



Fairfax VOTER

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ELECTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES – PART II

Continuing our conversation from September about the importance of voter turnout in elections—especially in state and local elections—and of understanding the issues and what can happen when people do not vote, we explore in October how a relative handful of votes can alter policies in our state and communities, again proving the maxim: “all politics is local.”

Informed by League positions, we have identified some specific legislation from the 2017 General Assembly that our state League followed and its ultimate fate. We hope reading and discussing this two-part series will help to highlight the issues about which we should be engaging the candidates in the upcoming November 5th General Election and the importance of voting in ALL elections.

Calendar

- 1-31 U.S. Voter Education Month
- 1-31 Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- 2 *Fairfax VOTER* deadline
- 2 Televised Western Region House of Delegates candidate forum
- 3 Lafayette Park Condo community election
- 7 **LWVFA Briefing and At-Large meeting**
- 7 LWVNCA Metro Funding forum
- 9-12 LWVFA Unit meetings**
- 12 Eastern District House of Delegates candidate forum
- 12 Woodlake Towers community election
- 13 LWVNCA Board meeting & presidents’ luncheon
- 16 Voter registration deadline for the General Election
- 18 LWVFA Board meeting**
- 25 Sully District House of Delegates candidate
- 31 Last day to apply for absentee ballot by mail for the General Election

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Presidents' Message



We are excited about all of the League activities that are underway this month and that are planned for later this year. Most of these activities are guided by our 2017-2018 work plan that was written this summer based on a retreat of Board members and other League members.

We are focusing on four goals this year:

1. Brand & Messaging
2. Membership
3. Voter Education & Outreach
4. Action & Advocacy

Brand & Messaging Goal: *To advance and revitalize our brand and relevance as a leading nonpartisan organization actively engaged in promoting and providing opportunities for civil discourse.*

During this time of great political divisiveness and lack of civility, it is more important than ever to promote our nonpartisanship status and to be a facilitator for civil discourse. At the same time, it is essential to drive brand revitalization through enhanced use of social media, press coverage, our newly-redesigned Website, and high-profile forums. We hope you will attend our "Elections Have Consequences" forum on November 18 (see the flyer in this Voter) and proudly wear your League of Women Voters pin at all of our candidate forums, voter booths, and other events.

Membership Goal: *To engage new members in League activities, and to retain them through membership renewal.*

After the November 2016 presidential election, our membership grew from roughly 200 members to 375+ members. Given this membership surge, our high priority will be to retain these new members by involving them in meaningful activities. If you would like to attend new member orientation, please contact Judy Helein at judithhelein@aol.com. Also, we encourage all of our members to volunteer at many of this month's events!

Voter Education & Outreach Goal: *To increase the number of younger voters and those who are disadvantaged to vote in the state and local elections this year.*

Our mission is to get out the vote for this year's election for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, House of Delegates, and Attorney General. We are hard at work educating voters through our candidate forums, voter registration booths, vote411.org, and social media. We were fortunate to receive a generous grant to support this goal.

Action & Advocacy Goal: *To advance the League's issues through legislative and regulatory advocacy with policymakers and elected officials at the state and local levels.*

This goal is a high priority this year because our new members told us that they joined the League because they "just had to do something." At the same time, the national League directed us to focus more on action and not just studying issues. We listened! We hope you will attend our Metro "Fund It – Fix It Forum: A Call to Action" on Saturday, October 7, from 9:30 – 2:30 p.m. at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, 4301 Wilson Blvd, Arlington, VA 22203. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/metro-fund-it-fix-it-a-call-to-action-tickets-36901682927>.

Thank you for all that you do. We look forward to carrying out this work plan with you!

Wendy & Judy

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2017 - 2018

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or call 703-658-9150

LWVFA - Reaching the Underserved

By Sidney Johnson, Chair, Voter Service



REACHING OUT

LWVFA is gradually extending our reach to underserved members of our community. We don't have large numbers of new registrants to report, but we are establishing rapport with agencies in Fairfax County and beginning to learn how to approach their clients.

Sherri Gillam and Candy Butler now make regular visits to the Community Services Board headquarters in Merrifield. The agency regards helping the clients to vote as an important feature of their return to full participation in social and civic life after episodes of mental illness or addiction. Sherri and Candy are not only helping the clients register; they are also planning some educational sessions on what to expect when voting at a polling place or in-person absentee location. They will do role-playing to ease the clients' potential concerns about presenting a photo ID and marking a ballot.

Sherri and Candy have been invited to host a voter education table at the Wellness Conference to be held at the Government Center on October 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. It is too late for the voter registration deadline of October 16, but still a useful venue for Get Out the Vote. Please go to SignUpGenius to volunteer for a shift.

We now have an association with Cornerstones, the umbrella organization that used to be Reston Interfaith in the Reston-Herndon area. We can go in to the citizenship class with information about upcoming elections and understanding "the Virginia Way." We have scheduled a regular voter registration/education table at the Neighborhood Resource Center at the same time as the English as a Second Language classes on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Please go to SignUpGenius to volunteer.

Ann Parham is working with Karen Campblin of the NAACP to find an agency in the eastern part of the County with whom we can work on voter education and promoting civic engagement. The NAACP has also been trying to find contacts in that area. Ann and Karen have been invited to give presentations at community meetings at the Gum Springs Community Center. We hope that we can develop

some regular opportunities for reaching the population after the meetings.

In August we were invited by officials at the Adult Detention Center to register pre-trial inmates and persons incarcerated for misdemeanors. Captain Steve Elbert wanted the inmates to have the opportunity to vote in the School Board election. He arranged with Carol Bursik and Roger Soles to help one inmate register and apply for an absentee ballot at the same time. Inmates are required to use paper forms because they may use the computers only for research on their own legal needs. We hope to return to the ADC to help other inmates this fall.

We were invited because the Sheriff's Office has been pleased to see us at the ADC Resource Fairs. As Woody Allen once said, "80 percent of success is showing up." Carol and Roger are attending the fair on September 26, too.

Donna Blake has reached out by mail. This is the second year that she has sent paper letters to the activities directors of the senior residences in the County. She believes that people take more notice of letters than one item in a string of e-mails. She lets them know that they can invite Office of Elections staff to their facilities to help residents with registering and absentee voting. We haven't had any feedback yet, but last year Pat Ferguson and Brenda Cabrera, the Registrar in City of Fairfax, both told us that activities directors did not wait till the last minute to ask their staff to help their residents and thanked us for the letter.

We are beginning to see the benefit of looking around our neighborhoods to find the people who may be unconnected to the usual channels of political information and who do not see how civic activity is related to their lives. All of these activities rose out of the commitments of individual members. Please work with your units or with the Board to identify other opportunities.

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703-476-0581

**REACHING OUT TAKES
NOTHING MORE THAN
A SMILE**

Elections Have Consequences - Update

By Sherry Zachry, LWVFA Program Director

We hope you had a lively discussion about Part I of “Elections Have Consequences” in September and have the same for Part II in October (in this *VOTER*). Since the September article went to press, there have been some developments we want to share:

Timing elections to manipulate turnout: On August 29, there was a special election for an At-Large seat on the Fairfax County School Board. It had been reported that this election was set by the “powers that be” to minimize voter turnout, in hopes of electing a specific candidate. Guess what happened on the way to the polls? LWVFA held a candidates’ forum, in conjunction with the Fairfax County Council of PTAs (FCCPTA), on August 23rd that was standing room only! Voter turnout topped 10 percent County-wide, <https://beta.doodle.com/login?redirectUrl=%2Fdashboard> unusual for a special election. Yay for voters paying attention and going to the polls. Fairfax Alerts posted this: “Special election turnout is 10 percent; unofficial results can be found here. http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/elections/webreports/specsb_resu0817.pdf”

Importance of voting in state and local elections: On August 30, 2017, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* ran an editorial about the importance of voting in local and state elections, entitled: “Vote local, as if your life depended on it - because it just might.” Following is partial text from that article (*emphasis added*):

Aug 30, 2017

The past couple of weeks have provided vivid reminders about the importance of competent, engaged local government. In Houston, city and county officials appear to be working diligently —

and effectively — with state and federal agencies to protect lives and property in the wake of rain and flooding of biblical proportions. . . Local leaders seem to have been well-prepared (though the crisis is not over) for the natural disasters flowing from the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey — a stark contrast to the inept response after Katrina in New Orleans, where a virtual collapse in local government escalated into additional failures at state and federal levels. . . . By those standards, it’s becoming increasingly clear that Charlottesville’s elected and appointed leaders do not deserve a passing grade for their handling of the mayhem that resulted when several hundred white supremacists and neo-Nazis descended on the college town earlier this month.

Charlottesville’s pain illustrates the high cost of municipal failures, especially in times of crisis. ***Local government is closest to the people***, and its errors and accomplishments can have swift and powerful effects on citizens. We’ve believed (long before the 2016 election) that Americans have developed an unhealthy obsession with presidential politics, which has resulted in a ***tendency to forget the elections that may have the largest impact on their daily lives and livelihoods: the contests for mayors, city council members, county supervisors, sheriffs, school board members*** — whose importance is magnified when disaster strikes. Our advice is to pay attention, choose wisely, and stay informed about your community — and those who seek to lead it.

http://www.richmond.com/opinion/our-opinion/editorial-vote-local-as-if-your-life-depended-on-it/article_8cc85796-7ac7-5fd8-8761-5dd010087438.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=email&utm_campaign=user-share



League of Women Voters Condemns White Supremacists in Charlottesville

Washington, DC - League of Women Voters president Chris Carson issued the following statement following the recent horrific acts by white supremacists in Virginia.

“. . . the world watched in horror as white supremacists gathered in Charlottesville, Virginia. There is no place for hatred and violence in our democracy and all leaders

must condemn these acts of domestic terrorism. We must send a strong message that while the freedom of speech and the freedom of assembly are some of our most cherished rights and must be protected, those rights do not extend to what we witnessed yesterday. The League of Women Voters stands in solidarity with the victims of violence in Charlottesville and against white supremacism.”

Elections Have Consequences – Part II

By Sherry Zachry, LWVFA Program Director (With editing by Therese Martin and Karole McKalip)

This month we continue our conversation about the importance of voting in all elections, of understanding the issues and what can happen when people do not vote. We learned in September that holding a November General election every year in Virginia was intentional, and that among other things, can contribute to low voter turnout in local and statewide races held in non-presidential election years, to say nothing of being expensive. We learned that low turnout and **who** goes to the polls can create unforeseen results, even in presidential election years, and that those results impact the quality of life and laws in our communities and state. We also learned about the effects of gerrymandering, or partisan redistricting, on voter turnout, competitiveness and candidates who run to represent the district.

October's material explores how a handful of votes can alter the trajectory of various policies that are adopted by state and local jurisdictions. We'll look at specific legislation connected to League positions that delegates and senators introduced in the 2017 General Assembly and the process it followed; sometimes its ultimate fate was determined by one or two votes. Also informed by our League positions, we will point out some areas of concern that we should be discussing with the candidates running for Governor, Lt. Governor, Attorney General and House of Delegates.

The Difference a Few Votes Can Make!

According to the Department of Elections chart in September's *Fairfax VOTER* of statewide voter turnout, 43 percent (2,253,418) of over 5 million registered voters elected the Governor, Lt. Governor and Attorney General in 2013. Vote totals for the candidates, by office, were:

- For Governor, Terry McAuliffe received 1,069,789 votes (47.7%) and Ken Cuccinelli received 1,013,354 votes (42.5%) out of 2,241,071 votes cast for governor, with 7% of votes cast for other candidates.
- For Lt. Governor, Ralph Northam received 1,213,155 votes, with 980,257 votes going to Earl Walker Jackson, Sr. out of 2,201,637 of total votes cast for Lt. Governor (note drop off in total votes from governor's total).
- For Attorney General, Mark R. Herring received 1,103,777 votes, and Mark D. Obenshain received 1,103,612 votes out of 2,212,851 total votes cast for Attorney General. Both candidates received 49.9 percent of the total (with 0.2 percent going to other candidates). The difference separating the winner from the loser was 165 votes! (Note: Herring's lead had grown during the recount following the election, however the recount was dropped when Obenshain conceded.) The total of votes cast for Attorney General was more than for Lt. Governor but 28,220 less than for governor. Wonder what

difference those 28,220 votes would have made in the outcome? ¹

So, another thing to note about voting in gubernatorial election years is that when people do not cast a vote for every office on the ballot, the outcome can affect who gets to govern, appoint cabinet members and agency heads, and who adjudicates policies.

How did the election of 2013 change the course of events for the next four years? Let's look at one example, the election of Mark Herring as Attorney General who won by only 165 votes. The *New York Times* article, "Virginia's New Attorney General Opposes Ban on Gay Marriage" by Timothy Williams and Trip Gabriel, published January 23, 2014, says it all:

Asserting that Virginia had too often been on the "wrong side" of justice on civil rights matters, the state attorney general asked a federal court on Thursday to invalidate the state's ban on same-sex marriage, calling the law unconstitutional and oppressive.

The move by the attorney general, Mark R. Herring, a Democrat who took office this month, was the first indication of how consequential last November's elections in Virginia, in which Democrats won all three top elected positions from Republicans, may turn out to be. Mr. Herring, a former state senator, narrowly defeated Mark Obenshain, a Republican state senator.

The decision to drop support for the gay marriage ban was an abrupt shift from the positions taken in the past by the state's socially conservative elected officials, and put Virginia on a path to be the first Southern state to allow same-sex marriage. Republican officials

swiftly denounced the decision, calling for Mr. Herring's resignation. ²

From that point, many legislative and judicial decisions took a different path from the preceding four years. Another point of great concern to the League is and has been, in the area of elections and voting legislation and implementation. The appointment and veto power of the governor have prevented the adoption of new voting restrictions under the current administration and have allowed the least restrictive implementation of laws enacted by the previous administration—photo ID being an excellent example.

As we will see when examining specific legislation, the Governor has used his veto power frequently to stop legislation that he deemed not appropriate for Virginia. In some cases, one or two votes would have overridden that veto and the legislation could have become law (if both Houses had ultimately overridden the veto). That is another example of how one or two votes can make a difference.

Using League Positions to Support or Oppose Legislation

As you know, the League (at all levels: national, state, regional and local) uses a process of study and consensus on selected governmental functions to arrive at a statement of belief about the topic which is called a “position.” When we use the phrase “influence public policy through education and advocacy,” we mean that League advocates on issues on which we have a position—advocacy can be educating the public (and elected officials) about the issue or lobbying in support of or opposition to the issue.

The official lobbying (such as letters to the editor, testifying at public hearings or in legislative committee meetings) in the name of the League of Women Voters is done ONLY by the president or her designee. However, when members and friends are informed about the issue and asked to “take action” (contact your elected official) through an Action Alert or some form of advisory, they always take such action as an individual—an individual who has been educated about the issue by the League’s position.

In this article, we are focusing on Virginia’s General Assembly session of 2017 with respect to legislation that relates primarily to the LWVUS (national) and LWV-VA (state) positions. Sometimes, a regional position (LWVNCA) is relevant also. LWV-VA monitors legislation connected to League positions throughout the General Assembly session, and often the LWV-VA legislative coordinator or president speak to legislators, at committee and subcommittee hearings about issues of League concern.

(The positions-in-brief of the LWVUS and LWV-VA are furnished in Addendum A which is posted on the LWVFA website, www.lwv-fairfax.org, along with the October 2017 Fairfax VOTER that contains this article—see October Unit Discussion Groups.)

Setting Legislative Priorities and Following Legislation

Each year the LWV-VA sets out which legislation we expect to focus on in the upcoming General Assembly session (based on League positions). These priorities are approved by the LWV-VA board (upon recommendation of the Legislative Coordinator) in December most legislation will have been filed.

The LWV-VA List of Legislative Priorities for the 2017 Session included positions on election laws, voting rights and voter registration, gun control and firearms safety, adult justice, offender re-entry, immigration, human trafficking, fracking, redistricting and reapportionment, mental health, health care, meeting basic human needs, transparency in government (citizens’ right to know / participate), restoring civil rights of felons, equality of opportunity and Equal Rights Amendment. Specific bills about these issues were followed by LWV-VA, and Action Alerts urging support or opposition were sent out by LWV-VA as the legislation progressed through the General Assembly. Below, we break out a few of the bills and explain what happened to them. *(The List of LWV-VA Legislative Priorities for 2017 is included in Appendix B and posted on the LWVFA website, as noted above. The specific positions relating to LWV-VA’s legislative priorities are noted on the list.)*

A Few Facts About the Virginia General Assembly

Recognized as the oldest continuously operating legislative body in the U.S., the Virginia General Assembly meets in two-year segments. The first year (which follows the election of the entire House of Delegates the previous November), the body meets for 60 days—the long session; the second year, it usually meets for 45 days—short session. (Although the Virginia Constitution provides that the short session be limited to 30 days, for the past decade or more, the short session has been extended to 45 days, as is allowed in the Constitution.)

The 2017 session was the second year of the 2016-2017 biennium. More than 2,950 pieces of legislation were introduced; of that total, 836 became law. Of the 2,950 pieces of legislation, 242 bills were carried over from the 2016 session; once a bill is defeated in the 2nd year of the session, it must be re-introduced in a new biennium to be considered again. The governor vetoed 49 bills; none of his

2017 vetoes were overridden.³

As you can see only a little over one third of the legislation introduced became law; a lot of legislation never gets a hearing or a vote because it “dies” in the subcommittees to which it was assigned (mostly in House subcommittees). Members of the volunteer group known as Transparency Virginia (TVa) met on a regular basis during the 2017 legislative session and monitored the three areas of transparency they have followed since the group’s formation in 2015. 1) TVa monitors the notice that is given for subcommittee and committee meetings so that citizens and advocates may observe or participate in them; 2) TVa believes that all bills should receive consideration by a committee or subcommittee; 3) TVa believes that all votes on bills should be recorded by name, not just by an up or down voice vote.

In its April 2017 Annual Report, Transparency Virginia reported, “**87.9 percent** of the bills defeated in the House of Delegates were dispensed **by a voice vote** [in subcommittees] without recording who voted for or against the bill. Only **12.1 percent** of the 636 bills defeated **received a roll-call vote.**” Other findings cited:

- 85% of the bills defeated or left in the **Senate received recorded votes**. All but 13 of the bills that died without a recorded vote were defeated by the Senate Rules Committee.
- Fewer House bills died on unrecorded votes in 2017 than in 2016, but the number is greater than in 2015. More Senate bills died on unrecorded votes than in the previous two years.
- Eighty-five of 140 legislators signed a letter to the clerks of the House and Senate asking that electronic voting be built into all committee and subcommittee rooms in the new General Assembly Building, and if possible, into the Pocahontas Building.⁴

This lack of transparency was decried in a May 9, 2017, editorial by the *Virginian-Pilot online* titled “Seeking more openness in Richmond,” which pointed out that legislators use this tactic to get rid of controversial bills without accountability, saying in part:

MAKING A CASE for openness to the Virginia General Assembly is an often thankless and frustrating endeavor. Lawmakers, particularly those who hold leadership posts, consistently demonstrate a penchant for secrecy and a disdain for accountability. They adhere to that despite knowing that the public would be better informed

*were they to more fully embrace transparency in state government. Thus, bills die in voice votes so there are no fingerprints when controversial measures are quietly snuffed out. Others are simply tabled, never even earning the privilege of a voice vote, much less a robust debate.*⁵

Next, we will see how some legislation that the League cares about has repeatedly received this treatment, creating frustration for proponents of legislation such as “No-Excuse Absentee Voting” and various bills to reform the redistricting process.

What Happened to These Bills?

Of all the 2017 legislation that LWV-VA tracked and about which various Action Alerts were sent to our members and friends, we have chosen the following to demonstrate how some legislation of concern to the League (both in support and opposition) fared in the 2017 General Assembly.

These bills were researched using the General Assembly LIS [Legislative Information System; LIS home <http://lis.virginia.gov/lis.htm> which is a searchable database of ALL legislation introduced in the Virginia General Assembly. Using the LIS format, first is Bill Number, Sponsor’s name, the “title” in bold, followed by a summary of the intent of the legislation. The timeline of progress is shown next, which gives the ultimate fate of the bill and at what point it failed or passed, including the actual vote, where possible, to show margin of passage or failure. Bills are grouped under League position headings shown in italics.

Positions: LWV-VA Government / Election Laws

LWVUS Representative Government / Voting Rights

HB 1428 – Hyland F. “Buddy” Fowler, Jr. - **Photo Identification would be required with the mailed request for an absentee ballot application.** Companion bill: **SB872]** (LEAGUE OPPOSED)

Summary: Requires any voter submitting an application for an absentee ballot by mail or by electronic or telephonic transmission to a facsimile device to submit with his application a copy of one of the forms of identification acceptable under current law. The bill exempts military and overseas voters and persons with a disability from this requirement. This bill is identical to **SB 872**.



Fate of Bill:

02/07/17 House: VOTE: PASSAGE (61-Y 35-N)
 02/17/17 Senate: Passed Senate (21-Y 19-N)
 02/21/17 House: Bill text as passed by the House and Senate (HB1428ER)
 02/21/17 House: Enrolled Bill communicated to Governor on 2/21/17
 03/03/17 Governor: Vetoed by Governor
 04/05/17 House: House sustained Governor's veto (*No vote recorded*)

Bill Failed**HB 1598 - Mark L. Cole - Voter registration; proof of citizenship required to register to vote in state and local elections. (LEAGUE OPPOSED)**

Summary: Requires persons applying to register to vote to provide proof of United States citizenship in a form enumerated in the bill. An applicant who does not provide such proof of citizenship shall be registered to vote in federal elections only. An applicant who does provide such proof of citizenship shall be registered to vote in federal, state, and local elections. The bill provides that any person who is registered in the Commonwealth on January 1, 2018, will be deemed to have provided proof of citizenship. The bill directs the general registrars to indicate on each registered voter's registration record whether such voter is registered to vote in federal, state, and local elections or in federal elections only.

Fate of Bill:

02/01/17 House: VOTE: PASSAGE (64-Y 33-N)
 02/20/17 Senate: Re-referred to Courts of Justice
 02/21/17 Senate: Left in Courts of Justice

Bill Failed**Positions: LWV-VA Government/ Elections Laws****SB 844 – Janet D. Howell - Absentee voting; no-excuse in-person available 21 days prior to election. (LEAGUE SUPPORTED)**

Summary: Allows for any registered voter to vote by absentee ballot in person in any election in which he is qualified to vote without providing a reason or making prior application for an absentee ballot. The bill makes absentee voting in person available beginning the twenty-first day prior to the election and ending at 5:00 p.m. on the Saturday immediately preceding the election. The bill retains the current provisions for voting an absentee ballot by mail, including the application requirement and the list of statutory reasons.

Fate of Bill:

01/31/17 Senate: Incorporates SB979 (Dance)
 01/31/17 Senate: Incorporates SB1002 (Ebbin)
 01/31/17 Senate: Incorporates SB1295 (Vogel)
 01/31/17 Senate: Failed to report (defeated) in Privileges and Elections (7-Y 7-N)

Bill Failed**SB 1581 – Mark J. Peake - Voter registration; verification of social security numbers. (LEAGUE OPPOSED)**

Summary: Requires the general registrars to verify that the name, date of birth, and social security number provided by an applicant on the voter registration application match the information on file with the Social Security Administration or other database approved by the State Board before registering such applicant. The bill also requires the general registrars to verify annually that the name, date of birth, and social security number in the registration record of each registered voter in the registrar's jurisdiction match the information on file with the Social Security Administration or other database approved by the State Board. The State Board is authorized to approve the use of any government database to the extent required to enable each general registrar to carry out the provisions of this section and to promulgate rules for the use of such database. The Department of Elections is required to provide access to the general registrars to the Social Security Administration database and any other database approved by the State Board. The Department of Elections is further required to enter into any agreement with any federal or state agency in order to facilitate such access.

Fate of Bill:

02/06/17 Senate: Read third time and passed Senate (21-Y 19-N)
 02/22/17 House: VOTE: PASSAGE (65-Y 34-N)
 03/07/17 Senate: Bill text as passed Senate and House (SB1581ER)
 03/07/17 House: Signed by Speaker
 03/10/17 Senate: Signed by President
 03/13/17 Senate: Enrolled Bill Communicated to Governor on 3/13/17
 03/13/17 Governor: Governor's Action Deadline Midnight, March 27, 2017
 03/20/17 Governor: Vetoed by Governor
 04/05/17 Senate: Senate sustained Governor's veto (20-Y 20-N)
 04/05/17 Senate: Requires 27 affirmative votes to override veto
 04/05/17 Senate: Reconsideration of Governor's veto agreed to (40-Y 0-N)
 04/05/17 Senate: Senate sustained Governor's veto (21-Y

19-N)

04/05/17 Senate: Requires 27 affirmative votes to override veto

Bill Failed

Positions: LWVUS Social Policy/ Immigration



HB2000 - Charles D. Poindexter- **Sanctuary policies prohibited (LEAGUE OPPOSED)**

Summary: Provides that no locality shall adopt

any ordinance, procedure, or policy that restricts the enforcement of federal immigration laws

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE (Proposed by the House Committee for Courts of Justice on February 3, 2017)

No locality shall adopt any ordinance, procedure, or policy that restricts the enforcement of federal immigration laws to less than the full extent permitted by federal law.

Fate of Bill:

02/22/17 Senate: Defeated by Senate (20-Y 20-N)

02/22/17 Senate: Reconsideration of defeated action agreed to by Senate (40-Y 0-N)

02/22/17 Senate: Passed Senate with amendment (21-Y 19-N)

02/23/17 House: Senate amendment agreed to by House (65-Y 34-N)

02/23/17 House: VOTE: ADOPTION (65-Y 34-N)

03/07/17 House: Signed by Speaker

03/10/17 Senate: Signed by President

03/13/17 House: Enrolled Bill communicated to Governor on 3/13/17

03/13/17 Governor: Governor’s Action Deadline Midnight, March 27, 2017

03/27/17 Governor: Vetoed by Governor

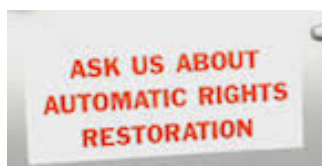
04/05/17 House: VOTE: OVERRIDE GOVERNOR’S VETO (65-Y 34-N)

04/05/17 House: (67 affirmative votes required to override)

Bill failed

Positions: LWV-VA Social Policy/ Restoration of Civil Rights For Felons

SJ 253 - Rosalyn R. Dance - **Constitutional amendment (first resolution); qualifications of voters and executive clemency (LEAGUE SUPPORTED)**



Summary: Authorizes the General Assembly to provide

by law for the automatic restoration of civil rights for persons convicted of nonviolent felonies who have completed service of their sentences. The amendment retains the Governor’s authority to restore the civil rights of persons convicted of violent felonies who have completed service of their sentences.

Fate of Bill:

01/03/17 Senate: Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

01/20/17 Senate: Assigned to P&E sub: Constitutional Amendments

01/31/17 Senate: Failed to report (defeated) in Privileges and Elections (7-Y 7-N)

Bill failed

Positions: LWV-VA Government/ Redistricting; LWVUS Representative Government/ Redistricting

SJ 290 - Howell - **Constitutional Amendment; Redistricting reform:** The criteria for electoral districts should say, “No electoral district shall be drawn for the purpose of favoring or disfavoring any political party, incumbent legislator or member of Congress, or other individual or entity.” **(LEAGUE SUPPORTED)**



Fate of Bill

02/06/17 Senate: Read third time and agreed to by Senate (31-Y 9-N)

02/14/17 House: Subcommittee recommends passing by indefinitely (5-Y 2-N)

02/17/17 House: Passed by indefinitely in Privileges and Elections (14-Y 7-N)

Bill Failed

Positions: LWVUS Social Policy/ Gun Control;

LWV-VA Firearms Safety Resolution



SB1362 - Dick Black - **Carrying concealed weapons; exemption for nonduty status military personnel. (LEAGUE OPPOSED)**

Summary: Provides that a member of the Virginia National Guard, Armed Forces of the United States, or Armed Forces Reserves of the United States in a nonduty status may carry a concealed weapon wherever such member may travel in the Commonwealth, provided that such member is carrying his valid military

identification card. [Identical **SB1297**-Vogel was incorporated]

Fate of Bill

01/19/17 Senate: Incorporates SB1297 (Vogel)

01/23/17 Senate: Engrossed by Senate - committee substitute SB1362S1

01/24/17 Senate: Passed Senate (22-Y 18-N)

02/16/17 House: Subcommittee recommends reporting with amendment (4-Y 0-N)

02/17/17 House: Reported from Militia, Police and Public Safety with amendment (16-Y 6-N)

02/22/17 House: Passed House with amendments (67-Y 32-N)

02/22/17 House: VOTE: PASSAGE (67-Y 32-N)

02/23/17 Senate: House amendments agreed to by Senate (22-Y 17-N)

03/13/17 Senate: Enrolled Bill Communicated to Governor on 3/13/17

03/24/17 Governor: Vetoed by Governor

04/05/17 Senate: Senate sustained Governor's veto (20-Y 20-N)

04/05/17 Senate: Requires 27 affirmative votes to override veto

04/05/17 Senate: Reconsideration of Governor's veto agreed to (40-Y 0-N)

04/05/17 Senate: Senate sustained Governor's veto (21-Y 19-N)

04/05/17 Senate: Requires 27 affirmative votes to override veto

Bill Failed

Note: LWV-VA Gun Safety Task Force Chair (and LWVFA member) Ruth Hoffman has prepared additional information on this legislation and other firearms safety legislation which will be available as a Resource for discussion meetings.

Some Observations

Of legislation followed by the League as highlighted in this article, we had several successes in that the bills we OPPOSED failed, albeit some because of the governor's veto—maybe a bit too close to passing:

- **HB 1428** – Hyland F. “Buddy” Fowler, Jr. - Photo Identification would be required with the mailed request for an absentee ballot application. [Companion bill: SB872]
- **HB 1598** - Mark L. Cole - Voter registration; proof of citizenship required to register to vote in state and local elections
- **HB2000** - Charles D. Poindexter- Sanctuary policies prohibited
- **SB1362** - Dick Black - Carrying concealed weapons; exemption for nonduty status military personnel.

Conversely, some we SUPPORTED also failed—and did not get very far in the process:

- **SJ 253** - Rosalyn R. Dance - Constitutional amendment (first resolution); qualifications of voters and executive clemency [restoration of civil rights of felons]
- **SJ 290** - Janet D. Howell - Constitutional Amendment; Redistricting reform
- **SB 844** – Janet D. Howell - Absentee voting; no-excuse in-person available 21 days prior to election.

Two Bills that we SUPPORTED and were ENACTED INTO LAW:

- **HB2217** - David J. Toscano- Addresses confidentiality program; victims of sexual violence and human trafficking
- **HB1912** - Joseph R. Yost - Absentee voting; eligibility of persons granted protective order (effective July 1, 2017). The enactment of this bill brings the total number of valid reasons for voting absentee to 20.

Too Close for Comfort

In our May 2017 article on the Dillon Rule, we talked about pre-emption—the state taking back authority previously granted to local jurisdictions. **HB2000**, which intended to prohibit “sanctuary cities” in the state, is a prime example of pre-emption where the state takes away, or limits, autonomy previously granted to localities. Note the narrow margin by which the governor's veto was sustained in the House (65-34) —**two more votes** would have overridden his veto—and if the Senate had also voted to override (by a 27-13 vote—both houses must override), a local jurisdiction's right to declare itself a “sanctuary city” would have been pre-empted, or taken away, by the state. That is uncomfortably close in our opinion and reminds us that we must be vigilant and learn about the views of the candidates who want to represent us.

What Do We Do Now?

Circling back to our September article on the effects of low voter turnout, several suggestions for increasing voter turnout are mentioned in Tina Rosenberg's June 13, 2017, opinion article in the *New York Times*. In her article, “Increasing Voter Turnout for 2018 and Beyond,” among other things, she offered the following “fixes”:

- Recruit better candidates to inspire voters and create competitive races.
- Reach out to high schools to register students before their 18th birthday and before they move on to college or other endeavors.

- Allow same day (Election Day) voter registration.
- Provide mail-in ballots (now in three states: Oregon, Washington and Colorado).
- Establish Automatic Voter Registration (AVR).⁶

Automatic Voter Registration (AVR) not only simplifies the voting registration process; it can increase voter turnout. According to Rosenberg, Oregon—the first state to institute AVR—had the largest increase in turnout of any state between 2012 and 2016.

As of August 2017, the Brennan Center reports that 10 states and the District of Columbia have approved automatic voter registration and that 32 states have introduced automatic registration proposals this year (2017). The states that have approved AVR are: Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Georgia, Illinois, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and West Virginia.

Brennan explains AVR this way:

Automatic voter registration makes two transformative, yet simple, changes to voter registration: Eligible citizens who interact with government agencies are registered to vote unless they decline, and agencies transfer voter registration information electronically to election officials. These two changes create a seamless process that is more convenient and less error-prone for both voters and government officials. This policy boosts registration rates, cleans up the rolls, makes voting more convenient, and reduces the potential for voter fraud, all while lowering costs.⁷

The Brennan article mentioned Virginia is one of the 32 states that has introduced legislation to make automatic voter registration the de facto method, whereby people are registered to vote unless they “opt out”—rather than having to “opt in” to be registered as has been the previous process.

On September 27, 2016 (National Voter Registration Day), Governor McAuliffe initiated the “Governor’s Challenge in High School Voter Registration” and continued the Challenge to the last week of April 2017 when he proclaimed April 23-29, 2017 as “Virginia High School Student Voter Registration Week.” The LWV-VA is one of the partnering organizations, with LWVFA listed among six other local Leagues in Virginia that participated in the Challenge. LWVFA continues to make engaging high school students in the area a top priority.

Concluding Thoughts

Although the Commonwealth may take a while to institute “mail-in voting”—or never will—it has improved the overall electoral process in many ways since the early 20th century, notwithstanding its voter ID laws. We hope further enhancements such as no-excuse, in-person absentee voting, automatic voter registration, and a fairer redistricting process will have a positive effect on voter turnout.

Changing the redistricting process in Virginia to remove partisan considerations by having an independent body, not the legislators, draw the lines should also increase voter participation. If a bipartisan redistricting commission composed of people (not elected officials) representing geographic distribution and demographic diversity draws compact districts according to natural geographic and jurisdictional boundaries and communities of interest without regard to the political leanings of its residents, we can achieve districts that promote competitiveness of quality candidates and overall voter enthusiasm, where “voters choose the politician, rather than having the politician choose the voters.”

We believe the League’s priorities toward expanding the vote are well placed and are encouraged that LWV-VA and LWVFA have embraced those goals, along with continued emphasis on a better redistricting process. As LWVFA continues to reach out to under-served populations, high schoolers and to the community at large, it promotes the value of registering to vote and the importance of exercising that privilege at all opportunities. Educating the voter about how to engage the candidates, the importance of voting in local, state and primary elections and why that matters needs to become the primary focus of our Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) efforts.

Sources:

1. Virginia Department of Elections, <http://historical.elections.virginia.gov/>
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<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/24/us/new-virginia-attorney-general-drops-defense-of-gay-marriage-ban.html>
3. 2017 General Assembly Session Statistics, <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=171&typ=lnk&val=08>
4. Transparency Virginia, 2017 Annual Report, <https://transparencyvirginia.wordpress.com/2017/03/31/transparency-virginias-2017-annual-report-on-legislative-transparency/>
5. “Seeking more openness in Richmond,” *Virginian-Pilot online* Editorial. May 9, 2017.
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seeking-more-openness-in-richmond/article_2a30872f-cb14-5ebf-9c7c-9ffe9f229bdf.html

6. Rosenberg, Tina, "Increasing Voter Turnout for 2018 and Beyond," *New York Times*, June 13, 2017
https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/13/opinion/increasing-voter-turnout-2018.html?emc=edit_tnt_20170617&eml_thmb=1&nid=3728989&ntemail0=y
7. Brennan Center for Justice, <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/automatic-voter-registration>

2017 House of Delegate Candidate Forums

There are only a few more Candidate Forums planned for the House of Delegates, but we still need your help. Please sign up to volunteer on our website: <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/>

We have divided Fairfax County into three regions:

- Eastern Region Delegate Districts: 38, 39, 43, 44, 45, 49
- Central Region Delegate Districts: 35, 37, 41, 42, 53
- Western Region Delegate Districts: 34, 36, 40, 48, 67, 86

To find your district: <http://www.elections.virginia.gov/citizen-portal/index.html>

Fall 2017 House of Delegates Candidate Forum Schedule

- Central Region (In Person): Thursday, September 28
- Western Region (Televised): Monday, October 2
- Eastern Region (In Person): Thursday, October 12
- Sully District (In Person): Wednesday, October 25

Help Wanted to Assemble "Facts for Voters!"

Would you like to help with the 2018 edition of "Facts for Voters?" We have a need for a few more "editors". This means taking a page, checking all the information, updating and editing it, which requires phone calls and emails.

(Facts, Cont'd on Page 5, Column 1)

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have anything to add about the importance of voting in local and state elections?
2. Which one or two legislative issues are you most interested in or concerned about? On the local level? On the state level?
3. What other General Assembly legislation do you want to know about, if any?
4. What else do you want to ask the candidates in November's election?
5. What can you do to encourage people to vote in ALL elections?

Fairfax City Unit Hosts Successful Candidate Forum

The Fairfax City Unit of the LWVFA hosted a Special Election Candidate Forum for the open Fairfax City Council Seat on August 30. The forum was standing room only, with over 115 in attendance. Fairfax City residents got to learn more about the two candidates, Karen Habitzreuther and Jennifer Passey running in the Special Election that will be held on September 12, to fill the open City Council seat. The City of Fairfax's government access television station, Cityscreen-12, also filmed the forum for replay on Verizon FIOS and Cox Channel 12. The forum was also available for viewing on the City of Fairfax website.

To watch the forum, go to candidate forum on the Fairfax City website: http://fairfax.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?view_id=11&clip_id=1801



Kathleen Pablo is shown moderating the forum.



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

presents

After Action Analysis: Impact of the Virginia Election

Saturday, November 18, 2017 1 - 4 p.m.
Virginia International University
4401 Village Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030



Stephen Farnsworth, Ph.D.

Professor, Political Science and International Affairs
Director, Center for Leadership and Media Studies,
University of Mary Washington

Supervisor Jeff McKay

Lee District Supervisor
Chair, County Board’s Budget Committee, Legislative Committee
& Northern Virginia Transportation Commission



Register here: <https://vaelectionimpact.eventbrite.com>

Free; donations appreciated

Remember: Elections Have Consequences



(Facts, Cont’d from Page EF-8)

Timeline: We begin the process after the November election results are certified. (Election results do not affect all pages, but many do. You can start earlier!) All edits are due before Christmas so the flyer can go to our designer and then to the printer to be ready for the General Assembly session. Being available for this short timeline is essential.

Our goal is always to have “Facts” to hand out to legislators, staff, lobbyists and interested parties on day of the first

League Women’s Round Table meeting. This year the date is January 17. Hope all can help! Let me know. I will contact you. Maggi mkluca8620@gmail.com, 703-978-4916



Environmental Outlook . . .

GMU's Potomac Science Center Opens

By Elizabeth Lonoff

Along with its Center for Geospatial Intelligence, GMU's Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center (PEREC) has moved to the new Potomac Science Center on Belmont Bay. This location is special - a freshwater tidal basin with unique flora and fauna at the juncture of the Occoquan and Potomac Rivers, an ecosystem PEREC has studied for more than 30 years. Each Center has an international research reputation; together they examine the environment and our impact on the environment.

PEREC focuses on Potomac River restoration and sustainability practices to keep the local ecosystem healthy. You can read the blog of five undergrads with scholarships who are working on PEREC projects at <https://cos.gmu.edu/perec/category/blog/#.WaXfiNGQyUk>. PEREC's research leads to outstanding watershed management and environmental science field programs for K-12 students, reaching more than 80,000 middle-school students in the Prince William County and Fairfax County public schools since 2009. PEREC also has been involved with assessing and addressing GMU's and Fairfax County's carbon footprints.

The ecological recovery of Gunston Cove is a continuing PEREC success story. In 1984, amid rapid development in Fairfax County, PEREC began monitoring to identify specific effects of the upriver Noman M. Cole, Jr., Pollution Control Plant's effluent on local biology and water chemistry enroute to the Chesapeake Bay. Gunston Cove didn't have any submersed aquatic vegetation. Reducing phosphorus, nitrogen, chlorine, and ammonia loads from this wastewater treatment plant has resulted in widespread vegetation coverage, filtering sediment and algal-bloom-triggering nutrients from the water column and providing necessary shelter for fish and invertebrates. The greater diversity of fish includes a substantial recovery in spawning river herring, now supported by fishing limits. The benthic community, including native mussels, shows signs of rejuvenation. Continuing study might reveal subtle signs of climate change beyond the slight water temperature rise since 2000.

Each year, the same stations at Gunston Cove are tested, and recommendations to meet future needs are made to Fairfax County. The extensive executive summary of the latest



Eutrophication recovery: Over the past three decades, removing phosphorus from waste-water has increased water clarity in Gunston Cove, enabling submersed aquatic vegetation and the fish and invertebrates it supports to return.

report is available at <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dpwes/wastewater/gunston-cove.pdf>. GMU's long-term partnership with Fairfax County is summarized in a three-minute video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5AQixS_vvg.

You can walk the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail directly to this new facility and visit the public display area/exhibit space and large multipurpose meeting room available to the community.

Domestic Violence Hotline

(703) 360 7273

Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

Topic: Elections Have Consequences - Part II

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the “At Large Meeting” and briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of September 1, 2017, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

Saturday, Oct. 7

At-Large Unit and Briefing

League Conference Room
Packard Center
4026 Hummer Road
Annandale, 22003
Contact: Sherry, 703-730-8118

Monday, Oct. 9

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

Hunters Crossing Classroom
Spring Village Drive
Springfield, 22150
Contact: Edith, 703-644-3970 or
Gloria, 703-852-5113

Tuesday, Oct. 10

7:45 p.m. Mount Vernon

Evening (MVE)
Paul Spring Retirement
Community - Mt. Vernon Room
7116 Fort Hunt Road
Alexandria, 22307
Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820

Wednesday, Oct. 11

9:30 a.m. McLean Day (McL)

StarNut Café
1445 Laughlin Ave.
McLean, 22101
Contact: Anjali, 703-509-5518 or

Sheena, 703-481-0933

9:45 a.m. Mount Vernon Day (MVD)

Mt. Vernon Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria, 22306
Contact: Gail, 703-360-6561 or
Diana, 703-704-5325

10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)

8739 Cuttermill Place
Springfield 22153
Contact: Kathleen, 703-644-1555
or Sherry, 703-730-8118

7:15 p.m. Fairfax City Evening (FCE)

The Green Acres Center-Rm 112
4401 Sideburn Road
Fairfax, 22030
Contact: Elizabeth and Amy,
Fairfaxcityunit@lwv-fairfax.org

7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE)

Hunter Mill District Community
Room
North County Government Center
1801 Cameron Glen Drive
Reston 20190

Contact: Rona, 703-476-5758 or
Rachel, 831-240-6611

Thursday, Oct. 12

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

11908 Paradise Lane
Herndon, 20171
Contact: Charleen, 703-620-3593

9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

LWVFA Conference Room,
Packard Center
4026 Hummer Road
Annandale, 22003
Contact: Marge, 703-451-0589

10 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD)

Sully Government Center
4900 Stonecroft Blvd.
Chantilly, 20151
Contact: Leslie, **571-213-6384**

1:30 p.m. Fairfax/Vienna (FX-V)

Oakton Regional Library Room 1
10304 Lynnhaven Pl.
Oakton, 22124
Contact: Bob, 563-299-5316
VoterRegistration@lwv-fairfax.org

November Meeting: General Meeting -- No Unit Meetings



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403
 703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

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 October, 2017

Wendy Fox-Grage, Co-President
 Judy Helein, Co-President
 Ron Page, Editor
 Liz Brooke, Content Editor

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person at least 16 years old, male or female, may become a member.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office, or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

LWVFA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership Dues: Individual \$65 _____ Household \$90 (2 persons, 1 Voter) _____ Student \$32.50 _____
 Dues year is July 1 – June 30 (A subsidy fund is available; check here _____ and include whatever amount you can afford.)
 Membership Status: New _____ Renewing _____ Reinstatement _____ Donation _____
 (Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check or PayPal Payment to “LWVFA Ed Fund.”)

(Please print clearly)

Name _____ Unit (if renewing) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Phone (H) _____ (M) _____ E-Mail _____

Please make checks payable to “LWVFA” and mail to: **LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale VA 22003-2403**
 OR Join Online at: www.LWV-Fairfax.org/join.html.

- I am interested in becoming involved in (please indicate by circling the appropriate bullet(s)):
- **Providing organizational support** (graphics design, website development/maintenance, fundraising/ grant writing).
 - **Voter Services** (e.g., voter registration drives, candidate forums, developing Voters’ Guides).
 - **Researching/writing about issues in which LWVFA has an interest** (e.g., environment, firearms safety, mental health, schools, domestic violence, criminal justice; or, chairing an LWVFA study committee on voter turnout or human trafficking).
 - **Representing the League in governmental fora** (e.g., serving as LWVFA representative on Fairfax County citizens’ committees and agencies, such as affordable housing, Fairfax County Public Schools).
 - **Other** _____