

# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS of Baltimore County

# The Voter

## Newsletter

Volume 2019-2020 Issue 5  
January – February 2020



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### CALENDAR

#### January 2020

- 8 – April 6, 2020, 441st session of General Assembly convenes in Annapolis, Maryland
- 14 – 10 a.m. letter-writing campaign begins
- 14 – 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. In the Cockeysville Library meeting room, Discussion/Concurrence meeting on LWVUS proposed new position of Voter Representation and the Electoral System & LWVUS programming
- 17 – 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Charlestown Retirement Community, Charlestown Square classroom 116, Discussion/Concurrence meeting on LWVUS proposed new position of Voter Representation and the Electoral System and LWVUS programming
- 25 – 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. LWVMD Winter Workshop, Wilde Lake Interfaith Center, 10431 Twin Rivers Road, Columbia (p.18)

#### February

- 4 – 7th Congressional District special election
- 4 – 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. Cockeysville Library meeting room. Annual LWV Baltimore County program planning and review
- 6 – 10 a.m. - ? Board meeting and Retreat
- 14 – 100-year anniversary of LWV celebrated  
Women Power the Vote campaign begins
- 20 – Presidents’ Day
- 28 – 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Charlestown Retirement Community, in the Charlestown Square Classroom 116. Annual LWV Baltimore County program planning and review.

#### March

- 3 – Super Tuesday
- 29 – *The Capitol Steps* sponsored by LWV Baltimore County

All events are posted at <http://lwvbaltimorecounty.org/calendar>.



**LWV Baltimore County:**

**Empowering residents through voter registration, education and advocacy.**

CO-PRESIDENTS LETTER

Dear League Members,

2020 is an exciting year for the League of Women Voters and for our country as it represents the 100th anniversary of the League as well as the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote. We strongly urge our readers to read about that rich history by going to LWV.org and clicking on "History".



That history would not be complete, however, without also reading the August 8, 2018 article by Chris Carson, LWVUS president, and Virginia Kase, LWVUS CEO, "Facing Hard Truths About League Origins" which addresses our League's failure to include women of color at the outset of the establishment of our organization. However, it is important to note that leadership at the National LWV level acknowledges that, as we approach our 100th anniversary, "we must do better. We will do better. As we enter 2020, we can say that no other national volunteer organization inspires such a degree of commitment from its members.

The LWV has evolved from what it was in 1920, a political experiment designed to help 20 million newly enfranchised women carry out their new responsibilities, to what it is today, a unique, nonpartisan organization that is a recognized force in molding political leaders, shaping public policy and promoting informed citizen participation at all levels of government. As we look to the future, we embrace a new Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policy. Today the League invites "all people, regardless of gender, gender identity, ethnicity or race to join us as we commit to right[ing] the wrongs of past and building a stronger, more inclusive democracy."

The LWV Baltimore County is fully committed to this vision. As part of our Strategic Plan initiated about two years ago, we developed goals for addressing issues of diversity and inclusion. As we begin this exciting year of celebration, we too recognize that while much has been accomplished, there still is much to do. Working together, the officers and Board of LWV Baltimore County are confident we can attain our goals.

Your Co-Presidents wish everyone a very Happy and Healthy New Year! Stay tuned for the exciting activities to come in 2020!

Sincerely,

*Theresa A. Lawler*

*Camille B. Wheeler*

Co-Presidents

Theresa Lawler

Camille Wheeler

NEW MEMBERS

WE WELCOME



Alice Cunningham  
Linda Dorsey-Walker, M.B.A.  
Donna Eden  
Hellene Gardel



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## LWVUS

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### CONSENSUS AND PROGRAM PLANNING

Betsy Sexton

This month, members address the recommendation for a national LWV platform on **Voter Representation and the Electoral Process**. Resources begin on [page 11](#) of *The Voter*. Members are encouraged to attend on either January 14 or 17 to learn and respond to the current recommendations.



**What is LWV Program?** Program is the League’s platform for education, advocacy and action.

**What are LWV Positions?** Positions are individual planks of the platform. Members identify issues for study, and they convene a study committee that write fact sheets, develop consensus questions that can lead to position statements and hold consensus meetings. Statements adopted by consensus become *positions* and a part of a League’s *Program*.

**What is LWV Program Planning?** Program Planning is the process of reviewing League positions. It happens at National, State and local levels.

**Meeting Agenda:** Tuesday, January 14 or Friday, January 17. Join us for one.

1. **Review** whether to retain LWVUS positions
2. **Respond** to proposed LWVUS electoral process concurrence

(a) We will review the 51 LWVUS positions and recommend whether to retain them. The outcomes of responses from Leagues across the country are reported to LWVUS for action at its convention in June 2020. You can find LWVUS Positions in Brief in January’s *Voter* newsletter [pages 15-17](#). Full positions and background for them can be found in *Impact on Issues* at the link <http://lww.org/content/impact-issues>.

(b) **Background on Proposed Concurrence:** LWVUS intends to request a vote on a concurrence statement related to electoral systems at its June 2020 convention. If approved, this is intended to be a national position and a guide for Leagues that do not have positions on this issue. LWVUS has asked local Leagues to provide an indication of support (or not) and feedback by March 1. It is possible that the statement could be modified based on feedback received prior to the vote at the June convention. LWVUS acknowledges that this is a different process than is typically used to establish a position. Rather than conducting a lengthy study, this statement is comprised of positions from 13 Leagues around the country plus LWVUS.

To support the above proposed statement and understand the research, LWVUS has provided several critical documents included in *The Voter* on [pages 11-13](#). Because this proposal combines information from many states, the terminology may be unfamiliar, but can be found at <https://www.lww.org/league-management/terminology-proposed-concurrence-voter-representation-electoral-systems>.

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## LWVMD

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**Winter Workshop** is at the end of this month. Meet members from across the state and hear speakers discuss topics such as the 2020 Census. Use the flyer on [page 18](#) to register or register online, [www.lwvmd.org/winter\\_workshop\\_2020](http://www.lwvmd.org/winter_workshop_2020).

**We expect this** to be a busy General Assembly with Redistricting Reform, Kirwan and Revenue to be hot issues, along with many other items. In the months ahead, the LWVMD will be working to help all members and supporters stay informed and involved. Make sure you get LWVMD Action Alerts and newsletters to follow the progress of legislators and bills. If you notice in February that you don't get the emails, update your league account at [www.lwvmd.org](http://www.lwvmd.org).

**You can follow** legislation, budget, actions, committees, legislators and other up-to-date news at the Maryland General Assembly website, <http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite>.

### LWV Baltimore County COMMITTEES AND REPORTS

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#### AGRICULTURE

*Ruth Smith*

Our Agriculture Committee meets in connection with LWV positions on agriculture policies, climate change, natural resources, US relations with developing countries and the UN. The recent committee report is relevant to all these areas of concern regarding the 2030 UN agenda for Sustainable Development envisioning “a world of universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination”.

This report is multifaceted, underscores the consequences of poverty and hunger, and is available on our website under Resource World Hunger, [https://www.lwvbaltimore.org/world\\_hunger](https://www.lwvbaltimore.org/world_hunger).

#### COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICATIONS

##### YES, YOU CAN!

*Sharalyn Luciani*

We need help. It is an infrequent but timely task, takes only a few minutes at a time, can be done independently and anywhere with online access, any time of day or night. It does not require physical strength nor stamina. It is of benefit to not only members but to those who are interested in the work we do.

Are you intrigued?

Our online calendar needs an author. We need **just one volunteer** to add event information to our online calendar embedded in our website. Google calendar is an easy-to-use format, and training will be provided if necessary. (You will be surprised to see how easy it is.) And there's a bonus! You will be the first to find out about events!

Even if you can't volunteer, please note that our calendar lists LWV Baltimore County, City and LWVMD events, as well as local groups providing events based on our advocacy. Visit [https://www.lwvbaltimore.org/calendar\\_events](https://www.lwvbaltimore.org/calendar_events).

## EDUCATION

### INCREASING ACCESS TO FOOD FOR LOW INCOME CHILDREN

*Dr. Laurie Taylor-Mitchell, President, Student Support Network*

Over 50,000 children in the Baltimore County Public School system (43% of all students) live in severe poverty. Of these, 25,000 children qualify for SNAP and live in extreme poverty; annual income for a family of four receiving SNAP benefits cannot exceed \$33,475. According to research conducted by the United Way and Johns Hopkins University, the annual income needed by a family of four to be self-sufficient in Baltimore County (no savings possible) is approximately \$70,000. These children are at major risk for hunger and food insecurity in the summer, when they do not receive free meals in school. Pre-school aged children have no access to meals in school.

**Please encourage Governor Hogan (410-974-3901) and your state legislators to support full funding of the Summer SNAP Program**, which would add \$100 per year to SNAP benefits (\$30 per month in the summer and \$10 for the winter break) and help improve access to food for our very low-income children (270,000 children state-wide). This program only received \$200,000 in funding last year for the entire state.

**The Student Support Network**, [www.studentsupportnetwork.org](http://www.studentsupportnetwork.org), improves the lives of Baltimore County students in poverty by providing food, other necessities, and advocacy support. The Network has programs in seven schools with several others interested in joining. **Dundalk High School is interested in joining the Network and needs two lead volunteers to help** organize Network programs at the school. Once a student-in-need support room is established at a school, the time commitment is 3-4 hours a week. Every school has at least two lead volunteers, so the tasks are always shared. Please contact Laurie ([ltaylormitchell.ssn@gmail.com](mailto:ltaylormitchell.ssn@gmail.com)) for more information.

### WRITING PROJECT – BLUEPRINT FOR EDUCATION

*Camille Marx*

**Why write?** Convince your state legislative representatives to vote in favor of the Kirwan Commission Report.

**How many letters?** Only two during the month of January.

**Then what?** Provide your email address so that Strong School of Maryland may send you emails to forward to your legislators.

Three ways to get started:

1. Attend a letter writing session at our LWV office at 10 a.m. on January 14.
2. Attend a letter writing session at the home of Judy Miller, 2800 Stone Cliff Drive, #105, Baltimore, 21209, at 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 18.
3. Arrange to have the materials sent directly to you by contacting Camille Marx, [marx7633@comcast.net](mailto:marx7633@comcast.net).

All residents are invited to participate. Join the project!



## COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD SEAT

TOWSON, MD — The Baltimore County School Board Nominating Commission will be accepting applications beginning Thursday, January 2, 2020, for the Board’s vacant at-large seat. The individual selected for this seat will fill the remaining vacated term, which ends December 2022.



Following the 2014 and 2017 Maryland General Assembly sessions, the composition and selection of the Board of Education of Baltimore County changed. Beginning in 2018, the Board became a hybrid Board by including both appointed and elected members. Seven members of the school board are elected, while four members of the Board are appointed by the governor. The Baltimore County School Board Nominating Commission has the task of selecting nominees to recommend to the governor for the four at-large positions.

“Now, our task is to select two nominees to recommend to the governor for appointment for the one at-large seat,” said Commission Chairman Aaron Plymouth. “All interested Baltimore County residents are urged to submit applications.”

Candidate interviews are scheduled for:

- Tuesday, February 18, 2020 – 6 to 9:30 p.m.
- Monday, February 24, 2020 – 6 to 9:30 p.m.

The application was posted on the Baltimore County Public Schools’ [website](#) on January 2, 2020, and will be accepted through Friday, January 31, 2020. Applications can be mailed to the Baltimore County School Board Nominating Commission, c/o Tracy Gover, 6901 N. Charles Street, Towson, MD 21204.

## PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

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### BOOK CLUB READS – FALL SCHEDULE

**Wednesday, January 22, 7:30 p.m.** *Washington’s Spies: The Story of America’s First Spy Ring* by Alexander Rose.

Basing his tale on remarkable original research, historian Alexander Rose reveals the unforgettable story of the spy ring that helped America win the Revolutionary War. For the first time, Rose takes us beyond the battlefield and into the shadowy underworld of double agents and triple crosses, covert operations and code breaking, and unmasks the courageous, flawed individuals who inhabited this wilderness of mirrors—including the spymaster at the heart of it all, George Washington..

**February 19 & March 18** No books have yet been considered for the future, so bring your suggestions to the January discussion.

**LEGISLATIVE LUNCH WRAP-UP**

Neilson Andrews



*Legislators left to right: Jay Jalisi, Clarence Lam, Jessica Feldmark, Delores Kelley, Pat Young, Jon Cardin, Michelle Guyton, Benjamin Brooks, Shelly Hettleman, Eric Ebersole, Cathy Forbes and Eugene Clark for Charles Snyder. Not pictured, Terri Hill.*

The first Saturday in January has been our traditional lunch with our legislators and this January 4<sup>th</sup> turned out to be one of our most successful. More than 65 members, guests and state legislators attended. Co-president Terri Lawler opened the meeting with an explanation of the League’s purpose, mission statement, and priorities. She reminded us of upcoming events and encouraged our Legislators to join the League.

Camille Marx reported on the Education Committee’s upcoming letter writing campaign in support of the Kirwan Report recommendations. She asked for volunteers to write to their Legislators in support of the recommendations.

Neilson Andrews introduced each legislator and moderated the afternoon. What follows is a brief review.



*Senator Kelley and Del Brooks talk with members Anne Libis and Pat Novak.*

Our Delegate’s Senior Senator and League member, Delores Kelley (10), started the comments. Senator Kelley is now chairman of the Finance Committee which hears the financial aspects of health care, insurance, energy and utility issues before the Senate. She reminded everyone that the Kirwan Report’s name had now changed to *Blueprint for Maryland Education* as House/Senate bills one and two have been pre-filed. Senator Kelley is also focused on changes in the juvenile justice reform, particularly changes in the educational system for juveniles mandated to homes around the State.

Senator Clarence Lam (D12), who is a Public Health physician in real life, sits on the Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee. One of his priorities this session is public financing for School Board candidates. He also thought that there should be greater focus on voter registration and voting among the young people in Maryland colleges. Senator Lam is also focused on the ability of 501(c)4 organizations to advertise without restriction on issues or name their contributors. These are the organizations that are often called “dark money”.

Delegate Benjamin Brooks (10) opened by acknowledging the veterans in our audience. He agreed with the LWV Maryland's Legislative Priorities and is particularly interested in reaching the goal of 50% renewable energy by 2030. House Bill 1, Built to Learn, and House Bill 2, both of which address the Kirwan Commission Report will be his priority. (HB2 must be in bill drafting at this time.)

Both Delegate Jon Cardin's and Delegate Shelly Hettleman's names have been sent to the Governor for appointment to Senator Bobby Zirkin's seat. The decision will not be announced until Senator Zirkin officially resigns at the start of the Session.

Delegate Cardin (11) expressed interest in reigning in robocalls. He also wants to continue the incentives for rooftop solar instead of on farmland. He is particularly interested in anti-bullying, especially internet bullying, as social media is always changing. Decriminalization of small amounts of narcotics is another of his priorities.

Delegate Eric Ebersole of the 12<sup>th</sup> District reiterated that Kirwan is his strong priority, especially as he is a former math teacher. Teacher retention is essential as is a new commitment to early childhood programs. The Delegate would also like to promote training hotel workers on recognizing sex trafficking. Commercial trucking licenses should also require further training.



Delegate Jessica Feldmark (12) is working with Common Cause on campaign finance reform and more accessible, secure ballots for people with disabilities. She would also like to accelerate the timeline for Clean Energy Jobs Act, phase out incineration and push for faster transition from local coal-burning plants. She hopes to create a Second Chance Task Force to address job barriers for people coming out of incarceration (they should leave with a state-issued ID). Additionally, she would like to see the HOME Act enacted statewide.

Delegate-Elect Cathi Forbes is the new delegate from District 42A replacing Steve Lafferty. She supports HB 1 and HB 2 as well as funding for school construction especially in the county. Environmental issues and access to transportation are also priorities.

Delegate Michele Guyton (42B) is particularly interested in disability issues and will seek support for vulnerable adults as they age and protections for them from exploitation and abuse. She would like to see increased transparency from state and county agencies, by reducing from 30 days to 7 days the delivery of requests for information. She would also like to put a stop to unlicensed horse breeding stables, which seem to be operating similarly to puppy breeding farms.

Delegate Hettleman (11) is Vice-Chair of the Education and Economic Development Committee of the House Appropriations Committee, which will work on funding the Kirwan recommendations. She also will be supporting safe spaces for drug users, where there could be access to information about treatment. She suggests funding two sites for a pilot program.

Mr. Eugene Clark represented Delegate Charles Sydnor (44), who has been appointed to the Senate seat of Senator Shirley Nathan-Pulliam. He will be sworn in at the start of the session and will support the Kirwan recommendation. The Delegate is also focused on desegregating HBCUs (Univ. of Maryland Eastern Shore, Coppin, Bowie State and Morgan State) and settling the lawsuit with the State. He also would like to see a change in the law to mandate that state legislators must live in the districts they serve.

Delegate Pat Young (44B) is Chair of County Delegation, which deliberates on all local issues before the Legislature. He would like to update the National Guard disciplinary procedures (last updated in 1958) for better coordination with the state court system. He would also like see reimbursement to dentists for mandated swab lead tests in children. (Many families take young children to the dentist, not doctor.) He wants an increase in the student School Board member compensation from \$1,000 to \$7,500, as it is for other School Board members.

Delegate Jay Jalisi (10) and Delegate Terri Hill (12) were late because of other obligations and were not able to speak as long as they would have liked. Del. Jalisi expressed interest in funding for the Bullet Train being designed to run between Baltimore and DC. Del. Hill is one of two physicians in the Legislature and is interested in health care.

As a conclusion, our members and guests asked questions touching on a variety of subject:: a second chance system for juveniles and those with life sentences, increased STEM education and focus in Baltimore County for job preparation, increased emphasis on environmental issues affecting our climate, and the state parole system. It was mentioned that we are one of two states where the Governor is a part of the parole system.

Be sure to follow the Maryland General Assembly through LWVMD email Action Alerts.

## THE CAPITOL STEPS ARE COMING!

*Neilson Andrews*

Have you marked your calendar to see the *Capitol Steps* on March 29 at 2:30 p.m. in the Dalsheimer Auditorium of Baltimore Hebrew Congregation? If not, do it now and plan to order your tickets. You will be able to **order tickets beginning on January 10, 2020**. The Dalsheimer Auditorium has open seating so there will be no assigned seats for the performance, and tickets are \$40.00 each.



There are two methods for purchasing tickets: online or mail. Tickets are sold with a link on our website, [http://lwvbaltimorecounty.org/capitol\\_steps\\_2020](http://lwvbaltimorecounty.org/capitol_steps_2020), through *InstantSeats*. Purchase your tickets with a credit card and print your tickets. If you prefer to use a check, you may mail your check to the League office (6600 York Road, Suite 211, Baltimore, MD 21212). Please include a note with the number of tickets and your name and address, or, if you prefer, include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. The tickets will be mailed to you.

We are most appreciative of the generosity of our *Capitol Steps* sponsors. WYPR will again be our media sponsor, and we will include our event on their calendar. Greenberg, Gibbons Commercial is returning as a sponsor. Bodie, Dolina, Hobbs, Friddell & Grenzer, P.C. have also contributed.

Don't forget to get your tickets before they are sold out! If you have questions, Betsy Sexton ([esexton2009@gmail.com](mailto:esexton2009@gmail.com)) and Neilson Andrews ([nandrews115@gmail.com](mailto:nandrews115@gmail.com)) will be glad to help you. We look forward to seeing you there.

## IN HONOR OF 100 YEARS OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

Next month, LWV celebrates 100 years of history. Our first century has been a season of growth yet continuity. As you read, notice the themes that continue in the League of Women Voters. ( <https://www.lwv.org/about-us/history>)



**1920s** – After a 72-year struggle and six months before the ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote, the League of Women Voters of the United States was founded by Carrie Chapman Catt during the 1920 Chicago convention of the *National American Woman Suffrage Association*. Its principal aim was to help 20 million newly enfranchised women become politically educated, responsible voting citizens by encouraging them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy. From the beginning, League founders believed in maintaining a nonpartisan stance while encouraging citizens to play a critical role in advocacy and to be political themselves, by educating citizens about, and lobbying for, government and social reform legislation.

The League quickly got involved with influencing policy and began advocating support for the Cable Act for independent citizenship of married women, which became law in 1922. The League also sponsored their first “Get Out the Vote” campaign. By 1925, there were National Leagues organized in 346 of 433 congressional districts.

**1930s** – The Depression of the 1930s and onset of World War II brought change, and from 1924 to 1934 membership was reduced from 100,000 to 44,000. Because of gas rationing, League members started meeting in small groups in their neighborhoods to discuss fundamental issues, which included the threat to democracy and the importance of the informed individual to the success of democracy.

**1940s** – President Harry Truman invited the LWV to serve as a consultant to the US delegation of the United Nations Charter Conference in 1945. The League expressed support for the UN, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

**1950s** – In 1951, *The National Voter* magazine was first published. Delegates to the 1954 Convention voted to group League programs into Current Agenda (“CAs”) government issues chosen for sustained attention and concerted action and Continuing Responsibilities (“CRs”) positions on governmental issues to which the League had given sustained attention and on which it could continue to act. In 1957, League of Women Voters Education was established to encourage active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.

**1960s** – The League reaches approximately 157,000 members nationwide. In response to the growing civil rights crisis of the 1960s, the League directed its energies to building a solid foundation of support for equal access to education and employment. It was not until 1966 that the LWV reached its first position to combat discrimination. The focus, however, was on social policy and not on the front lines.

**Early 1970s** – The LWV addressed the issue of income assistance and began efforts to achieve a national Equal Rights Amendment which failed. The League adopted an official position on direct popular election of the President, members of Congress, on the UN and on Campaign Finance Reform. In addition, the LWV developed broad national positions on water, air, waste management, land use and energy. In 1974 national bylaws were amended to allow men to become full voting members of the League.

*Next month's Voter: LWV after the mid-70s*

## VOTER REPRESENTATION / ELECTION PROCESS

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### CONCURRENCE

**Category:** Government. Possible title: Voter Representation /Election Process

(Note: Titles, Categories and descriptions of positions in brief are generally Board decisions)

#### **Position in Brief:**

Support election methods at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable and enhance representation for all voters.

#### **Position in Full:**

The LWV-XXX promotes an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive. (LWVUS)\* We encourage election methods that provide the broadest voter representation possible, have a positive effect on voter participation and are expressive of voter choices. (AZ & CO)\*

Whether for single or multiple winner contests, the League supports election methods that:

- Encourage voter participation and voter engagement
- Encourage those with minority opinions to participate, including under-represented communities
- Are verifiable and auditable
- Promote access to voting
- Promote competitive elections
- Maximize effective votes/minimize “wasted” votes
- Promote sincere voting over strategic voting
- Discourage negative campaigning
- Encourage meaningful discussion of issues
- Require the winner to receive a majority of the votes for executive and other single seat offices
- Are compatible with acceptable ballot-casting methods, including vote-by-mail.

(LWVUS, ME, OR, CA, MN, MA, FL, NC, OK, SC, VT, WA, Santa Monica)\*

The LWV-XXX believes in representative government. The League supports systems that elect policy-making bodies – legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards – that proportionally reflect the people they represent. We support systems that inhibit political manipulation (e.g. gerrymandering).

The LWV-XXX supports enabling legislation to allow local jurisdictions to explore alternative election methods, as well as supporting state election laws allowing for more options at both the state and local levels. With the adoption of any election system, the League believes that education of the voting public is important and funding for startup and voter education should be available. We encourage a concerted voter education process.

(LWVUS, AZ, CA, OR, SC, WA)\*

\* All language is from LWVUS Principles and multiple State positions.

## BACKGROUND

We take pride in our name, The League of Women Voters, and our work as a multi-issue organization over the last century. The LWV has positions on a multitude of public policy issues decided by our elected representatives. We do not, however, have a position on how we elect those representatives.

And yet, those representatives decide the public policy we care about...healthcare, environment etc.

Our plurality system came with the British and it has limits when it comes to “Making Democracy Work.” Just one example: a voter’s choice can help elect their least favorite candidate due to vote splitting. Potential good candidates often choose not to run because they don’t want to be a “spoiler candidate.” Unsatisfied with the limits of the plurality system and its impact on representation, 14 state Leagues as well as many local Leagues have undertaken studies and developed positions supporting alternatives to the plurality system, which is also known as “first past the post.” originating in the late 1800’s.

As opposed to plurality, sophisticated options used in some cities around the country (like Cambridge MA where it has been used for over 50 years for city council and school boards) have saved taxpayers and candidates money. They have reduced negative campaigning, achieved majority winners while preventing vote splitting among similar candidates, minimized “wasted” votes and provided more voters a meaningful voice. Additionally, they have helped elect women and candidates more representative of their communities.

Leagues that did studies and consensus discovered no electoral method is perfect. However, some are better than others at representing voters and creating more opportunities for women and under-represented voters. These Leagues recommended election methods as a result of their studies as well as criterion for evaluating a method and best practices.

This concurrence position does NOT support any particular election method but rather supports the LWV goals for “an open, governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.” It allows for Leagues to use the position to evaluate or propose electoral options. In many jurisdictions, options are needed as remedies to voting rights lawsuits that seek minority representation.

### WHY ADOPT THE CONCURRENCE?

This concurrence provides us a clear, but flexible, base of principles to explore election method reforms and take action when appropriate for voters. Across the nation, cities in various states have adopted new election methods, including Minnesota, California, Washington, Texas, North Dakota, Illinois, New York and many others, including new methods used for statewide office and Congressional contests in Maine. Most major newspapers have editorialized in support of electoral options to improve representation and reduce voter apathy. They recognize that democracy depends on it.



## OUR PROCESS

This proposed concurrence position is a compilation of position language adopted by AZ, CA, CO, FL, MA, ME, MN, NC, OK, OR, PA, SC, VT, WA, and established LWVUS principles on representation.

While this is not an exhaustive list of state & local leagues that have conducted related studies, these states were instrumental in the formulation of the proposed concurrence.

How can the League use this Position in the Future?

- Local Leagues can use it to propose or evaluate an electoral system proposed in their community.
- Local Leagues can propose or support a suitable election method as a remedy to voting rights lawsuits that are filed when a protected group is under-represented by the current system.
- State LWV can use it to support or oppose state legislation.
- Meets language requirements for future LWVUS concurrence.

For more information or questions, contact one of the co-chairs:

- Barbara Klein, Co-chair of project. (LWV Rogue Valley, Action Chair) [drbarbaraklein@120years.com](mailto:drbarbaraklein@120years.com) (Oregon)
- Paula Lee, Co-chair of project. (LWV Sacramento, Action Chair) [paula.lee@comcast.net](mailto:paula.lee@comcast.net) (California)

## ELECTORAL SYSTEMS TERMINOLOGY

Electoral systems are tied to representation of voters. For definitions of basic electoral terminology, please refer to <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/terminology-proposed-concurrence-voter-representation-electoral-systems>

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### Reminder: Consensus & LWVUS Program Planning

**January 14 – 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.** Cockeysville Library meeting room,  
Discussion/Concurrence meeting on LWVUS proposed new position of  
Voter Representation and the Electoral System  
& LWVUS Program Planning

**January 17 – 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.** Charlestown Retirement Community,  
Charlestown Square classroom 116, Discussion/Concurrence meeting on  
LWVUS proposed new position of Voter Representation and the Electoral  
System & LWVUS Program Planning

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## PRO AND CON CONSIDERATIONS OF VOTER REPRESENTATION / ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

March 2019

| PRO  | CON  |
|--|--|
| After 100 years, it is a good time for the League of Women Voters to have a position on Voter Representation.  | After 100 years, the LWV doesn't need a position on Voter Representation.  |
| This proposed concurrence provides a clear but flexible base of preferred principles (from 15 state positions) for evaluating electoral options to enhance voter representation.                               | The numerous criteria included are very broad, and, as an <b>entire</b> group, not easily achieved.                                      |
| This position does not support one particular electoral system but allows options for local jurisdictions.   | This position doesn't specifically name or support a best electoral system, which could be helpful to members.                           |
| Along with representation, it makes sense for the League of Women <b>VOTERS</b> to have a position on how we <b>VOTE</b> in our leaders.   | As with representation, the LWV doesn't need a position on <b>HOW</b> we elect our leaders, we have functioned without it for 100 years. |
| The LWV does not have a position that supports or opposes ANY electoral system. Electoral options are needed to improve voter representation.  | While the LWV does not have a position on the current winner-take-all plurality system, it is familiar to voters.                        |
| Position is in line with LWV mission & principles on representative government. How we elect our leaders has a direct effect on voter representation.  | Position introduces too many issues for one position.  |
| This position recognizes that the electoral systems we use can enhance or deny representation just as much as who draws district lines, and how they are drawn. With this position, both issues are addressed. | Redistricting reform with Independent redistricting commissions drawing the lines will help voters be represented.                       |

For more information or questions, contact one of the co-chairs, Barbara Klein ([drbarbaraklein@120years.com](mailto:drbarbaraklein@120years.com)) or Paula Lee ([paula.lee@comcast.net](mailto:paula.lee@comcast.net)).

## LWVUS POSITIONS IN BRIEF

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### **REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT**

*Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.*

#### **Voting Rights**

**Citizen's Right to Vote.** Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

#### **DC Self-Government and Full Voting**

**Representation.** Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

#### **Election Process**

**Apportionment.** Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

**Redistricting.** Support redistricting processes and enforceable standards that promote fair and effective representation at all levels of government with maximum opportunity for public participation.

**Money in Politics (formerly campaign finance).** Support campaign finance/MIP regulations that enhances political equality for all citizens, ensures transparency, protects representative democracy from distortion by undisclosed contributions and big money, and combats corruption and undue influenced in government. Support campaign spending that is restricted but not banned. Supports public financing, full disclosure, abolishing SuperPACs, and creating an effective enforcement agency.

**Selection of the President.** Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

#### **Citizen Rights**

**Citizen's Right to Know/Public Participation.** Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate informed understanding and public participation in government decision-making.

### **Evaluating Constitutional Amendment Proposals and Constitutional Conventions**

**Amendment Proposals.** Consider whether a proposal addresses matters of abiding importance, makes our political system more democratic, protects individual rights, could be achieved by a constitutional amendment or legislative proposal, and is consistent with other League positions.

**Constitutional Conventions.** Hold Constitutional Conventions only when certain conditions are in place, such as: limited to a specific topic, full transparency, delegates selected by population, and voting by delegates not by states.

**Individual Liberties.** Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

**Public Policy on Reproductive Choices.** Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

#### **Congress and the Presidency**

**Congress.** Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision making capability, effective performance, and transparency.

**The Presidency.** Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

#### **Privatization**

Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector.

### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

## **United Nations**

Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic, and humanitarian needs of all people.

## **Trade**

Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers; expand international trade; and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental, and social goals.

## **Developing Countries**

Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

## **Arms Control**

Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

## **Military Policy and Defense Spending**

Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.**

**Resource Management & Protection** Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems. Promote resource conservation, stewardship, and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government. Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

**Air Quality.** Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

**Energy.** Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation, and encourage the use of renewable resources.

**Land Use.** Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

**Water.** Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater, and drinking water, and set up a process to evaluate inter-basin water transfers.

**Waste Management.** Promote policies to reduce the generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

**Nuclear.** Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

**Climate Change.** Support climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available climate science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations.

## **Public Participation**

Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

## **Agriculture Policy**

Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices, and increased reliance on the free market.

**Federal Agriculture Policies.** Provide financial support to subsidize agriculture in specific instances, enforce federal antitrust laws to ensure competitive agricultural markets, and apply clean air and water regulations to all animal and aquaculture production. The federal government should fund basic agricultural research to provide adequate safety of our food supply.

## **SOCIAL POLICY**

**Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.**

## **Equality of Opportunity**

**Equal Rights.** Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA. Support equal rights for all under state and federal law regardless of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability.

**Education, Employment, and Housing.** Support equal access to education, employment, and housing.

**Federal Role in Public Education.** Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12.

### **Fiscal Policy**

**Tax Policy.** Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

**Federal Deficit.** Promote responsible deficit policies.

**Funding of Entitlements.** Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability, and health insurance.

### **Health Care**

Promote a health care system for the United States that provides affordable access to a basic level of quality care for all U.S. residents, including behavioral health that is integrated with and achieves parity with the physical health care system.

### **Immigration**

Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business, and employment needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

### **Meeting Basic Human Needs**

Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

**Income Assistance** Support income assistance programs based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing, and shelter.

**Support Services** Provide essential support services.

**Housing.** Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

### **Child Care**

Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality childcare for all who need it.

### **Early Intervention for Children at Risk**

Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development, and safety of all children.

### **Violence Prevention**

Support violence prevention programs in communities.

### **Gun Control**

Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

### **Urban Policy**

Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

### **Death Penalty**

LWVUS supports abolition of the death penalty.

### **Sentencing Policy**

Support the exploration and utilization of alternatives to imprisonment, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

### **Human Trafficking**

Oppose all forms of domestic and international human trafficking of adults and children, including sex trafficking and labor trafficking.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement, and well-defined channels for citizen input and review



# WINTER WORKSHOP

\*Saturday, January 25, 2020\*

Wilde Lake Interfaith Center  
10461 Twin Rivers Road  
Columbia, MD 21044

9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

\*Snow Date: Feb. 1, 2020.  
Check LWVMD.org  
if weather is inclement.

Workshop fee - \$25 / Non-LWV member - \$30 (Early Bird Pricing through 1/17)

9:30 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. Registration and light breakfast

10:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. "Dangers of a Constitutional Convention", Jessica Jones Capparell - LWVUS

11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. Potential Partnerships for Celebrating our 100th Year

12:30 p.m.- 1:45 p.m. Lunch and Speaker:

Robert S. McCord, Maryland Secretary of Planning The 2020 Census

1:45 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. Announcements

## REGISTER ONLINE

[www.lwvmd.org/winter\\_workshop\\_2020](http://www.lwvmd.org/winter_workshop_2020)

OR BELOW

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## WINTER WORKSHOP 2020 REGISTRATION FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

LEAGUE \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Before 1/17** Members \$25/Non LWV Member \$30 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**After 1/17** Members \$30/Non LWV Member \$35 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation to the LWVMD \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Or donate online at [www.lwvmd.org/make\\_donation](http://www.lwvmd.org/make_donation)

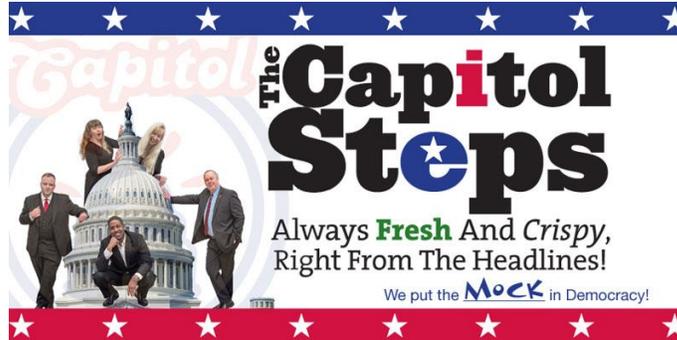
Mail to: LWVMD, 121 Cathedral Street, Suite 2B, Annapolis, MD 21401

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:stateoffice@lwvmd.org)

# The Capitol Steps

Presented by

The League of Women Voters of Baltimore County



## Musical Political Satire

Over 30 years of political wit and wisdom featured on  
NBC, CBS, ABC, and PBS

Prepare for the Primary Election with this hilarious Washington-based troupe of Congressional staffers turned song writers as they poke fun at politics, candidates, the latest news, scandals, and polls. Sight gags, smart musical satire, and bi-partisan satirical sketches keep audiences laughing. No matter who or what is in the headlines, you can bet the Capitol Steps will tackle both sides of the political spectrum.

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**\$40.00 Open Seating**

**Baltimore Hebrew Congregation**

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Baltimore, MD 21208**

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*Proceeds to benefit the League's education activities, including special election, primary and general election Voters' Guides in libraries and on VOTE411.org.*



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