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## STATE BOARD LETTER

December - January 2020-2021

### LWVMD Calendar

#### December

- 12/14** Vote By Mail Consensus Due from Local Leagues
- 12/15** Program Planning Briefing – 7:00pm
- 12/21** ***Tentative LWVMD Board Meeting - 7:00pm-9:00pm - Virtual Only***
- 12/24** *Christmas Eve* - LWVMD Office Closed for Holiday
- 12/25** *Christmas Day* - LWVMD Office Closed for Holiday
- 12/31** *New Year's Eve* - LWVMD Office Closed

#### January

- 1/1** *New Year's Day* - LWVMD Office Closed
- 1/13** **Start of [Maryland 2021 Legislative Session](#)**
- 1/18** *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* - LWVMD Office Closed for Holiday
- 1/20** LWVMD Membership Workshop - 4:00pm-6:00pm
- 1/25** **LWVMD Board Meeting - 7:00pm - 9:00pm - Virtual Only**
- 1/30** **[Winter Workshop](#)- 9:30am-12:30pm**

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

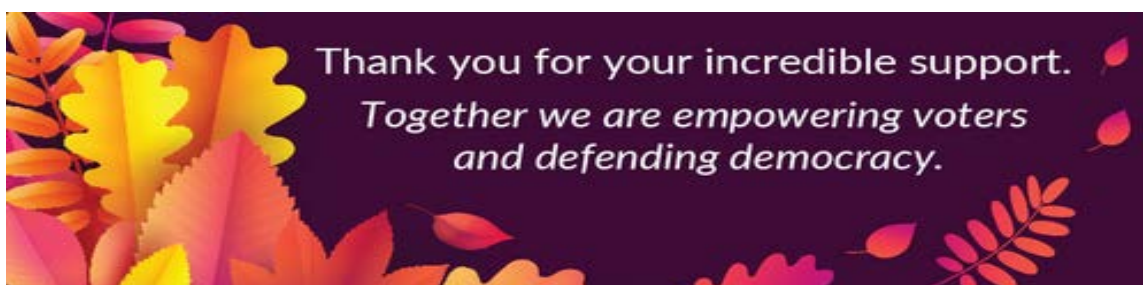
### Presidents' Message

Our DEI policy (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) is that LWVMD is an organization fully committed to diversity, equity and inclusion in principle and in practice. Diversity, equity and inclusion are central to the organization's current and future success in engaging all individuals, households, communities and policy makers in creating a more perfect democracy.

To me, this policy statement has close parallels with one of the key statements that hold us together as a democratic society: One person, one vote. Let me spell that out - if the best decisions for the well-being of all come from a world (OK, nation) where the more people who vote the better, then I don't believe that at a deeper level we can be satisfied with outcomes where the majority forces its will upon the other 49%. In the League we strive for consensus in our decision making and I must confess - I yearn for more consensus-based governance in our political sphere. How in this world might that be possible you ask? I think if we can embrace DEI we might get close.

Recently, I came across a field of study called Moral Psychology in which researchers like Jonathan Haidt have determined that we all have developed certain moral foundations, we just weigh them differently in our decision making. Some of the foundations identified include caring, liberty, fairness, loyalty and authority. In broad brushstrokes, when one of our moral foundations is triggered, we sense a revulsion or sense of personal offense. And here is where it gets interesting: In their research they found that, for example, conservatives view the moral foundation of fairness as equality of opportunity. Conservatives would maintain that people should start from the same starting point as measured by access (access to education, non-discrimination), but how far you get in life depends on how much you work proportionally. Liberals, by contrast, view the foundation of fairness more as equality of outcomes, and would maintain that it is unfair for the wealthy and powerful to exploit the poor and weak without paying fair taxes; this is more about social justice and fair wealth distribution, a more liberal person might argue.

It seems that everyone feels all of these moral foundations, just to varying degrees of strength or sensitivity. As such, one can reasonably predict which political party they belong to depending on the varying 'strength' of each moral foundation. For instance, Liberals typically feel the Caring foundation most strongly, followed by liberty and fairness. Conservatives, meanwhile, feel all of the foundations relatively evenly. Libertarians feel liberty most strongly. So what we end up with here is an important insight: Only the sociopath is devoid of morality, the rest of us just put the emphasis in different places. If we are repulsed by the opinions of others we need to identify in ourselves the moral foundation that is reacting, knowing that often this could be a learning moment as we seek to understand where others are coming from. Good legislation and good conversation flows from deep listening and I hope that this sharing (yes, I graduated with a degree in sociology with a minor in psychology) may be helpful as we work together for a better League and a better world.



*Richard Willson, Co-President*

## November State Board Meeting Highlights

We had our BEST performance of VOTE411 this year! Kudos to all those who worked so hard to get this information out to the public. We are in the process of completing our Vote By Mail Consensus and hope your Local League has participated. The Board will be hosting a Fundraiser on December 1 this year. The Board is also preparing for a Wonderful [Winter Workshop](#) on January 31, 2020 from 9:30am-12:30 (tickets can be [purchased](#) now). More information about our Winter Workshop can be found [here](#). Most of this month's meeting went into review and amending the Job Descriptions for State Board members. We are doing this to make the Board more efficient and transitions run more smoothly.

*Theresa Freligh, Secretary*

## Program Update

### **Vote By Mail Consensus**

First, thanks to all who have already submitted their consensus reports on Vote by Mail. Remember, the deadline is Monday, December 14.

### **Winter Workshop**

We will have a briefing on our next State consensus study, The [Initiative Process](#), at the Winter Workshop on Saturday, January 30. The flyer is at the end of the SBL. Consensus Due 4/16

The second program at the [Winter Workshop](#) will be an examination of the 5 changes to Maryland Law recommended that would dramatically impact fairness in policing. We will present 5 short videos that explain each of these reforms. A panel composed of Senator Jill Carter, Delegate Erik Baron, and Yanet Amanuel, Public Policy Advocate with ACLU of Maryland, will continue the discussion and answer questions.

Lastly, looking ahead to Program Planning. These reports are due to State on 2/26. A Zoom meeting for program contacts is scheduled for December 16. I will send a reminder with login information to LL Presidents and program chairs. At this time, we will discuss the intent of program planning meetings and forms for the presentations.

### **Upcoming Program Dates Reminders:**

- Dec. 14, Monday – Initiative Study Consensus
- Dec. 15, Tuesday, 7PM – Program Planning Briefing
- Jan. 30, Saturday, 9:30 -12:30 – Winter Workshop

*Elaine Apter, VP & Program Chair*

## Legislative Priorities Summary

*LWVMD Priorities are based on feedback from the Local League level. We view Leadership and Allyship as equally important roles and critical responsibilities in our advocacy work. LWVMD will apply lenses of diversity, equity, and inclusion; transparency; and public access to every priority bill to ensure effective and equitable policy implementation.*

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### Leadership

*Leading Role*

**MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK**



**Redistricting Reform**  
**Protecting the Right to Vote**

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### Allyship

*Supporting Role*

**Government Transparency**  
**Progressive & Adequate Fiscal Policy**



**MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK**

**Education & The Blueprint for MD**  
**Police Accountability & Reform**  
**Affordable Housing**  
**Public Transportation**



**SOCIAL & ECONOMIC  
JUSTICE**

**Clean Energy**



**PROTECTING THE  
ENVIRONMENT**

## The Struggle Continues for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future

Because education adequacy and equity have long been a priority of LWVMD, we have been a member of the Maryland Education Coalition and the Coalition for the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. We were extremely disappointed when the governor vetoed HB 1300 last spring. The first priority for the 2021 General Assembly is the override of the veto. The veto delayed appropriations for the 2020-2021 budget. In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic and the

dependence on online learning have exacerbated learning losses among students who were already underserved and underfunded. So both coalitions are considering additional requests after overriding the veto.

**Some concerns are:**

- Accelerating funding for Community Schools to help meet the social needs of children which impede learning;
- Ensuring that additional funding for Pre-K programs is not delayed, but hopefully accelerated (including expansion or programs for the very youngest such as Judy Centers, Patty Centers and the Infant and Toddlers Programs);
- Prioritizing funding for tutoring programs;
- Improving upon funding equity, especially in the early years of the phase-in for the students who need the most support;
- Supporting passage of a bill to close the digital divide and prioritize students and districts with the greatest needs immediately. Rural districts have a problem with infrastructure and lower income urban families have had problems affording devices and adequate connectivity for online classes. Many districts have spent local funds on laptops and hotspots for students.

So, to prepare for the 2021 General Assembly, save the date of Thursday, January 7, in the evening, for a [Maryland Education Coalition](#) (MEC) statewide call to action on its funding priorities.

And for a review of the main features of the Blueprint legislation and the Call to Action Meeting held on **September 24**, [here](#) is a link to a recording of that meeting. **Our legislators, especially Senators need to hear our support for overriding the veto of HB 1300.**

*Lois Hybl, Co-President*

## **Sending A Socially Distanced Hug to All Our Election Volunteers**

This past election season was unique to say the least. Our amazing volunteers stepped up to the plate to help make sure all Marylanders were prepared. Throughout the state we had volunteers answering our election line, monitoring vote centers, and helping to report disinformation on the internet.

### **LWVMD's Election Infoline**

Our Election line volunteers were equipped and ready to go with knowledge to answer your questions. The volunteers took shifts answering questions about changes to election protocols and information on how to apply for and return a mail-in ballot. With the growing uncertainty amid the COVID-19 pandemic we relied on our election line volunteers to help make sense of it all.



**Sara Richman**, a LWV Anne Arundel County member, was one of our amazing volunteers. She told us she wanted to find a meaningful way to get involved this election season while staying safe during the pandemic. “I joined the League of Women Voters and was excited to volunteer by answering voter questions over the phone. It was the perfect opportunity for me as a mom of a 4 year old with a full time job. I loved helping people confirm their ballot status, understand their voting options, and get connected to candidate information. “



**Katherine Larrabee**, a LWV Anne Arundel County Member was an instrumental leader in helping to organize and schedule election line volunteers. Of the experience, Kathy said, “When I was asked recently what I enjoyed most about helping to staff the LWVMD Election Hotline, I jokingly said, “‘I like telling people what to do.’ But the real answer is that I like the challenges the League offers its members to first educate themselves in order to educate others. For a life learner, League work is rewarding in this way. On my shifts, although all callers expressed gratitude, two in particular stand out still today. Vivian, 92 years old, of Baltimore County, had a question about specific content in VOTE411. It was a question that stumped me: why would two sitting judges have identical writeups, word-for-word. Upon checking to find the answer, I learned the judges share

an office and submitted one writeup for both. Odd, but it happens. When I called Vivian back to explain, she was very grateful. She said, ‘Oh, chatting with you is like having a new girlfriend.’ A similar call came from Harold, 91-year old, also of Baltimore County. He said the League is a trusted source for information. ‘I love and respect the League.’”

**Janet Millenson**, a LWV Montgomery County member and a member of our state LWV voter service leadership team shared. “Normally I'd be working the election in person, welcoming thousands of voters and trying to make their experience as problem-free as possible (in a nonpartisan way, of course). The League of Women Voters shares this goal. So, when the pandemic came it meant I needed to rely on my phone and my computer instead of my presence, I turned to the League and asked how I could help. It's been tremendously inspirational to read the reports of all you dedicated people across the state, and I'm glad I could help answer questions about voting rules and procedures.”



**Gail Viamonte**, of LWV Anne Arundel County said “For my part, the experience was extremely informative. The on-line resource document with links was wonderfully navigable. Between that, the Voter's Guide, local branch resources (including Montgomery County's Spanish Voter Help

Line and fluent Spanish-speaking contact), and LWVMD back up (Ashely, that's you) -- I felt resource-rich in my ability to help problem-solve. Special thanks to Babs McCauley, who kept me updated regarding the morning's phone traffic, as I took over the afternoon." Gail also shares a conversation she had with one voter on the election line. "‘Everywhere I turn I get a different response. The problem is I keep requesting the ballot and nothing happens.’ This was the frustrated and defiant complaint of one voter, whose husband had received his mail-in ballot whereas she had not. ‘I'm 85 years old and have never missed an election!’ She declared--and she was NOT about to break her record. Following on-line research while she was on the phone and a referral to her local BOE (email and phone number), I was emailed a thank you the next day, announcing that she had just returned from voting."

We want to thank Sara, Katherine, Janet, Gail, and all our other hardworking volunteers for all their dedication and drive to ensure everyone had access to quality information this past election season.



Maryland [Election Protection](#) is a nonpartisan voter protection program that seeks to ensure that every eligible Maryland voter who wants to vote can and that every vote is counted accurately, even during this public health crisis.

For the General Election, more than 100 LWV members supported this effort, making up a quarter of the 400 Election Protection volunteers in the partnership throughout Maryland. These volunteers were out in the wee hours to be sure polls were open on time, and they were there at 8 pm to make sure every last voter in line got to vote! We would not have the reach and capacity to support voters all over the state without the amazing individuals dedicating their time to ensuring everyone's voice can be heard in our democracy.

Janet Millenson also stepped up as an Election Protection volunteer as a part of the EP Command Center with our State Director, Ashley Oleson. They helped answer questions about Maryland Elections that stumped the national hotline volunteers or needed a direct connection on the ground to election officials. Their work took place over the course of weeks leading up to the election and especially on Election Day!

### **SQUINT Misinformation Volunteers**



Former Redistricting Volunteer, Philip Brooks, rejoined LWVMD this fall to help us assemble a team of SQUINTERS. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic this was an election season like no other. With information changing by the day, it was even more crucial people had access to reliable quality resources. Our volunteers scoured the internet in search of misinformation about the election process that may deter or confuse voters and reported it using the SQUINT app. These reports were used to aid in strengthening a take-down request. SQUINT also says that the reports “can also help election officials spot patterns of concern so they can communicate proactively with voters and officials at social media channels”. We were able



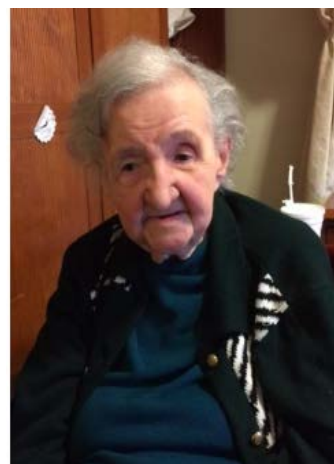
to coordinate 45 volunteers by the state LWVMD, and 10 other local Leagues ran their own SQUINT programs

*Willow Goode, LWVMD Administrative Coordinator*

### **Generous Bequest from Margaret Garner**

The League of Women Voters Maryland would like to acknowledge a generous bequest by Margaret Garner. Margaret, or Margo, as friends knew her, was an ardent supporter of the League and we would like to express our gratitude to her and sympathy to her friends and family.

Since the 1970s she had been active with the League of Women Voters of Howard County where she was their President from 1973-1975. After she retired, she served as Office Manager of the League of Women Voters of Maryland's office in Annapolis.



Andrea Gruhl, a friend of Margaret's, and a member of the Howard County League writes “Margo was a Columbia pioneer. She moved into a townhouse in Wilde Lake Village . It was in the first townhouse development the then-new Ryland firm ever built. My



husband Werner, baby Sonja, and I lived in a townhouse at the other end of the same building. Margo worked at NSA but had earlier been a high school teacher. She eventually sold her townhouse and moved to Vantage House in Columbia. Leaguers were impressed by Margo's intellectual vigor. Despite her advancing age, Margo fearlessly forged ahead with computer usage. Eventually her advancing vision difficulties resulted in blindness. She also developed hearing problems and became deaf. She died at age 103. It is consistent with Margo's value system that she chose to bequeath wealth to both the League of Women Voters of Howard County and the League of Women Voters of Maryland. RIP, Margo!"

Barbara Russell, writes, "Margo was a delightful woman, with a wonderful sense of humor."  
LWVMD is very grateful for this contribution.

While we don't ever budget based on getting a bequest, these gifts make a tremendous contribution to our ability to fulfill our mission. Sometimes they increase our capacity, and sometimes they make up for an overestimation of revenue. But they are always appreciated and put to work to empower voters and defend democracy. A link to Margaret's can be found [here](#).

## The Passing of Trenice Goldstein

The League of Women Voters Maryland wishes to inform members who may have known Trenice Goldstein of her recent passing. Trenice Goldstein was a resident of Montgomery County and a supporter of the League. Our deep condolences go out to Trenice's family and friends. We are very grateful to those who chose to honor her memory with donations to LWVMD. Below are more details about Trenice's passing.

**"Trenice "Terry" Dodek Goldstein, 93, passed away peacefully at home on November 9, 2020. A longtime remedial tutor in Chevy Chase and former director of tutoring for the Kingsbury Center, she was predeceased by her beloved husband, Dr. Lloyd Goldstein and eldest son, Wayne, and brother, Dr. Oscar I. Dodek, Jr. She is survived by her brother, Sam Dodek II, sister-in-law, Joan Dodek, sons, Jim (Tina) Goldstein in Earlville, NY and Tom Goldstein in St. Paul, MN; granddaughters, Sarah and Rachel; grandson, Mathew, and great-grandson, Eli. Graveside services will be held privately at Garden of Remembrance Memorial Park. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to League of Women Voters of Maryland at [www.lwvmd.org](http://www.lwvmd.org). Services entrusted to Sagel Bloomfield Danzansky Goldberg Funeral Care. [www.sagelbloomfield.com](http://www.sagelbloomfield.com)"**

## Legacy Gifts

You can contribute to LWVMD's lasting legacy by including the League of Women Voters Maryland in your will or estate plan. A bequest to LWVMD in your will or living trust helps to ensure we continue our mission for years to come.

Including the League in your will can be as simple as adding a codicil or amendment to your current will.

The following is suggested language for your lawyer to use to draft a bequest to the The League of Women Voters of Maryland:

*"I devise and bequeath to The League of Women Voters of Maryland, Annapolis, MD, Federal Tax ID# 51-0204502, (Insert amount of gift or insert the percentage of estate) to be used for its general purposes."*



## **VIRTUAL WINTER WORKSHOP**

Saturday, January 30, 2021

9:30 am - 12:30 pm

Workshop fee - \$5

Register online - [https://www.lwvmd.org/winter\\_workshop\\_2021](https://www.lwvmd.org/winter_workshop_2021)



### INITIATIVE STUDY CONSENSUS BRIEFING

***Should Marylander voters be able to put legislation and/or Constitutional amendments on the ballot through a petition process?***

An in depth look at this, the topic of our second consensus study this year.  
A briefing for local League presentations

### FIVE LEGISLATIVE REFORMS FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

LWVMD has joined the Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability along with 100 organizations calling for five changes to Maryland Law that would dramatically impact fairness in policing:

***Allow investigations into all police misconduct to be disclosed under the Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA)***

***Create statutory limits on the use of force by law enforcement***

***Repeal the Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights (LEOBR)***

***Give the people of Baltimore City the ability to govern the Baltimore City Police Department***

***Take law enforcement out of schools.***

We will present short videos to explain each of these reforms.  
A panel discussion and questions will follow.

Panelists: Senator Jill Carter, Baltimore City  
Delegate Erik Barron, Prince George's County  
Yanet Amanuel, Public Policy Advocate, ACLU of Maryland