, 2020. One of the many things we've lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic is the ability to meet other League members, exchange ideas, and talk strategy. Therefore, after a commemoration of the anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks, reception attendees will break into small

meeting rooms to discuss how they are managing two issues: handling virtual messaging for the 2020 election and keeping the League visible during quarantine.

The formal part of the Workshop begins at 9:00 AM on Saturday, September 12, 2020. Morning speakers will offer information on two important 2020 Election-related issues: getting people to the polls and stopping voter suppression.

After a break, during which attendees will have the option to mingle with other members in virtual break rooms, we will continue with an afternoon session where the focus will be on League management, including League leadership development and a deep-dive into position study.

Don't miss this chance to connect with members from all over the Commonwealth as you learn new ways to make our League more influential, effective, and efficient!

AGENDA

9 AM - 10 AM **How to Get Out the Vote (GOTV)** - Maggie Bush, LWVUS

Break

10:05 AM - 11: 05 AM **How to Combat Voter Suppression** - Andrea Miller, Poor People' Campaign of Virginia

11: 05 AM - 12:00 PM Break **(the virtual meeting rooms will be open for informal discussions)**

12:00 PM - 1:00 PM - **Leadership Development** - Kelly McFarland Stratman - LWVUS

Break

1:05 - 2:05 PM - **Deep Dive into League Positions** - Betsy Lawson - LWVUS

Please RSVP [here](#) to get your Zoom link. (Links will be sent three times in the two days prior to the meeting.) Cost is \$20.



National Voter Registration Day Commitment Program

Janet Boyd, [Voter Services, LWV-VA](#)



COVID is not going to stop the League of Women Voters of Virginia from registering people as part of the National Voter Registration Day celebration on September 22!

Local Leagues are asked to commit to up to four voter registration activities to be completed by Sept 22. LWV-VA will assist them in completing these goals. A September 22 press release will advertise the work we have completed. Local leagues can use the press release to promote League activities to local media outlets while reminding people that there is still time to register to vote.

The four programs Leagues can choose to participate in are:

- Placing signage in front of every public library in their respective areas
- Distributing fliers to all local food shelters
- Sending at least 200 voter registration postcards
- Partnering with another non-partisan organization to promote voter registration

This is a great opportunity to promote voter registration and the League!

For more information contact Janet at voterservices@lww-va.org!

ONE Virginia Plan

Dr. Janice Underwood, Ph.D, [Chief DEI Officer, Commonwealth of Virginia](#)



August 18, 2020 marked 100 years since the 19th amendment was ratified in 1920.

And while it was originally only levied for white women, today we have more women and women of color in historical and trailblazing roles. There's one or two in particular that come to mind right away. But this important anniversary underscores that when inequity persists, it requires those who have been marginalized to demand shared power. This is no different than what we see happening with the protests all around Virginia.

Therefore in that spirit, I'd like to acknowledge my bias as a black woman. I am personally invested in racial justice. I am personally invested in breaking down doors for those who have never been invited to the inner table of decision making because that is who I have been.

As a national thought leader in the DEI space, I know that equity initiatives, like increasing workforce diversity and confronting our culture of systemic racism are important to our economic sustainability, our public health, and to those who have unfairly carried the burden of discrimination and marginalization. For this reason, I have been engaged specifically with these issues and others since my first week as Governor Northam's Chief Diversity Officer. That said, I am also pleased to share with you that I have championed the [One Virginia plan](#), a strategic plan for diversity and inclusive excellence.

I applaud the work of the Northam administration to move quickly beyond words and into action through a historic 2020 with teeth. But now we must see these teeth bite into the inequities that have long existed in our nation.

Governor Northam, in partnership with our General Assembly, passed a series of bills this past winter that cement equity in our state policy and codifies these strategies, such as providing localities control over the removal of confederate monuments, voting protections, and a permanent Virginia Council on Environmental Justice.

And, my role, also made permanent by the General Assembly earlier this year, as the Commonwealth's Chief Diversity Officer is the first of its kind in Virginia and to exist nationally.

Yet, while each of these historic wins, acknowledges that together, in partnership, we have moved the needle greatly in the last 18 months, as you know we have much more work ahead and must fund many of these initiatives.

Today, explicit evidence of discrimination and Jim Crow segregation has curiously dimmed. For instance, black and brown lovers of the Chesapeake Bay, like me are no longer segregated from "whites only" beaches. No longer do Black, Latino, Asian, and Indigenous people have to fight for their own outdoor spaces such as the Green Pastures outdoor recreation park in the James River watershed. No longer do Bay residents consider Green Pastures to be the "Black park" and nearby Douthat State Park the "white park." We know that hundreds of racist laws have been removed from the Virginia Code just this July 1, yet racism persists. How can this be true?

Today, discrimination is not as explicit as Jim Crow, but instead exists as James Crow, Esq., which is a bit more cunning, insidious, and easily overlooked. For example, after much hindsight, we recognize that education and opportunity are meant for the benefit of all regardless of your color, tribal affiliation, economic status, or your zip code. Today, we publicly acknowledge that clean air and water and protections under the law are supposed to be a right for all.

While we can all agree on the surface level veracity of these statements, the reality is that they ring hollow for underrepresented and disadvantaged communities because there has been a movement by the haves to hijack power from those who have less. Or worse, we use our power as well-intended allies to ultimately advance racist policies and practices, all the while claiming an antiracist ideology.

The ongoing pandemic has highlighted for Americans the disproportionate impact that polluted air and polluted water has on public health within communities of color. The resulting higher rates of death from COVID-19 in these communities should alarm all of us toward sustained action.

Further, as the coronavirus drives many into the outdoors for exercise and peace-of-mind – Virginians are enjoying our state parks, wildlife management areas, and natural heritage sites in record numbers – but regrettably yet not surprisingly low-income communities and communities of color are far more likely to be nature-deprived than white communities.

If you don't remember anything else, please know that to fully realize what I believe is our shared goal of rebuilding our society to be more equitable and accessible, we must be willing to break down the systemic barriers purposely and illegally established decades ago to marginalize certain communities. You and I must reflect on our own personal bias and lived experiences. You and I must remember that we have to use our influence to push for an anti-racist agenda. Our work here is no different and no less impactful than the calls for racial justice playing out on the streets of Richmond, New York City, Annapolis, D.C., Harrisburg, and across our globe.

Since early 2020, Virginia has applied a health equity lens to our COVID-19 response, while fostering state-wide conversations on our reckoning on racial injustice as I suspect many of you have as well. For building a more inclusive state and nation, we can apply our lessons learned from the last six months, which revealed for some that racism, the larger public health crisis disproportionately impacts the same communities who have traditionally been forgotten in the environmental justice space, for example. So, leading with an equity and justice minded lens must be more than lip service. I am sharing all around the Commonwealth that this can be boiled down to three areas:

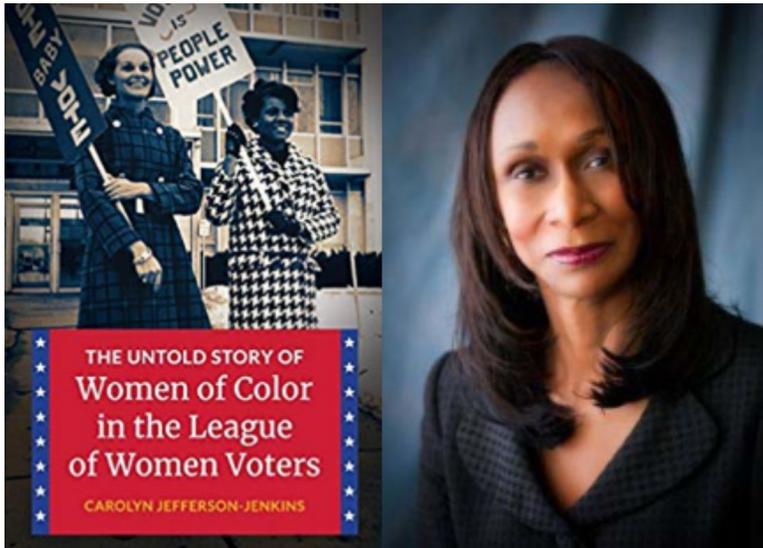
1. **Governance Equity** – This is achieved when we vertically and horizontally broaden the diversity of those who are delegated for collaborative problem-solving and decision-making, which also includes a rejection of toxic and manipulative control or power. This does not mean creating the illusion of diverse work groups, while a small inner group of white men and women hold the decision-making power. Instead we must over-communicate with historically underrepresented communities and prioritize new voices at the inner-table of decision making. These communities will not immediately trust government because of the lack of involvement or agency given in this work, but it must be done to achieve equity;
2. **Resource Allocation**– This is the way in which resources and services are procured, promoted, and provided in proximity to those who most need or require them to survive or thrive; and
3. **Problem-Solving and outcomes** – This is the extent to which solutions are transformative, justice-oriented, and liberating from the structural inequities that are sustained by a misguided commitment to the status quo. This last one is usually a tough one to swallow because no one I know likes to admit that we are all operating in systems in which explicit racism only became politically inexpedient less than 60 years ago, which makes anti-racist governance now all the more difficult. Therefore, we must continuously interrogate and confront our own personal biases and influence to advance anti-racist policies that empower a sense of belonging to all people.

So, in closing, in addition to these factors, accountability and transparency will be the keys to our success. It will be uncomfortable and hard work because we are reckoning with the ghosts of our past and present.

I always say, you can't change what you don't measure and you can't measure that which you don't acknowledge. Whatever we do, we need a strong plan to confront the 401 years of oppression we've all suffered under. This is why I've begun the ONE Virginia Plan.

I'd like to leave you with this – the first and second Governors of Virginia helped to institutionalize racism and inequity into our systems but the 73rd Governor of Virginia was bold enough to appoint me and others in the administration to dismantle those policies in part for the hope of future generations to enjoy a more inclusive region. And for those reasons, I am a willing accomplice with you in this work...and I'm looking for "good and necessary" trouble.

Save the Date for LWV-VA Convention



Virginia League State Convention 2021 will take place May 21-23, 2021 at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center. The theme will be: Democracy for All – Now is the Time. Carolyn Jefferson Jenkins, former President of LWFVUS and author of [The Untold Story of Women of Color in the League of Women Voters](#), has accepted our invitation to speak at the Opening Session.

We are looking for members who can help with fundraising and identifying exhibitors for the convention. We are also in need of a sign language interpreter.

If interested, please email convention organizers: Judy Helein, Kathy Matusiak, and Sabeena Rajpal at convention@lwg-va.org.

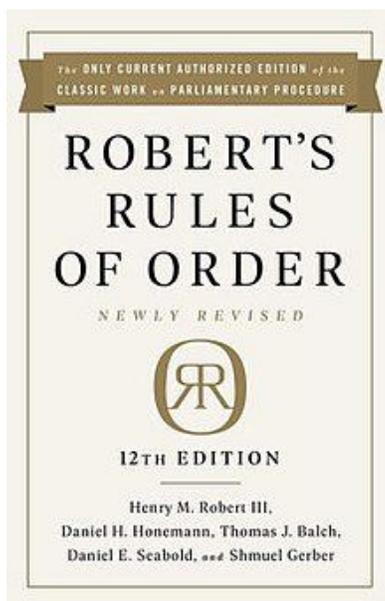
Newly Revised!

Martha Rollins, [Secretary, LWV-VA](#)

All the Voting Information You Need



[All the Voting Information You Need](#)



To make decisions in fair, efficient, and effective meetings, we follow rules! LWV has adopted Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised as the parliamentary authority. The newly revised 12th edition is released on September 1, 2020.