

League of Women Voters of Virginia
41st Biennial Convention, June 3-4, 2023
Transparency Is a Key Tenet of Good Government

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters has a [Position on the Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation](#), adopted in 1984, which states that "The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions, holding open meetings, and making public records accessible;"

WHEREAS, transparency is a key tenet of the League, so necessary for broad public participation at every stage of government decision-making to ensure that government acts in the public interest that the League has published [Observing Your Government in Action](#) to guide members in forming an "observer corps" to attend and observe government meetings;

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Virginia was one of the founding members of [Transparency Virginia](#) that successfully pushed the General Assembly to improve public access, both in person and online, to legislative meetings and votes;

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Virginia successfully advocated for transparency as a key tenet in the Commonwealth's [redistricting](#) process;

WHEREAS, LWVUS created [Virtual Transparency Guidelines](#) for Leagues to use to advocate for open, transparent, and accessible processes for all governmental bodies in the face of COVID-19 and to be used in future emergencies requiring the limitation of in-person contact;

WHEREAS, General Assembly [budget conferees](#) refuse to call meetings and thus circumvent public scrutiny, leaving even [fellow legislators](#) in the dark until presented with a fait accompli;

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's Freedom of Information law has become riddled with exemptions and government agencies have resorted to exorbitant charges for public information, so much so that the Virginia Mercury now has a "[FOIA Friday](#)" feature; and

WHEREAS, state agencies in Virginia too often hold [legally required public comment periods](#) after decisions have been made in private, and then ignore [public input](#) that does not agree with those decisions: now, therefore,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED

That the League of Women Voters of Virginia reaffirms that all branches of Virginia government must respect the public's right to know by doing public business in public,

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED

That the League of Women Voters of Virginia creates a Transparency Issue Group to monitor both legislation and government behavior and to advocate for open government.

Deb Wake, President

Second: Heather Miller-Tokarz

Jessica Davis, Secretary