

**League of  
Women Voters**  
OF KENT COUNTY

The Kent County Voter

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[www.kent.lwvmd.org](http://www.kent.lwvmd.org) Winter 2018 Vol. 42, No. 2



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## Events Calendar

Saturday, January 20, 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM – LWVMD 2018 Winter Workshop. See inside for more information.

Thursday, January 25, 6:30 PM – A meeting at the Chestertown Firehouse regarding the state's plans for a new bay bridge. One of several crossings being considered would connect Baltimore and Kent County. The meeting is being convened by the Kent County Preservation Society.

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 7:00 PM. Panel on the Dream Act and Immigration Reform, co-sponsored by the LWVKC and Washington College's Goldstein Program in Public Affairs, Hynson Lounge, Washington College. Admission is free. See article on page 7 of this newsletter for more about DACA.

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 9:30 AM - LWVKC Board Meeting, Yellow Bldg., Kent County Public Library. Members are welcome at the board meetings!

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 12:00 noon – Consensus meeting on the primary system in Maryland. Yellow Bldg., Kent County Public Library. This meeting follows the regular board meeting. Bring a brown-bag lunch. See the article inside for more information on the topic.

Wednesday, Feb. 14 – This is the 98<sup>th</sup> birthday of the League! We will have a small celebration at the consensus meeting mentioned above.

Saturday, Feb. 17 – Annual Henry Highland Garnet Symposium, Sumner Hall, 206 S. Queen St., Chestertown

Tuesday, March 6, 8:30 AM – 1:30 PM– LWVMD Legislative Day, Annapolis. See flyer inside.

Tuesday, March 13, 9:30 AM – LWVKC Board Meeting, Yellow Bldg., Kent County Public Library

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## Message from the Co-Presidents

Dear LWVKC Members,

2018 will be a busy year for our League! Incumbents U.S. Senator Ben Cardin and U.S. House Rep. Andy Harris will both be defending their seats, we believe, as will all of our delegation to the Maryland General Assembly. We will also elect a Governor, Lieutenant Governor, State's Attorney and Attorney General. On the local level look for races for County Commissioner, State's Attorney, Clerk of Court, Registrar of Wills, Judges of the Orphans Court, Sheriff, and Board of Education. The Primary Election this year will be held on Tuesday, June 26, with early voting from June 14 through June 21. The General Election will be on November 6, with early voting from October 18 through November 1.

In the coming months we will be contacting you to help us carry out our usual “full court press” for both the Primary and General Elections: preparing and distributing printed and online *Voters’ Guides* and conducting candidate forums for races on the national, state, and local levels.

But for now, we might think about another facet of our mission: how do we engage potential voters who have never participated in the electoral process? Although Kent County has an excellent record of voter participation compared with other Maryland jurisdictions, we can still improve. Where are the best locations to (find and) hopefully register those heretofore non-participatory citizens? Please send either of us your thoughts about increasing voter turnout this year. We need your ideas and input!

In the meantime, don’t forget to join us for several events coming soon, including a program about “Dreamers” at Washington College on February 7; a consensus meeting about Maryland’s primary election system on February 13 — where we’ll also toast LWV’s 98th birthday; and LWVMD’s Legislative Day in Annapolis on Tuesday, March 6. Find out more about all three of these within the pages of this *Voter*.

We were disappointed that the weather put the kibosh on our Legislative Preview on January 4. It will be difficult to reschedule this event, but mark your calendars for the “Legislative Wrap-Up” Breakfast, also at Heron Point, to be held on Thursday, April 12. With very best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous new year,

Lynn Dolinger, [lynn.thirdwish@gmail.com](mailto:lynn.thirdwish@gmail.com)

Jane Hardy, [janehardy@gmail.com](mailto:janehardy@gmail.com)

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### **Consensus Meeting on the Primary System in Maryland**

Have you noticed that Maryland has a closed primary system? Do you think this strengthens the two-party system in our state or does it exclude too many voters? Have you heard about “instant run-off” elections? Want to learn more about other states’ systems? As noted on the calendar at the front of this *Voter*, there will be a consensus meeting about MD’s primary election system open to all members following the regular monthly board meeting on February 13 at 12:00 noon. Members can find the study material by going to the LWVMD Webpage at [lwvmd.org](http://lwvmd.org), clicking on News, then Publications, then on the Fact Sheets. Under 2017 click on Primary Election Fact Sheet. Our co-president Jane Hardy will email the Fact Sheet to all members as well.

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### **BAY BRIDGE CROSSING**

The Maryland Department of Transportation is in the Tier 1 process of studying the environmental impact on 6 possible bay bridge crossings and one of those crossings being considered is in Kent County. This study will be completed this year, and at that point they will announce where they plan to have the new bay bridge crossing. Please plan to attend a public information meeting Thursday, January 25, 6:30 PM at the Chestertown Firehouse to hear more about what will happen

to our community, if a bridge is built in Kent County. The meeting is sponsored by Kent County Preservation Alliance.

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### **Recommendations from the LWVUS for Member Action**

1. Urge Congress to support the Automatic Voter Registration Act. The bill would improve the accuracy of voter records, cut down on costs, modernize outdated registration systems while supporting implementation in states across the country.

2. Urge Congress to save Health Care. When the attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act failed, the President and Congress have done everything possible to make it fail, including the recently passed tax reform legislation. The bill passed by the Senate repeals the individual mandate, the provision in the ACA that requires individuals to have health insurance or face a penalty fee. Without the individual mandate, healthy people may opt out of getting insurance, and the number of uninsured Americans would increase by 13 million, according to the Congressional Budget Office.

Contact Information:

Congressman Andy Harris: Washington, DC office: 202-225-5311  
Senator Ben Cardin: 202-224-4524  
Senator Chris Van Hollen, Jr.: 202-224-4654

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### **LWVMD Legislative Priorities for 2018**

Based on member input from our fourteen local Leagues, here are LWVMD's priorities for action (testimony, lobbying, letter-writing, coalition building, public outreach) during the current legislative session:

- Redistricting reform
- Improved voter access and security of the election process
- Mitigating climate change
- Increasing the use of clean, renewable energy
- Ensuring safe water and clean waterways for all
- Maintaining the safety net for vulnerable populations
- Providing adequate and equitable Pre-K – 12 public education
- Providing adequate public transportation
- Reforming corrections and sentencing

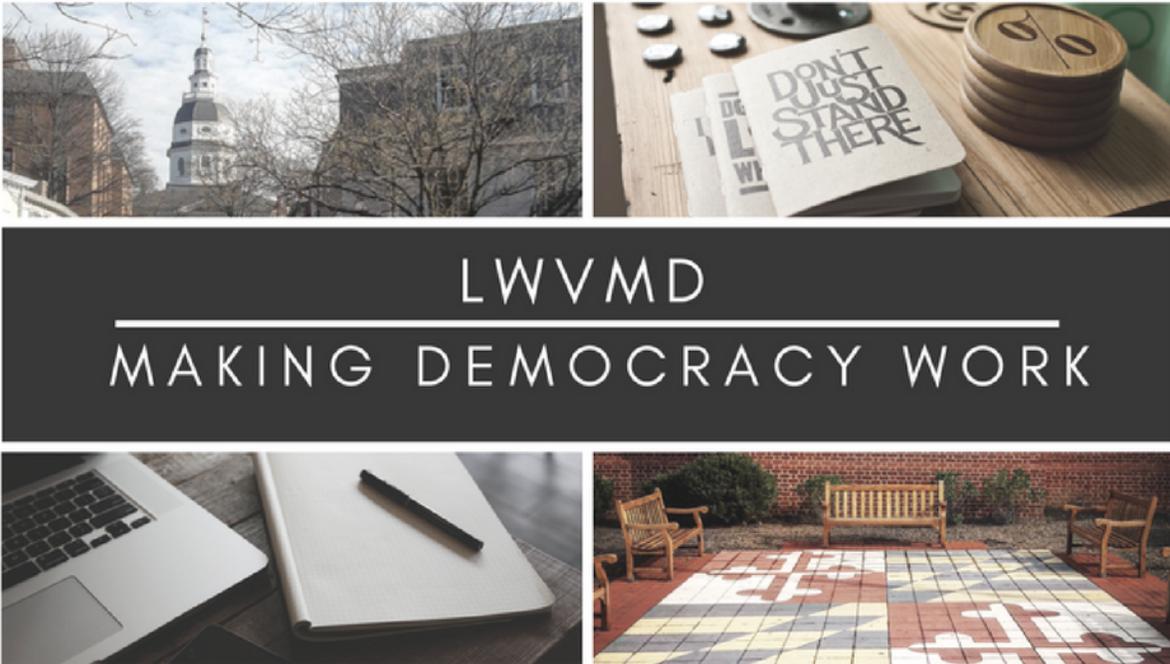
Stay tuned for action alerts so that you can help!

*Save the  
Date!*

LWVMD's LEGISLATIVE DAY  
JOIN US IN ANNAPOLIS ON  
MARCH 6TH, 2018



Starting at 8:30 a.m. join us for a morning of learning, socializing and visits with our legislators to share LWVMD's 2018 Priorities.



WHEN: March 06, 2018 at 8:30am - 1:30pm

WHERE:

Miller Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen St  
West II Room  
Annapolis, MD 21401

CONTACT

Ashley Oleson, LWVMD Administrative Director · [stateoffice@lwvmd.org](mailto:stateoffice@lwvmd.org) · 410-269-0232

## **LWVMD Winter Workshop**

This event will be held on Saturday, January 20 (Jan. 27 Snow Date). The featured luncheon speaker will be Ken Oldham, President and CEO of the United Way of Frederick County. His topic: "Who Is Alice?" ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income constrained, Employed.

### **Schedule:**

9:30 – Registration and light breakfast

10:10 – Morning Workshop Session 1: "Preparing for Elections: Forums and Debates" or "Non-Profit Treasurer's Seminar"

11:20 – Morning Workshop Session 2: "How to Run a Condo Election" or "Non-Profit Treasurer's Seminar"

12:30 – Lunch and Speaker

The Workshop will take place at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 3604 Chatham Rd., Ellicott City, MD 21042. Tickets are \$25 for members and \$35 for non-members. Go to the LWVMD Webpage, [lwvmd.org](http://lwvmd.org), to sign up.

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## **DACA and the Need for Comprehensive Immigration Reform**

On Wednesday evening, February 7 at 7:00 PM the LWVKC will join with the Goldstein Program in Public Affairs at Washington College for a discussion of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy, otherwise known as DACA. The speakers will be Estela Vianey Ramírez, Assistant Director of the Chesapeake Multicultural Resource Center in Easton, MD and Ivette Riera Salarich, Court Liaison/Outreach Coordinator for Kent and Queen Anne's counties. Ms. Ramírez is herself a DACA recipient, having come to the United States from Honduras as a child with her mother and brother to escape the violence in her country. Ms. Salarich is from Barcelona, Spain and earned a law degree in her own country. She came to the United States through marriage, and is currently moving toward an American law degree. This event is free and open to the public. It will be held in Hynson Lounge. The most convenient parking locations on campus are in Lots B (by the stadium) and C (behind the theater).

The DACA program was established on June 15, 2012 by then President Obama, and permitted young people who had entered the country with their parents as children to be able to study and work without fear of deportation. Recipients filed an application with Homeland Security in order to qualify. In September 2017 President Trump announced that the program would not be continued unless Congress acted to make it official and permanent. Furthermore, Homeland Security would accept no new applications or applications for renewal after a date in October of last year. More detailed information on DACA can be found in the Fall edition of the *Voter*.

In the meantime, the legality of the administration's action has been made subject to court action. This month Judge William Alsup of the Northern District of California ordered the Trump administration to partially resurrect the program. The order was the result of a lawsuit filed by the

University of California. It makes it possible for those who have or have had DACA protections to apply for renewals again. Even those involved in the decision emphasize that it should not take pressure off Congress to pass a bill that would create permanent protection or even full legal status for DACA recipient.

In addition to addressing the plight of these young people, the “Dreamers,” Congress must work to create a more comprehensive immigration reform bill. Change has been long needed in this country, where the policies that now govern immigration are seriously flawed. The League of Women Voters has supported that kind of reform for a long time. Put simply, the League’s position is that Immigration policies should promote reunification of immediate families; meet economic, business and employment needs; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises.

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### **Hot off the Presses – “Your Elected Officials” Brochure**

This one-page flyer, produced by members of the LWVKC, includes contact information for all our elected officials from the Kent County Board of Education to the President of the United States. The brochure has been recently redone, so that it now includes the results of local elections held in the fall of 2017. We will update again in June or July to reflect the results of the local elections to be held in the spring. You may view or download this brochure from our Webpage. If you would like a hard copy, please contact a board member – see the list at the front of this *Voter*.

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### **Victory in Maryland on Earned Sick Leave Legislation**

The LWVMD has strongly lobbied for Earned Sick Leave legislation. In the spring 2017 session the Legislature passed a bill requiring that employers with more than 15 workers offer the right to earn paid sick leave (the Healthy Working Families Act). Unfortunately, Governor Hogan vetoed the bill in May. Early in the current session, however, both the House of Delegates and the Senate voted to override the Governor’s veto, the former by a vote of 88 to 52, the latter by a vote of 30 to 17.

The Act allows employees in businesses with 15 or more workers to earn one hour of paid leave for every 30 hours they work, up to a maximum of five paid sick days. Employees in smaller businesses will earn unpaid leave. There are currently more than 750,000 Maryland workers in the private sector without access to any paid sick leave. Estimates are that 488,000 Marylanders will be able to earn paid leave as a result of this bill, while at least another 205,000 will earn unpaid leave. Thus, the bill benefits more than 90% of Maryland employees who did not have any earned sick days before.

Source: Public Justice Center, [www.publicjustice.org](http://www.publicjustice.org)