



SC Voter

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Website: www.lwvsc.org

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ETHICS BILLS SIGNED: Income Disclosure & Independent Investigation *League's Role in Passage Recognized*



On June 23, 2016, Governor Nikki Haley signed two ethics reform bills into law: *Income Disclosure and Independent Investigation*.

The Governor's office invited the League to attend the bill signing which was held in Easley, SC and requested that the League be one of the three speakers at the signing: the Governor, Senator Larry Martin, and the League.

Unfortunately, our League ethics legislation champion Lynn Teague could not be at the bill signing, but the Governor mentioned Lynn by name in her remarks and made it known that the League played a pivotal role in getting the ethics bills passed. In addition, she gave JoAnne Day two bill signing pens, one for each bill, to give to Lynn Teague. The Governor said she rarely gives two pens to one person.



Lynn Teague and JoAnne Day presented a *Spirit of Democracy Award* at State Council in the spring to Representative Kirkman Finlay for his work on the ethics bill. Senator Larry Martin also received the same award but was unable to attend.

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Presidents' Perspectives:

To say that this election season has been bizarre is an understatement. The country is divided and the political atmosphere is at times toxic. But in spite of the negative atmosphere of this election cycle, we are also witnessing a bright spot.

At long last we are beginning to see the rollback of voter suppression laws in many states. Before and after the 2013 Supreme Court decision that struck down a key part of the Voting Rights Act, we saw state after state (including South Carolina) pass laws that imposed restrictions on the right to vote under the guise of preventing voter fraud.

We congratulate our sister League in North Carolina on their recent victory when a federal appeals court struck down the heart of a North Carolina voting law, finding that lawmakers intentionally discriminated against African-Americans when they passed it. The court found that "Although the new provisions target African Americans with almost surgical precision, they constitute inapt remedies for the problems assertedly justifying them and, in fact, impose cures for problems that did not exist". In addition, courts have recently struck down strict voter ID laws in Texas, Wisconsin and North Dakota on the grounds that such measures disenfranchise poor and minority voters.

We look forward to even more positive court rulings across the country and we

will continue to work for the passage of more affirmative voting laws, such as automatic voter registration.

And speaking of voting and elections, ninety-six years after women won the right to vote, a major political party in the United States has finally nominated a woman to be president of the United States. This is a historic moment for the League, for women and our country. And while we celebrate this event, women are still woefully underrepresented in elective office and leadership positions.

According to LWVUS, in 2016:

- There are 104 women who serve in the U.S. Congress (or 19.4% of the 535 seats).
- Twenty women serve in the Senate (or 20% of the 100 seats) and 84 women serve in the House of Representatives (or 19.3% of the 435 seats).
- The number of women that serve in statewide executive elective posts is 76 (or 24.4% of the 312 seats), while the proportion of women in state legislatures is 24.6%.

More work must be done in order to provide women with the education, skills and resources to run for public office. The empowerment of women and other underrepresented groups in our political



JoAnne Day
Co-President, LWVSC

process can lead us to "making democracy work" more perfectly.

The League of Women Voters is, and has been uniquely suited to help lead the charge. We know how to do this and have done it for almost one hundred years. Now is the time for us to grow our membership, our diversity and assume an even greater mantle of leadership in our communities. YES, we can do this!

Welcome To Our New LWVSC Board Member

Welcome to our newest state board member, **Jean Wood from Greenville**, who joined LWVSC Board just in the nick of time in her role as Vice President for Voter Service.

Jean is a native of Indiana who has lived up and down the east coast but longest in Greenville, which she considers home. She has an undergraduate degree from Ball State University and a masters at Furman University. She joined the Greenville League in 2009 and has service in a number of offices and also obtained the grant for registering new citizens, described elsewhere in this VOTER.

Jean would like to remind everyone that National Voter Registration Day on Tuesday, September 27th. Join the rest of the country and most local Leagues and hold a voter registration. To sign up visit: <http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/partners/partner-sign-up/> LWVUS will supply the signs and other great materials. It's fun, it's important, and it's what we do!



The 2016 General Assembly and Looking Forward to 2017

By Lynne S. Teague, LWVSC VP, Issues and Action

In 2012 efforts were begun to revise South Carolina's appallingly weak ethics laws. In 2016 two ethics bills passed, following four years of very active advocacy by the League. One addresses independent investigation of complaints against legislators (H.3184) and the other disclosure of private income sources (H.3186). Both passed at the last minute on June 15, during the day when legislators returned under the sine die resolution to address the Governor's vetoes and conference reports. Both passed in weakened forms, but nevertheless represent major advances over where we were before their passage.

Governor Haley recognized the League as an indispensable partner in passing these bills during the signing ceremony, at which League Co-President JoAnne Day spoke. In a very sad follow-up to these successes, Senator Larry Martin, without whom these bills would surely never have passed, was defeated in the primary elections and will not return to the Senate. His departure is an immense loss to the state.

Many other bills were part of the League advocacy efforts in 2016. Many were coalition efforts; widely distributed summaries by environmental, education, and health care groups address those bills in detail. There were major environmental successes, especially passage of a bill that will stabilize the South Carolina shoreline for development purposes. There was a major loss in women's reproductive health, in passage of a ban on abortions after 19 weeks, a bill promoted on the basis of unscientific assertions about the

capacity of fetuses to feel pain and on rejection of concern for those who have been raped or are the victims of incest.

What do we expect in 2017? Ethics reform has only been begun. The next step is to address the problem of "dark money," the anonymous funds that go into supposedly independent ads to benefit or attack candidates and parties.

We will continue to work with the **Close the Gap Coalition** that is working to expand Medicaid to cover the estimated 123,000 South Carolinians who at present have no access to affordable health insurance.

We hope to find opportunities to work on judicial reform, following up on our study several years ago in which we concluded that we need a Judicial Merit Selection Commission that does not include the same legislators who vote on the final candidates.

We are working with the **Stop the Blank Checks Coalition** to reform the regulatory process that allows utilities to pass on all of their cost overruns to consumers, while shareholders receive a 10.5% guaranteed return.

We will continue to support the efforts of our allies in the environmental and health communities.

We expect to testify when hearings are scheduled on the issue of gun violence, on the basis of the League's strong national position on this issue.

There will doubtless be other challenges and opportunities that we don't yet foresee. We will do our best to work together to meet these in a way to serve the best interests of the citizens of our state.

National LWV News

Membership: The 2017 convention voted to allow 16 year olds to become full voting members of the League. Local Leagues will need to change their bylaws to be in conformity with national policy. Just think, two years of exposure to the League's way of being a good citizen before you cast your first vote! So let's recruit the next generation of voters and get them excited about democracy before they actually are able to vote.

Celebrating Women's Suffrage: Turning Point

The State Board of the League of Women Voters has donated \$1,000 to the Turning Point Suffragist Memorial, which is scheduled for completion by 2020, the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment. Our League will appear on the donor wall.

The Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit Virginia Corporation dedicated to honoring the suffragists who fought for and won women's right to vote. Their vision is to raise awareness and funds to create a memorial that will reflect the strength of these women and the significance of their struggle. In partnership with NOVA Parks, the memorial will be located near the Occoquan Workhouse in southern Fairfax County, Virginia where women were imprisoned for their demonstrations on behalf of the right to vote.

If you are interested in learning more, there is a Video on YouTube called Women's Suffrage in the 20th Century, or you can visit the Turning Point website, <https://suffragistmemorial.org/us/>.

Greenville Gets Voter Registration Grant

The Greenville League of Women Voters, in partnership with Leagues in Clemson, Spartanburg, and Columbia, is one of 11 local League recipients of a grant through the LWV Education Fund as well as other foundation sponsors.

The money will be used to cover the costs of having local League representatives attend the Friday swearing-in ceremonies for new U.S. citizens at the federal courthouse in Greenville and to register them as voters. Greenville has been doing this for some time on its own, so it's great that they got recognition and support! The grant runs from June 24th through end of November. Great going, Greenville!

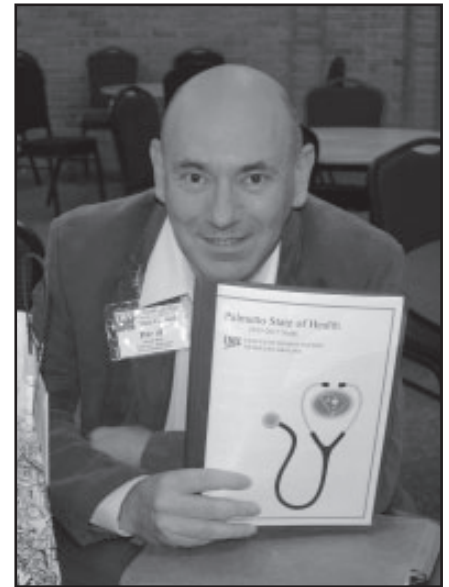


LWVSC Council Highlights:

- **Andy Brack**, Editor of State House Report, gave an inspiring talk on money in politics in South Carolina and the importance of being effective in influencing public policy through networking and communications.
- **David Ball** presented the Health Care study materials for next year's consensus. (See more details below.)
- **Alyssa Miller**, director of public affairs for Planned Parenthood in SC gave us an informative update on the status of women's health issues in the Legislature.
- **Lynn Teague** provided a great (almost) end of session report on the good, the bad and the ugly in this year's General Assembly session
- A LWVSC budget was adopted!



LWVSC board member Holley Ulbrich is chatting with featured speaker Andy Brack, editor of State House Report, who gave an inspiring talk on the state of South Carolina and the importance of being effective in influencing public policy through networking and communications.



David Ball

LWVSC Leagues to Participate in Health Care Study and Consensus

LWVSC received a draft of the consensus questions and supporting materials at State Council on May 14th from LWVSC health care expert, David Ball. David, who recently moved to Massachusetts, did a tremendous amount of work, including holding multiple focus groups to define the

issues. LWVSC Board is in the process of finalizing the consensus questions and supporting documentation with help from retired Clemson nursing professor Bonnie Holaday, a new member of the Clemson League.

We hope to have all the materials you need and some suggestions on

how to conduct the consensus to all local Leagues by the end of September. The focus is on expanding health care coverage and access for all citizens of South Carolina within the context of our national League health care position.

Consensus reports are due to LWVSC on March 1st,
so be sure to put this meeting on your calendar for no later than February.



LWVSC Board Decisions: *The Voter and Conventions*

LWVSC board members made two important decisions this summer that will affect local Leagues and local members. One was about state conventions. The other decision was about the VOTER. Both decisions were driven in part by dollars—using our funds more effectively for other purposes, like perhaps hiring a part-time intern to work with Lynn Teague. But they were also motivated by a desire to make convention more accessible and less burdensome on host Leagues and to focus the VOTER more on upcoming events than on what has already happened.

So we are cutting the VOTER from four issues a year to three. The VOTER is one of our largest single expenses, but we rejected the idea of having it solely in electronic form. It's important for it to show up in your mailbox and not get

lost in the deluge of email reminders. It's pretty. It's something to share with friends and prospective members. It also has a long lead time from board to deadline to layout and edit to production and distribution, so it needs to be focused on upcoming and recent major events—elections, the General Assembly, LEAD, council or convention.

The summer VOTER has the least news and the fewest upcoming events, so our schedule now is the fall issue (out in early September), the winter issue (out in early December) and the spring issue (out in March).

We have been discussing conventions, the cost, the distance, the volunteer demands, and this is the solution that state board came up with. The convention will rotate between our three major urban

centers of Columbia, Greenville, and Charleston. Each convention will have three or four host Leagues to share the work of planning and managing the event. Columbia will be the site of the 2017 convention, with Clemson (which was next in the rotation) working with Columbia and State Board on the planning and with on-site volunteers recruited from Florence, Darlington, Sumter and Columbia—the Midlands group. Then to Charleston in 2019 with Georgetown and Hilton Head as partners with the Charleston League, and Greenville with host partners Clemson and Spartanburg in 2021.

There are details to be worked out, but we think this will make it easier and encourage networking among local Leagues. Let us know what you think!

IMPORTANT LEAGUE DATES:

September

Voter Registration Month

17th Saturday, *Constitution/Citizenship Day*

27th Tuesday, *National Voter Registration Day*

October

Voter Education Month

8th Saturday, *Last day to register to vote in November election*

November

8th Tuesday, *General Election Day*



CALENDAR



Charleston Takes on Sea Level Rise

The sea level is rising! The sea level is rising! Everyone has heard that. Most people understand that. What many people don't know is what is being done to confront this challenge. The answer, it turns out, is "quite a lot."

On November 14, the LWV of the Charleston Area will present "Charleston Takes on Sea Level Rise: Strategies, Projects, Funding, and Progress" at the Charleston Library Society to provide concrete information about what has been, is being, and will be done to combat the effects of sea level rise in the Charleston area.

Sea level rise is just one aspect of the climate change impacting the whole state as time progresses, but communities along the S.C. coast already feel its effects in their daily lives. Dr. Elizabeth Fly of the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium points out that "sea level in the Charleston area has risen about one foot in the last 100 years," and the accelerated rise brings detrimental consequences to "roads, infrastructure, housing, historical structures, and quality of life."

According to a NOAA sponsored report*, the city averaged two days of tidal flooding a year in the 1970s, but that figure has now risen to 10 days and is anticipated to rise to 180 days a year by 2045.

So, what's going on in South Carolina, and specifically in the Charleston area, to get ahead of the problem?

Several years ago, the National Academy of Sciences formed a nation-wide initiative, **Resilient America**, to encourage the creation of "resilient communities," i.e., communities with the ability to prepare, plan for, absorb, recover, adapt to, and move on from adverse catastrophic events and chronic stresses. Charleston was chosen as one of its pilot communities; two Resilient America Roundtable conferences have been held in Charleston,

and the **Charleston Resilience Network(CRN)**** has been formed. The CRN is composed of local, regional, and state governmental leaders, public and private utilities, and research institutions. In another initiative, a coalition of MUSC, ETV, and community organizations presented Community Leaders Institute conferences on sea level rise this summer at St. Helena Island, Savannah, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach.

In December 2015, the City of Charleston published the Sea Level Rise Strategy***, a 50-year plan including 78 specific initiatives and goals for the city. Regional approaches are critical, but individual locations also have their unique issues. For example, sea walls,



The National Academy of Sciences formed a nation-wide initiative, Resilient America, to encourage the creation of "resilient communities"



which may be of great help elsewhere, are of limited value in Charleston because so much of the city is built on landfill and the sea seeps in from underneath. The city's goals include planning and coordinating as well as concrete engineering projects for mitigating the problem. Some have been underway for over 25 years; some have originated in recent years. Some will be completed within two years; others will stretch further into the future. Some have obtained funding; others are still in the application stage.

In one recent development, the Charleston Resilience Network received a half-million dollar grant from NOAA, being handled through the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, which will move the city closer to understanding localized effects of sea level rise and help guide major infrastructure improvements.

The League's November event in Charleston will focus on informing the public about the area's specific accomplishments, projects, and intentions. The audience will learn what is going on in the city, and underneath the city.

For example, after completing its master drainage plan in 1984, "the city began designing and constructing projects to improve drainage all over the city," says Laura Cabiness, the city's Director of Public Service. "The dollars invested in the projects that have been completed and those that are underway will exceed \$235,000,000." And other projects are planned or ongoing as well. We need to know more details, and we need to know how we as citizens can support the necessary efforts — whether it is by avoiding constructing impermeable surfaces, by collecting rain water in barrels, or by not complaining about construction noise from improvement projects. The presenters will be people who know what's happening, were involved in developing the strategic plan, and are charged with carrying it out. We anticipate a lively discussion.

* <http://www.ucsusa.org/sites/default/files/attach/2014/10/encroaching-tides-full-report.pdf>

** <http://www.charlestonresilience.net>

*** <http://www.charleston-sc.gov/DocumentCenter/View/10089>

LWV Gun Safety Coalition

By Melinda Hamilton, LWV/Charleston Area, President

It is no secret that gun violence deeply touches the heart of Charleston. It is all the more painful because it is interwoven with racism and hatred. If there is one issue on which the Charleston League would be unanimous, I suspect it would be the need for stronger gun safety laws. The facts are appalling. The gun murder rate in the United States is 25 times the average of other developed countries, according to the Center for American Progress. South Carolina is the fourth deadliest state for gun homicide with a rate 47 percent higher than the national average. The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence reports that South Carolina has some of the weakest gun laws in the nation.

It has been heartbreaking to watch as gun safety is swept aside again and again by elected officials nationally and in many states including South Carolina. However,

the League excels in marathons --dogged, difficult marathons devoted to a just cause. Gun violence is just such a cause.

At the national convention in June, LWVUS voted to join health and scientific organizations and research universities asking Congress to end the 20-year-long freeze on the Center for Disease Control's gun violence research funding. This work is essential to the study of gun violence as a public health issue.

In late in 2015, the LWV Gun Safety Coalition was formed under the leadership of Patti Brigham, First Vice President of the League of Women Voters of Florida. The coalition, which is open to all League members, now brings together representatives of 14 states. The coalition works to create a national focus on gun safety for the League and support grassroots advocacy.

In South Carolina, the General Assembly finally passed ethics reform legislation improving the transparency and accountability of South Carolina government. On the issue of gun safety, financial transparency is critical. In Charleston, the League has worked diligently with the guidance of LWVSC to create energy, visibility, and advocacy on the issue of gun safety. We are part of the LWV Gun Safety Coalition and are working to create a strong advocacy network under the leadership of Sarah Johnson, Legislative Action Director.

If you are interested in being part of the LWV Gun Safety Coalition, please email Patti Brigham at pattibrigham@gmail.com. If you would like to know more about Charleston's work on gun safety, please email Sarah Johnson at ccshad@aol.com or Melinda Hamilton at MelindaLH@aol.com.

LWVUS Convention Attendees Comment

Julie Hussey, LWVSC Co-President:

"I was surprised to learn that millennials are interested in issues but separate their interest from politics because they equate politics as conflict ridden and don't want to find themselves disagreeing with others. This opens up not just an understanding of this generation but also a role the League can play in creating safe places to discuss different sides of issues and training for advocates to embrace conflict versus run from it – if it wasn't for conflict, women wouldn't have the right to vote."

Fran Holt, LWV Hilton Head Island/Bluffton:

"I came away fired up to do all we can to make the world a better place for all but also learned how cautious we must be not to appear to favor a particular candidate or party in this very controversial election year."

Barbara Zia, former LWVUS Board Member:

"Among high points for me was a discussion about how to make LWV more inclusive as our second century approaches. Speaker Keesha Gaskins with Rockefeller Fund remarked on looking at the assembly that we were more diverse than in the

past in terms of age, race and ethnicity. As former LWV Minnesota Ex. Dir., she attended many national LWV meetings. But Dee Woodward reminded us that we still have far to go to leverage the power of all women to create a more perfect democracy. A really moving moment was testimony from a Dearborn, MI, delegate in hijab about how welcome she and other Muslim members are made to feel."

Sarah Johnson, LWV Charleston Area:

"I learned so much about voting rights, from the Lobby Day briefing to Ari Berman's amazing speech. One of our Congressmen responded by saying "So we require picture ID to fly, but we shouldn't require it to vote?" The issue is much more complex than that. A book study with Ari's book, Give Us the Ballot: The Modern Struggle for Voting Rights in America (<https://www.amazon.com/Give-Us-Ballot-Struggle-America/dp/0374158274>) might be in order!"

Marie Vandivort, LWV Charleston Area:

"Before hearing Ari Berman's speech on voting rights at convention I never really understood what the fuss was about. I thought, why can't everyone just bring their picture ID to vote. Ari explained that the gutting of the Voting Rights Act was part of a systematic effort to deprive people of their right to vote, thus unfairly influencing elections. He explained how morally wrong this is and traced the history of it, including William Rehnquist's influence on his clerk John Roberts. I now have an entirely new view of the importance of protecting voting rights."

Dee Woodward, LWV Sumter County and LWVSC VP, Community Relations:

"All I can say is 'Awesome' to the Convention. Changing the age of membership from 18 to 16 was a much needed change and made it awesome for me. That change will give us the opportunity not only to set up a voter registration table at high schools, but it also gives us the opportunity to recruit students who are not eligible to vote to join the League."



LWV SC Voter

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Established in 1951, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. All members receive the National Voter, the SC Voter, and a newsletter from their local League.

Co-Presidents: JoAnne Day
Julie Hussey

Editors: Holley Ulbrich & Laurel Suggs

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LWVSC DELEGATES to the June 2016 LWVUS Convention



BACK ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT):

*Sarah Johnson, Sue Yearwood, Julie Sellers,
Janelle Rivers, Peggy Appler, Julie Hussey,
JoAnne Day, Sharon Ayling, Dee Woodward*

FRONT ROW (LEFT TO RIGHT)

*Fran Holt, Barbara Zia, Nancy Finch,
Marie Vandivort*

MISSING:

Nicole Paluzzi, Clemson.



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