

# State Board Letter

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### LWVMD

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Co-Presidents: Deborah Mitchell  
Nancy Soreng  
Editor: Stacey Morrison



## LWVMD Calendar

Nov	30	LWVMD Giving Tuesday
Dec	8	Redistricting Rally with LWVMD and The People's Maps Maryland Lawyer's Mall, Annapolis, 9-11am
	9	Community Panel on Police Accountability Reform hosted by the LWV Baltimore County virtual, 7-9pm
	10	Human Rights Day
Jan	1	New Year's Day
	17	Martin Luther King Jr. Day
	29	LWVMD Winter Workshop virtual, time TBD

## LWVMD Winter Workshop



Mark your calendar for the LWVMD Winter Workshop to be held virtually on Saturday, January 29, 2022. Though planning has already begun, the Winter Workshop Planning Committee welcomes any interested off-Board members who would like to help plan and execute this event; contact [pres@lwvmd.org](mailto:pres@lwvmd.org) to join. If you are unable to join the committee but have an idea about topics and/or speakers that might be of interest to local Leagues, please send them to the email address above so they can be considered for this and future events. Once workshop content is finalized, it will be posted to the LWVMD [website](http://lwvmd.org) along with registration details.

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

## Co-Presidents' Message

By the time this edition of the SBL reaches you, Thanksgiving will have passed. Nonetheless, we want to take this opportunity to let our readers know how thankful we are for the time and support that you give to your local Leagues and LWVMD.

The work of the League has never been more important than right now. Our commitment to empowering voters and defending democracy depends on the many hundreds of volunteers around the state who care about living in a country that supports its residents and their right to participate in the governance of our nation. This participation can happen through voting and/or advocacy. We are grateful that so many of you have stepped up to help.

You volunteer in your communities to make sure that residents understand how elections

operate, how they can participate in them, and what will be on the ballot when it is time to vote. We truly believe that this is noble work. And, many of you follow public policy decisions that are under consideration by law-makers at the state and local level, and when appropriate, make an impact on those decisions based on positions reached by the League's study and consensus process.

We hope you had an opportunity to share Thanksgiving with friends and loved ones. We are thankful that we have the opportunity to get to know and collaborate with so many of you.



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

### State Board Meeting Highlights

LWVMD board members agreed to rejoin the Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) Coalition. Deborah Mitchell will serve as the LWVMD liaison.

The LWVMD's Police Accountability Committee thanks League advocates from Anne Arundel County and Prince George's County who have agreed to participate in the [Maryland Coalition for Justice and Police Accountability](#) (MCJPA) regional committees.

The [LWV Baltimore County](#) will be hosting a Community Panel on Police Accountability Reform on Thursday, December 9, from 7 - 9 p.m. If you'd like to join this virtual event, visit their website.

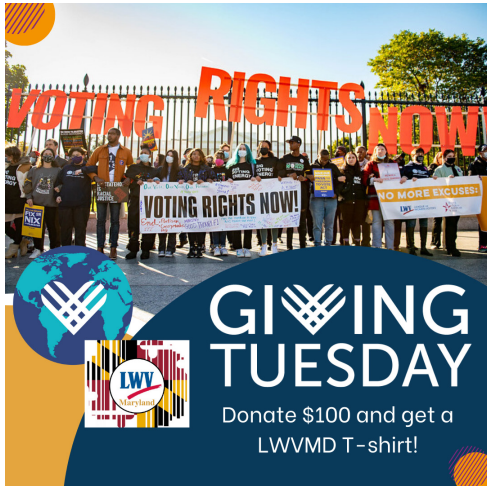
*Stacey Morrison, SBL editor*

## Committees

### LWVMD Giving Tuesday

On November 30, LWVMD is celebrating the generosity movement known as Giving Tuesday, and we need you! Help us to promote democracy by donating this Giving Tuesday via our website, [www.lwvmd.org](http://www.lwvmd.org).

LWVMD is committed to championing voting rights, social justice, and equity by working with the General Assembly and allies this legislative session. Your donation helps the LWVMD fight voter suppression and combat disinformation. Our democracy is only as strong as our voters!



### Appreciated Stock Donations

The holiday season is fast approaching. What better way to celebrate than to give to a cause you love and save money on taxes at the same time?

By donating appreciated stock to LWVMD, a 501c3 nonprofit, you may be eligible for a charitable tax deduction equal to the current market value of your holding.

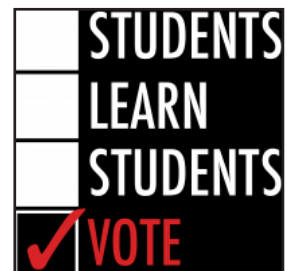
Please check with your tax advisor before proceeding. To learn about the lasting impact your contribution to LWVMD may have, contact LWVMD Executive Director Nikki Tyree, [nytree@org](mailto:nytree@org) or 410-269-0232.

### Civic Investment in Higher Education

The [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#) and the [Students Learn Students Vote Coalition](#) studied the extent to which institutions of higher learning and local election officials work with each other in order to identify areas of needs and explore best practices.

Their [report](#) details the power of relationships to improve voter access and youth engagement. In this concise report, local Leagues can find insights worth sharing and implementing in their work with universities, community colleges, and elections officials.

*Genie Massey, Youth Engagement  
Committee Chair*



# Committees

## Conducting Candidate Forums: Guidelines and Best Practices



image by [mary1826](#) from [Pixabay](#)

With mid-term elections coming up in 2022, the LWVMD Candidate Forum Committee is busy preparing resources to guide and support local Leagues planning to host candidate forums. In addition to hosting candidate forums for state level races, the Committee encourages local Leagues to host forums for local level elections, too. Hosting candidate forums not only helps to educate voters but also gives the League visibility and an opportunity to increase membership.

Encouraging informed and active participation in government by sponsoring candidate forums has a long and rich tradition within the League. Nonetheless, hosting them can be daunting to organize and manage. To assist local Leagues, the Committee consolidated resources on candidate forums into one document, [LWVMD Candidate Forum Guidelines and Resources, 2021-22](#). In addition, Linda Rittlemann, Barbara Crain, and Ericka McDonald presented [Forum Management—Best Practices: Virtual and In-Person Forums During Uncertain Times](#) at the 2021 Fall Workshop.

These resources are intended to provide answers to questions local Leagues may have when considering whether to sponsor a forum and how it should be managed. For example, what criteria should a League use when deciding which candidates to include and what to do if there is only one candidate? What if there are only two candidates and the incumbent declines the invitation to appear? What should a League consider if it wants to partner with another organization or with the media? The opportunity to use virtual platforms has opened new opportunities to reach more people, but how are these best managed? These resources also include basic tips such as what materials to include in a forum kit and job descriptions for forum volunteers.

If members of a League have questions, would like to receive the above mentioned resources, or would like assistance with hosting candidate forums, please contact a LWVMD Candidate Forum Committee member; they are ready to help. As 2022 approaches and the elections draw closer, the Committee will be sending out additional information.

### Key 2022 Election Dates:

<i>Candidate filing deadline:</i>	<i>2/22/2022</i>	<i>Primary Election:</i>	<i>6/28/2022</i>
<i>Last day to withdraw:</i>	<i>3/4/2022</i>	<i>Early Voting General Election:</i>	<i>10/27/22 - 11/3/2022</i>
<i>Early Voting Primary:</i>	<i>6/16/2022 - 6/23/2022</i>	<i>General Election:</i>	<i>11/8/2022</i>

### MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Gail Sunderman, Chair	<a href="mailto:gsunderman@lwvmd.org">gsunderman@lwvmd.org</a>
Barbara Crain	<a href="mailto:bcrain@lwvmd.org">bcrain@lwvmd.org</a>
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*Gail Sunderman, Candidate Forum Committee Chair*

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## Committees

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All local League's 2022 state and national per member payments (PMP), as well as each League's number of voting delegates at the next LWVUS Convention, will be based on the number of active members on the official League roster as of January 31, 2022. PMP is the portion of each member's dues that helps to support activities of the state and national Leagues.

## Roster Management

Each Maryland League has chosen to maintain active member information either in LWVMD's NationBuilder platform or directly in the LWVUS portal. Over the coming weeks, local Leagues should allow time to enter and verify their current roster, including member types and expiration dates. If you are unsure which database your League maintains, or if you would like to request training, assistance or information about this process, contact [online@lwvmd.org](mailto:online@lwvmd.org).

The Online Services committee will update the LWVUS portal for local Leagues that maintain their records in LWVMD's NationBuilder. To allow time for corrections and review, the Online Services Committee asks that rosters in NationBuilder be finalized by January 15, 2022. Thank you for attending to this important League responsibility.

*Niecy Chambers, Online Services Committee Member*

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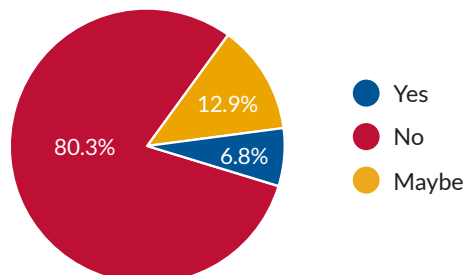
## Nation Builder Website Surveys

LWVMD provides local Leagues the option to publish their own websites using the same software as the state League. The website software, which is licensed from a firm called NationBuilder, can also be used for communications, to create events with RSVP lists, to collect money, and to track membership. Currently, 13 of the 15 Leagues/Affiliates in Maryland have LWVMD-hosted websites on NationBuilder.

In November, the Online Services conducted two surveys to assess user satisfaction with the NationBuilder websites. The first questions asked about interacting with the website as an external visitor; the second gathered input from League volunteers who work inside NationBuilder. Online Services will use the results to try to determine a reasonable balance between members' skill levels, training opportunities, website functionality and appearance, and overall affordability.

LWVMD Online Services appreciates the feedback of the nearly 150 external users and 13 NationBuilder volunteers. The results to one survey question, charted below, clearly indicates members do not want to receive League communications via text message. While LWVMD has no plans to roll out text communications in the near future, those tools are available in NationBuilder if a local League wishes to implement.

*Richard Willson, Secretary*



*Survey Question: Would you like to receive communications from the League via text message?*



## Advocacy

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The Redistricting Committee is excited to announce that LWVMD, in partnership with The [People's Maps Maryland](#) coalition, is rallying in person in Annapolis around redistricting. The coalition's goal is to encourage Marylanders to express their opinions about the proposed district lines for the eight Maryland members of Congress. This is the last chance to get out in force before the district lines are set for the next 10 years. Members of the coalition also plan to draw attention to Maryland's process to adopt new Congressional and Legislative district maps for Maryland and to advocate for fair maps to the Maryland General Assembly.

### People's Maps Rally in Annapolis



The People's Maps Maryland Rally takes place on **December 8 from 9 - 11 a.m.** at [Lawyers Mall](#) at the intersection of Bladen Street and College Avenue in Annapolis. Strategically located between the Senate and House of Delegates office buildings and the State Capital, Lawyers Mall is where participants can greet Maryland representatives with signs and excitement as they go from their offices to the 10 a.m. Special Session. Bring as many friends and family members along as possible.

The People's Maps Maryland coalition is arranging for buses from Gaithersburg, Timonium, and Columbia, and vans from Calvert County and the Eastern Shore; availability on the buses and vans are first come, first served. A free mask will be given to the first 50 people who reserve their seats. For participants who choose to drive, consider also visiting with a representative after the Special Session which ends at 2 p.m. To reserve a space in one of the vehicles, RSVP on the [LWVMD website](#).

*Beth Hufnagel, Redistricting Committee Chair*



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### Digital Advocacy

Support the grassroots efforts of the League by lifting up our messaging on social media.



[www.facebook.com/LWVMD](http://www.facebook.com/LWVMD)



[www.instagram.com/LWVMD](http://www.instagram.com/LWVMD)



[www.twitter.com/LWVMD](http://www.twitter.com/LWVMD)

*Genie Massey, Youth Engagement Committee Chair*

# Advocacy

## 2022 Legislative Priorities

The LWVMD strives to affect change every legislative session. The issues listed below highlight where local League and LWVMD will focus attention in 2022.

### **Making Democracy Work**

Redistricting

Protecting the Vote

Campaign Reform

*Other Issues:  
Administration of Justice*

### **Social and Economic Justice**

Affordable Healthcare

Affordable Housing

Police Reform

*Other Issues:  
Transportation  
Public Education  
Paid Family Leave*

### **Protecting the Environment**

Protect Clean Air and  
Water

Reduce Causes of  
Climate Change

Reduce Solid Waste

*Other Issues:  
Improved Land Use  
Policies*



## Advocacy

### Voting Rights Protesters: Carrying on a League Tradition

If you believe the League of Women Voters is a “nonpartisan, activist, grassroots organization that believes voters should play a critical role in democracy”, as [LWVUS states](#), then you will agree that as League members, we each should be committed to the fight for expanding and protecting voter rights. The League believes in more equitable, fair and free elections where people of all ages, races, ethnicities, creeds, and sexual orientation can participate. The outcome of any election depends on the ability of **all** citizens to exercise their right to vote. Over 100 years ago, women fought and even died for this inalienable right.

For me, personally, it’s almost impossible to believe there are States that are enacting legislation that makes it harder for people to exercise this basic, but critical, right to vote. But that is exactly what is happening in our country.

Because fighting for federal legislation that will increase turnout and help all communities participate in the voting process is a basic tenet of the League, Nikki Tyree, LWVMD Executive Director, and I went to DC on November 3 to join others to stand up for targeted voters and our democracy.

Though there are many critical, voting-related issues at this time, at the top of the list were two important bills: the [Freedom to Vote Act](#) and the [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#), which both faced serious challenges in the Senate. The Freedom to Vote Act, which incorporated several League supported reforms of the [For the People Act](#), failed to be brought to the Senate floor for a vote in October, while the John Lewis Voting Rights Act was passed by the House of Representatives but failed to proceed to the Senate floor.

I urge you to join other Leaguers and other voting-rights activist at the next rallies, which will resume in 2022. Let’s stand up together for the right to vote, join forces to answer the call.

*Janet Bellizzi, LWVMD Treasurer & LWV Calvert County member*



LWMD Executive Director, Nikki Tyree (l), and Treasurer Janet Bellizzi (r), protesting for voting rights legislation in Washington, DC, on November 3, 2021.