



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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STATE BOARD LETTER

Mid-February 2016

Calendar

February

9 – Tuesday, Bag Ban Rally, 9 – 11 a.m., Lawyers Mall, Annapolis

14 – Sunday, League of Women Voters' **96th Birthday!**

15 – Monday, Presidents Day – LWVMD office closed

15, 16 – Action Alert for “Greenhouse Gas” bills, see page 5

24 – Wednesday, public meeting in Frederick County about redistricting; see page 6

29 – Monday, afternoon. Tentative date for LWVMD co-sponsored forum for candidates for U.S. Senate, University of Baltimore; see page 3 for details

March

1 – Tuesday, LWVMD Legislative Day in Annapolis, see flyer, pg. 8

1 – Tuesday, deadline for submitting your League's LWVUS Program Planning Form; see this page, below

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

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

10 – Thursday, *State Board Letter* deadline

April

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.

11 – Monday, *Sine Die*, General Assembly adjourns

14 – Thursday, Early Voting in Maryland begins

March 1: LWVUS Program Planning Deadline

The deadline for submitting your League's input to LWVUS 2016-2018 Program Planning is March 1, 2016. All forms must be submitted electronically; no response forms will be accepted by other means. The link to the Program Planning Response Survey is:

<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2518503/Program-Planning-Response-Survey>

One of the important ways through which League focuses its grassroots support is to align each level of the organization with the others, and with the League's positions. This takes place in the process of Program Planning. The adoption of a program including a list of action items, will occur at the LWVUS Convention 2016 in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for participating in this very important League process.



PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Most people think Valentines, chocolates, and romance when they think of February 14th.

However, if you are reading this newsletter, you are probably among the unique group of individuals in this nation who also thinks about the founding of the League of Women Voters when this wintery date approaches. We should be proud of the 96 years of advocacy, education, and civic engagement that this venerable organization, that you have chosen to join, has advanced.

Thanks to all of you who came to our Winter Workshop to learn more about the new Website and how you can educate your communities about redistricting reform. We hope to see even more of you at one of the highlights of our work year, **Legislative Day**, which this year will be March 1. Please see the flyer in this *State Board Letter* and register on-line or send your registration information and check to the League office. Don't forget to tell the leaders in your League that you are planning to attend so they can arrange for a visit with your state delegates and senator.

Because of a change in Maryland's election calendar (made by the General Assembly to meet federal law about mailing absentee ballots to overseas voters), every other year we are faced with preparing for an election in the midst of the General Assembly session. This is always a challenge, but thanks to our many wonderful voter service volunteers and the leadership of Ralph Watkins, as well as our terrific *Report from State Circle* authors lead by Action Chair Ruth Crystal, we have been able to meet this challenge. People are always surprised at how much the League accomplishes with volunteers.

We are planning a **wonderful social event for our members and friends at the end of April**. Think of it as a reward for all of the hard work the League has done. You can read more about it in this *State Board Letter*.

Barbara Schnackenberg and Nancy Soreng, LWVMD Co-Presidents

Maryland Leagues are the Greatest

CONGRATULATIONS . . .

To all fourteen local Leagues for meeting the LWVUS database-update deadline. Thanks to each Roster Manager and team for completing the task so efficiently. A job well done!



The LWVMD Board

LWVMD BOARD HIGHLIGHTS, February 1, 2016

LWVMD

Clip Board: Co-President Nancy Soreng's article in the *Washington Post* on redistricting. and a letter to Governor Hogan from the Women's Coalition for Healthcare Reform addressing the issue of barriers to reenrollment in the HealthChoice program that LWVMD co-signed.

Fifty-five dollars was collected from wares sales at the Winter Workshop. The League received \$580 in contributions last month.

Spring social: Roberta Safer has secured the Cosmos Club for the April 30 event. There will also be an optional tour of the Phillips Gallery.

LWVMD-Ed Fund

Donations in honor of Sherry Hyman were \$1,108. A letter will be sent to Sherry's husband and family with the list of donors. (*Editor's note: As of Feb 8 the total is \$1,978.*)

Voter Service: Board voted to reimburse Watkins \$475 for Vote411 cards.

Questions for party convention delegates were confirmed: 1) What are your qualifications to serve as a convention delegate? 2) Why have you decided to pledge your support to your candidate for President?

Elaine Apter, LWVMD Board Secretary

News about Candidate Forums



With the Maryland Primary on the horizon, the League will be hosting candidate forums for many offices across the state. Planning is underway for a **debate among the Republican and Democratic candidates for the U.S. Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Barbara Mikulski**. These two events, to be held **the afternoon of Feb 29 at the H. Mebane Turner Learning Commons, University of Baltimore, 1415 Maryland Ave., Baltimore**, are co-sponsored by LWVMD, the *Baltimore Sun*, the Schaefer Center for Public Policy at the University of Baltimore, and WJZ Television (many thanks to **Linda Rittelman** and **Diedre Bajedo** of the Baltimore City LWV for connecting us with these co-sponsors). N.B.: We have been advised that schedule conflicts may require a change of the date for the Democratic candidates.

Continued next page

The event is open to the public but, due to limited seating, reservations will be made through a Website, which we will post as soon as the event is created on that site. Both forums will be broadcast on WJZ (times announced as soon as they are available to us) and will also be streamed from the Websites of the co-sponsors.

As your League arranges candidate events, please help us to post information about all of these events on VOTE411 and the LWVMD Website. Please send the following pieces of information to ralph.watkins1@verizon.net: 1) offices covered (for example, U.S. Representative, Board of Education); 2) date and time; 3) place (include a street address); and, 4) whether the event is being broadcast (including streaming on the Internet) information to enable readers to connect to that broadcast.

Ralph Watkins, LWVMD Voter Service Chair

Important Information: New Decision about Early Voting Procedures

A major change was made at the Maryland State Board of Elections at a special meeting on Thursday, February 4. As most League members are aware, Maryland will be switching to paper ballots for voting at precincts on Election Day this year. Because it would be difficult to stock and manage all of the ballot styles needed at an Early Voting Center (because voters from any location in the county may vote at any center), the Maryland State Board of Elections had planned to use a touch-screen voting machine that would have marked the voter's choices on a paper card that would then be scanned and would be retained for audit purposes. Those machines could only display seven candidates at a time, however, and many candidates in multi-candidate races (particularly those with names near the end of the alphabet) complained that voters might overlook them and move to the next contest. The Board was concerned that, although there was a method for moving between screens of candidates in a given race, many voters would be confused by the technology. The Election Administrator had asked the contractor for the voting machines to develop a solution, probably a method of displaying columns of multiple candidates on a single screen, but there was not time to make such a change and test it for reliability and security before the Primary Election.

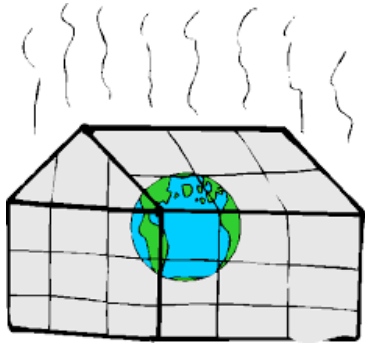


Accordingly, the Board adopted the Election Administrator's recommendation that paper ballots be used in Early Voting Centers during the Primary. For those with vision impairment or other disabilities that make it difficult to read and mark a paper ballot, touch-screen ballot marking machines will be available in Early Voting Centers as well as at precinct polling places on election day. The training manuals for election judges will be revised to provide new instructions to implement the new procedures.

Ralph Watkins, LWVMD Voter Service Chair

Your League in Action in Annapolis!

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act – Reauthorization



Progress toward passing the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act Reauthorization was made recently with the introduction of **SB 323** in the Senate Committee on Education, Health and Environmental Affairs (EHE). The Senate has scheduled a hearing for Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 1 p.m. LWVMD is submitting testimony to the committee and we're signing on to a letter from the Maryland Climate Coalition.

SB 323 has been cross-filed as HB 610 in the House Committee on Environment and Transportation (ET). It also has to go to Senate Finance (FIN) and House Economic Matters (ECM).

League members are participating in a **Maryland Climate Coalition Lobby Night** for the bills in Annapolis on **Monday, Feb. 8 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.** We will visit legislators from Howard, Harford, Baltimore County, Prince George's and Anne Arundel Counties. **Other dates for Lobby Night are Feb. 22, Baltimore City; March 7, Western MD/Montgomery County and March 21, Southern MD/Eastern Shore.**

We also hope that members respond to an **upcoming Action Alert** request to call legislators on Feb. 16 and 17 to ask them to support **SB 323 and HB 610** in committee and when it goes to the floor for a vote.

This reauthorization is important because it builds on the previous, successful plan that has put us on track to meet the current goal for greenhouse gas emission reduction by 2020 while also providing \$3.5 billion in economic output and creating up to 36,000 new jobs. The current legislation expires on Dec. 31, 2016, thus the urgency to reauthorize the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act in the 2016 General Assembly session.

A significant feature of the new bills requires the Department of the Environment (MDE) to submit a plan to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent from the 2006 levels by 2030. This goal is the same as the unanimous recommendation of the bi-partisan Maryland Climate Change Commission, chaired by MDE Secretary Ben Grumbles.

The bills provide for a series of public workshops for comment on the proposed plan before it goes to the Governor and to the General Assembly by Dec. 31, 2018.

MDE would be required to adopt a final new plan by the end of 2019. If the new plan builds on existing programs like the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard, EmPower Maryland and the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative while creatively designing new programs, it has the potential to carry Maryland forward toward substantially lower carbon emissions and clean energy, healthy people and a strong economy.

Betsy Singer, LWVMD Environment Chair

Join the Frederick County LWV for a Special Meeting On Redistricting Reform

Wednesday, February 24, 6:30 p.m., C. Burr Artz Library,
110 East Patrick St., Frederick, 21701, (parking available in garage beside the library)

Speaker: Mr. Walter Olson, Co-Chair, Governor's Commission on Redistricting Reform

Our own Co-President Nancy Soreng has prepared a PowerPoint presentation on **Gerrymandering and Redistricting Reform** for local Leagues to use in their communities. If you are interested you need to download the PowerPoint presentation from LWVMD's Google Docs and save it on your computer. Then, if you open it with PowerPoint, you should be able to play the whole presentation, including the embedded videos. You will need to have Real Player on your computer. This is free software you can download from the Internet but most computers have it.

Please contact the LWVMD office, 410-269-0232, info@lwvmd.org, if you have questions, The office can also suggest a speaker to give this presentation to your audience.



*MD's 3rd.
Cong.
District*

SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE DATE

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 30, 2016



The League of Women Voters of Maryland is planning a **special spring event** that will feature as our luncheon speaker **Karen Tumulty**, national political correspondent for the *Washington Post*. In 2013, Ms. Tumulty received the Toner Prize for political reporting. Prior to her writing for the *Post*, Ms. Tumulty was a political reporter for *Time* magazine. She will share with us her observations about the current presidential campaign.

We are privileged to be able to hold our luncheon at the prestigious **Cosmos Club**, located at 2121 Massachusetts Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C., on Embassy Row. The club, one of the goals of which is the "advancement of its members in science, literature and art," has a long list of past and present distinguished members such as Presidents Woodrow Wilson, William Howard Taft, Herbert Hoover and Theodore Roosevelt. Also included are Supreme Court Justices Harry Blackmun, Louis Brandeis, Antonin Scalia, and Sandra Day O'Connor (although women were not admitted to membership until 1988). The Townsend House where the club is located is itself on the National Register of Historic Places.

You can visit this special space, enjoy lunch, listen to our noted speaker, and afterward, if you wish, **tour the Phillips Collection** at 1600 21st St., which is near the Cosmos Club. If you have not seen "The Luncheon of the Boating Party," in which Pierre Auguste Renoir paints himself as a member of the party, you have missed a masterpiece: Check it out at the Phillips!

You will not want to miss this event! Stay tuned to learn about how to sign up.

Barbara Schnackenberg, LWVMD Co-President

Time to Start Preparing for LWVMD's Annual Legislative Day, Tuesday, March 1st

This will be an exciting year in Annapolis and there will be a lot to learn about during Legislative Day on March 1. **Warren Deschenaux**, Executive Director of the Department of Legislative Services, will present information on the state budget. **Benjamin Grumbles**, Secretary of the Maryland Department of the Environment will be our luncheon speaker.



There will be an optional tour of the legislative complex. Nineteen League members who having been following legislation for LWVMD's **Report from State Circle** will report on the status of key legislation in their fields.

This year the LWVMD has set the following priorities for lobbying the General Assembly: Redistricting reform; open government; improved voter access; eliminating contested elections for judges; mitigating climate change; increasing renewable energy; assuring clean water standards; adequate public transportation; full funding of the "Bridge to Excellence" Act; corrections and sentencing reform; and maintaining the safety net for vulnerable populations

We make our presence felt in Annapolis when we use Legislative Day to visit with the delegates and senators from our individual districts. **Now is the time to plan your visits with others from your League and make appointments with your legislators.** Go to mdelect.net for contact information.

If the League office has received your Legislative Day registration (see flyer on page 10) by February 23, we'll email you background material on some of the key issues to use in your discussions with your legislators. Updated information will be available at our meeting room (President's Conference Room, West Wing in the Miller Senate Office Building) on March 1, by 8 a.m.

Here are some ideas for parking:

NAVY-MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL STADIUM

Public Parking lot entrance, Gate #5, Taylor Avenue. Daily flat fee. The Trolley Shuttle runs to Annapolis Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at 20 minute intervals. Saturday and Sunday service, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. No service on State holidays unless the General Assembly is in session. Trolley service costs \$2.00.

GOTT'S COURT GARAGE

Entrances: Calvert Street and Northwest Street. Hourly rate.

WHITMORE GARAGE

Entrances: Calvert and Clay Streets. Hourly rate.

If you have any questions, contact me at ruth@cramercrystal.com.

Ruth Crystal, LWVMD Action Chair



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND
LEGISLATIVE DAY

Tuesday, March 1, 2016

Miller Senate Office Building
President's Conference Room, West Wing
11 Bladen Street, Annapolis, MD



Registration fee: \$35 - GUESTS ARE WELCOME
Includes buffet lunch Parking not included

Photo ID required for admission to all Maryland government buildings.

- 8:30am Registration and Coffee
- 8:30 -10am Visits to Legislators arranged by Local Leagues
Local Leagues are responsible for making those appointments in advance.
- 9:00 -10am Optional tour of Legislative complex
- 10:00am Report on legislative visits
- 10:30am State budget presentation by Warren Deschenaux, Executive Director
Department of Legislative Services
- 11:15am Updates by reporters from LWVMD *Report from State Circle*
- Noon Lunch - Speaker: Benjamin H. Grumbles, Secretary
Maryland Department of the Environment
- 1pm Optional visits to committee hearings

LEGISLATIVE DAY 2016 REGISTRATION FORM

If you or someone you know would like assistance from the Lois Stoner Scholarship Fund for the workshop fee, please contact the LWVMD office.

(Deadline for Registration - Tuesday, February 23, 2016)

NAME _____

LEAGUE _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration fee - \$35 _____ Donation to the LWVMD Education Fund _____

Or donate online: Go to http://www.lwvmd.org/join_donate

Mail to: LWVMD, 111 Cathedral Street, Suite 201, Annapolis, MD 21401

Or register online: http://www.lwvmd.org/legislative_day_2016