

Fairfax VOTER

September 2023

Volume 76, Issue 1

Welcome back! We are laser-focused this month on making sure Fairfax voters know the importance of the election this year. In lieu of regular unit discussions, we are inviting everyone to stop by the office on the afternoon of September 10, between 2 and 4 p.m. to learn how they can help get out the vote, and Get Excited!! We are also partnering with libraries in our efforts and will hold candidate forums in early October. And, of course, registration continues apace!

Calendar

September 2023

Note: LWWFA Unit Meetings will meet in September & Membership Campaign

1-30 National Voter Registration Month
3 Fairfax Voter Deadline for the October 2023 issue
8-14 LWWFA Unit Meetings at various locations around Fairfax County
8 LWWNCA Virtual Board Meeting, 10 a.m.
10 Go Vote Rally, 2-4 p.m.
LWWFA League Office
12-18 National Disabled Voter Registration Week
14 New Member Orientation (Virtual)
20 National Voter Registration Day
20 LWWFA Board Meeting, 10 a.m.
22 Early Voting Starts

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Presidents' Message

Welcome back!

We hope you all had a wonderful summer, full of whatever warm weather dreams you may have wished for. Now that everyone is rested, we are setting up for a big get-out-the-vote effort. The Virginia elections this November are far more consequential than most voters realize. We will be electing the entire membership of the State Senate and State House of Delegates, after a major redistricting. In addition, there will be many Fairfax County positions on the ballot. These are the elected officials who most directly impact our daily lives: they set our tax rates; fix (or not) our roads; fund and staff our schools; maintain our parks; and determine what development can come to our neighborhoods. Research has shown that the most effective way to get someone to vote is to approach them personally. To that end, we will hold a get-out-the-vote open house at our office on Sunday, September 10 from 2 – 4 p.m. We hope you will come to meet some of our board members, see our offices, and most importantly learn more about what you can do to encourage friends, neighbors, family, and everyone you know to vote this fall.

Over the summer we also welcomed three new members to the board and said goodbye to two others. We are grateful to everyone who is willing to serve in this or any other capacity. As a reminder, all of our board meetings are open to all who would like to attend. When we hold our meetings via zoom, you can contact one of us or call/email the office, and we will share the link.

Ready, set, go!!!

Pat and Katherine



*Fairfax County 24-hr.
Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline:
703-360-7273; 711 TTY*

What Happened to the Unit Meetings?

During September and October, there will be no briefings or studies in the *VOTER*. Instead, we will focus on the fall election and getting out the vote. Unit meetings will be optional, however, units are encouraged to:

- Meet to discuss the election.
- Support the Get Out the Vote initiative.
- View candidate forums. (How about a viewing party?)
- Discuss the issues, such as the article about School Boards in this issue of the *VOTER*.

View the voting information posted on the homepage of our website and under the Voter Resources tab. Make a plan to share information about voting with your friends, neighbors, and community members. Help them understand the importance of this fall's state and local elections. We will send the details for the Candidate Forums as soon as they are finalized.

LWVFA Fairfax *VOTER* 2023 - 2024

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Please e-mail address corrections to the office
or call 703-658-9150.

Get Out the VOTE!

As Leaguers, we are advocates for voter participation.

Step 1: We help people register to vote in high schools, New Citizen ceremonies, and in community events across the Fairfax area.

Step 2: We produce materials that answer questions, such as:

- Am I registered to vote?
- How can I register to vote? Is there a deadline?
- How do I get an absentee ballot?
- What are my Virginia Senate and House of Delegates districts?
- What's on the Ballot?
- How can I learn more about the candidates?
- Where are the early voting sites and what are their hours?
- Where do I go to vote on Election Day?

We need to ensure that the materials we produce reach people in our community so they are ready to vote. We distribute these materials in our voter registration and community events and post them on our website.

Step 3: We need to get people to vote! This last step is crucial. One of the best ways to get voters to the polls is to make a personal appeal. We are going to do this in a variety of ways.

- Some units are going to have a table at a library, where they will distribute materials, talk to community members, and encourage voting.
- Other units might adopt a subway station or local community center to distribute materials and talk to community members.
- Individual Leaguers are encouraged to talk about voting and take materials to their book club, their neighbors, community group, or any organization to which they belong.
- Leaguers are encouraged to wear a Go Vote button throughout the election season.

To share ideas and obtain materials, attend the GO VOTE Rally on September 10. This will be a casual open house type event from 2 to 4 p.m. at the League Office, 4026 Hummer Road, Annandale. We will have copies of materials, Go Vote buttons, and League cookies! We will take pictures for posting on our website and social media. All are invited to come, and we hope that at least one member of each unit will attend.



November 7 Elections in Virginia are HUGE this year!!

Our priority is to get Voters to the polls

To share ideas and obtain materials, attend the GO VOTE Rally on September 10.

What: Casual open house from 2 to 4 p.m.

Where: the League Office, 4026 Hummer Road, Annandale

Why: We will have copies of materials, Go Vote buttons, and League cookies!

We will take pictures for posting on our website.



Did you know?

Fairfax County first elected School Board members in November 1995. Previously, the Board of Supervisors appointed the School Board. In that first election, 35 candidates ran for 12 seats.

If you are Fairfax County voter, you have four votes for School Board members. You can select one person to represent your Fairfax County district and three people to serve as at-large members.

LWV-VA Convention

By Katherine Ingmanson

At the beginning of June, ten delegates from LWVFA joined our colleagues from all over Virginia for our biennial Convention. Our delegates were Katherine Ingmanson, Jessica Storrs, Lyn Lister, Susan Avellanet, Emebet Taddese, Julia Jones, Lois Page, Marcia McDevitt, and Arina van Breda. In addition, we were honored to “borrow” Anne Brennan from the Williamsburg league. We had a series of outstanding speakers who all shared powerful messages of the need for community engagement to safeguard societal gains and democracy itself. The Convention adopted four positions based on studies conducted over the last two years. These positions can be found on the LWVVA website and address: Child Care, Education Equity, Environmental Justice, and Money in Politics. The Convention approved a study on the Right to Vote to be undertaken in the next two years. We also adopted a joint resolution submitted jointly by LWVFA and our Arlington sisters honoring longtime member Patricia McGrady. Finally, the Convention elected new board members and approved the budget for the next year. Congratulations to LWVFA members Anu Sahai, Ernie Bridges and Andrienne Conostas for their election, and to Joan Porte from Arlington, who assumes the role of President. Below you will find some more personal reflections from some of our delegates.

Convention Thoughts – Jessica Storrs

The 41st convention of the League of Women Voters of Virginia was held at The College of William and Mary in Williamsburg. This location was especially appropriate as the university’s strategic plan includes a “Democracy Initiative,” which endeavors “to practice and promote democratic ideals in the pursuit of a more perfect union. At a time when our country is deeply divided, we have the opportunity to rediscover the ideals that make pluralistic democracies strong.” (See link: bit.ly/WMDemocracy)

In her speech to the convention, William and Mary Provost Peggy Agouris emphasized that democracy requires discipline and hard work. She commended the League for its commitment to this fundamental human right and noted that for us to safeguard government by the people, we will need everyone on board. Agouris said that William and Mary stands with the League to preserve democracy.

As the League likes to say, “Democracy is not a spectator sport!” It was encouraging to hear about William and Mary’s commitment to our shared cause and to know we have another esteemed organization fighting the good fight.

Convention Thoughts – Susan Avellanet

This was my first LWV convention, and it was a terrific experience. There were several excellent speakers and breakout sessions with valuable information and experiences. My favorite speaker was Kimberley Hunter of the Williamsburg/James City County School Board. Her ground-level experiences in education and as a school board member place her in the middle of current issues related to the functioning of democratic institutions. It gave me hope to know that she is able to find some path through all the discord in the community.

Convention Thoughts – Lyn Lister

I attended the Virginia League of Women Voters 41st Biennial Convention, where I was first introduced to the League’s outgoing and current leadership and to President Dr. Turner, United States League of Women Voters’ message by a virtual YouTube presentation. With pride and humility, I am sharing a few impressions that uplifted my passion to defend our democracy: (1) President Turner’s amazing virtual message warmed my heart with reflections on the League’s 2022 significant achievements and with ways to strengthen the League in the 21st Century. One way was building people power in the League membership, not just in the number of members, but in diversity, equity, and inclusion. (2) I also found the roll call with brief achievements by each president to be very impactful. Though I am a life member of Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority, Incorporated, it was so impressive to hear of two Leagues partnering with Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated. I was self-inspired to coordinate a future meeting between the LWV-Fairfax and my chapter, Lambda Kappa Omega of AKA, Incorporated, to foster collaboration. It takes all of us, working together, to defend our democracy. (3) As I sat in awe for two days actively listening to speakers and discussions on four programs for adoption, I felt so proud to be a delegate amongst these dedicated and passionate women and men who care about the least of these, specifically, black and brown people. I am so looking forward to our next convention in Fredericksburg. (4) Lastly, it delighted my heart to learn about the Lemon Project: A Journey of Reconciliation. The Project is named for Lemon, a man who was once enslaved by William and Mary. We toured the vessel that holds the fire at the center of William and Mary’s Hearth: Memorial to the Enslaved.



*William and Mary's Hearth:
Memorial to the Enslaved*



Emebet Taddese and Lyn Lister at The Hearth

LWV-VA Resolution in Honor of Pat McGrady

Whereas Patricia Mc Grady was a hardworking 50 plus year member of the League of Women Voters, first in the League of Women Voters of Arlington and Alexandria City and later in the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area.

Whereas Pat served those leagues as Treasurer, Social Chair and at her death was co-chair of the Greenspring unit of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area and credited the League with inspiring her desire to fight for civil rights.

Whereas She was a life-long advocate for affordable housing and served on the Board of the Arlington Housing Corporation (AHC) from 1975-1985 and on the Arlington Partnership for Affordable Housing (APAH) Board from 2013-2016. In September 2016, Pat was inducted into the AHC, Inc. Housing Hall of Fame.

Whereas Pat picketed a real estate company for redlining in 1963 and helped organize the 1964 Walk of Dignity, supporting black community members.

Whereas Pat was very involved with the Greenspring Black and White Shared History Committee.

Whereas Pat was a grassroots activist for Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement (VOICE).

Whereas before Pat came to Virginia she served as Assistant Dean and/or Dean of Women for Quincy College, and Loyola and DePaul Universities.

Whereas Pat's final words, when asked how she wanted to be remembered, she whispered, stronger than she'd been able to in days, "Tell them that I was an activist for Social Justice!"

Be it resolved that the League of Women Voters of Virginia, in Convention on June 3/4, 2023, recognizes the dedicated work and fine example for all League members of Patricia McGrady.

Primary Elections: Are They Important?

By Julie Jones

The importance of primary elections was the topic of the May 2023 unit discussions. Many members and guests expressed appreciation for the information provided. The differences between open primaries and firehouse primaries, caucuses or conventions provided topics for good discussions and gave all members a chance to express their views.

Most Leaguers felt that a primary election run by the state or local board of elections was the preferred system. An open primary allows more people to participate, it is faster to mark a ballot, less commitment of time, and consists of a secret ballot. There were some concerns about “cross-over” voters - who would cross party lines in hopes to create chaos,

The “firehouse” or caucus primary has the advantage of being cheaper to run and easier to identify politically affiliated voters, often requiring a loyalty pledge. The candidates need only to influence a smaller number of people who attend the one-time event. These party-run primaries can be problematic in that only a small number of citizens are involved, a few individuals can dominate the outcome, and it requires a longer time commitment. Although most League members knew the main responsibilities of various offices on the November ballot, they were surprised at the number and complexity of the Clerk of Court’s duties required by law. They were unaware that the Soil and Water Commissioners were essentially volunteers with expected expertise but no paid compensation. Some were unaware of the main duties of the Sheriff in Fairfax County that were not strictly “law enforcement.” Many expressed approval for the increase in the supervisors’ salaries in light of the complexity of their offices/jobs.

There was agreement that the state Senators and Delegates should be paid more for what is almost a full-time job, necessitating year-round meetings and appearances. Most members felt that the low pay limited the number of people who could run for these positions. Hardly any member thought that they would (or would have earlier) offer as a candidate (maybe for school board). Many felt that the climate of threats and uncivil discourse is discouraging many citizens from becoming candidates.

LWVFA will continue to report on Rank Choice Voting (RCV) as it is becoming more widespread. Our members were impressed that the candidate had to have 50%+1 to win which ensures that the winning candidate appeals to a broad majority of the voters.

The first place vote would be for the preferred candidate and the following choices would be candidates they “could live with”. Many worried that there would have to be a “lot of educating” the voter as to how to mark the ballot and how to have patience to learn the outcome. RCV primaries and elections will take longer to count the in-person and mail-in ballots.

Poll Taxes in Virginia

The 1902 Virginia Constitution stated that any person who applied to register to vote in or after 1904 must pay poll taxes of \$1.50 for each of the three years preceding an election, plus interest. In the 1950s and 1960s, the League of Women Voters of Virginia and the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area campaigned for the repeal of the poll tax, but the General Assembly was unwilling to act. The poll tax disenfranchised large numbers of people who could not afford to pay the tax. (Remember that the \$1.50 a year was worth considerably more at that time than it is today.)

In 1963, Annie Harper, Fairfax County resident, was told to pay a poll tax of \$4.71 (three years plus interest) in order to vote. She thought it was wrong to have to pay to vote, and in addition, she could not afford this payment as she had a very limited income. In 1964, The 24th Amendment was ratified, prohibiting poll taxes in federal elections, but Virginia continued to charge a poll tax in state and local elections. That same year, Ms. Harper joined with three other Fairfax County residents, Gladys Berry and Curtis and Myrtle L. Burr, to sue the Virginia Department of Elections claiming that the poll tax was unconstitutional because it denied poor people the right to vote, violating the Fourteenth Amendment’s Equal Protection clause. This case was dismissed!

Annie and her fellow defendants appealed to the Eastern District Court of Virginia, and the court ruled that the poll tax was constitutional, but Annie and her fellow defendants were not deterred. The case was appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1966, the Supreme Court ruled in Harper v. Virginia State Board of Elections that Virginia’s poll tax violated the 14th Amendment’s Equal Protect clause. Justice Willam Douglas wrote in the majority opinion, “It is argued that a State may exact fees from citizens for many different kinds of licenses; that if it can demand from all an equal fee for a driver’s license, it can demand from all an equal poll tax for voting. But we must remember that the interest of the State, when it comes to voting, is limited to the power to fix qualifications. ...wealth or fee paying ... has no relation to voting qualifica-

tions; the right to vote is too precious, too fundamental to be so burdened or conditioned.”

On July 22, 2024, a historical marker was unveiled honoring Annie E Harper and her codefendants for their instrumental role in removing the poll tax in the United States. They were ordinary citizens who knew the importance of being able to vote. You can visit this marker for these unsung voting rights heroes in the Gum Springs area of Fairfax County.

League Cookies

By Marcia McDevitt

My Grandfather (the Rabbi) taught me that: “Community Service is the Rent you pay G_D to stay this side of the grass.” Admittedly I’ve lived his and Mom’s example to extremes. Never understood folks who MAY only vote in Presidential Elections or who don’t vote at all. “My vote doesn’t matter.” Involvement starts with voting! If you live in Virginia, there IS an election in November!

Before WWC (Covid), live Fairfax Area League of Women Voters functions served my: League of Women Voter Cookies (Golden Raisin Oatmeal)

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 3 cups quick-cooking oats | 3/4 butter, softenend |
| 2/3 cup all-purpose flour | 1 cup packed brown sugar |
| 2 tbsp grated orange peel | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1 tsp ground cinnamon | 1 egg, room temp. |
| 1/2 tsp baking soda | 2 tbsp water |
| | 1 tsp vanilla extract |
| | 2/3 cup gold raisins |

1. preheat oven to 350 degrees, line baking sheets with parchment paper
2. in mixing bowl, combine: oats, flour, orange peel, cinnamon & baking soda
3. in stand mixer, cream butter with sugars, beat in egg, water & vanilla
4. gradually add dry ingredients to creamed mixture, stir in raisins
5. drop dough onto baking sheets*
6. bake for 10 - 15 minutes depending on size, remove to racks to cool

*Make SMALL cookies as ladies will not eat 1 big cookie but 3 small ones

2023-24 LWVFA Monthly Program (Always subject to change)

Sept.10 - **GET OUT THE VOTE**
Sunday afternoon League Open House Drop-in to pick up educational material for voters Unit Meetings (optional) to plan **GET OUT THE VOTE** activities

Oct. - Preparing for voting and engaging the public
Attending Candidate Forum

Nov. 12 or 19 General Meeting
“Her Story” - Local Elected Officials for panel discussion about their candidate journey

Dec. - Food Insecurity
An Exercise in Civil Discussion Legislative priorities in Virginia Legislature Committee report on LWVFA & LWVUS Positions

Jan. - Food Waste: What we can do?

Feb. - Selecting and Challenging Books

March - LWVFA Book Club:
Reading a Banned Book

April - Annual Meeting:
Restoring Felons’ Right to Vote

May - Virginia Courts - How many and what they do

June - Elimination of the Electoral College - an LWVUS initiative

Are you interested in helping research or plan a program? We need you!!

Committee to review positions on the LWVUS and LWVFA

Food - Are we all fed adequately? What happens to good waste?

Can we encourage composting through governmental action?

Our court systems on the local, state, and national level in Fairfax

Planning a social time - Rank Choice Voting at winery or brewery

Contact: julie.Jones@lww-fairfax.org or judy.Helein@lww-fairfax.org

School Board Elections Prove Essential as Education Becomes Political Battleground

By Megan Rudacille

Megan was a high school political science intern with the League of Women Voters during the 2022-23 school year. She now attends William & Mary with plans to study political science and English. Megan was involved in politics throughout high school. She also enjoyed performing in theater productions, competing with the speech team, and writing for the school newspaper.

While presidential elections garner widespread mainstream attention and midterms remain a central point of political focus, another electoral battle on the horizon fails to make the grade when it comes to public attention, despite its vitality to local youth. The upcoming Fairfax County School Board race, which will be pivotal to the county amidst the ever-growing political importance of school systems nationwide, must not be allowed to fly under the radar.

“The needs of our students have never been as great as they are right now,” Sully District Representative Stella Pekarsky said. “Everybody is working their 110 percent max, trying to serve our kids which is hard enough. Add to that the fact that we are not funded adequately, and it makes it even more difficult. On top of that, we have this political hailstorm of distrust and negative rhetoric.”

School board members in Virginia serve four-year terms, with alternating election cycles such that a handful of school districts in the state are up for election each year. In Fairfax, the school board is composed of twelve members, nine serving specific districts within the Fairfax County Public School system (FCPS) and three at-large members who represent the entire county (Ballotpedia).

The responsibilities of school boards vary based on states’ constitutions. The Virginia Constitution outlines school board duties: approving the school district’s budget, selecting its superintendent, determining curriculum and setting educational standards, creating the school year schedule, and redistricting schools, as necessary (Virginia Code). However, in accordance with the U.S. Constitution’s 14th Amendment’s provision for equality under the law, an overarching responsibility to ensure equitable access to education for all constituents emerged. From the institution of special education and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs to free and reduced lunch price initiatives, school boards must utilize their funding to make public school an equalizing environment that allows all children access to a bright future.

Despite the essential duties of the school board, their

elections remain unrecognized by the public and voter turnout is consistently low, especially among people of color, who can be affected disproportionately by school board policy (Pollen). In Fairfax County, voter turnout in the 2019 election when the school board was on the ballot was 44.3%, the lowest among the nearest surrounding years of each other type of election (Fairfax County).

“One of the problems for a lot of local races is, for whatever reason, people just don’t pay attention,” Dranesville District Representative Elaine Tholen said. “They come out for the presidential elections, maybe they come out for the Virginia Senate and House of Delegates, but then when it comes to the board of supervisors or school board, they don’t pay a whole lot of attention. Virginia is a tough one because we have elections every year, so I think sometimes people are just tired.”

Year	Type of election	Voter turnout in Fairfax
2018	Midterm	69.8%
2019	School board & state legislature	44.3%
2020	Presidential	79.4%
2021	Gubernatorial	60.0%

However, in recent years, educational issues have become increasingly mainstream, primarily due to the introduction of progressive curriculum and schools’ response to COVID-19. With school policy directly impacting their children, parents feel a stronger personal connection to school board elections (Time). In the face of these changes, some parents seek to gain control over their children’s education, transforming schools and school boards into battlegrounds along the way. As liberals promote initiatives seeking to increase inclusivity, expanding sex education, history curriculum, and mental health programs, conservatives oppose these movements, viewing them as unnecessary and instead emphasizing parents’ connection to schools.

“The political aspect that has befallen public education, that’s different,” Pekarsky said. “So we have had to manage that: How do we operate in this era of uber-scrutiny, lawsuits and engagement, and, at the same time, make sure that we are focused on what we need to be, which is actually our students and their well-being?”

For example, the censorship of books has become increasingly widespread amidst political division. Conservative politicians and interest groups have recently advocated for parents’ rights to shield children from mature or liberal ideas and the restriction of content related to race, sexuality, and gender identity in schools (New York Times). School boards are the key to enacting these reforms: early this year, the Madison

County School Board used its prerogative over curriculum to ban 21 books containing adult content from school libraries entirely (Newsweek). Ultimately, the makeup of a district's school board will determine the extent of content restriction enforced in schools.

"In my mind, the school board should be focusing our energies on providing the best academics possible in every single one of our schools versus worrying about exactly what books are in the library," Tholen said. "We have professional library staff to do that work."

Aspects of curriculum including social and emotional education and sex education likewise remain subject to intense political debate. The majority of school board members consider mental health problems the most pressing issue facing students today (MHFA). Implementation of programs to support student mental health is a responsibility of school board members: the FCPS School Board was granted \$13.5 million to fund increased school-based mental health service providers (VSBA). However, some Americans remain unconvinced of the value of mental health services and believe funding should be allocated elsewhere (Time). Sex education is an equally disputed educational policy under school board regulation. The FCPS School Board is set to vote on the implementation of Family Life Education (FLE) curriculum changes including combined gender lessons and curriculum on gender identity (VSBA). These changes have faced backlash on both sides of the aisle. While liberal board members fear increased stigma around discussion of puberty, especially for female students in a mixed-gender environment, conservative groups push back against LGBTQ curriculum (dcist). The FCPS School Board develops the FLE curriculum independent from state government control, so the controversial decision will ultimately fall to board members.

"We, of course, represent a very diverse community," Pekarsky said. "So, with that diversity comes diverse thoughts and desires and a lot of passionate feelings about what folks want for their kid. You've got to sit down and talk to people, and you may agree on absolutely nothing and they may spend the entire time screaming at you, but that just kind of goes with the territory. Sometimes we find some compromise; sometimes, they will walk away understanding my point of view. Open communication is really critical."

The task of ensuring quality within schools also falls to school boards. Provisions for transgender students have recently garnered substantial political attention: 2022 saw an unprecedented rise in bills restricting trans rights, with policy decisions falling to school boards when bills fail in state legislatures (Washington Post). Governor Glenn Youngkin's October model

policy, requiring students to use school facilities and pronouns of their assigned gender at birth and teachers to inform parents of students' gender identity, was ultimately left to local school boards to enforce (VDOE). Multiple counties' school boards, including FCPS, rejected Youngkin's policy and renewed their support of transgender students (FCPS), showcasing their direct influence over students' livelihoods.

"Some of the policies that we have put in place, people are not very happy about; some of the LGBTQ stuff, for example," Tholen said. "But the way I look at it is: I'm here for every single student. Public schools welcome every single student that comes through the door, no matter what, so I'm working as hard as I can to make everybody feel welcome."

School boards' power over distribution of funding is another influential tool. With teachers and staff hesitant to expose themselves to COVID in the classroom, districts nationwide faced staffing shortages returning to school in 2021. FCPS specifically lacked sufficient bus drivers to operate normal routes at the start of the 2021-22 school year (Tysons Reporter).

"Certainly with COVID, workforce has become a huge issue for us," Tholen said. "Just in the last couple of years, we've had to seriously increase the salaries or the hourly wage of our bus drivers, our family liaisons; we have a 5 percent raise for teachers and some additional raises for teachers that are very experienced, to try to keep our workforce. So, we focused on that this year and some of these other programs we're just not going to be able to fund." With staffing effects of COVID lingering and a plethora of programs clamoring for funding, board members are left with the task of allocating their district's limited resources. Constituents can better ensure their priorities are funded by electing politicians with shared values into office.

Under a national political spotlight, sweeping changes are sure to come from incoming school board members. With such polarizing issues hanging in the balance, voters on either side of the aisle may feel inspired now more than ever to get out the vote this November and protect their vision of education.

Be sure to make your voice heard November 7 amidst the countless outside pressures influencing the school board's crucial decisions.

Have you renewed your League membership for 2023-2024? We need YOU in this big election year! Use the form on the last page of the VOTER or click the Join tab on our website, lwv-fairfax.org

Domestic Violence: CEDV Quarterly Meeting

By Adarsh Trehan
Chair, Domestic Violence Committee

The Fairfax County Council to End Domestic Violence (CEDV) held its quarterly meeting on July 20, 2023. CEDV is comprised of elected officials, leaders of public safety, public schools, the judiciary, and human service agencies, as well as community members.

Highlights of the meeting were presentations by Amanda Katz, Executive Director of the Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse (JCADA), a member of the Equity Workgroup/Committee, and legislative updates by Ruth Miklem, Community Initiatives Manager, Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (VSDVAA).

CEDV Training Retreat

Amanda Katz explained the retreat focussed on how CEDV members can use an intersectional and equity lens to deepen partnerships with survivors, service providers, and communities. Various agencies provide services to the clients, but to provide optimal service they need to act as working partners by coordinating, collaborating, cooperating better.

New laws

Ruth Miklem gave an overview of the new laws that emerged from the 2023 General Assembly Session. All legislation entered into effect on July 1, 2023, unless otherwise specified below.

The new laws:

Provide for an attorney for the Commonwealth or a law-enforcement officer to file a petition for a preliminary protective order for a minor, as his next friend, in a family abuse situation. This new law is important because otherwise the minor would have no protection from the respondent after the EPO expired. <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?231+sum+SB873>

Kader Gumus, an immigrant representative to the CEDV, stated that other provisions requiring password access for cell phones and other devices be provided to the alleged victim is especially helpful when all family documents are uploaded in a digital or shared file and perpetrators refuse to disclose the password for access to the victim/survivor.

Provide that as soon as practicable following arrest, or following indictment, arrest by warrant, or service of a petition in the case of a juvenile, the attorney for the Commonwealth may request after consultation with any complaining witness, that any person

charged with certain specified crimes be requested to submit to testing for sexually transmitted infections. The law also provides that the results of such tests shall not be admissible as evidence in any criminal proceeding. <https://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?231+sum+HB1416>

Closes a loophole in Virginia's strangulation statute, amending it to include suffocation.

Provides for the collection of evidence kits for victims of strangulation similar to those collected for victims of sexual assault. The Commonwealth will pay all medical fees related to the collection. The law has a delayed effective date of July 1, 2025. https://vsdvalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2023-VA-Law-Final_w_Cover-Page.pdf

Definitions

An ex parte decision is one decided by a judge without requiring all the parties to the dispute to be present. (Wikipedia)

Definitions of protective orders are available at: <https://vscc.virginia.gov/protective-orders-virginia-guide-victims-english.pdf>

A New CEDV Leadership Structure

A new leadership structure will include the Chair, Vice Chair, and Community Leader, and Organizer positions. The recruitment period for nominations and applications ends November 9. All members were encouraged to email and submit names freely to Stacy Ziebell at stacy.ziebell@fairfaxcounty.gov. On November 9, the slate of candidates will be presented at the CEDV's Fall Quarterly meeting.

Future Legislative Work

The CEDV will continue to work hard on future firearm safety bills, firearm storage issues, and the alignment of firearms restriction processes so that they feel more consistent across the different firearms laws.

Announcements

Ruth Miklem shared that in December 2023, VSDVAA will honor Janet Howell and Delegate Rob Bell with lifetime achievement awards. Janet Howell has been a steadfast advocate on behalf of victims of sexual and intimate partner violence in Fairfax County.

Stacy Ziebell, Program Manager, Prevention, and Coordination, Domestic and Sexual Violence Services, announced that the Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Annual meeting will be held on October 6, and will start at 8:30 a.m. and will last for about 3 hours. The CEDV Fall Quarterly meeting will be held on November 9 and will have a limited agenda focusing on the leadership process.

Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

Topic: Get Out the Vote

Units are encouraged to engage in Get Out the Vote activities during September and October. Please note that unit meetings in September are optional, but members are strongly encouraged to meet at their regular times to plan strategies and Get Out the Vote activities. As of September 1, 2023, the following information was correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend.

September 2023

No Briefing /At Large Meeting
Contact: Judy: 703-725-9401,
judithhelein@aol.com
or Julie:
Julie.jones@lwv.fairfax.org,
703-476-8347

Monday, September 11

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)
Meeting Room To Be Determined
Contact: Judy:
jismith64@earthlink.net,
703-342-3353

Wednesday, September 13

10 a.m. Mount Vernon Day (MVD)
Mount Vernon Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane, Mt. Vernon
Contact: Diana:
jfdw1111@gmail.com,
703-704-5325

7 p.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)
8739 Cuttermill Pl, Springfield
Contact: Diana:
dianawhite@gmail.com,
707-866-0796
or Sue:
sueoneill1@hotmail.com,
703-266-0272

4 p.m. McLean Day (McL)
6657 Madison McLean Dr
Contact: Anne:
kaneratw@gmail.com,
703-448-6626

Thursday, September 14

9:30 a.m. Reston Day (RD)
North County Governmental Ctr.
12000 Bowman Towne Drive,
Reston
Contact: Charleen:
Charleen.deasy@verizon.net,
703-620-3593

10:00 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

No Meeting
Contact: Jane:
patchwork1@verizon.net,
703-256-7834

11:30 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD)

No Meeting
Contact: Susan:
sadill@cox.net,
703-391-0666

1:00 p.m. Oakton/Vienna (OV) - In Person and Virtual

Oakton Public Library
10304 Lynnhaven Place, Oakton
Contact:
Mary: mmvalder@aol.com,
703-932-3665

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

North County Governmental Center,
12000 Bowman Towne Drive,
Reston
Contact: Wendy:
wendy.foxgrage@gmail.com,
703-319-4114

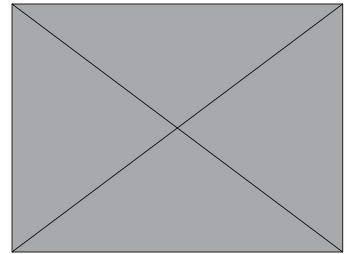
7:30 p.m. Mount Vernon Evening (MVE) – In Person

Contact: Jane:
jane@hilderwilliams.net,
703-960-6820
or Susan:
scash5002@email.vccs.edu,
703-587-4790
or Jane: jmbyers@att.net,
703-380-3651

October Meetings: Get Out the Vote



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



**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER®
 September 2023**

Pat Fege, Co-President
 Katherine Ingmanson, Co-President
 Laura Hamilton, 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 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.

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<https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/donate>



LWVFA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

Dues year is July 1 – June 30

Name: _____ Unit (if renewing): _____
 Name of Second Household Member (if one): _____
 Street Address: _____ Condo/Apt No: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code +4: _____
 E-mail: _____ Phone: (C) _____ (H) _____

Membership Status: _____ New _____ Renewal

Membership Level (please check one):

Basic Membership:

Individual (\$75); Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$100);

Limited Income (suggested donation: \$10); Student (Free!)

Membership Plus:

Suffragist (\$100); Advocate Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$150);

Champion (\$300); Founders' Circle (\$500)

Membership Plus levels include basic membership PLUS a donation to the LWVFA General Fund. This money will support members of limited income, help invest in LWVFA web site technology, and support other priority projects. General Fund donations are not tax deductible.

Please mail this completed form along with payment to:
 LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403