2021-23 Programs Planning Session

LWVDC held its annual Program Planning session on Saturday, January 23, 2021. We have already committed to DC Statehood work and the People Powered Fair Maps™ (PPFM) program; at issue was determining which two additional projects should be our priority for the next two years.

- Anne Anderson and Maggie Dunn of the Full Rights Committee advised that the Committee has reapplied for a DC government grant to continue the work on DC Statehood, including updating the Statehood toolkit. The House Statehood Bill, HR51, was introduced with 202 co-sponsors, and the Senate Bill, S51, had 39. With the filibuster still in place, we will need to continue outreach.

- Peyton Ritter, intern for PPFM, reiterated that Year 2 of this program will be focused on post-Census redistricting. April 29th will be a “day of action”; watch our social media for ways to contribute. HR1, the gerrymandering Bill blocked by the Senate in 2019, has just been reintroduced in the House of Representatives, and needs our support.

- Paula Hirschoff discussed how the Climate & Environment Watch team continue to advocate for clean energy goals as part of the DC Climate Coalition.

- Bob Gump spoke on Voting Rights, noting that newly-elected DC Councilmember Christina Henderson has already said she plans to introduce a Ranked Choice Voting bill.

- Linda Softli introduced an upcoming program on Civics Education, focused on training 10th and 11th grade students to register voters, become educated on the Constitution and election issues, and conduct community outreach.

Using ranked choice voting, members selected Voting Rights Issues and Civics Education.

Reminder: our Annual Business Meeting will be coming up in April (Date TBD)!

Please Renew Your Membership!

The first 100 members who renew at the Sustaining, Centennial or Champion level by March 31, 2021 will get a delicious thank-you gift from Cabot Cheese. We are grateful to Cabot for supporting our efforts for voter engagement over the past couple of years and now they want to thank YOU for all you do for our League! We will be sending you a link to register for your gift so know that we are not sharing your contact information.

We also have a thank-you gift for those who renew by March 31st at the standard or student level. Renew today at www.lwvdc.org.
President’s Message

What a wild and crazy year this has been! Who would have imagined the nail-biter wait for election returns in November and again in January? Or the frightening, horrific storming of our Capitol? Or an historic second impeachment trial? Oh, the list goes on…

But here we are, like our foremothers, persevering to advocate for issues important to all of us. Times have changed, but not our mission to empower voters and defend democracy.

So, despite the roller-coaster ride we’ve been on both personally and as an organization, I believe we must celebrate our successes - high voter turnout; a growing membership in our League; a woman Vice President of the United States; and having our quest for Full Rights and Statehood be recognized by both chambers of Congress.

I volunteer for and financially support our League because it is premised on each of us having the same voice as the next with the goal to make sure that each and every eligible voter’s voice is heard loud and clear.

I value the League’s 101-year history of non-partisan status. Sure, sometimes it is a challenge but being non-partisan does not preclude us from taking a well-researched and carefully thought-out stand on issues.

I value my efforts with the League as we strive passionately to remedy the hurtful legacy of systematic racism, to become a membership that reflects the diversity and strength of our District, to become an organization ready to tackle our next 100 years.

I ask that you too renew your membership in our League. Dues support the work to fight voter suppression and gerrymandering as well as the award winning online nonpartisan voter guide Vote411. If you are able, please support our LWVDC with dues at the Sustaining, Centennial and Champion level to support our work for Full Rights for DC, Voter Education and Outreach, Climate Watch and more.

I look forward to volunteering with you! Hopefully that will soon be in person but in the meantime, stay well and strong - we have work to do.

Kathy

DC Elects Joe Biden 46th President

Pictured Above: The DC League was well-represented at the meeting of the DC Electoral College on December 14, 2020 at the Wilson Building. Barbara Helmick (above center), LWVDC member and active Statehood advocate as the Programs Director at DC Vote, served as one of DC’s three electors. Kathryn Ray (above right, commemorating suffragists on the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment) and Girl Scout Morgan Hubbard (above left) presented the award certificates to the three electors – all women this year for the first time ever! The other DC electors were front-line essential workers, including Safeway cashier Jacqueline Echavarria and nursing director Meedie Bardonille. Photo provided by Barbara Helmick.

2020-2021 Board of Trustees

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DC Voter Editor: Angela Parsons
Feel free to contact us at DCVoter@lwvdc.org
Youth Poster Contest

LWVDC held its first ever Youth Voter Education Poster Contest this fall and it was a great success! We asked students under 18 to create posters encouraging everyone to vote and to use VOTE411.org to learn more about the voting process. Submissions came from all over the DMV and from pre-K students to high school seniors. The results were selected by ranked choice voting from the LWVDC board. We’re so grateful to our young participants for their commitment to civic education! Go to https://www.lwvdc.org/poster-contest to see complete results.

~ Lee Palmer, 1st VP

Pictured Above: Third Place Winner Audrey T; below, Grade 8 Entry

Pictured Above: Second Place Winner Abby P.

Pictured above: Grade 4 Entry; below, Grade 9 Entry
If you want change, vote.

Pictured above: Grade 8 Entry; below, Grade 2 Entry

Pictured above: Pre-K Entry; below, Grade 3 Entry; Grade 12 Entry

Your country depends on you.
The League in Our Community

In October, a Capitol Hill Girl Scout troop participated in a League-led discussion of suffrage. The week before the meeting, LWVDC Trustee Kathryn Ray challenged the Scouts to use Vote411 to find out who is running for their ANC Commissioner seat, and to decide which At-Large SBOE candidate they would vote for if they were 18. At the meeting, DC’s political geography - Wards, ANCs, SMDs, and voting vocabulary, such as ‘down ballot’, At-Large, contested race, and incumbent, were discussed. The Scouts then shared the results of their candidate research. Insightfully, one said she eliminated a candidate because he told of problems but not solutions. Another felt she could only select a candidate whose children attend (or attended) DCPS. In the spirit of the League’s People Powered Fair Maps program, they also discussed the meaning of apportionment and how the census is used to draw boundaries, stressing the importance of being fair. It was a lively discussion!

Thank You to Our Members!

Pictured at Left: Kathy Chiron registering voters and providing Census info at the Fannie Lou Hamer GOTV Event at the Wharf on a cold October day. Photo by Karen Hibdon.

LWVUS Statement Calling for the Impeachment of U.S. President Donald Trump

On Thursday, January 7, 2021, the League of Women Voters – US board of directors met and voted unanimously to call for the immediate removal of Donald J. Trump from the office of the President of the United States of America via any legal means, including and in order of preference: impeachment with disqualification, the invocation of the 25th amendment, or resignation. The next day the board of directors issued the following statement:

“Donald Trump must be immediately removed as President of the United States of America and banned from running for federal office ever again.

“The sitting president was the instigator of Wednesday’s domestic terrorist attack on the U.S. Capitol that left five Americans dead and many more injured. He commanded an army of insurrectionists to forcefully overturn our free and fair elections in an effort to maintain power. These are the actions of a tyrannical despot, and they are in direct opposition to American democracy. President Trump continues to present a clear threat to national security as well as the safety and security of the American public.

“For violating his oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States, Donald Trump must immediately resign or be removed from office by any measure possible in accordance with the law. Removing President Trump from the office of the president and swearing in Vice President Mike Pence to fulfill the duration of this presidential term will ensure our Constitution is maintained and upheld.

“The League of Women Voters calls on both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate to immediately impeach President Trump with disqualification and remove him from office. Should Congress fail to impeach him, we call on Vice President Mike Pence and the Cabinet to invoke the 25th Amendment and remove President Trump from office immediately.”

LWVUS also issued a statement calling for the U.S. Senate to convict former President Trump following delivery of Articles of Impeachment by the U.S. House of Representatives on January 25, 2021.
In January LWVUS and LWV of Arizona filed independent amicus briefs in support of plaintiffs in the upcoming Supreme Court case *Brnovich v. DNC*, a consolidated set of cases that addresses the collection of ballots by third parties and counting provisional ballots case outside of a voter’s designated precinct.

At issue in *Brnovich v. DNC* is Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits voting practices and procedures that discriminate based on race, color, or membership in language minority groups. Plaintiffs argue both the practice of casting provisional ballots outside of one’s precinct and the practice of third-party ballot collection are used disproportionately by racial minority voters in Arizona, especially Latinx, Black, and Native voters.

*Brnovich v. DNC* is expected to be heard before the U.S. Supreme Court in March.