



## LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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### STATE BOARD LETTER

**Mid-November 2015**

#### **Calendar**

**November 26-27** - Thursday-Friday, **Thanksgiving** – LWVMD office closed

#### **December**

1 – Tuesday, Consensus Reports due to LWVUS on Constitutional Amendment Study, see page 5

4 – Friday, LWNCA Board meeting 10:30 a.m.

7 – Monday, LWVMD Board meeting, 10 a.m., Wilde Lake

9 – Tuesday, State Board Letter deadline

12 – Saturday, Nation Builder training in QAC, see page 6

15 – Monday, Bill of Rights Day

25-31 – Friday-Thursday, LWVMD office closed

#### **2016, January**

1 – Friday, LWVMD office closed

4 – Monday, LWVMD Board meeting 10 a.m. Wilde Lake

7 – Thursday, State Board Letter deadline

8 – Friday, LWNCA Board meeting 10:30 a.m.

9 – Saturday, Voter Service Workshop, Columbia, location TBD

13 – Wednesday, General Assembly convenes

16 – Saturday, Voter Service Workshop, Queen Anne's County Library, Centreville

18 – Monday, Martin Luther King Jr. Day – LWVMD office closed

23 – Saturday, Winter Workshop 10 a.m. Wilde Lake, TBA

30 – Saturday, Snow Date for Winter Workshop

Please note that the **new date** for the **League's Legislative Day** is Tuesday, March 1, 2016. Stay tuned for details!

## PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear Leaguers,

We have all taken the time this fall to reassess our legislative goals for the 2016 session of the General Assembly. No member of the League will be surprised that we continue to be concerned about the world we leave to our children and grandchildren, about what kind of government they have, the education they receive and their ability to vote as citizens of our country.

Elsewhere in this issue you will see that the state board has adopted our shared priorities governing our activities for the upcoming legislative session. We depend on every member of the League to help alert us to any local or state effort to diminish any of these goals.

Meanwhile nationally we are expressing our concerns about the excessive influence of money in our political process, which tends to reduce citizens' ability to select our leaders based on their qualifications for office and ideas for our future rather than the amount of money they can gather and spend. We are also trying to assess the process for amending our constitution to assure that it is we citizens who hold the power over our lives and not the elite few.

When asked what kind of government the Constitutional Convention developed for the new United States of America, Benjamin Franklin is said to have remarked that they had given us a



republic, if we can keep it. That is what we are now trying to do – keep our republic. We hope you are participating in our Money-in-Politics and Constitutional Convention studies so that the League nationally is able to help us keep our republic.

Ashley Oleson, our former office administrator, has helped us take another step in our effort to remain a republic by serving with distinction on Governor Hogan's task force on redistricting. Be sure to read the result of her efforts on the task force in the next issue of *The Maryland Voter*, which you will receive in the next week or so. We owe Ashley our appreciation for a job well done!

All of us look forward to the various celebrations we enjoy during the upcoming holidays. These, too, are an expression of our founding beliefs: the opportunity to celebrate and worship as we are persuaded rather than forced to conform to the ideas of others about what *should be* our personal beliefs.

**Happy Thanksgiving!** Enjoy your friends and family.

*Barbara Schnackenberg Nancy Soreng*

Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng

## DEBATE COORDINATOR NEEDED



We need a volunteer experienced with organizing debates to oversee preparations for any debates that the state League may sponsor or cosponsor for United States Senate candidates. Debates are vitally important to the League's public visibility, in addition to being a valuable service to the voters. **In recent days, how often have we heard people say that they wish the League were still in charge of Presidential debates?**

Debates among candidates for the Senate are just as important. With an open seat in the United States Senate, candidates are announcing for both the Republican and Democratic nominations. We anticipate being asked to cosponsor debates with other organizations and **we need someone to determine which opportunities are appropriate for the League, and then make the necessary arrangements.** If you would be willing to serve or to assist another volunteer in coordinating Senate debates, please contact one of the co-Presidents or Ralph Watkins, Voters Service Chair.

Ralph Watkins, [Ralph.watkins1@verizon.net](mailto:Ralph.watkins1@verizon.net)

### LWVMD BOARD HIGHLIGHTS, November 9, 2015

Our co-Presidents hosted a delegation from the **nation of Georgia** on a tour of Annapolis.

**Debate policy:** The Board voted to renew LWVMD debate policy. It is unchanged from the 2014 election cycle.

**Vote411:** The Board voted to use the Spanish translation feature of Vote411 with the assumption that it will be the candidates' responsibility to check the translation for accuracy of their statements.

**Website:** The Board voted to buy the Organizer Service Package for NationBuilder at no additional cost to the League for two years.

**Hotspot:** The Board authorized Schnackenberg to purchase a hotspot with good Wi Fi speed to boost our Internet access capacity at Wilde Lake for a cost not to exceed \$20 a month.

Elaine Apter, Secretary, LWVMD Board

## AROUND THE STATE: SHARING IDEAS FROM LOCAL LEAGUES!

*Looking for a local program/event to promote the League within your community? Here's something that worked for one local League.*

### CIVICS 101: Passport to Government Knowledge

The League of Women Voters of Queen Anne's County sponsored a civics event for two evenings in October, one each at the Kent Island Library and the QAC Community Services Center. The purpose of these events was to encourage students in grades 3 through 12 and their families to join the LWQAC for a fun night of learning the basics of American government at local, state and federal levels. The students were able to meet representatives from all branches of government, as well as members of the Queen Anne's County Board of Elections and School Board and state Democratic and Republican Central Committees.

During the course of the evening each student each completed his or her **"Passport to Government Knowledge"** by finding the appropriate answers for elementary and middle/high school "passport questions" by visiting the tables, speaking with the representatives and reading the presentation boards displaying governmental structures, which were prepared by LWVQAC members.

The completed "stickered passport" was the student's pass to a free ice dish up by teen employees at Rita's Ice. The students also entered their names in a raffle for a \$30 Gift Card from Under Armour, a sports accessories company.

Fun was had by all, and students had the chance to have their voices heard by their governmental representatives, who enjoyed their interactions with the youngsters as well. And, of course, Rita's Ice was a big hit – a well-earned reward for participating in the League's **Civics 101**.

If interested in finding out more on this event, contact Jacki Carter at [Msjac529@aol.com](mailto:Msjac529@aol.com).



# Constitutional Amendment Consensus Response Form

**REMINDER: The Constitutional Amendment Consensus Response Form is due December 1, 2015.**

Click on the link to submit your League's official Constitutional Amendment Consensus Responses: <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2321563/Constitutional-Amendment-Consensus-Response-Form>



Consensus is the process the League uses to reach member agreement on study issues. It is neither a simple majority nor unanimity; instead, it is an overall sense of the group. In other words, consensus results from answers to questions on which members can find common ground and agreement.

**The consensus deadline is December 1 2015.** Each League is entitled to one response. Before getting started, make sure you have the following:

1. Your League's responses recorded and the comments pre-typed and ready to be cut and pasted into this form. **While you can type directly into the form, you will run the risk of timing out of the system if you spend too long on a single page.**
2. Your League's ID (a five digit code consisting of your two letter state and 3 additional numbers) **\*Your League ID is NOT your 7-digit account ID or password used with the previous roster system.** If you don't know this number, you can find it listed on your League's page on the [Find A Local League page of the LWVUS website.](#)

## FIRST CALL

**The League of Women Voters' 52nd National Convention 2016  
Washington, DC, Thursday, June 16 – Sunday, June 19, 2016**

**LWVUS invites you to save these dates and plan to join hundreds of passionate and engaged leaders for this vibrant national gathering in our Nation's Capital next June.**

## **LWVMD Legislative and Budget Priorities for the Maryland General Assembly Session of 2016**

While the League has many issues we follow based on positions we have reached at the state and national level, each year the Maryland League highlights the issues we believe are the most critical and require the most attention from our members. Our focus for the 2016 session will be:

- **Protecting the Environment, including**
  - Mitigating climate change
  - Increasing renewable energy
  - Assuring clean water standards
  - Adequate public transportation
- **Making democracy work, including**
  - Redistricting reform
  - Open government
  - Improved voter access
  - Eliminating contested elections for judges
- **Adequate resources to meet the basic human needs of our citizens, including**
  - Full funding of the Bridge to Excellence Act
  - Corrections and sentencing reform
  - Maintaining the safety net for vulnerable populations

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**NationBuilder Training #3**  
**Saturday, December 12, 2015 at 9:00 AM**  
**Queen Anne's County Public Library - Kent Island Branch**  
**in Stevensville, MD**

This NationBuilder training will provide an overview of the site and what it can do, and walk through the process of setting up a site for one of the Leagues in attendance - our choice! This is the third in the LWVMD's series of similar training opportunities being offered this fall. Visit the League's Webpage, [lwvmd.org](http://lwvmd.org), to sign up.



## HELP THE LEAGUE AND HAVE FUN SHOPPING!

Amazon, which sells nearly any product under the sun, is offering to give charities .05% of the purchase price when they shop at AmazonSmile. LWVMD Education Fund has registered to receive this rebate. You can support the League and it won't cost you a penny! If you are already participating in AmazonSmile, please consider designating League of Women Voters of Maryland-Education Fund as your charity. If you haven't joined AmazonSmile here's how you do it: Enter "smile.amazon.com" in your browser. You will then see this screen:



You shop. Amazon gives.

- Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.
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- Support your charitable organization by starting your shopping at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com).

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In the list of choices that comes up next, you will find this entry:

**League Of Women Voters Of Maryland Education Fund**  
[Inc About](#)

Annapolis MD

[Select](#)

By clicking the "Select" box to the right on the smile.amazon site, you will add your purchasing power in support of the League! And Thank you!

*For those local League leaders who had to miss the LWVUS Membership Leadership Development Workshop on October 17, here's a follow-up:*

## **Five Steps to Developing New Leaders in Your League**

### **Step One: Assess your League membership**

- Group members according to current involvement level
- Develop a list of members who are potential leaders

### **Step Two: Focus on a couple of the potential leaders**

- Contact them personally to get to know them and encourage them to become more involved
- Find out what interests THEM and pair them with that interest

### **Step Three: Select mentors who can guide emerging leaders**

- Mentors can be current or past board members, committee chairs or other leaders
- Mentors build partnerships with their mentees with frequent contact and encouragement

### **Step Four: Identify activities where new leaders can become engaged**

- Invite emerging leaders to partner with current leaders to learn a specific job or role
- Respect each leader's interests and time

### **Step Five: Train emerging leaders**

- Give them an opportunity to enhance current skills or learn new ones
- Training can include one-on-one, state and national LWV workshops and outside skill training