



## Thank You Statement for Virginia's Historic Legislative Session

**Fairfax County, Virginia, May 2020**

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area thanks the Fairfax Delegation\*\* of the General Assembly for its historic legislative session. The League appreciates its leadership during the pandemic. The League also honors its volunteers who have been members for 50+ years and advocated tirelessly for these reforms.

“The General Assembly adopted the League’s highest priority issues, many of which the League has advocated for several decades,” said Anu Sahai, LWV-Fairfax co-president. The League of Women Voters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan volunteer organization that just celebrated its 100-year anniversary.

“We thank our state legislators for keeping their promises to the electorate,” added Sahai. They passed important new reforms on redistricting, women’s rights, voting rights, and gun violence prevention:

- **Redistricting Reform:** The constitutional amendment that was passed during the last legislative session will now go to voters on the November ballot. We thank the General Assembly for adopting this reform in time for the new Congressional and General Assembly maps to be drawn based on the 2020 census numbers.

- **Equal Rights Amendment:** We are proud of our delegation for passing the ERA to guarantee equal legal rights for all American citizens regardless of gender, making Virginia the 38<sup>th</sup> state to pass the amendment.
- **Voting Rights:** The General Assembly took big steps toward guaranteeing voting rights for all citizens ages 18 and older. We thank our legislators for supporting participation in elections by allowing for no-excuse absentee voting and automatic voting registration as well as making election day a holiday and no longer requiring photo identification.
- **Gun Violence Prevention:** We support the newly enacted legislation that addresses gun violence including universal background checks, extreme risk protection orders, child access prevention laws, stronger protection orders, and state and local authority to regulate firearms in public spaces. We are proud of our legislators who stood strong during armed threats and protests.

The League commends our Fairfax delegation by acting on these human rights. However, our job is never done. During COVID-19, voter safety and elections' security are now human rights' concerns — voters need to be able to exercise their right to vote in a safe environment, and their votes need to be secure. “The League is strongly encouraging people to vote at home by absentee ballot this November to ensure voters' and election workers' health and safety during COVID-19,” urged Nancy Roodberg, LWV-Fairfax co-president.

We owe a debt of gratitude to our 400+ Fairfax area members and especially to our long time, dedicated members. “Amazingly, 28 members have been volunteering for our Fairfax League for more than 50 years!” exclaimed Roodberg.

We thank the League of Women Voters of Virginia for its leadership as well as our members who volunteer countless hours to stand up for what they believe. Since the 1970's, our members have protested,

written postcards and emails, and made hundreds of phone calls for ratification of the ERA. Since the 1980's, our League has advocated for redistricting reform for fair elections. Since the Sandy Hook tragedy, gun violence prevention has been of critical importance to us. Finally, voting rights have been a rallying cry for the past 71 years our League has been in Fairfax County.

We express our gratitude for the successes of this past legislative session, and we look forward to working with state and county officials to ensure safe and secure elections during the pandemic.

*\*\* The League thanks Fairfax Area state legislators: Senators Adam Ebbin, Barbara Favola, Janet Howell, Jennifer Boysko, Chap Petersen, Richard Saslaw, Scott Surovell, David Marsden, and George Barker; and Delegates Kathleen Murphy, Mark Keam, Kenneth Plum, David Bulova, Kaye Kory, Vivian Watts, Dan Helmer, Eileen Filler-Corn, Kathy Tran, Mark Sickles, Paul Krizek, Mark Levine, Rip Sullivan, Alfonso Lopez, Marcus Simon, Karrie Delaney, and Ibrahim Samirah.*