

# State Board Letter

## Contents

- 1 Calendar
- 2 Co-Presidents' Message
- 2 State Board Meeting Highlights
- 3 DEI
- 3 Coalitions
- 4 Police Reform
- 4 Redistricting
- 5 VOTE411
- 6 Advocacy
- 6 Studies
- 6 Constitution Day Program
- 7 Youth Engagement
- 8 Freedom to Vote Rally
- 8 Make Good Trouble Rally

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Co-Presidents: Deborah Mitchell  
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## LWVMD Calendar

- Oct** 4-8 National Voter Education Week
- 20-23 Freedom to Vote Relay and Rally
- 27 LWVMD DEI Book Club  
virtual, 4pm - 5pm
- 29 LWVMD Advocate Training  
virtual, 3pm - 5pm
- Nov** 1-30 Native American Heritage Month
- 2 Election Day
- 11 Legislative Priority Survey reply due

## Redistricting Hearings Calendar

### MD Citizens Redistricting Commission

- Oct** 6 Map Presentations, Round 3  
virtual, 6pm - 8pm
- 13 Map Presentations, Round 3  
virtual, 6pm - 8pm
- 20 Map Presentations, Round 3  
virtual, 6pm - 8pm
- 27 Map Presentations, Round 3  
virtual, 6pm - 8pm

### Legislative Redistricting Advisory Commission

- |            |    |  |            |    |   |
|------------|----|--|------------|----|---|
| <b>Oct</b> | 3  | Baltimore County<br>virtual, 6pm - 8pm         | <b>Nov</b> | 5  | Statewide<br>virtual, 3pm - 5pm         |
|            | 5  | Montgomery County<br>virtual, 6pm - 8pm        |            | 12 | Baltimore City<br>virtual, 6pm - 8pm    |
|            | 10 | Howard County<br>virtual, 6pm - 8pm            |            | 18 | Eastern Shore<br>virtual, 6pm - 8pm     |
|            | 15 | Statewide<br>virtual, 3pm - 5pm                |            | 28 | Southern Maryland<br>virtual, 6pm - 8pm |
|            | 18 | Harford & Cecil Counties<br>virtual, 6pm - 8pm |            |    |   |

The SBL is a monthly LWVMD publication that seeks to strengthen understanding and collaboration between the Board and local Leagues statewide

## Co-Presidents' Message

As you read this issue of State Board Letter, you will realize that your state Board is busy, busy, busy. We hope that the Fall Workshop, which was planned around one of our key goals, supporting local Leagues in their work, was successful in at least meeting some of your expectations. In this edition, you will learn that LWVMD has numerous teams and individuals who are working on an array of issues such as policing reform, student engagement, engaging the public in redistricting, helping the League to become an organization committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, as well as efforts to pass critical federal voting rights legislation.

The LWVMD Action Team, led by J.C. Hooker, LWV Calvert County, and including Ruth Crystal, LWV Baltimore City, Ericka McDonald, LWV Baltimore County, Nikki Tyree, LWVMD's State Director, and LWVMD Co-Presidents, has been busy planning an orientation for volunteer advocates from local Leagues, which takes place on October 29 at 3 p.m. (see page 6); all

interested members are encouraged to attend. Signing up to participate in this orientation does not commit you to being an advocate, but it will open that door if you choose to step through.

Every local League president was sent a survey to help the LWVMD Board determine our 2022 Legislative Priorities, and each League has been invited to submit one response no later than November 11. Learn from your local League President how your League will determine their response.

Summer was a time when many of us had the opportunity to slow down our pace a bit. Now that fall is upon us and the convening of the Maryland General Assembly as well as a statewide election are around the corner, it is full speed ahead in League-land.



*Deborah Mitchell (l) and Nancy Soreng (r), Co-Presidents*

### State Board Meeting Highlights

The LWVMD continues to pay for access to the VOTE411 on-line database for all local Leagues. See page 5 for more details about how this system can help your League.

Members of the Online Services Committee are available to provide training or assistance with applications such as NationBuilder, Zoom, or G Suite. If you'd like to learn more about these programs, email [online@lwvmd.org](mailto:online@lwvmd.org) to get started.

State Director Nikki Tyree is now serving as the LWVMD Fundraising Chair. We are still looking for someone to chair the Membership Committee; please contact Nikki at [stateoffice@lwvmd.org](mailto:stateoffice@lwvmd.org) if you are interested in serving in this capacity.

The Candidate Forum Planning Committee is working out details for State League sponsored primary and general election forums.

LWVMD's Co-Presidents and State Director met on Oct 2 with local League presidents.

The State Board is organizing a DEI training for its members and state and local committee chairs to be offered later this fall.

*Stacey Morrison, SBL editor*

## Committees

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The DEI committee has made strides in its efforts to incorporate DEI values and practices into League work. It has finished developing tools for organizing advocacy on issues it has determined will have a very high DEI impact. The DEI Advocacy subcommittee has reviewed legislation advanced in the 2021 session using our DEI lens, and has rated each bill with an eye to learning how our lens can be efficiently applied to bills advanced in the upcoming 2022 session of the Maryland General

Assembly. Last month, DEI committee member Richard Willson provided local League presidents with [definitions of DEI terms](#) from the LWVUS website and encouraged them to discuss the terms with their members.

The committee also sponsors a DEI book club which meets virtually each month in which participants will discuss the book selection within the framework of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This month's book is:

**The Other Wes Moore, by Wes Moore**  
**Wednesday, October 27, from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.**

The book club is free and open to all. To join the conversation, email State Director Nikki Tyree at [stateoffice@lwmmd.org](mailto:stateoffice@lwmmd.org) to receive the Zoom link.

*submitted by Stacey Morrison, SBL editor*



The LWMD is a partner in several Maryland coalitions listed below. This list will likely grow as we set our legislative priorities for the upcoming session of the Maryland General Assembly. If you would like to learn more about a group's work, contact the LWVMD liaison listed. If you are unable to access the liaison's email, contact our State Director Nikki Tyree at [stateoffice@lwmmd.org](mailto:stateoffice@lwmmd.org).

### Coalitions

Coalition	Liaison
● <a href="#">Everyone Votes Maryland</a>	<a href="#">Nikki Tyree</a> , <a href="#">Janet Millenson</a>
● <a href="#">Maryland Advocates for Sustainable Transportation</a> (MAST)	<a href="#">Bee Ditzler</a>
● <a href="#">Maryland Alliance for the Poor</a>	<a href="#">Ruth Crystal</a>
● <a href="#">Maryland Association of Non-Profit Organizations</a>	<a href="#">Nancy Soreng</a> , <a href="#">Nikki Tyree</a>
● <a href="#">Maryland Civic Education Coalition</a>	<a href="#">Genie Massey</a>
● <a href="#">Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability</a>	<a href="#">Ericka McDonald</a>
● <a href="#">Tame the Gerrymander</a>	<a href="#">Beth Hufnagel</a> , <a href="#">Nikki Tyree</a>
● <a href="#">Time to Care Maryland</a>	<a href="#">Ruth Crystal</a> , <a href="#">Nikki Tyree</a>
● <a href="#">Students Learn Students Vote</a>	<a href="#">Genie Massey</a>
● <b>Citizens' Campaign for the Environment</b> Builds consensus on priority bills before the General Assembly and collaborates on strategies to pass them.	<a href="#">Shari Glenn</a>

*Nancy Soreng, Co-President*

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## Committees

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### Upcoming Reforms to Police Misconduct Investigations



The LWVMD advocates for transparency and diverse community inclusion in reforms to the police misconduct investigation system. The Maryland Police Accountability Act of 2021 mandates that all Maryland counties implement a new process to investigate complaints of police misconduct beginning in 2022. County governments are required to create a Police Accountability Board (PAB) and an Administrative Charging Committee (ACC).

These reforms are significant because they allow communities to become involved in police misconduct investigations. Counties will select community members to serve on their PAB and appoint civilians to serve on police misconduct trial boards. This phase of the reforms will require community education and involvement in each county.

The League's advocacy this year will be focused on supporting local Leagues to engage in the implementation of PAB and ACC in their counties. Local League involvement will be critical because of concerns that county governments will attempt to limit community involvement by controlling appointees to the PAB, which has already been attempted in one Maryland county.

The purpose of PABs is to allow communities to hold law enforcement officers accountable for misconduct. The LWVMD offers local Leagues support and training on these issues. Members who are interested in working on these reforms can contact their county governments to request information about their plans and timelines for implementing PABs. Please contact Ericka McDonald at [emcdonald@lwwmd.org](mailto:emcdonald@lwwmd.org) for more information or to get involved.

*Ericka McDonald, Police Reform Committee Chair*

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There is still time to make your voice heard regarding redistricting, as both Maryland commissions established to map out new districts continue to solicit public input. The [Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission](#), MCRC, formed by Governor Hogan, kicks off round three of their virtual meetings on October 6 at 6 p.m.; their portal to accept citizen generated maps is currently open. Visit the MCRC's website to see working drafts of maps being used for illustrative, instructional and discussion purposes by the commission during its meetings.

The [Legislative Redistricting Advisory Commission](#), LRAC, formed by the Maryland General Assembly leadership, held their first three public meetings last month and will hold the last one on November 18. In addition to statewide hearings on October 5 and again on November 15, each from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m., members from the following regions will have a chance to attend a virtual meeting specifically on their region: Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Cecil County, Eastern Shore, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County, and Southern Maryland. Visit the LRAC webpage for meeting details.

*submitted by Stacey Morrison, SBL editor*

### Redistricting: Map Making in Progress



## Committees

### VOTE411: Updates, Access and Requests to Candidates

[VOTE411.org](https://vote411.org) is the League of Women Voters' go-to site for election information. Once a user enters their address into VOTE411, the website provides appropriate links to voter registration sites, information about upcoming elections, and candidates. Use of the site continues to grow, with about 280,000 hits statewide in the 2020 election season. In Maryland we also depend heavily on VOTE411 for asking questions of candidates and getting their answers into our printed and online Voters' Guides. A few of the most helpful features are the formatting of information related to a candidate's office and our questions to them, the automating of communications with candidates, and the tracking of candidates who haven't responded.

#### Updated Software and Training for VOTE411 volunteers

The VOTE411 team at LWVUS has just completed a major update of the user interface that volunteers see when they enter information into the website. The new software should be much easier to use, particularly for new volunteers. I had the opportunity to participate in testing one section of the new interface in September, and I will receive my overall training in the new system in October. Training for all volunteers will be scheduled in January 2022. COVID permitting, we will have both virtual and in-person training sessions.

#### Questions for candidates due on January 5, 2022

Before each election, the League of Women Voters asks questions of each candidate. Their answers are posted verbatim on VOTE411 and in the Voters' Guides for each county. Each county is responsible for preparing the questions for its county-only races (county council, board of education, etc.). For races that cross county lines, however, we use the same questions across the state. That means that the LWVMD is soliciting possible questions for the following offices:



- Governor
- Representative in Congress
- Comptroller
- State Senator
- Attorney General
- House of Delegates
- U.S. Senator
- Judge of the Circuit Court

In the coming weeks, you will receive an email containing several documents that are useful in constructing your questions: LWV's instructions for writing nonpartisan questions, descriptions of each office, and the questions we sent to candidates in 2018 and 2020. Lists of all federal, state and local offices on the 2022 ballot can be found [here](#) on the State Board of Elections website.

Questions from local Leagues must be received by Wednesday, January 5, 2022, so that they can be compiled and a final list presented to the State Board for its approval at its January meeting. Please send the questions to [bcrain.lwvmd.org](mailto:bcrain.lwvmd.org). Note that candidates have until February 22 to file to run for office. If possible, we would like to be able to send out our invitation letters to candidates by March 1. Many other organizations send questionnaires, and it helps our participation rates if they see League questions early on.

*Barbara Crain, Voter Services Chair*



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## Committees

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### Advocacy 2022: Getting Ready



The 2022 Advocacy season will be a busy one, and the more members we have working on legislative issues, the more chance we have of achieving our goals. So we are asking everyone to consider our mission *Making Democracy Work* by engaging with the Action Committee to make it happen. Here are just two ways you can engage.

The Action Committee has been finalizing an Advocate Training session for League members that will take place on October 29 from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. The training will include:

- Familiarity with issues
- Coalition participation
- Tracking and prioritizing bills
- Meeting with legislators
- Writing testimony
- Public communications

The training will be held via Zoom and registration is required. If you would like to attend, email J.C. Hooker, Action Committee Chair, at [jchooker@lwvmd.org](mailto:jchooker@lwvmd.org) to receive the Zoom link once it becomes available. If you are unable to attend the October training, there will be a second training session in 2022.

*submitted by Stacey Morrison, SBL editor*

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At the LWVMD convention earlier this year, two studies were adopted by the membership. One is on “Equity in Education” and another is on “Living Wage.” Beginning a study can be overwhelming, but there is a silver lining! Both studies have prior League work that can be used as starting points. For Equity in Education, LWV of Howard County did a study on the topic that was completed in 2020 and they continue to work on this issue for Howard County. An LWVMD study committee could start from the Howard County study to examine the issue across all of Maryland. For Living Wage, LWV of Kansas has developed a position already. An LWVMD study committee could start from that work to determine if it might be applicable for Maryland. So neither study requires starting from scratch! Both study committees need more members and also a Chair (or Co-Chair). For a study to proceed, both are needed! For further information or to indicate your interest, contact Linda Kohn, LWVMD Program, [lkohn@lwvmd.org](mailto:lkohn@lwvmd.org).

### Two Studies Seeking Volunteers

*Linda Kohn, 3rd Vice President*

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### Constitution Day Program a Success

*An Audacious Idea Whose Time Has Come: The Democracy Constitution* was the topic of the 15th Annual Constitution Day Program, held on September 17. The event was a joint collaboration between the LWVMD, the University of Maryland Carey School of Law, the University of Maryland’s MLAW program, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore.



image by [Wynn Pointaux](#) from [Pixabay](#)

As at previous Constitution Day programs, September’s event included experts who spoke on the topic as well as those served as commentators followed by questions and answers. The event attracted 199 virtual participants who were so engaged in the topic that we extended the program by 30 minutes in order to accommodate all of the participants’ questions. We are truly thankful to everyone who helped make this event a success.

*submitted by Stacey Morrison, SBL editor*

## Committees

### Youth Engagement: MD Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act



Youth Engagement Chair, Genie Massey, attended the Maryland Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act Meeting last month, hosted by [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#), a movement that empowers colleges and universities to achieve excellence in nonpartisan student engagement. Speakers included Senator Luedtke, Madeline Yates of [Campus Compact](#), Nancy Shapiro, Associate Vice Chancellor of the University System of Maryland, and Jennifer McGlaughlin of the Maryland Board of Elections. There were also representatives from numerous colleges who spoke about their efforts and gratefulness to have a team in the coalition on whom they can rely. Speakers covered a variety of topics, among them:

*Senator Luedtke* gave a great shout out to the League by praising the LWV and urging colleges to collaborate with their local Leagues.

*Lessons from the 2020 Election.* College students have shown a renewed interest in elections, and by improving access to and familiarity with the electoral process, that engagement is likely to be sustained. There is also improved collaboration between campuses and their local boards of elections; such programs developed in Maryland are building a model for other states to follow

*Legislation.* Permanent absentee voting is available thanks to the 2021 Maryland General Assembly's session; this might help with 'off year' elections. Additional requirements have prompted Election Boards to consider polling locations and ballot drop-box locations in relation to disenfranchised communities.

Tufts [National Study of Learning Voting and Engagement \(NSLVE\)](#) provides reports to any campus showing voter registration data, which has helped campuses set goals and track progress. Though NSLVE protects student privacy, it does provide some demographic information, including majors.

*Carnegie Classification.* Brown University initiated and Albion currently coordinates the [Carnegie Community Engagement Classification](#), which provides a clear model for higher education systems to integrate service, civic engagement activities, voter access, etc.

*submitted by Stacey Morrison, SBL editor*



## Advocacy

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### Freedom to Vote Relay and Rally



Across the country, extremist state politicians are passing anti-voter bills making it harder for people to vote, especially for people of color. These same state politicians are now preparing to draw highly-partisan congressional maps that will effectively disenfranchise voters for the next decade.

Meanwhile Billionaires and Big Business are buying elections with the ability to spend unlimited funds to influence the outcome and then are using their power to advocate against the will of the people. Luckily, there is a solution.

- The Freedom to Vote Act (a revised For the People Act) would protect our voting rights, get big money out of politics, ensure fair districts, and help create a democracy that works for all of us.
- The John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act would prevent states from passing further laws to erode the freedom to vote for BIPOC communities.
- DC Statehood would enable the more than 700,000 people who live in Washington, DC, a majority of whom are people of color, to have a voice and a true vote.

If we're into October and the Senate has refused to move these bills due to Senate Republican obstructionism, we are going to need to pull out the stops to get them across the finish line. That's why a broad coalition of organizations are joining together to plan an exciting mass event called the *Freedom to Vote Relay and Rally*, [www.freedomtovoterelay.org](http://www.freedomtovoterelay.org). Held from October 20-23, the event will kick-off with a relay from West Virginia to Washington, DC, culminating with a rally at the nation's Capitol on October 23. The relay route will follow the C&O Canal much of the way, giving participants the choice to join on foot or on bikes. If none of the opportunities for participation on the official Relay site work for you, LWVMD will be providing other ways that you can help; watch for a message from the state League.

*Nancy Soreng, Co-President*

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Several rallies were held on the National Mall at the end of August, the largest of which was held on August 28, *March on For Washington and Voting Rights*. Its aim was to call attention to the need for federal voting rights to address voter suppression laws being passed in some states. The rally also recognized the 58<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King's *March on Washington*.

Members from Maryland—as well as Virginia and DC—jointly participated in the rallies, mingling in the crowd to register voters and also giving out a fan with the LWV logo on one side and information on Vote411 on the other side. Since it was the hot and humid days of late August, almost 1,000 fans were given out! This activity was coordinated by LWV of the National Capital Area.

Because of its importance, LWVMD agreed to join with LWV of Virginia and LWVDC to provide money to help buy the fans. In the end, LWVUS stepped in and provided the money, a great example of Leagues coming together for critical issues.

*Linda Kohn, 3rd Vice President*

### LWVMD Represented at Voting Rallies on the National Mall

