

***President's Column – Marian Ott***

**LWV of Tennessee Sues State of Tennessee for Chilling Voter Registration Law** This is not the headline that League members hoped for at the beginning of the 2019 legislative session. However, despite strong arguments from the League and other groups about the chilling impact of this legislation on voter registration activities in the state, it passed overwhelming in the TN General Assembly. LWVTN has filed a complaint against the state to prevent implementation of the law.

***Leagues across the state should aggressively pursue voter registration activities until October 1, 2019 when the law goes into effect.*** Meanwhile, LWVTN is pursuing the legal strategy and monitoring any state regulations promulgated to implement the legislation. Further guidance for League voter registration activity will be forth coming before October 1.

Compiling information on League activities shows how much voter service – including voter registration – that Leagues across the state engage in. Local leagues registered voters and provided either a voter guide or an event or both! The work continues in 2019 with local elections. More Leagues participated with the online League voter VOTE411 which saw record use in Tennessee during the 2018 elections.

It is not too early to plan for 2020 – and to recruit more league members to help! The old adages are often apt – “each one, bring one”. I challenge each of us to bring a person new to the league to the next event. The League needs lots of members, volunteers and partners for the 2020 voter service work ahead!

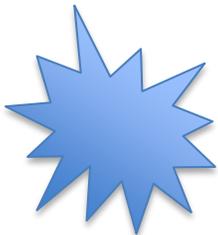
It is my privilege to serve as President of the LWV of Tennessee and I thank you for your vote of confidence to elect me to another term. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me at [president@lwvtn.org](mailto:president@lwvtn.org).

**SAVE THE DATE: FALL WORKSHOP**

“Preparing for 2020 Voter Service”

Saturday November 2, 2019

>>>>Watch your email for more details<<<<<



**LWVTN Board:**

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**Appointed Directors:**

**VOTE411 –**

Jo Singer

**Voter Service/Debates**

– Katrina Gay

**Director –** Barbara Gay

***Advocacy Committee Chair – Debby Gould***

Thanks to our many, many members who contributed to the impact of our advocacy efforts with the Tennessee legislature this year. The bills that were introduced seemed to hit all of LWV’s hot buttons – voting restrictions, school vouchers, health care access and open government. We responded with:

- 14 action alerts for members to contact legislators
- 5 testimonies to legislative committees
- Multiple meetings with legislators and their staff members
- 2 letters to the governor
- 1 press release
- 1 lawsuit

What was our impact? Our position, in collaboration with other groups, prevailed with 5 of the bills that were our focus. We failed to prevail on 7 others for which we had advocacy positions.

Now let’s talk about the lawsuit: The advocacy committee and LWVTN membership were deeply disappointed by the passage of a bill that will have a chilling effect on future voter registration efforts in the state. It regulates the way that voter registration drives and dissemination of information to the public is conducted by organizations such as LWV. It will go into effect October 1, 2019.

A lawsuit was filed in May 2019 against the Secretary of State to block its implementation. LWVTN along with fellow plaintiffs LWVTN Education Fund, American Muslim Advisory Council, Rock the Vote, Spread the Vote, and Mid-South Peace and Justice Center are being represented by ACLU. We anticipate a response from the state of Tennessee prior to October 1 date. Until that time, we urge all local LWV chapters to continue with their regular voter registration and Vote411 information outreach.

As Marian stated in her announcement of the lawsuit, “Tennessee ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation for rates of voter registration. This legislation does a disservice to would-be voters by discouraging the important outreach efforts needed to change those statistics.”

LWVTN has a new Copyright Policy.  
(Local Leagues may want to consider adopting the policy.)

#### LWVTN COPYRIGHT POLICY:

Film and photography efforts may be ongoing during League events. Consequently, attendees may be featured by LWV of Tennessee or local leagues in Tennessee in related motion picture footage, still photographs or sound recordings for art, advertising, trade or other lawful purposes. By attending LWV of Tennessee or local TN league events, you grant the League the right to use such multimedia in print, electronic or other media and waive any right to inspect or approve such multimedia.

### ***League of Women Voters Nashville – Barbara Gay / President***

Thank you to Debby Gould and volunteers who organized our "**Speed Dating with Metro Council at Large Candidates**" at Lipscomb University on July 10th. Ten of the 15 candidates were able to participate, and 68 voters met them on a personal level to ask their questions. All participants agreed it was a creative and effective format.

Our main focus this month is the **August 1st election** for mayor and council members whose outcome will determine the direction of our city. Visit the League's [Vote411.org](http://Vote411.org) website to compare candidates and look for our electronic billboards and widely distributed bookmarks directing voters to candidate and election information. Early voting starts **Friday, July 12th** at the Howard Office Building and other locations open **Friday, July 19 through Saturday, July 27th**. On August 1st, Election Day, voters **must** go to their neighborhood precincts. There are new voting machines with a paper trail this election. Be sure to complete your vote by scanning your paper ballot into the lock box. Please encourage you family and friends to vote in this most important election.

Our **August Hot Topic** on Friday, August 2nd will address our problems with homelessness. We will meet at the Cookery, 1827 12th Avenue South, a restaurant that trains our homeless population for jobs. Watch for details and plan to order ahead of time. **August 14th** presentation will be at 6:00 pm, at the Green Hills Library.



***Empowering Voters \* Defending Democracy******News from Knoxville/Knox County League – Linda Mccabe***

The League of Women Voters of Knoxville Knox County held a forum for the Mayoral candidates and one for three City Council positions on June 25<sup>th</sup>, Mayoral Forum – 6 candidates participated and on July 9<sup>th</sup>, City Council Forum – 11 candidates participated. Both forums were held at the Knoxville News Sentinel Building. There were approximately 130 reporters and audience participants at each forum. Almost 7000 viewed the WATE - TV live streaming of the mayoral forum.

***News From Memphis / Shelby County League – Carol Straughn***

The League has been busy with voter registration events every month. We are excited about the long awaited unveiling of the Suffragette Legacy Statue on the riverside downtown near the Law School on August 18<sup>th</sup>. Members also are looking forward to Paula Casey speaking at the library on October 10<sup>th</sup> about local history and participants of the Women's Suffragette Movement.

Our Voter Education Committee is currently working with the Tennessee Nurses Association on a Mayoral Candidates 'Meet & Greet' event on Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> at the National Civil Right Museum in downtown Memphis. There are 11 candidates on the ballot running for the position. We believe it will be a lively evening.

Additionally we are planning a televised Mayoral Debate with partners WMC Channel 5 News, the NAACP, The Commercial Appeal and the University of Memphis. Partners have tentatively decided that there will be a financial donations threshold used to select participants as used in other cities across the country and national debates. This debate will be held at the Rose Theatre on campus on September 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

In October we plan on partnering with the Environmental Justice Conference, which will be held in Memphis, to offer voter registration and voter education materials.

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**2019 – 2020 LWVTN COALITIONS:**

[Clean Water Network](#)

[Tennessee Coalition for Open Government](#)

[Tennessee Conservation Voters](#)

[Tennessee Health Care Campaign](#)

**NEWS FROM THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS CHATTANOOGA**

– Lisa Bilbrey Hyder President

The LWVChatt is excited to head into the 2020 election season and the 100th anniversary year of both the 19th Amendment and the League of Women Voters. The newly-elected board and I are committed to achieving a diverse and inclusive organization, and we invite everyone in the Chattanooga area to join us in our efforts to empower voters and defend democracy.

Big thanks go to the LWVChatt's outgoing board members, all of whom were valuable contributors to our successes over the past year! In particular, I would like to thank Sharon Alexander, my intrepid co-president for the last 16 months, who now is our voter services chair. As co-president, she has worked tirelessly to spread the League's message, register voters, and recruit members. Sharon always has the best ideas to advance our causes! As just one example, she was the driving force behind our successful LWWUS grant application to fund this spring's youth voter registration drive, which registered almost 500 students. I know that Sharon will serve as voter services chair with the same enthusiasm and dedication.

I want to encourage all members and prospective members to participate in registering voters and to attend a LWVChatt event. The coming months are going to be incredibly busy, and we need your help. Please email me ([lisabhyder@gmail.com](mailto:lisabhyder@gmail.com)) with questions or ideas for projects and speakers. I look forward to hearing from you!

- Lisa

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**LWVChatt Upcoming Events:**

**July 1** - The League's new fiscal year begins. Join the Chattanooga League by July 1 to enjoy a full year of membership! [Click here to learn how to join the League.](#)

**July 11, 10:00-2:00** - Civic Engagement Teacher Workshop from the TN Secretary of State, Chattanooga State Community College. Registration required and space is limited - for details, [click here](#).

**July 12, 11:45-12:45** - Lunch with the League at The Spot, 1800 East Main Street

**July 23** - Women's Fund of Greater Chattanooga announces three Nightingale grant finalists

**August 5, 7:00** - LWV Chattanooga Book Club meets to discuss *There There* by Tommy Orange. The LWVC Book Club meets at the home of a member (1012 Forest Ave., Chattanooga, 266-9316)

**August 17, 9:00-12:00** - Voter registration at the Minority Health Fair, Eastgate Town Center

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**Additional news from LWV Chatt –**

**Youth Voter Registration Grant**

This past spring the LWV of Chattanooga won a \$700 grant from the LWVUS Ed Fund to register students to vote. The grant mandated that we contact and try to register voters in 10 schools in underrepresented areas. Because of the hard work and persistence of 24 LWV members and volunteers, we were able to go into 13 schools during 16 registration events and register 469 new voters from February through May. Those schools were: Chattanooga Girls Leadership Academy, Sequoyah, Ivy Academy, Central, Hixson, Red Bank, Brainerd, Howard, Chattanooga School for the Creative Arts, Signal Mountain, Chattanooga School for the Arts and Sciences, Lookout Valley and Chattanooga State Community College.

In some schools we were able to go into the schools' government classes or senior advisement periods to talk to students about the importance of voting and then offer help with their registrations. These classroom encounters were very successful in engaging with students. In other cases we set up tables in the cafeteria, hallway or an end-of-year family fun day. These were most successful when there were faculty members or other students involved who helped encourage students to register.

Thank you to all 24 dedicated members and volunteers who made this grant so successful! A special thanks goes to Teresa Garland, who, as former Voter Services Director, set this program up, recruited and trained volunteers and created and organized registration materials. And thanks to Maria Sabin for creating a wonderful piece of literature—First Time Voter Guide—that we can continue to use for any new voter. Thank you to Debbie Gonzales for translating this into Spanish. The grant allowed us to print hundreds of these guides in English and Spanish along with pledge-to-vote cards, which have contact information that we can use as reminders to vote.

We are grateful for this grant which made it possible to have the materials to go into so many schools. And we are greatly encouraged by the enthusiasm of the students as they registered to vote and prepared to participate in our democracy.

- Sharon Alexander



**Tools for 100th Anniversary**

The Women's Vote Centennial Initiative (WVCI) is a collaborative of organizations and individuals committed to preserving and honoring women's suffrage history. The League of Women Voters is a [WVCI Taskforce partner](#), meaning that your League is too. This organization has a lot of resources for suffrage celebration, including an [interactive toolkit](#). WVCI is looking to feature events and activities in all 50 states. If you are interested in promoting a local or state League suffrage project, you can [submit your information here](#). More tools for 100th Anniversary celebrations from LWVUS will be made available to Leagues in the coming months.

***News from the Hendersonville League – Shelley Ames***

The League of Women Voters of Hendersonville has started planning fall activities for members and for the community.

The Membership Reception will be held on Monday, September 9, at the Hendersonville Public Library. This event is for members and others from our community. More details will be released soon.

Voter registration efforts are continuing with the League. We will work with Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin for National Voter Registration Day on September 24, 2019. League members will work with students from student government organizations at the college. This event will give students the opportunity to register to vote.

Another registration event is in the planning process with the Sumner County NAACP.

Volunteers are needed for both events. Respond to [sames107@comcast.net](mailto:sames107@comcast.net) to volunteer.



**September 24, 2019 — Mark Your Calendars**

**National Voter Registration Day!!**

**LEARN ABOUT VOTING IN YOUR STATE**

**QUESTIONS ABOUT  
REGISTRATION**

**CALL Our  
866-OUR-VOTE for  
answers to common  
questions about  
registering to vote.**

Can I register to vote online? Is there a deadline before which I have to register to vote, in order to vote in the next election? What if I have a past felony conviction? Can I still register and vote? Get answers to these and other commonly asked questions about registering to vote, voting, and elections in your state.

**SIGN UP TODAY!!**

<https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org>

### ***Knoxville Immigrant Transit Assistance (KITA) – Bill Moore Oak Ridge League***

We are a nation of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers. We have all come from different countries, cultures, religions, languages, and ethnicities. Not only do we fully acknowledge our immigrant roots, we embrace it.

We express our acceptance with, perhaps the best known American icon, the Statue of Liberty... "give me tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breath free"..... We express it within our religious communities ... "You shall love the stranger, for you were once strangers yourselves." ... We express it with our League position... "be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises," and in too many other ways to mention.

However, over the last few years there has been an resurgence of white nationalism and nativism groups that go counter to the people we are. They spew hate and violence on those they choose not to like. This, unfortunately, is also being reflected in some of our national and presidential policies. But in this mess, there are always these rays of compassion that give us hope. The Knoxville Immigrant Transit Assistance (KITA) is one of these rays.

Last October, the immigrant allies in the region noticed a significant increase in the number of asylum seeking immigrant families that are coming though Knoxville on Greyhound buses. Upon a little investigation, it was discovered that the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is detaining and then releasing hundreds of asylum seeking families from their detention jails In Texas. They are then put on Greyhound buses with stops in Memphis, Nashville, and Knoxville. ICE is taking these families straight from their jails to the bus station for trips that could last two days. ICE does not give these families any money, any clothing, or any food or water. ICE does not provide the most basic of items for hygiene - no soap, no diapers, no sanitary pads, no toothbrushes. Kids are sick and have no meds, no toys, no blankets. The recent numbers are now up to 2500 a month through Knoxville and increasing daily. ICE had to add an additional bus and the number is now up to four a day.

These buses will eventually take these families to designated friends or other family members currently living in the US. They will stay there until their immigration trials which can take months to years.

A grass-roots organization spontaneously started in Knoxville (KITA) to assist these traveling families. Though donations, they are able to provide some supplies, such as water, medications, and food. If buses are delayed they try to amuse the kids at area parks.

Each bus has a team and each team consists of a translator (since these families cannot read English, some were getting on the wrong bus or missing their bus), a greeter to assure them that they will be okay, and a supplier (for food, water, necessities). They developed a reliable communications network to meet emergency developments (ie bus delays, bus cancellations, etc). They meet buses early in the morning and very late at night. They found out that similar grass roots organizations developed in Memphis, Nashville, and Roanoke, Va. and communicate with them daily.

This small cadre of compassionate and caring volunteers is truly what America is all about. They are our good will ambassadors to families that are scared and tired. They are the best of Us.

*If you would like more information about KITA please contact Mary Ann Reeves 693-6286.*