

LWV OF KENTUCKY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Support HR 1, the For the People Act! See p. 3 for details**

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The Kentucky Voter



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SUMMER 2019

LWV KY Hosts 3 Spring Debates

The LWV of Kentucky co-sponsored three primary election debates this spring for candidates for governor. The Louisville LWV hosted a Republican debate on May 7 at Lang House, videoed by WLKY and televised on YouTube. Unfortunately, two Republican candidates declined to participate. On May 16 the League sponsored a debate with the four Democrat candidates at the studio of WLKY. This event was videotaped and aired on WLKY and its affiliates.

The Lexington LWV hosted a debate for Democratic candidates on May 15 with co-sponsors Gray Television and the University of Kentucky Student Government Association. This event was aired and streamed live by WAVE/Louisville and aired later by WKYT/Lexington and other of Gray Television's eight stations statewide.

Both Louisville and Lexington Leagues are planning debates this fall. Television stations have sought to

work with the League because of our experience and fair and thoughtful process. Kudos to League members Jules Marquart/Louisville and Cindy Heine/Lexington and their teams of volunteers for organizing these events.

Moderators Bill Bryant, WKYT, and Shannon Cogan, WAVE, prepare for Gubernatorial Debate in Lexington.



LWV KY Receives For The People Act Grant

LWV KY engaged members and volunteers with a For The People Act grant (H.R. 1 in the House) from the LWV US. This omnibus bill, which supports many improvements to the voting process, has already passed the House. Now the goal is a hearing on the bill in the U.S. Senate.

We mailed hundreds of postcards demanding a hearing on the For The People Act in the U.S. Senate; published a full-page ad the *Courier-Journal*; penned an op ed that was published in the *Courier-Journal*, the *Lexington Herald-Leader*, the *Hopkinsville New Era* and the *Elizabethtown News Enterprise*; met with staff members in Senator Mitch McConnell's Louisville and Lexington offices and shared information with hundreds of citizens at meetings across the state. (Additional details on page 3.)



Photo by Jenn Jackson

LWVKY President
Fran Wagner

President's Message

BY FRAN WAGNER

Many years ago, when I joined the League, I stood in awe of state League leaders such as Beverly Rosenblum and Scottie Kenkel. It never occurred to me that one day I'd be following in their footsteps. It's an honor to be your new president, but it's scary, too, especially knowing those who've come before me!

Three things give me courage to undertake this job. The need for the League has never been greater. Kentucky's dynamic local Leagues are engaged in a myriad of impactful programs that inspire and challenge. And, finally, an exceptional team of League members have stepped forward to serve on state board with me.

When the League was established almost 100 years ago, it was after a long struggle for the passage of the 19th amendment. Having secured the right to vote, women decided it was their responsibility to use the right wisely and help everyone become better informed voters. We're still working for better informed citizen involvement in our democracy. Read the stories in this *Voter* about our candidate debates and the *For the People Act* as just two examples of what we're called to do.

Most members have close ties to the local Leagues and in Kentucky we have four – Bell County, Hopkinsville, Lexington and Louisville. In addition, we have a state administered League in Murray as well as members-at-large. In total we are 379 strong. We've seen an increase in membership recently, but we need even more energy. There are many communities in our Commonwealth that would benefit from a League, and we're committed to expanding geographically. More than that, we're committed to becoming more diverse, both racially and generationally!

Finally, I'm proud to work with those who've stepped forward to serve on State Board. After our board retreat in May, I'm convinced that we have an extraordinary team to lead us this year.

Meet the New Board

Dee Pregliasco Louisville – 1st VP (Redistricting)
 Bonnie Lynch, Hopkinsville – 2nd VP (Membership)
 Harriette Seiler, Louisville – Secretary (also Health Care)
 Richard Heine, Lexington – Treasurer
 Soraya Assar, Hopkinsville – Director (Voter)
 Verna Cahoon, Louisville – Director (Education)
 Nikki Chambers, Hopkinsville – Director (Environment)
 Cindy Heine, Lexington – Director (Legislative Liaison)
 Jennifer Jackson, Lexington – Director (Voter Service)
 Judy Johnson, Lexington – Director (Ex-Felon Voting Rights)
 Patty Kannapel, Louisville – Director (Communications)
 Jules Marquart, Louisville – Director (Debates)
 Mary Jo Rodgers, Louisville – Director (Legislative Liaison)

LWVKY State 2019 Convention Held in Hopkinsville

The LWVKY 2019 State Convention, hosted by the Hopkinsville League, opened with a presentation on Friday evening by Josh Douglas about his new book, *VOTE FOR US: How to Take Back our Elections and Change the Future of Voting*. On Saturday the gathering of 27 members and guests was convened by outgoing president, Bonnie Lynch. At dinner Friday, the board commended Senator Whitney Westerfield (R) Hopkinsville, for his work on felony expungement.



Melissa Currence, LWV US Liaison to KY, presents outgoing President, Bonnie Lynch, with a certificate of recognition for her service to the League from LWVUS President Chris Carson.

Business included:

Election of new officers and board members for 2019-20. See **Meet the New Board** on page 2 in the President’s Message.

Adoption of four areas of program focus for the year including:

Restoration of Voting Rights, with a goal of restoring voting rights to persons convicted of felony offences once their sentencing has been complete.

Reapportionment, with a goal of improving the process of drawing voting precinct lines (a commission would be our first preference) and providing for transparency of the process

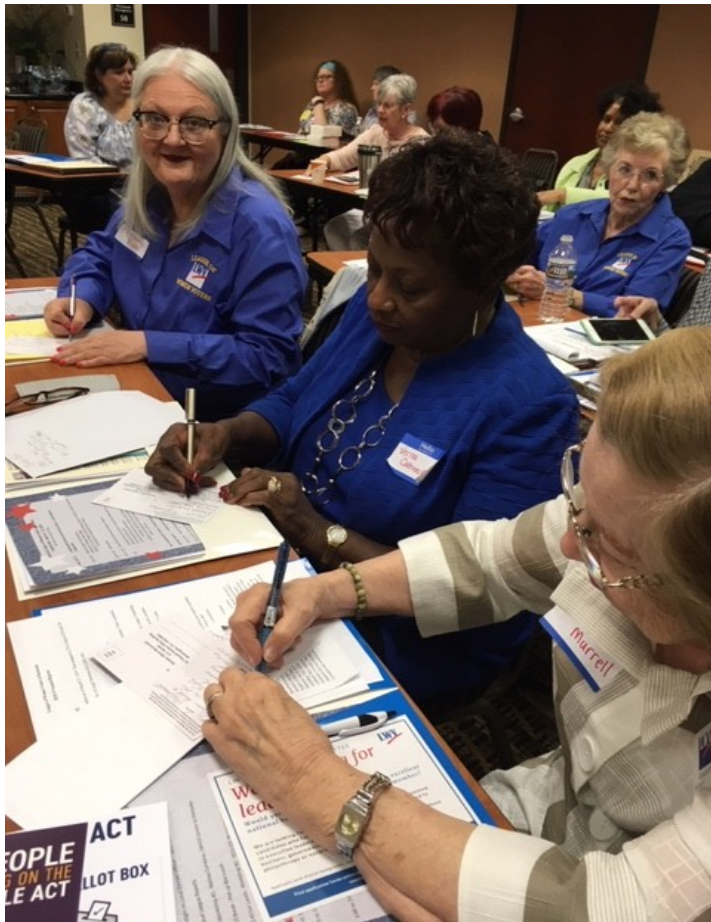
Women’s Suffrage, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the League and the 19th amendment

Education with a focus on public education and changes in high school graduation requirements.

Summaries of the 2019 Legislature, membership, and spring debates were also shared. Newly elected President, Fran Wagner reported on a grant from LWV US, supporting the “For The People Act” and members signed postcards to send to Senator McConnell. We also heard a discussion of rules and issues pertaining to 501(c)(3) status led by Dan Kemp, former Mayor of Hopkinsville and the stories of two women elected locally, Maggie Ferguson, a Christian County Magistrate, and Paige Parker, Circuit Court Clerk. The board then adopted resolutions honoring and thanking former board chairs Terry Nandan and Nita Smith for their League work.

Finally, special guest Melissa Currence/Cincinnati, LWV US Board member and Liaison to the Kentucky League, brought us up to date with national activities. Read more on page 7.

2019 LWV KY CONVENTION



LWV members Soraya Assar, Verna Cahoon and Pat Murrell sign post cards for the For The People Act campaign at state convention.



Professor Joshua Douglas, our Friday evening convention speaker, shares information about his new book, *VOTE FOR US: How to Take Back Our Elections and Change the Future of Voting*.



President Bonnie Lynch and Legislative Co-Chair Cindy Heine, recognize Sen. Whitney Westerfield for his leadership with felon expungement legislation.

LWVUS COUNCIL – DEMOCRACY UNDER THREAT

BY DEE PREGLIASCO and FRAN WAGNER

We were honored to represent Kentucky as we joined 85 other League leaders from 47 states, in addition to the League's National Board and Staff, at the LWVUS Council meeting in Leesburg, Virginia, June 20-23. It was both a challenging and inspiring meeting. We're going to do our best in the coming months to share with you the ideas and strategies that were discussed during this three-day meeting because they have important implications for the future of our state and local Leagues.

The overall theme of the meeting was that our country faces a threat to our democracy, and the League has an essential role to play if we are to overcome the forces that are undermining its foundations with –

- Dark Money, Lobbying & Super PACS
- Gerrymandering, Attacking the Census & Reapportionment
- Voter ID, Exact Match & Voter Roll Purges
- Felony Disenfranchisement
- Restricting Grassroots Registration Drives & Voter Assistance
- Closure and Cuts to Registration & Poll Sites
- Widespread Misinformation

The impact of all this has been lower voter turnout; disenfranchised black, immigrant and young citizens; and more power for the few who have power and want to retain it.

Defending our democracy that is under threat requires both internal and external action. Internally, the League needs to increase and diversify its membership – racially, economically and by age; raise sufficient funds to administratively support volunteers; and do a better job communicating, particularly with younger voters. We brought back some specific plans to do these things that you'll be hearing more about in the coming months.

Externally, the League is challenged to expand our efforts to pass laws, educate, organize, and, when necessary, litigate. We returned with some tools to help us do all of that. For example, a new and improved version of VOTE411 will be rolled out in August, and sessions on *"What's Next in Getting Out the Vote"* and *"How to Build Out a Statewide Campaign"* gave us good ideas for working on these issues in Kentucky.

The session on *"Implicit Bias"*, the address by the first black president of the League, Dr. Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, and the session on *"Governance"* were outstanding, inspiring and full of much information to share.

Perhaps the most useful part of the conference was the opportunity for informal conversations with other League leaders throughout the U.S. It's harder to encapsulate those, but they gave us perspective and connections. It's one of the reasons that we hope many League members will consider being a delegate to the National Convention June 25 – 28, 2020 in Washington, DC. Convention is a much larger meeting, including hundreds of League members who will be celebrating our 100th anniversary and answering this challenging question – "What should be the League's focus for the next 100 years?"

One last thought. We are all so busy; we are all bombarded with information, social media and incessant tweets. We wonder, how can we make a difference? Please remember personal contact and participation in the political process by calling elected officials or participating in canvassing is a vital way to make a difference.. Do what you can when you can.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. – Margaret Mead

Melissa Currence, LWVUS Liaison, Reports from LWVUS



KY Vice-president Dee Pregliasco and President, Fran Wagner at LWV US Council in Leesburg, VA

Melissa Currence is our Liaison to the LWVUS Board. She serves on that board as Chair of the Governance Committee. Her home base is Cincinnati and she would be pleased to help us incubate a Northern Kentucky League. She gave updates on the midterm elections based on data from **Vote411.org**. They served more than 5 million voters. More than 500 Leagues gave feedback on their activities to get out the vote. Richard Heine asked how many local leagues there are—Melissa replied “800.” Harriette expressed some dissatisfaction with Vote411.org based on her first attempt to use it. She wondered whether more voters would use it if the LWV connection were made more evident. Melissa said National is putting resources into the platform and it is improving.

The National League is waiving its share of the **student PMP**. One can become a full member of the League at 16 and one does not have to be a citizen. The “**transformational roadmap**” is National league’s plan designed to reduce barriers, raise diversity among the membership. Leagues are encouraged to adopt a **diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI) policy**, reflecting the underlying core values of the organization. Harriette asked if adopting such a policy required a bylaws change. Melissa thought not.

To those who find National’s web site difficult to navigate, she recommended going to LWV.org, then scrolling down to “League Management.”

Melissa brought the postcards LWV members and friends completed and addressed (mentioned in earlier article). National now has a full-time attorney. They are involved in redistricting cases. Local Leagues are urged to get involved with the **census**. The US Census Bureau is setting up “complete count committees” in local communities, to ensure an accurate count.

Just one more state is needed to pass the **ERA**. There is a Facebook group within League looking into that issue. LWVUS has approved creation of a task force to study a **National popular vote**. At Convention there was a vote against continued dependence on the Electoral College. Surveys recently distributed by National indicated legislative priorities of local leagues. Bonnie submitted our LWV KY survey. Melissa congratulated us on our priorities, which include a new **climate** position.

There are regular webinars to assist with **technology**. Harriette asked about making it easier to “share” National’s announcements as Facebook posts. Melissa said to follow National’s own Facebook page.

“The League Update” Is a national newsletter that goes to “leaders.” She urged us to check to be sure our “leaders” are getting it. Each local League must update its roster. The site also lists national staff contacts.

100th anniversary update. There are plans for a **coordinated day of action on Feb 20, 2020**. LWVUS hopes state and locals will take part. Specifics will be discussed at National Council in June.

They are developing a digital campaign to attract members and increase brand awareness. They expect to launch it on **Aug. 19** (for Nineteenth Amendment). Local Leagues can contribute to “A Turning Point Suffrage Memorial” to commemorate the tragic imprisonment of suffragists.



League of Women Voters of Kentucky

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Return Service Requested

A large, black and white starburst graphic with a white center and a black border. The starburst is composed of multiple points, creating a jagged, sunburst-like shape.

Check us out!
<http://lwvky.org/>
Twitter: @lwvky

Calendar

August 25: Women's Equality Day at Frazier Museum, Louisville

September 7: SKY LWV Board Meeting, 10:00 – 12:00, Place TBD

October 5: KY LWV Board Meeting by conference call at 10:00 a.m.

October 7: Last day to register to vote in the General Election

November 5: Election Day (state executive officials)

November 9: KY LWV Board meeting 10:00 – 12:00, Place TBD