



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 1, 2011

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League of Women Voters of South Carolina to Hold 2011 Convention in Sumter

Arizona Chief Justice Ruth McGregor (ret.) and South Carolina Treasurer Curtis Loftis are featured speakers.

Columbia, SC– The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) will hold its 30th biennial convention at the Quality Inn Hotel, 2390 Broad St., Sumter, on May 14-15, with a renewed commitment to help all South Carolinians participate fully in the democratic process.

The two-day gathering will give League members across South Carolina the opportunity to celebrate the League's accomplishments in making sure voters are registered, informed and confident in the political process, discuss important policy issues, and plan the League's next two years in South Carolina. The LWV of Sumter County is convention host.

"This convention celebrates the League's 60th year in South Carolina. The theme, 'Empowered for Action: Staying True to Our Mission in South Carolina', stresses the League's important work advocating for voters and supporting public policies that are in the best interest of all who are fortunate to call South Carolina home," said Barbara Zia, LWVSC President.

A special focus of the Convention will be the League's statewide Initiative on Ensuring Independence and Increasing Diversity in South Carolina's Courts. The guest speaker at the Saturday Banquet will be the Hon., Ruth V. McGregor, retired Chief Justice of the Arizona Supreme Court. She served on the Arizona Supreme Court from 1998 until 2009 and was the Court's Chief Justice from 2005 until retirement. Prior to appointment to the Arizona bench in 1998, Justice McGregor served as law clerk to U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. In her address, Justice McGregor will present a national perspective on judicial independence and diversity.

South Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Ernest A. Finney, Jr., will receive the LWVSC's 2011 Spirit of Democracy award for his commitment to making democracy work in South Carolina. Justice Finney, the state's first African-American Supreme Court Justice since Reconstruction, is being honored for his commitment to a fair and impartial justice system. The award will be presented at the Convention Banquet on May 14 at the Sumter Quality Inn. A reception at 6 p.m. will be followed by the Banquet at 7:00. Reception/Banquet tickets cost \$25 and can be purchased by calling 803-251-2726.

"I am filled with pride as our League welcomes convention delegates to our beautiful city and we honor Sumter's own Justice Finney. He truly left his footprint on South Carolina history, and I believe our democracy is stronger because of it," said LWV of Sumter County President Chuck Gibbs.

S.C. Treasurer Curtis M. Loftis, Jr., will address delegates on the topic of the importance of transparency and openness in government. Other highlights include: a panel discussion on the judicial selection process with Circuit Court Judge W. Jeffrey Young, Rep. J. David Weeks, Pee Dee Citizens Committee on Judicial Selection Member Janet R. Lynam, S.C. Women Lawyers Association leader Victoria L. Eslinger, and Charleston School of Law Professor Constance Anastopoulo; a panel on South Carolina's electronic voting system featuring Rep. Joseph Neal, computer scientists Duncan Buell and Eleanor Hare, and citizen activist Frank Heindel; a presentation by Jane Brailsford and Allison Sullivan on iCivics, a program in South Carolina schools to educate the next generation of voters.

Spirit of Democracy Awards will also be presented to two outstanding League leaders: Sarah Leverette, one of South Carolina's first women lawyers and an tireless fighter for open, effective government; and Mary Ann Deku, whose name has been synonymous with voter outreach since the 1970s in Spartanburg.

For Convention schedule and registration information, go to www.lwvsc.org or call 803-251-2726.

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The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. Join us in making democracy work!