



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND, INC.

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STATE BOARD LETTER

Mid-August 2018

LWVMD Calendar

August

20 – Certification of Local Ballot Questions

September

6 – LWVMD Board Meeting, First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ellicott City, 10am

12 – Constitution Day Program at the UMD Carey School of Law in Baltimore: *The Changing Makeup of the Supreme Court*, from 12 to 2pm. (See page 8)

15 – Book Talk and Social with Elaine Weiss: *The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote*, at Church of the Redeemer in Baltimore from 11am to 1pm. (See pages 9-10)

22 – Vote411.org Goes Live

29 – Fall Workshop at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ellicott City, 10am to 2pm. (See page 11)

Planning your local league calendar? Click [here](#) to see the whole calendar.

Presidents' Message



I am excited. We have good news – Nancy Soreng and Lu Pierson have agreed to lead a redistricting advocacy team to build on the educational work LWVMD will be doing with our LWVUS Redistricting Project Grant (see page 7 for more info). The League is seeking to reform the way Maryland adopts legislative and congressional district boundaries before a new map is drawn following the 2020 census. In preliminary conversations we have acknowledged that the

League should take the lead on this Making Democracy Work[®] undertaking. We are culminating our [multi-year strategy](#) with a full court press to improve the redistricting process before the 2020 census. [The 2019 General Assembly session is critical.](#) We will delve into the workings of the current power structure and help local Leagues to gain support among their elected officials and their constituents. We will do frequent and regular conference calls between League advocates and coalition partners (yes, this will take advanced levels of cooperation). It is my

expectation that our work together will hone our mission focus, will help us train new leaders for the decade ahead and can be a focus for membership recruitment.

So, a couple of related observations:

1. Democracy (like League leadership) grows with practice. We base our advocacy for redistricting reform not on what is best for one party or another but on what **can** come from a process that honors diversity of views. Leadership comes in different shapes and sizes but is only effective when trust is cultivated and practiced. Our democracy performs best when we and our leaders find the beauty of mutually acceptable solutions. We are not there yet.
2. The League needs to learn how to utilize volunteers. Non-member volunteers attracted to vital democracy building work will grow the League much faster than the “attraction” membership model we mostly follow now (based on the belief that folks will join us because we are such a great organization).

I look forward to working with every League on all aspects of this initiative to build a stronger democracy in Maryland.

Richard Willson,
LWVMD Co-President
pres@lwvmd.org

Notes from the State Board

This is a very busy time of year and the State League is working hard to ensure nothing falls behind. Your LWVMD State Board has continued to focus on the new Transformation Road-map and how to make Democracy work for your local League. School Funding and Same Day Voter Registration are two items that will be on the November Ballot. [The Fall Workshop](#) will cover these items in detail to help you inform the voters in your county of the issues. We have eliminated the dues for students aged 16 to 30 who are attending accredited learning institutions. Now is the time to get these young people involved in LWV and to JOIN! They are motivated and they bring young ideas to our organization. Fund raising is also a concern for local Leagues. The State Board is planning a 50/50 Fundraiser with the Harford County LWV on October 17. The tour will visit Ledew Gardens, the Colored School, and

learn about Historic Havre De Grace. The consensus studies on Death with Dignity and Corrections and Bail are almost ready for your input. We are also working on Voter Forums for autumn.

Theresa Freligh
LWVMD Secretary
secretary@lwvmd.com

Candidate and Issue Forums

The League of Women Voters has a [long history](#) of hosting nonpartisan candidate forums and educating the American people. [Attending or watching a candidate debate](#) is one of the best ways to prepare for casting your ballot. As a core feature of U.S. politics, candidate debates [help voters learn more about a candidate](#) and his or her stance on key issues.

Thanks to all the Voter Services Volunteers

Thanks to the Voters Service volunteers across the state, we provided election information to more than a quarter million Maryland voters, equal to 30% of all those who voted in the primary! There were:

- ❖ more than 188,000 copies of Voters' Guides distributed;
- ❖ more than 10,000 visits to Voters' Guides posted on the LWVMD website; and
- ❖ 53,705 visits to VOTE411.

Providing this information required a great deal of preparation by dedicated League volunteers, including updating descriptions of offices, drafting questions for candidates, and then gently reminding candidates to respond, which often required multiple gentle reminders. For the primary, there were more than 2,500 candidates and more than 1,600 responded. The majority of those who did not respond were unopposed in the primary and/or were running for party central committee, which is often overlooked by the voters.

Many different methods were used to distribute Voters' Guides. The Voters' Guide was included as an insert to a newspaper in Frederick County, and the

Eastern Shore counties of Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne's, and Talbot. The Montgomery County Voters' Guide was printed separately and was mailed to several thousand requesters, the homes of every voter registered since the 2016 election, and homes in five precincts with a history of low voter turnout. The Montgomery Guide was also distributed through county libraries and service centers and volunteers handed out several thousand copies at Metro stations. The League has been registering voters at naturalization ceremonies at the Baltimore and Greenbelt federal courthouses and also at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service office in Baltimore, and each new citizen is provided a Welcome New Voter packet that includes a postcard to request the Voters' Guide. The LWVMD office mailed Voters' Guides to those requesters.

Now is the time to make plans to expand the reach of our Voters' Guides -- whether on paper or the internet, planning now for getting the word to new audiences will help us build on the success we had in this primary. A big Thank You to everyone who helped with this vital public service!

Ralph Watkins
LWVMD 3rd Vice President
VP3@lwvmd.org



(Get your bumper sticker at www.lwvmd.org/lwvmd_ware)

Facing Hard Truths about League Origin

8/8/18 by [Chris Carson](#), LWVUS president & [Virginia Kase](#), LWVUS CEO

Last week, Brent Staples of the New York Times published an op-ed titled, *How the Suffrage Movement Betrayed Black Women*. The League of Women Voters was not mentioned in the piece, but we should have been.

The League was founded in 1920—just months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment—by American suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt. Catt was a complicated character, a political operative, and by modern standards, yes, racist. While fighting for the 19th Amendment and lobbying Southern senators, she famously claimed, “White supremacy will be strengthened, not weakened, by women’s suffrage.”

These remarks are sometimes brushed over as a sign of the times or a political strategy. But actions speak louder than words, and our organization was not welcoming to women of color through most of our existence.

Even during the Civil Rights movement, the League was not as present as we should have been. While activists risked life and limb to register black voters in the South, the League’s work and our leaders were late in joining to help protect all voters at the polls. It wasn’t until 1966 that we reached our first position to combat discrimination. Still, our focus on social policy was from afar—not on the front lines.

Today, we acknowledge this shortcoming and that we have more work to do.

The League of Women Voters serves millions of voters in underrepresented communities across America every year, but as an organization, our membership does not always reflect the communities we serve. As we approach our 100th anniversary, we are not only striving for better, we will do better.



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We are having tough conversations about race in this country—and making sure that as an organization we confront our place in history. African Americans were shut out of the vision of the League. As we continue to grow our movement, we acknowledge our privilege and must use our power to raise the voices of those who haven’t always had a seat at the table.

We have embraced a new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy. We know policy alone does not solve a problem. The League is committed to living our values and prioritizing inclusion.

We hope that as an organization we offer and nurture a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment that is welcoming to all who are drawn to our mission and wish to make a positive impact.

Today, we invite all people, regardless of gender, gender identity, ethnicity, or race, to join us as we commit to righting the wrongs of our past and building a stronger, more inclusive democracy.

Baltimore Fair Elections Support Charter Amendment



Baltimore City voters will be asked in November whether to change the city charter to allow for public financing and to create an 11-

member commission to oversee a Baltimore City Fair Election Fund for public money available for candidates. [The League of Women Voters of Baltimore City](#) joined the [Baltimore Fair Elections Coalition](#) to support the passage of the bill in the City Council and the November election.

Supporters hope public financing will change how candidates run their campaigns, allowing more time for community interaction and less effort for fundraising. They propose that only candidates who agree to accept individual donations of less than \$150 would be eligible for matching funds from the city. Now individuals can contribute up to \$6,000 to a local campaign. The proposal would offer qualifying candidates some multiple of an individual's donation. The idea is to reduce the power of large donors and make giving more appealing to lower-income residents. Money for the fund could come from an annual budgeted allocation, dedicating certain fines, fees and surcharges, and grants or donations. Detailed requirements and oversight of the election fund would be overseen by the commission and city ordinance. The system could be in effect for the 2024 elections.

Proponents will face some people who will object to using even a small percentage of a

tight budget for public funding. However, proponents point to the need to do something to combat the power of large donors. In the 2016 election, candidates for mayor spent a total of \$9 million, up from about \$3 million previously. The winner, Mayor Catherine Pugh, spent more than \$2 million.

Lois Hybl,
LWVMD 1st Vice President
lhybl@lwvmd.org

LWVMD Prepares to Recruit Student Members

The first step in launching a statewide initiative to attract new student members entailed defining our target audience. For purposes of the LWVUS pilot program announced this April, LWVMD has adopted the following definition:

Student Member: a person between the ages of 16 and 30 enrolled in an accredited institution.

LWVUS and LWVMD have agreed to waive Per Member Payments (PMP) for student members through January 2021 as part of the pilot program.

An age range has been included because the LWVUS pilot specifically speaks of attracting young members. The state board appreciates that Leaguers are lifelong learners and that members of all ages take classes. We hope the information gained from this pilot will help guide future strategies and dues structures for all members.

LWVMD is actively working to support local Leagues in this initiative. Administrative director Ashley Oleson has assembled resources and identified potential partners to help Leagues organize meaningful activities for students. A committee has formed to brainstorm other possibilities, such as liaising directly with student groups in high schools and colleges.

Is your local League participating in the pilot?
Do you have a contact at a local school or college who might want to learn about the League? What ideas do you have for engaging students as League members? How can the state League help?

I welcome your input and participation in this exciting endeavor. Please contact me to offer suggestions and/or volunteer. Our committee will meet by conference call in early September.

Niecy Chambers,
LWVMD 2nd VP-Membership
nychambers@lwvmd.org

Legislative Priorities Season is Here Again

The General Assembly convenes again on January 9, 2019. This year some committees have already been meeting and others will begin again in September. For example, the Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education (Kirwan Commission) has been meeting almost weekly to prepare for a fall report. You can see links to the schedule and papers from previous meetings near the bottom of the General Assembly homepage.

Whatever comes out of these intersession committee meetings, we need to be ready with our own legislative ideas and establish our priorities. In order to be sure that all local Leagues participate in the process of setting our priorities, we ask that the **suggestions be submitted to me at lhyl@lwvmd.org by Wednesday, September 26, 2018**. We will also poll RSC reporters who have been following issues. The State Board will adopt our statewide priorities at our November board meeting and publish a leaflet of our priorities for us to use with our legislators in their home districts or in Annapolis.

What Topics Should Local Leagues Consider?

Your suggestions may be on any topic on which we have a national or state consensus. Our national [LWVUS Positions](#) are provided on the LWVUS website and state [LWVMD positions](#) may be found in *Study and Action* on the LWVMD website. Another factor we consider in adopting priorities is whether we have a reporter who can follow the issue and write for *Report from State Circle (RSC)*. Check past issues [here](#) to see if we have had a reporter on the issue. Consider last year's priorities (**Making Democracy Work:** Redistricting Reform, Improved Voter Access and Security of Election Processes; **Protecting the Environment:** Mitigating Climate Change, Increasing the Use of Clean Renewable Energy, Ensuring Safe water and Clean Waterways for All; **Promoting Social and Economic Justice:** Maintaining the Safety Net for Vulnerable Populations, Providing Adequate and Equitable Pre-K to 12 Public Education, Providing Adequate Public Transportation, Reforming Corrections and Sentencing. Also, consult the [Maryland General Assembly website](#). At the bottom of the home page, you will find a box titled "Highlighted," with "The 90 Day Report" and "Issue Papers." It provides a summary of legislation that passed and failed in the 2018 session. The report may provide some suggestions for your consideration, especially among ideas that failed but we may want to raise again.

You may also look to the news and our coalition partners such as the [Maryland Education Coalition](#), Marylanders for Open Government, [Tame the Gerrymander](#), [Working Matters](#) and SBL articles by Betsy Singer, Chair of LWVMD's Environment Advocacy Team.

If we do not have a national or state consensus on a topic of great interest to League members, they may suggest that the topic be studied when we consider program planning as we do each January. League members who have questions about our consensus positions may contact me at lhybl@lwvmd.org.

Lois Hybl,
LWVMD 1st Vice President
lhybl@lwvmd.org

Statewide Redistricting Push, Can You Help?

Have you heard that LWVMD was awarded an \$8,000 6-month grant (June-Dec 2018) to educate Marylanders on redistricting reform? We are very honored that our work so far has earned us this award & we are very excited about this opportunity to help more Marylanders learn about how gerrymandering hurts our democracy, and build our base of supporters on this issue.

In order to make the most of this opportunity, we are looking for leaders to help us spread the word! Our plan is to have as many educational meetings as possible between now and December.

Is there someone in your League who wants to help support this mission by leading (or co-leading with Ashley Oleson, LWVMD Redistricting Reporter) at least one small educational meeting for gerrymandering newbies in your county?

We've started developing resources for this initiative here

https://www.lwvmd.org/make_every_vote_count on LWVMD website – check it out to dig into more information.

How we can support your meetings –

- 1) We have developed a shareable PowerPoint to guide your conversation which you can walk your audience through
- 2) A Quick Training with Ashley Oleson, our Redistricting Advocate since 2015
- 3) Mix and match [redistricting education tools](#) to personalize your event
- 4) Printed [Empowerment Toolkit Folders](#) for your attendees
- 5) Conversation Starting [Buttons](#) for your attendees
- 6) Potentially more as we learn and grow!

[Please click to sign up here](#) if you or someone you know is interested in collaborating to Make Every Vote Count in Maryland with our 6-month education campaign for Fair Maps!

Ashley Oleson,
LWVMD Redistricting Reporter
redistricting@lwvmd.org



12th Annual LWVMD Constitution Day Program

A panel of experts will discuss:

“The Changing Makeup of the Supreme Court”

Monday, September 17, 2018 at 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

Ceremonial Court Room, University of Maryland Carey School of Law
500 W. Baltimore St., Baltimore, MD 21201

Reception in Atrium follows program's Q&A. The program and reception are FREE, but parking at Baltimore Grande Garage costs about \$7 for 2 hours.

Leaguer volunteers needed: Greeters, Ushers, Publication display, Sign-in table, Reception helpers, Donors of cookies, brownies, party sandwiches. Contact andreagruhl@aol.com to volunteer.

RSVP required by Sept. 14. Send email with your name, local League, contact info, and if parking is needed to: stateoffice@lwvmd.org

Co-sponsored by League of Women Voters of Maryland, University of Maryland Carey School of Law, University of Maryland-Baltimore, University of Maryland-College Park, College of Behavioral & Social Sciences, MLaw Programs.

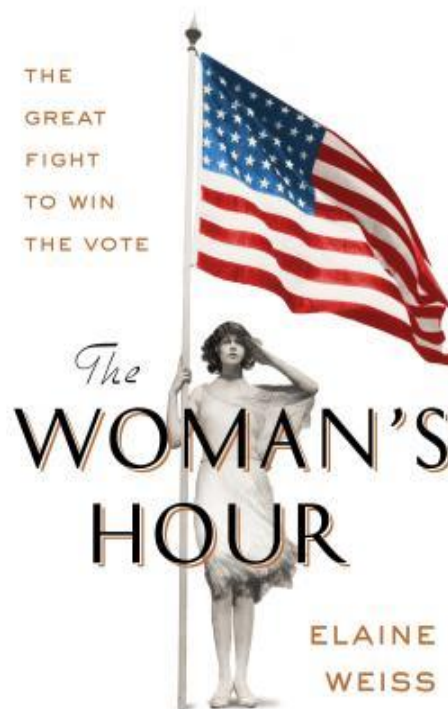


League of Women Voters of Baltimore City

Book Talk & Social with
Baltimore author Elaine Weiss

Saturday September 15, 2018

11 am – 1 pm



The nail-biting climax of one of the greatest political battles in American history; the fight to ratify the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, granting women the right to vote.

Church of the Redeemer • 5603 N. Charles St. 21210

Light Lunch & Book Signing to follow, \$20.00

Registration: Online <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-womans-hour-the-great-fight-to-win-the-vote-baltimore-author-elaine-weiss-tickets-48165683857?aff=eac2>

Print Next Page or call 410-377-7738

Reservation Form for Elaine Weiss:

The Women's Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote

Saturday, September 15, 2018 • 11:00 am - 1:00 pm

Church of the Redeemer • 5603 N. Charles St. 21210

Light Lunch & Book Signing to follow

Name: _____ League _____

Email: _____ Phone# _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

\$20.00 regular _____

\$5.00 student _____

TOTAL _____

Mail Check to:

LWV Baltimore City, 6600 York Road, Suite 211, Baltimore, MD 21212

For more information: 410-377-7738 • E-mail: lwvbaltimore@comcast.net

Or pay online: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-womans-hour-the-great-fight-to-win-the-vote-baltimore-author-elaine-weiss-tickets-48165683857?aff=eac2>



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF MARYLAND

FALL WORKSHOP

Saturday, September 29, 2018



First Evangelical Lutheran Church - 3604 Chatham Road, Ellicott City, MD 21042

Early Bird Registration* fee: \$25 for members, \$35 for non-members

(Includes morning coffee/light breakfast, lunch, materials)

9:30 a.m. Registration and light breakfast

Morning Workshop Sessions

10:00 am **Briefing on LWVMD Death with Dignity Study** - Sandra Bjork and committee members

11:00 am **You're Voting on More than Candidates – 2018 Ballot Question Overview** – Ralph Watkins, Voter Service Chair

OR

10 am & 11 am - Repeated Session **LWVMD Action - the Who, What, When & How of State & Local Advocacy** – Lois Hybl, Action Chair

12:00 p.m. Lunch

12:30 p.m. Keynote: ***Perspectives on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)***

FALL WORKSHOP 2018 REGISTRATION FORM

(Deadline for Early Bird Registration - *Sept.18, 2018, Late Registrations - \$30 members/\$40 guests)

NAME: _____

League: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Amount enclosed: _____

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

Questions? Email stateoffice@lwvmd.org or call 410-269-0232

Or REGISTER ONLINE

Go to lwvmd.org/2018_fall_workshop

If you or someone you know would like assistance from the Lois Stoner Scholarship Fund for the workshop fee, please contact the LWVMD office at 410 269 0232 or by [email: stateoffice@lwvmd.org](mailto:email:stateoffice@lwvmd.org)