

LWV OF KENTUCKY

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

Local League

Activities

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The Kentucky Voter

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 2

DECEMBER 2019



KY LWV awarded \$2,000 redistricting grant

The League of Women Voters of Kentucky has been awarded a \$2,000 grant from the League of Women Voters of the United States to lead a campaign to promote fair and representative legislative districts in Kentucky.

Kentucky's legislature is charged with drawing new legislative maps after each census. These maps group voters into districts that elect representatives in the Kentucky House, Kentucky Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives. The new League initiative will focus on ensuring that Kentucky redistricting is fair and on educating voters statewide about fair redistricting as we approach the 2020 Census.

"Democracy flourishes when citizens are active and informed participants in the democratic process," explains Kentucky League president Fran Wagner. "Our redistricting work will seek strong citizen input in designing new districts through a collaborative, transparent process. We will also advocate for fair and competitive districts, so that voters choose their representatives rather than politicians choosing their voters through gerrymandering."

The grant from the national League will support partnership activities, materials for local forums and presentations, and a Day of Action held in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters. (February 13) Related work will happen across the country as League chapters join in a shared "People-Powered Fair Maps" campaign. (See more on page 6.)



Voting Rights Restored to 140,000

On Dec. 12, Governor Andy Beshear kept a campaign promise and signed an executive order restoring voting rights to persons with nonviolent felony convictions who have fully completed their sentences. It is estimated this will affect 140,000 citizens. Two persons whose rights will be restored, spoke at the event. They brought their children, saying they wanted them to appreciate the right to vote.

The Kentucky League has advocated for restoring voting rights for many years and sees this is a major step forward. Next steps are to learn about the process for helping these citizens register to vote and continue to advocate for a constitutional amendment to secure restoration of voting rights.



President's Message

BY FRAN WAGNER



Photo by Jenn Jackson

President
Fran Wagner

As a new year is fast approaching filled with challenges and opportunities, let's take a moment to reflect on our achievements in 2019. I can't remember a League year more filled with accomplishments thanks to the expertise and hard work of so many.

Some of the year's highlights to celebrate –

For the People Act: With support from a \$7,370 grant from the LWVUS, over 400 volunteers wrote post cards and lobbied our Senators to allow a vote on the For the People Act (HR 1), and editorial and opinion pieces were published in the *Courier Journal* and other papers.

Educating Voters: Debate teams in Louisville and Lexington worked with TV and university partners to stage primary and general election debates for Governor, Secretary of State and Attorney General. Our volunteers also set up VOTE411 providing voter information and policy platforms provided by the candidates.

Educating ourselves: League leaders who took time from busy schedules to attend conferences, gained information to benefit all our work: LWVUS Council in D.C. in June; the National Conference of State Legislators in Columbus, OH and the LWVUS Fair Maps Conference in D.C. both in October.

Communications: A new communications committee is pulling us (some of us kicking and screaming) into the 21st century. It's imperative for the League's future that we reach out to a larger and more diverse population while also doing a better job of communicating with our own members.

Public Relations: Louisville and Lexington League members volunteered for a KET taping for its fund raising appeal in which the League was recognized during the program. In addition to supporting KET, it was an opportunity to expose the League to state-wide viewers.

Redistricting: A \$2,000 grant to the LWVKY from the LWVUS is supporting our redistricting committee to plan a Fair Maps Campaign that will be a major focus of 2020 activity.

Speaking out on elections: Our widely circulated editorial in the *Courier-Journal* focused on strengthening Kentucky's election process and contended that our problem is not fraud but lack of participation.

So, let us be thankful this holiday season for all that's been accomplished and grateful for those who worked so hard to make it happen. Happy Holidays to all!

Watch for a new KY VOTER!

BY Soraya Assar

In the new year, the newsletter will be delivered through a new and better program! The December VOTER is the last one using this format. As we discussed at convention this year, the VOTER will transition to a shorter, but more frequent electronic format beginning in January 2020.

The League's Communications Committee has been working to improve and expand our external communications, including enhancing our social media presence and updating the KY VOTER.

For those members who do not have email, we'll still snail mail a copy of the new version.

TAKE ACTION!

Add your Voice to the Fight for Election Security

Contact your US Senators Today!

Election security should not be a partisan issue. We must invest in our elections and prevent meddling from the same foreign actors who targeted our elections in 2016. Earlier this year, the U.S. House passed important legislation focusing on election security and now it is the Senate's time to act. We can protect our democracy and improve all voters' confidence and participation by securing our elections. We believe voter turnout will increase if voters have faith in our electoral processes and believe that their votes count. [Click here to send a message!](#)



Left: Louisville and Lexington members help LWV KY with KET's fall fundraising campaign.

Below: LWV KY President Fran Wagner was interviewed by KET host Rene Shaw.

LWV got free publicity and KET got volunteer help!

Women Suffrage Centennial Chorus: Kentucky Ratification Day Celebration

Monday, January 6, 2020

5:00-7:30 PM

Paul Sawyer Library, 319 Wapping St, Frankfort, KY 40601 ([map](#))

100 years ago on January 6, Kentucky ratified the 19th Amendment, affirming women's right to vote. Come celebrate this historic event! The Women Suffrage Centennial Chorus will host a reception featuring remarks from public officials, the sewing of Kentucky's star to our own Ratification Flag, and a screening of the film "Dreamers and Doers: Voices of Kentucky Women."

RSVP by 12/20 to scoffey7@mis.net.



AG, SOS and Gubernatorial Debates in Kentucky



Candidates for Governor Debate at Bellarmine University.



Candidates for attorney general debate in Louisville at WLKY studios.

The LWV of Kentucky in Louisville, in partnership with WLKY-TV, sponsored three debates among the candidates for statewide constitutional offices. WLKY anchor, Vicki Dortch, moderated all three debates. Attorney General candidates, Daniel Cameron (R) and Greg Stumbo (D), participated in a half-hour debate broadcast on Oct. 17. It was followed by a half-hour debate between candidates for Secretary of State, Michael Adams (R) and Heather French Henry (D). Two candidates for governor, Andy Beshear (D) and Matt Bevin (R), participated in an hour-long live debate at Bellarmine University in Louisville on October 26.

The LWV of Kentucky in Lexington partnered with the University of Kentucky Student Government Association and Gray Television to host a one-hour debate for Beshear and Bevin at UK's Singletary Center for the Arts. The October 15 debate was moderated by Bill Bryant of WKYT/Lexington and Shannon Cogan of WAVE/Louisville. It aired and streamed live by Gray Television stations across the state and available afterward electronically receiving over 45,500 views.

The League again played an important role in offering non partisan debates to inform voters. Thanks to all who helped make these events happen.

Jules Marquart, Louisville and Cindy Heine, Lexington



LWV KY President Fran Wagner welcomes the audience at Bellarmine University.



Candidates for Secretary of State debate in Louisville at WLKY studios.



Candidates for Governor Debate at UK in Lexington.



Keisah Mische speaks to the Hopkinsville League about the 2020 Census.

Lexington

The LWV of Lexington is gearing up for an exciting year in 2020. One exciting activity will be regular interviews with artists who are supporting democracy, broadcast on the local college radio station WRFL. We will kick off the New Year with the January 2nd show featuring Jenn Jackson Acting President of the LWV of Lexington and Doraine Bailey of the Woman Suffrage Centennial Choir. Tune in at 8:15 AM to WRFL or listen online at www.wrfl.fm.

The LWV of Lexington will be joining the Kentucky Woman Suffrage Project at the Kentucky Ratification Centennial Celebration at Paul Sawyer Library in Frankfort from 5-6:30 PM. Voter registration and information about the League and its Kentucky Fair Maps work will be available.

In 2020, the LWV of Lexington is excited to be kicking off their first annual Fayette County-wide, school-branded high school voter registration campaign. Twelve Lexington High Schools are on board, including technical and vocational programs. This multi-tiered campaign will include teachers, but be driven by students and social media. The campaign has garnered support from students, teachers, the Social Studies Content Lead and Social Studies Chairs from the high schools and the Fayette County Clerk's Office. We are in the process of recruiting volunteers to provide classroom education and voter registration as well as student members for our Democracy Team. If you are interested please contact Mark Scarr or Jenn Jackson at LWVlexWeVote@gmail.com.

We closed out the year with our annual Holiday party, held at Jenn Jackson's house, was well attended and with several prospective members joining in the festivities.

Jennifer A. Jackson, M.D., Acting President, Chair Voter Services, LWV of Lexington.

Hopkinsville

After a very busy and successful voter registration period in September, the Hopkinsville/Christian County LWV has turned its attention to other issues of concern.

Keisha Mische, Census Regional Partnership Specialist, was our guest speaker in October. Ms. Mische provided a comprehensive report on efforts in our county and within Western Kentucky to ensure the success of the 2020 census. Our local LWV chapter offered our services to Ms. Mische and to our local census leadership in facilitating communications and encouraging people to complete their census forms.

In November, Jennifer Brown, a founding member of the Kentucky Open Government Coalition, spoke to the chapter to explain this new Coalition's work to ensure transparency in KY government entities using Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Open Records laws.

Our Suffrage Centennial committee has been meeting regularly for several months and working with other local groups to plan monthly activities in 2020 to celebrate the 100th anniversary. Activities include movies, book studies, special speakers, reenactments, a potential historical marker, and a local parade in August. We have added several new members this fall and have plans for a very busy



Louisville and Lexington members help with KET's fundraising campaign.

Kentucky Fair Maps Coalition

The LWV of Kentucky is working with a growing coalition of organizations in the Kentucky Fair Maps Coalition to raise awareness of the importance of redistricting. After the 2020 Census has been completed (no later than April 2021), the legislature will redraw district lines for Congressional and state House and Senate seats. In the past, Kentucky redistricting has been done behind closed doors with little or no public input. The last time our legislature redrew the maps, a court challenge and ruling required a costly and time-consuming redrawing of the maps. Recent challenges in other states ending in the U.S. Supreme Court have highlighted serious gerrymandering by both Democrats and Republicans. The League wants to assure that doesn't happen in Kentucky. We will be advocating for an advisory commission and a transparent process that allows for public input, and we'll be taking our message out across the state.

Redistricting Committee Report

BY Dee Pregliasco

The LWV of KY Redistricting Committee has been extremely busy. First, we have been schooling ourselves on the issue with Susan Weston's attendance at a seminar hosted by the LWV US in Virginia, and with Cindy Heine's and my attendance at the National Conference of State Legislatures in Columbus, Ohio. Our heads and notebooks are full and Susan has been putting together charts, updating our reporting and generally keeping us informed.

In addition, we have received a grant from LWV US that will support our effort by helping us defer some of the expenses related to educating the public statewide on this important issue. We plan to take our redistricting education campaign to local Chambers of Commerce, Rotary clubs and others. We need your help identifying and connecting us with appropriate groups. See below for other ways you can participate.



Report on Washington LWV Meeting

Meeting outside Washington DC for three days in October, representatives from Leagues in every state took up the challenge of a shared campaign for People-Powered Fair Maps. This conference focused on the redistricting that will occur after the 2020 Census.

Susan Perkins Weston, representing Kentucky, learned about the shared effort and key organizing skills, including strategic mapping of the political terrain, storytelling to make the issue of redistricting more engaging, and building partnerships on true equality and multiple perspectives.

The campaign for People Powered Fair Maps has already launched with state Leagues taking approaches ranging from seeking constitutional amendments to bringing lawsuits and pressing for federal law enforcement.

For the Kentucky League working with the new Kentucky Fair Maps Coalition, the first wave of effort will be support for an advisory redistricting commission bill. The Kentucky League's Day of Action celebrating our 100th anniversary of the League's founding will be an especially important part of that push.

Weston returned home with two strong thoughts:

- Our odds for enacting a commission are more than scary here in Kentucky
- This effort is a truly worthwhile opportunity for renewing our democracy

Susan hopes the Kentucky League can mobilize lots of creative energy to make Kentucky's next set of district maps fair and constructive for citizen participation.

Redistricting - You can help!

- Urge your legislators to support an open and fair redistricting process – call 1-800-372-7181 Check the website for more information and sign up for action alerts by email from the Kentucky Fair Maps Coalition kentuckyfairmaps.org.
- Follow and share our tweets and posts. We're @kyfairmaps and www.facebook.com/KYFairMaps.
- Help us arrange speaking engagements in your community and/or
- Join the KY LWV Redistricting Committee by emailing KentuckyLWV@gmail.com.

Money in Politics

The national US administration has proposed changes in the IRS regulations that would allow greater amounts of 'dark money' i.e., money put into non-profit organizations that remains anonymous, that is often used to support the interests of the donors in political elections. This dark money is a growing menace to our democracy. George Schuhman, of the Louisville League, has written the following comment to the IRS regarding this change. Mr. Schuhman is Past President, Louisville Bar Association, Past-Member, League of Women Voters US (Money in Politics Study Committee). [Note, this communication is sent by the individual named. He does not represent or speak on behalf of the organizations listed.]

To whom at the IRS it may concern,

The proposed change regarding the reporting requirements of exempt organizations [other than those under sections 501(c)(3) and 527] should not go into effect. It represents the kind of corruption that the founders of this country found abhorrent. The influence of nobility in that day was considered undemocratic. In this day and age it is the influence of the nobility-of-wealth that has proven equally undemocratic.

The flood of "dark money" has spawned a new Golden Age for the interest of the super-rich to exert a concealed interest in elections. Frankly, America would be better off if nonprofit corporations, as such, were not allowed to engage in any election related activity. Such activity should be reserved only to real persons who are entitled to exercise the right to vote in US elections. Private persons deserve their 'Right of Privacy' but corporations—whether public or private—do not have unlimited privacy. All corporations and other legally organized entities clearly should not be afforded the absolute right of privacy as envisioned by Justice Louis D. Brandeis who advanced to the US Supreme Court by being "the people's lawyer." That is simply because the fiction of corporate personality exists for organized entities to carry on their operations in a businesslike, lawful manner; and it does not properly extend beyond that limit. Corporate secrets are lawfully protected by patent, copyright and trade secrecy rather than by a cloak of invisibility.

One of the greatest ongoing tragedies in contemporary American society is the distortion of the concept of "We the People" from the original use of that term in our Constitution. Corporations, business associations and other organized entities in our society

Mark your calendar for
**League Day of Action at
the Capitol**

Thurs., Feb. 13, 2020

Join us to celebrate the League's
100th Anniversary!

Details in January VOTER.



are not people in that sense. Such entities are adequately represented by their stakeholder US citizens to act for the interests of their organization by voting and by donating reasonably limited amounts of publicly disclosed money to candidates of their choice. The remainder of the financing of federal elections should be done by a combination of public funds and required candidate access to federally licensed media.

The problem is clear: the need to restore popular governance in the US to '**Us the People**'; and the solution is: **Not** by expanding the influence of unlimited, undisclosed money.



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Calendar

January 7 - April 15 -2020 Kentucky General Assembly

January 8 - LWV KY Board meeting 10:00 – 12:00. noon, ET, Hardin County Library

January 13 - Media Conference on Redistricting, 3:00 p.m. Capitol Rotunda,
Frankfort

February 8 - LWV KY Board conference call at 10:00 a.m., ET

February 13 - League Day at the Capitol and Celebration of League's 100th
Anniversary

March 7 - LWV KY Board Meeting 10:00 – 12:00, Place TBD

April 3-4 - LWV KY Council: Louisville

Kentucky VOTER Editor: Soraya Assar