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STATE BOARD LETTER

February 2020

LWVMD Calendar

March

21 - **State Board Meeting** – 9:00 - 12:00PM – Online

April

01 – U.S. Census Day

06 – *Sine Die* – Final Day of Maryland’s Legislative Session

07 – Final Day of Online Voter Registration & Party Affiliation Change

16-23 – Early Voting (Voters can register to vote at the polls)

28 – Maryland Presidential Primary & Congressional District 7’s Special General Election (Voters can register to vote at the polls)

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

Presidents’ Message

There are so many people who devote untold hours to LWVMD! Some of their efforts are fairly public, but much is being done behind the scenes.

Kudos to **LWVMD State Director Ashley Oleson** and our interns **Joan Maingi** and **Stephanie Parajon**, **Nancy Soreng**, and **Policy Director Tierra Bradford** of Common Cause MD for a superbly organized *Fair Maps Lobby Night* on February 17. Under Ashley’s direction student volunteer **Philip Brooks** spent hours setting up appointments. Between our two organizations at least 40 people participated. They had us organized into teams with a detailed schedule for visiting the offices of members of the MD Senate Budget and Taxation Committee and MD House Rules and Executive Nominations Committee. We had been provided with legislator names, room numbers, phone, district, a map of each floor of the office buildings, as well as background information on legislator positions on the issue. And Ashley and Nancy have had extensive personal meetings with legislators to get sponsors and co-sponsors for the Fair Maps bill.

Report from State Circle is the result of innumerable volunteers writing about legislation and writing testimony, with **Ruth Crystal** editing and **Ashley Oleson** formatting the final product.

Action Co-chair **Kimberly Scott** organized the reporter training with assistance from Ashley Oleson and Nancy Soreng.

At the same time **Barbara Crain** has been working more than eight-hour days (unpaid overtime) coordinating *Vote411*, and this wasn't even a job she originally signed up for. **Ralph Watkins** trained local volunteers and has helped coach the process. We can't begin to list all the local volunteers working to get the *Voters' Guides* produced.

Beth Hufnagel has stepped up to do a review of LWVMD's financial records. In these times with more board members who work during the day, we have been experimenting with online board meetings. Here the leadership of **Richard Willson** and the online committee has been invaluable. This is only a sample of the people who need to be thanked, because we realize that there are so many of you working hard at the local and state level on various aspects of League work. Thanks!

Richard Willson and Lois Hybl - Co-Presidents

NationBuilder Confidentiality Agreements – Final Notice

Back in November 2019, LWVMD began reaching out to League members with access to records in NationBuilder to make sure that we had all signed Confidentiality Agreements. Though this may have looked like a departure from our practice of mutual trust, we felt this step was needed since some local leagues had begun seeking access for individuals outside League membership to help them with web page maintenance and communications. As you know, within the NationBuilder package, permission to create web pages also confers permission to view profiles. You might say that our decision to require the signing of Confidentiality Agreements is just a formalizing of our contract with members to keep their personal information secure.

To that end and to make this as easy to follow as possible, we have placed instructions on our Maryland League Management site so that if you need to continue your present access role of "Web author", [click here](#).

- If you have already completed this process and previously provided us with your signed Confidentiality Agreement, thank you very much.
- If you no longer need NationBuilder access, just email Richard and let him know.

We will be sending out emails to individuals who have not yet completed the Agreements next week, and if we do not receive a signed Confidentiality Agreement in response to that email by March 31, 2020, members will have their NationBuilder access revoked until they reapply and complete the required documentation.

Richard Willson, Co-President
rwillson@lwvmd.org

Fair Maps Lobby Night – Inside View

On February 17th, I attended my first lobby night. It was exhilarating to see many LWVMD



members come out and talk to legislators about the importance of passing Fair Maps legislation. My interactions with the League members and hearing about their reasons for supporting redistricting reform was my favorite part of the night. A mom who brought her child along to lobby night talked about how redistricting impacts her child's future, and that really resonated with me. In high school I lived and went to school in two different Congressional districts even though my school and house were two blocks apart. Even now, I move almost daily between two districts as my college campus,

1- One group of 6 out for Fair Maps

Towson University, is also split into two different Congressional districts. It was interesting talking to the legislators because it seemed that every legislator had a different opinion about redistricting reform depending on their perspective. It seemed that if redistricting did not seem to personally affect the legislator, they did not seem as interested in the topic. But there were legislators who saw the damages that gerrymandering caused, and you could see they wanted to support the Fair Maps. One legislator shared a story about how to reach one part of his district he had to take a boat ride. When the different groups reconvened at the end of lobby night, I loved hearing the different experiences and their excitement for the Fair Maps Act. This, to me, made the night a success. Seeing people come together to lobby for a cause they are passionate about.

Joan Maingi, LWVMD Intern, Session 2020

LWVMD Legislative Day

Legislative Day 2020 was an incredible experience. Getting to meet members of the different leagues and hearing about the fantastic work that they're doing on a local level was truly inspiring. Encouraging voters to get involved in their local government is vital to ensuring that everyone is represented fairly. I really enjoyed going with League of Women Voters Maryland board co-president, Lois Hybl, to advocate for LWVMD's 2020 Legislative Priorities: Making Democracy Work, Protecting the Environment, Promoting Social and Economic Justice.



2-Dorothy Lehman, Shirly Hatch, Alfa Stevens, Beth Hufnagel, Joan Maingi, Stephanie Parajon, & Lois Hybl

Having lived in some of the most gerrymandered states in the country, I am particularly passionate about the Fair Maps Act and enjoyed getting the chance to speak with my representatives about a cause that I deeply care about.

I enjoyed observing the presentation by Victoria Gruber from the Department of Legislative Services about how the state's 2020 budget will affect the causes organizations advocate for. Additionally, I learned a lot from the partner panel, which included Joanne Antoine-Common Cause Executive Director, Steven Hershkowitz-Chesapeake Climate Action Network Maryland Director, Christopher Dews-Job Opportunities Task Force Policy.



3- LWVMD State Director, Co-President, and Montgomery County President recognized on the floor by Delegates Sara Love, Marc Korman, and Ariana Kelly with Speaker Jones



4- LWV-Howard, Anne Arundel, and Harford County Presidents recognized on the Senate Floor by Sen. Susan Lee

This panel helped me to further understand the wide array of topics the League is able to engage in thanks to the strong partnerships we build with other organizations doing great work in the state.

My experience at 2020 Legislative Day left me energized and more committed to working for organizations that advocate for policies that will create a more fair and equitable democracy. The most exciting part of the day was watching League of Women Voters be recognized on the senate floor for their hundredth anniversary. The League of Women Voters has been a driving force in making sure that everyone's voice is heard, and I am very proud to be interning for this organization.

Stephanie Parajon, LWVMD Intern, Session 2020

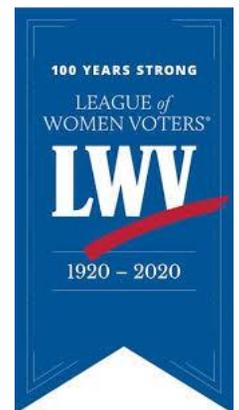
100th Anniversary Celebrations

All across the country, Leaguers celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the League of Women Voters and the passage of the 19th Amendment on Valentine's Day, February 14, 2020.

The Baltimore City League held an open house at the [Robert L. Bolgolmony Library](#) and Archives at the University of Baltimore to announce a new digital exhibit, [The League of Women Voters: The Legacy of Suffrage](#), which is now available for researchers and the general public.

At the reception, Roberta Sharper, a member of the Governor's "Year of the Woman" Committee, read the following inspirational reading, and we'd like to share it with you here:

*372 years ago, in the year 1684, **Margaret Brent** attempted to exercise her franchise as a land-owning citizen by appealing to the Maryland General Assembly for the right to vote. The*



assembly was shocked that a woman would consider that because she owned land, that gave her the same privilege as a man, and she was refused. She left the assembly with this thought, "Taxation without representation is tyranny". Following this event, she and her family were so victimized that they left Maryland and moved to Virginia.

"Taxation without representation is tyranny".

Many years would pass following that event. As time passed the treatment of women became more and more abusive. It was 252 years later, in the year 1900 that some Maryland women were allowed to vote. It was in a special municipal bond election in Annapolis and only because the women were taxpaying property owners. They continued to vote but only in bond elections. They were not allowed to participate in elections for the mayor and other city officials.

260 years later in 1908, the town of Still Pond, in Kent County, Maryland, received a charter which granted female taxpayers the right to vote, 12 years before the ratification of the 19th amendment. The charter recognized the suffrage rights of women over the age of 21 to vote. Three women voted in the local election that year. Fourteen women were registered, including two African Americans; however, the town later repealed the rule and women were once again without the vote until 1920.

The history of this nation ignores the harsh and brutal treatment that women endured as they struggled against what seemed to be impossible odds. After all, the Constitution made allowances for all men to have life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but offered nothing for women. Women grew tired of the physical and mental abuse and black women, who were already the victims of discrimination, were in double jeopardy. Women had had enough and began to band together to fight back.

They realized they had to have representation in the government to speak up for them, and for this to happen they had to be able to vote. They had to have fearless leaders, who would not wilt in the face of the consequences that they would receive for violating the law as it stood. They knew that the constitution had to be amended, to address the needs of those not included in the present document and they were determined to make it happen, regardless of the cost, and research tells us that the cost was great. I am certain that our history books avoid this episode, because it would tell the shameful story of how the suffragettes were treated just because they wanted the right to vote.

The suffragettes' fight to get the vote began in 1848 and was not won until 1920; seventy-two years later because in order for the constitution to be amended at that time thirty-six states (two-thirds of the country) had to vote in support of it, and you can be sure there was stiff opposition; sad to say, even some women opposed it. The state of Maryland was not one of the thirty-six states to ratify the amendment in 1920. It was twenty-one years later that Maryland finally ratified the amendment in 1941; twenty-one years after it was passed.

The amending of the constitution is a rare happening in this country, and as the centennial of the 19th amendment drew near, decisions were being made all over the country to celebrate the occasion. In 2013, Governor O'Malley commissioned a group to begin to plan for the celebration in Maryland. The emphasis on this event highlights, showcases, and seeks to educate, the present generation about the history of women rights in the past and the lessons to be learned for the future. Governor Hogan has declared 2020, "The Year of the Woman."

We are aware of the gallant leaders who led the charge and persevered in the face of one defeat after another, but we must also pay tribute to others who made it possible for the leaders to meet the challenges, those suffragettes - young and old, black and white, who played significant roles in accomplishing this victory who may not be so well known.

- **Francis Harper** – abolitionist, poet, teacher, public speaker, suffragette, African/American who in 1866 gave a moving speech before the National Women's Rights Convention, demanding equal rights for all, including black women.
- **Lavinia Dundore** – organized the Maryland Equal Rights Society in 1867 to work for suffrage.
- **Elizabeth Ellicott** – advocated for suffrage and fought for women's education and other social and political reforms.
- **Dr. Lillian Welsh** – in 1913 joined 100 Goucher students and national suffragette activist at the inaugural suffragist march in Washington.
- **Edith Hooker** – formed the Just Government League in 1907 which became the largest suffragette organization in the state.
- **Lavinia Engles** – served as field secretary of the National American Women's Suffrage Association from 1913 to the passing of the amendment.
- **Mrs. John Hurst** – in 1915, she was an organizer of the Women's Suffrage Club in Baltimore.
- **Edna Latimore** – campaigned around the state on a pilgrimage in a horse-drawn covered wagon called a *Prairie Schooner* with VOTES FOR WOMEN flags.
- **Lucy Branham** – arrested several times and served sentences in the Occoquan Workhouse and the district jail.
- **Augusta Chissell** – formed the Progressive Women's Club in 1915 for African American Women, because white suffragettes in Maryland usually excluded African Americans from participating.

*Of course, there were many others who rallied when the leaders set the pace. But let us not forget **Carrie Chapman Catt** – who devoted half of her life to the cause and three decades of constant work and travel. She felt it was her job, her life's mission to guide America's women to the promised land of political freedom, securing for the most basic right of democracy. I quote from the statement she made just after the passing of the amendment:*

"Our mothers began it, so it comes on to us in a way a sacred trust, and a great part of our rejoicing today, in the hour of victory, is compounded of our feelings of loyalty to the past and our satisfaction that we have stood faithful to its trust. Now that it is over, the feeling of "ceaselessness" is probably the sensation uppermost with us all and perhaps that is just as well that it should be. For women cannot stop! The National American Women's Suffrage Association with a new purpose, the purpose of making the vote register for an improved citizenship. The women of the National American Women's Suffrage Association are already lined up under a new name "The League of Women Voters."

I end by saying, in 2020 we not only celebrate the centennial of the Passage of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment, but we also celebrate the centennial of the founding of the League of Women Voters thanks to Carrie Chapman Catt.

League Member Sally Grant (a relative of Baltimore City League founder, Sadie Crockin) also presented inspirational remarks. You can [read those here](#).

February State Board Meeting Highlights

- Kimberly Scott and Roy Appletree did a great job planning this year's Legislative Day. Thanks Kim and committee.
- The 2020 State Council is scheduled for June 6 in Prince George's County. Joyce and her team have been working hard to make this a great event. Be sure to sign up for this, after all it is our 100th Anniversary.
- Thanks to Barbara Russell we have a Budget Committee with some great volunteers to make sure your money is spent wisely.
- Ashley Oleson has been working hard pushing Redistricting Reform in Annapolis. Let's hope this is the year it passes.
- Local League Presidents be on the lookout for email from your State Board. Another matter important to Local Leagues is the 2021 State Convention! Perhaps your Local League would like to host this event.

VOTE411 and the Primary Elections

VOTE411.org was established in 2006 to bring election information to the public. This project requires local volunteers to collect and post information about the candidates during each election season. This year, both the statewide Presidential Primary Election and the Special General Election in Congressional District 7 will be held on **April 28, 2020**. In the past, our primaries have been in June, so the "VOTE411 season" was compressed this year. Dozens of volunteers bravely stepped up to the challenge. They attended training sessions in early January and were able to send questionnaires to the candidates beginning the last week in January. They then had to remind the candidates to participate, which was a time-consuming task. The due date for answers was February 25. When the VOTE411 website "goes live" on March 14, individuals across the state will be able to read the candidates' answers word-for-word, exactly as they were received.



Although all the information is now in VOTE411, our volunteers are still at work, busily preparing Voters' Guides for each county and for Baltimore City. Each jurisdiction will submit a pdf file for posting to LWVMD.org. In addition, many counties will be preparing printed Guides for distribution to libraries, senior centers, and other public places. This year, for the first time, Montgomery County's Guide will be available in both English and Spanish.

Thanks again to all our volunteers for this important project.

VOTE411 business cards were distributed at the Winter Workshop. These are great to pass out at League-sponsored events, including voter registration events and forums. To request cards, email Barbara Crain at bcrain@lwvmd.org.

Finally, a big THANK YOU to the dozens of dedicated, hard-working LWV volunteers across the state who make this all happen!

Call to Council June 6th – Save The Date!

The Maryland State League’s Biennial Council will be held on **Saturday, June 6, at the Culinary Arts Center of Prince George’s Community College in Laurel, Maryland.** In addition to conducting our normal business of adopting a budget, we’ll have workshops, speakers, lunch and entertainment celebrating the League’s 100th anniversary.

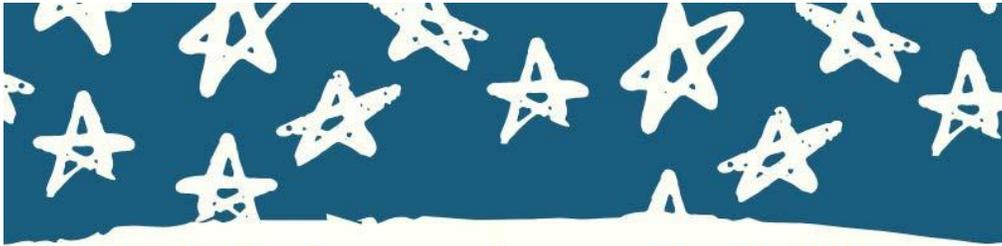


For purposes of voting delegates, according to the LWVMD bylaws, “the council shall be composed of the LWVMD board, two representatives from each local League, and one from each MAL unit and inter-League organization.” Of course, we encourage all members to attend - the more the merrier!

Please watch your inboxes for registration information and additional details.

The decennial census will take place on April 1, 2020. The census requires counting an increasingly diverse and growing population of around 330 million people in more than 140 million housing units in the United States. Get resources to help get out the Count in your neighborhood at [Census.Maryland.gov](https://www.census.gov)





Join Us for our day on Capitol Hill



Thursday May 16th,
10am-3:30

- ✓ Visit our US Senators' and Representatives' offices
- ✓ Enjoy lunch together in staff dining facility
- ✓ Take part in advocating a LWWUS topic* (voluntary)
- ✓ *Have fun!*

**Participants will be briefed by email about the LWWUS topic for advocacy, participating voluntarily.*

- Meet at Taxi/Massachusetts Ave. exit inside Union Station, Washington DC, 10 am.
- Arrive at Union Station by Amtrak, MARC, Metro, bus or auto. If driving one can park in Union Station's public parking (assuming space is available.)

To reserve your spot (or ask questions), please email Jackie Coolidge at: jcoolidge@schoolbench.com with the subject "LWVMD on Capitol Hill" by April 30, and include the following information:

Name(s) _____ Cell phone # _____

Email _____ Street Address (not PO Box) _____

***Street address and cell phone required.