



SC Voter

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Convention Actions

At its April 29th convention in Columbia, League members from across the state of South Carolina adopted a health care position that supplements the national League position and extends it to particular policy issues in South Carolina. That includes insurance portability, expanding Medicaid, protecting reproductive rights, and ensuring children's access to health care. The League also will support the work of other organizations that address lifestyle health issues ranging from nutritional education, gun safety and violence prevention to obesity, discouraging tobacco use, and access to quality fresh food in rural and inner city areas. A detailed statement of the position is available on the League web site.

Following a rousing keynote speech by Florida's League President Pamela Goodman on her state's experience with redistricting, the League voted to make redistricting its number one action priority. Other action priorities are voter access, ethics reform, regulatory reform and judicial reform. The League will also continue to be active in collaborative issue areas with other groups, including health care, natural resources, and education. Local Leagues are encouraged to follow legislative developments in these areas and keep their members and communities abreast of new developments.

The League welcomed seven new board members: Fran Holt (treasurer), Sally Huguely (education), Phyllis Jones (membership support, redistricting), Linda Bilanchone (communications), Jane Turner (voter service), Suzanne Rhodes (nuclear waste), and Pat Forbis (criminal justice, women's health).



Pamela Goodman, President of the League of Women Voters of Florida



Former Senator Wes Hayes

Former Senator Wes Hayes, who spoke at the banquet, was presented with the Spirit of Democracy award for his many years of supporting issues of concern to the League, particularly in education.

— Author to come

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Co-President's Perspectives



I'm the not-so-new kid on the block as the new co-president of SCLWV with Julie Hussey for 2017-19. I have served on State Board off and on since the early 1970s in a variety of roles, most of them having to do with issues and advocacy. Our partnership got off to a rapid start with a July Board retreat at Table Rock, an August redistricting coalition meeting, conferring on the "fallout" from the V.C. Summers nuclear plant in Fairfield

County, and our first board meeting. The 2017-19 Board is a good mix of returning members and newcomers, with seven of our eleven Leagues represented.

The League is the lead partner in a redistricting coalition, partly because the other partners recognize that we are the democracy/good government experts and partly because of our nonpartisanship. When Wylecia Harris from the LWVUS spoke to our convention in April, she said that everything is on the table as we get ready for our 100th anniversary in three years—everything but nonpartisanship. That focus on issues and ideas, not people and parties, is our unbending commitment. Other organizations may have more money and more staff, but we are trusted like just about no one else to be fair and to be informed. It's a heritage from those who fought for women's suffrage, and our solemn trust to pass on to a new generation of Leaguers.

You will be reading about redistricting elsewhere in this issue, but I just want to point out something new that we are doing in educating ourselves. We're not encouraging local Leagues to bring in outside speakers. If we want to tell others the redistricting story, we have to learn it ourselves. So we have invited a few

folks from each local League (selected by the local board) who are willing to be the messengers. By the time you read this, they will have been in a two hour training in either Greenville, or Columbia, or Charleston. They will have come home with a bunch of handouts and some guidance on planning a meeting to help people understand what's at stake in redistricting, how it works, and what role we as a League can play. Your local League in turn needs to play its role in getting the people in your area interested, aware and informed about this very important issue. If this "train the trainers" approach works well for redistricting, we may try it again in future years for other important South Carolina League issues like education funding and environmental protection.

Voter participation is going to be another important area of focus as we start to gear up for the 2018 elections. South Carolina has a pretty high percentage of registered voters, but we don't do as well in voter turnout, especially for those all-important primaries. Think about what you can do to get people to the polls in our area, especially in primaries.

Fasten your seat belt and stay tuned—it's going to be a great ride!

—Holley Ulbrich



Know Your State: South Carolina Government Updated Spring 2014

- Revised edition of our popular book first published in 1972
- 70+-page paperback book describes the structure and functions of South Carolina State Government
- Includes recent revisions to the Constitution, changes in voting, education funding, property tax relief, restrictions on powers of local government, changes in absentee voting procedures, and reorganization in the executive branch
- Ideal for students from secondary school through college
- Excellent resource for teachers at all levels
- Essential tool for citizen advocates
- Useful reference for information about South Carolina State Government

\$12 for non-League members, plus \$1 per copy shipping
\$10 for League members or \$10 per copy for 10 or more copies, plus \$1 per copy shipping
Learn more at www.lwvsc.org/publications.html

Sarah Leverette: Appleseed Legal Justice Advocate Award

Sarah Leverette is a pioneer in fighting for a seat at the table for women in the legal profession and in their communities. Sarah graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Law in 1943 – the only woman in her class and only the third woman to graduate from the Law school at that time. Though many doors in the legal profession were closed to women at that time Sarah persevered and worked for over twenty-five years as the first female faculty member at USC's law school and later served as the commissioner and chair of what is now the Workers Compensation Commission.

She paved the way for the women who followed her and is admired in South Carolina in the legal profession and beyond. As a member of the League of Women Voters and past Columbia League president Sarah has advocated tirelessly for equality for women, including the right of women to serve on juries in South Carolina. She has also worked for judicial reform and for civil rights and social justice in South Carolina.

We in the League are so proud that Sarah is being honored by the South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center as the recipient of the 2017 Rev. Sen. Clementa C. Pinckney Award for Justice on September 26. We cherish her as a League member, friend, and pioneer for full equality for women. In spite of the many obstacles she faced throughout her career, of our Sarah we can say: "She persisted."

Congratulations, Sarah!

—Keller Barron



An Electrocardiogram of Democracy

If democracy is government of the people, for the people, and by the people, then meetings of boards, councils, commissions, and agencies are its beating heart. Making democracy work is a major goal for the LWV; the recently formed Columbia Chapter Observer Corp (OC) is taking democracy's pulse.

To accomplish this goal, we have several committed League volunteers who observe designated monthly meetings for Richland County Council, City of Columbia, SC Election Commission, and some local school boards to include Richland and Lexington counties. Our presence at these meetings also builds relationships with public officials and lets our elected representatives know that the League is paying attention to what they do. There is no formal training or qualifications required for observers, but training

materials and informal training are available.

After each observation, volunteers complete a simple form that summarizes the highlights of each meeting, paying particular attention to matters of interest to the League. The summary is then published in the League Lines, a LWV publication, and shared with other League members.

We welcome your input and feedback (contact Rana Davis [ranaperi@outlook.com] or Pat Mohr [patmohr@mindspring.com]). We believe efforts like these can keep democracy alive!

—Rana Davis, Columbia League

Editor's note: Charleston, Hilton Head, and Clemson also have observer programs, and maybe other local Leagues as well. Share your adventures in observing public meetings for a future VOTER article.



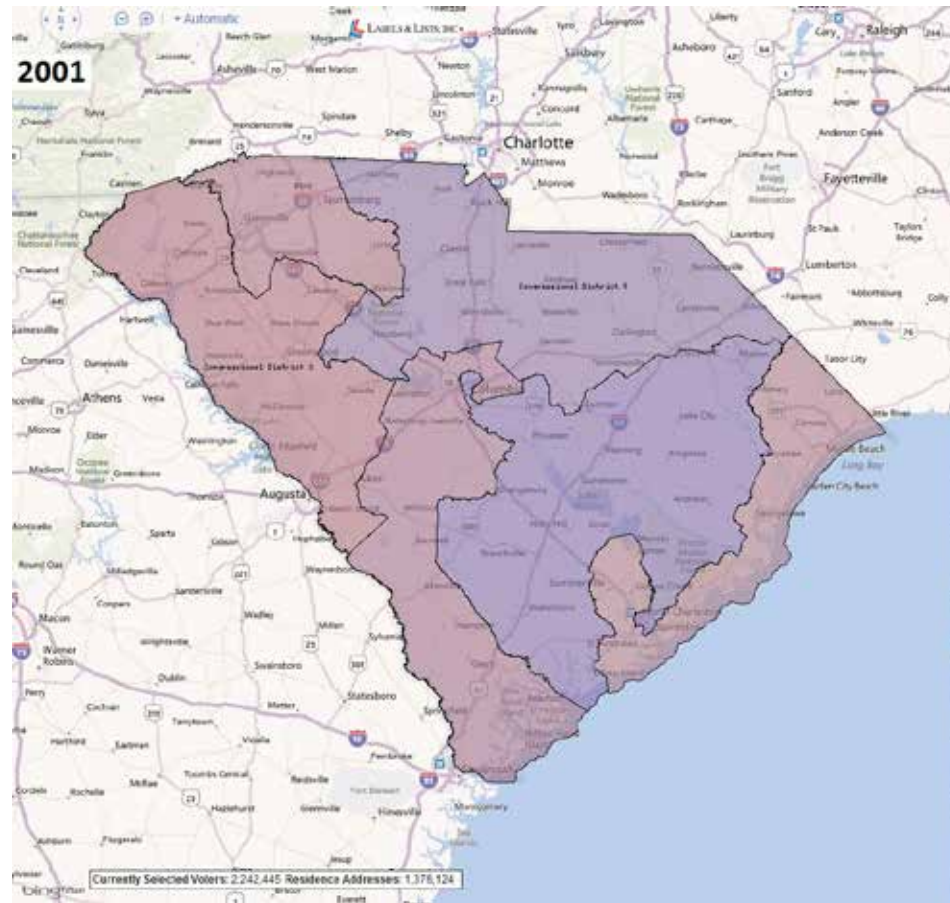
Redistricting and the League

League leadership is working to develop a coalition to support voter-centered redistricting in South Carolina. This is a big job. At present legislators draw their own districts, shifting lines to their own advantage and that of their party. Holley Ulbrich has described this process in this issue, and more information is available in an excellent presentation developed by the Charleston Area League, available on their website at <http://lwvcharleston.org/RedistrictingReform.html>.

In keeping with the League's long-standing mission, "Making Democracy Work," we are emphasizing a nonpartisan approach to redistricting reform. Our goal is not to further the interests of a party or candidate, but of the voters. We want district lines drawn by an independent commission and we want criteria that do not include protecting the interests of incumbents or parties. This is essential to break through voter apathy (why vote if the conclusion is foregone?), to reduce polarization in our legislature and Congress, and to ensure that every legislator must make his or her case to voters representing the full range of citizens who live in around their communities.

We must convince legislators that their voters care about this issue enough that they must respond to our call for reform. To do this we want 1. Awareness, 2. Acceptance, and 3. Action from the public. We have already formed the core of a steering committee for this effort, joined by AARP of South Carolina, Conservation Voters of South Carolina, and the NAACP of South Carolina. Several other organizations are considering joining this central group. We intend to reach out beyond this to a wide range of interested individuals, businesses, and organizations to create a communication network that will reach throughout the state.

We are working to develop effective messages and communication methods.



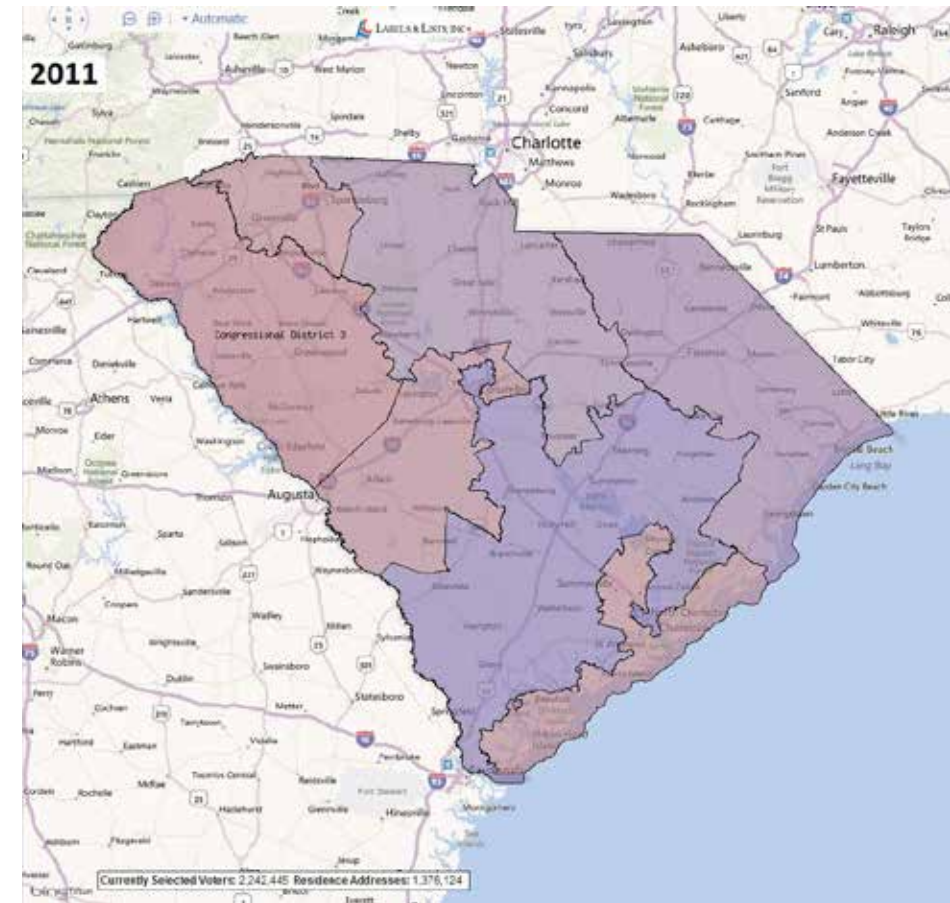
We have begun the process of training League members across the state to speak to groups interested in this issue and spread the word, but we will need much more than this to make a fundamental change in how district lines are drawn in South Carolina. We will need to raise funds, and will reach out to granting foundations, businesses and individuals for their help.

It will be a long effort, not finished overnight. A core group of legislators in the House is already discussing legislation with us and we have had preliminary conversations with some interested senators. Bills will be introduced, but will go nowhere without public support. Whatever we accomplish through the legislative

process, we will need to continue our push as 2020 census data become available and the actual process of drawing lines takes place. At that point in the process our coalition will continue our work with the benefit of League members with extensive experience in the redistricting process and especially in the computer mapping necessary to develop and promote maps that respect the rights of voters.

We hope that when maps are completed we and our partner organizations can celebrate, along with our General Assembly, a job well done. If not, we will continue the fight in court, as Leagues across our nation have done, to insure that every vote counts!

— Lynn Teague,
VP for Program and Action



Redistricting is coming to a county, school board, legislature and Congress near you! So here are a few basic issues that you need to keep in mind as the process begins to heat up.

First of all, every elected entity except for the U.S. Senate that elects its government from single member districts, wards, or seats (rather than at large) has to redraw those lines every ten years after the Census. For Congress, districts have to be exactly equal in population; for state and local districts, a five percent variance either way is allowed.

The Census is in 2020, the data will be out in 2021, and the process of actual drawing district lines will take us into

early 2022 for the November election. (If you look at the map for Congressional Districts, you will notice some very odd-shaped districts. The same is true for state senate and house seats.) Long before 2022, we will be looking at the process and the rules for drawing those lines, which in South Carolina are drawn by the General Assembly. The League and others would very much like to shift the primary responsibility to an independent commission as 22 other states do. We also want clear criteria for drawing districts in case a court challenge is needed to prevent gerrymandering.

UP until the 1970s, redistricting was an occasional event, but court challenges

in the 1960s plus the Voting Rights Act changed the game. The Supreme Court ruled that districts had to be equal in population all the way down to local governments—except, of course, the U.S. Senate, because two per state is what is in the Constitution. The Voting Rights Act made it illegal to draw boundaries so as to dilute the power of minority voters, although it has taken many cases to define what that meant. When the lines are drawn to concentrate minority voters in one district, or to spread them thinly across districts so their vote doesn't count, that's racial gerrymandering.

Right now the court cases are focusing on partisan gerrymandering—drawing districts to favor one party over another. That's a widespread practice in both parties, whichever one is in control of the legislature. One party may get more total votes yet wind up with a minority in its Congressional representation or not have control of either house of the state legislature. The Supreme Court has acknowledged that partisan gerrymandering is a problem, but is looking for measures to determine whether it exists and how severe the problem is. Mathematicians and political scientists have developed some measures that will be tested in some current court cases, especially the Wisconsin case that will be argued this October.

The League hopes to play an important role in making sure that the lines are drawn in a way that ensures that your vote, and everyone else's vote, has an equal chance to influence the outcome. We are going to create an army of advocates to pressure the General Assembly to have an open and fair process with an acceptable outcome. We need you to be part of that army. You can start by attending your local League's redistricting meeting to make sure that you understand what is at stake, and then spread the word.

— Holley Ulbrich, Co-president



Does Your City or County Have Elections on November 7 This Year?

Two Spartanburg citizens (Jane Turner and Linda Bilanchone) decided to see what we could find out about off-year elections. We know that a City of Spartanburg mayoral election is coming up, but we wondered what else is on the ballot so we started to check. We went to the Spartanburg County Registration and Elections Office website and found that the towns of Landrum, Pacolet and the county of Spartanburg would also have elections on Tuesday, November 7. But there was no information given as to the positions to be on the ballot and no information as to who the candidates might be! And, we didn't find anything more about Spartanburg. Emails and phone calls were in order, but we happened to be working on a weekend. **And, shouldn't this information be available on websites?** From past experience, we were pretty sure that the answer was to go to the City of Spartanburg website because the municipality is responsible for city elections and they contract with the Registration and Elections Office to run them. Alas, we couldn't find any

information there, either. Next, we tried the South Carolina Municipal Association; maybe they've collected information about all the municipal elections across the state. No, couldn't find anything there, either. How about SCiWay? Surely, that's the answer. Nope, couldn't find anything. Ah, how about SCVotes.org?? Surely that's it. Nope.

Now, we're not saying that the information is not there, but we two are fairly typical citizens and we weren't able to find it. Of course, it is true that we are dedicated to "Making Democracy Work," and we expected it to be front and center on the website: **"There's a City election coming up! Choose your leaders! Be sure to study the candidates (names listed with districts in which they are running) and come out and vote on Tuesday, November 7, 2017! Be part of making our town great!"** Wow! That's got some energy! But, of course, that was OUR idea!

Not wanting to give up, we tested a few other cities where we have Leagues. Couldn't find anything on the City of Beaufort website. Then, COLUMBIA –

YAHOO! Right there under "Welcome to the City of Columbia" is notice of the November 7 election and information about the offices to be elected and more voter information! Wow! We nominate Columbia for the prize. We wanted to stop with this success, but we went on. Next was Charleston – another great story for us!!! Guess who had the information that came up in one click? **The League of Women Voters of Charleston County!!!!** It was all there and beautifully accessible; it makes us think – should all SC Leagues be doing this?? If we want people to vote, they have to know there's an election.

Greenville: We did find the information after "clicking around." And a friend told us that she found it on the City website pretty quickly. Maybe we were just getting tired! So, what's the take-away? 1. We're not saying the information isn't there, but we are regular citizens, and in most cases, we couldn't find it. 2. And wouldn't it be appropriate to show filing deadlines for potential candidates right there with the date of the election? Maybe each Local League could check (definitely look at the stellar Columbia website) and if you can't

easily find your local information, perhaps the League could call attention to that. Cities are responsible for their own elections so the phone call or email would go to City Hall. And, we have time to check out the dissemination of this information BEFORE the election happens in November! Happy hunting!

— Jane Turner and Linda Bilanchone
LWVSC Board Members



Home Rule Requires Money

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina strongly supports home rule for cities, counties and school boards. Home rule means having some freedom to make decisions on behalf of the citizens of your county, school district, or municipality. An important dimension of home rule is the ability to manage local government finances with some degree of independence. It also means that when the state requires local governments to provide certain services ("mandates"), the state has some obligation to help to pay for them.

That "fair share" approach involves the Local Government Fund, established in 1990. Since 1920, the state had been collecting 11 different taxes on behalf of local governments for the previous 60 years. In 1990, those funds, now reduced to seven taxes, became part of the General Fund. In exchange, cities and counties were promised 4.5 percent of the previous year's state revenue, which was the percent of the General Fund that those taxes were expected to supply in 1990. County governments receive 83.278 percent of the LGF, and municipal governments get 16.722 percent. This split represented the percentage of those funds actually going to county and municipal governments in 1990. Counties receive a larger share than cities because they have many more shared service responsibilities, ranging from health services to election management to housing circuit court judges.

The state has not been consistent in funding this program. Last fiscal year, it provided \$222 million rather than the \$312 million that the 1990 legislation would have required. Now the House Ways and Means Committee is looking at reducing the amount to the current level and providing for inflation-adjusted increases in the future. However, no one is suggesting that the counties get any relief from the required services they are expected to provide.

Cutting the Local Government Fund would not be so painful if local governments had more flexibility in ways to raise revenue. However, even if they did have more revenue tools, less funding for the Local Government Fund is hard on poor counties. The funds are distributed on a per capita basis, so they represent a

larger share of total funding in the state's smaller, poorer, and more rural counties.

Perhaps the formula needs to be re-examined, but let's not balance the state's budget on the backs of those counties least able to make up the funding gap.

—Holley Ulbrich, State Board Director for Home Rule and Taxation

LWVSC Planning Calendar 2017-18

October 2017

- 8 Last day to register to vote in November election
- SCLWV finance appeal
- Local Leagues should schedule a meeting on redistricting in October or November

November 2017

- 4 Written reports due to state board for distribution
- 7 General Election Day, municipal elections in SC
- 12 State Board Meeting in Columbia
- 17 Deadline for material for Winter SC VOTER

December 2017

- Winter SC Voter mailed

January 2018

- 9 General Assembly reconvenes
- 13 Conference call state board meeting
- 27 LEAD
- 31 Deadline for LWVUS membership count
- Budget committee meets

February 2018

- 14 LWVUS is 98 years old
- 16 Deadline for material for Spring SC VOTER
- 23 Written reports due to state board president for board distribution

March 2018

- Women's History Month
- 3 State Board meets
- Spring SC VOTER mailed
- 30 Filing deadline for June primary

April 2018

- 27 State Council
- State Board TBA

May 2018

- 5 Registration deadline to vote in June Primary
- 10 General Assembly adjourns

June 2018

- 5 Primary elections
- 28 July 1st National Convention in Chicago



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.

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Democracy Is A Cause Worth Fighting For

LWV has long acknowledged that democracy is not a spectator sport, but the need for us to get into the game has never been more important.

Luckily, our membership rolls are growing throughout the state. Membership dues are essential to keep us connected across the state and the country through educational events such as conferences or webinars and communication tools such as this newsletter, emails, websites, and a basic database. While LWVSC and all the local Leagues in SC do not have any staff, LWVUS staff are essential to share best practices, stay on top of federal actions, support court cases, and insure the League is at the table. Membership dues are important to keep the League in the fight for democracy, but not enough

to make certain we have the deep bench needed to win, especially in the game to create competitive and well defined voting districts through redistricting in 2020.

Our bench includes, Lynn Teague, our full-time volunteer lobbyist. She is certainly a heavy hitter, but she could more effectively manage our redistricting campaign with a full, professional communications campaign. Our bench also has some heavy hitters, such as Nancy Moore, who can wield some impressive great database skills, but she could use a more robust database to precisely target at the legislator district level. Jean Wood in Greenville is ready to host large scale forums on redistricting and other topics but needs general liability insurance to reserve meeting space. Thanks to an

anonymous donation in Charleston and additional local contributions our bench now includes a professional Stacker presentation that explains redistricting in 30 slides, but boosting it across social media could use advertising dollars.

Defending democracy is not easy or cheap, but the future of our country depends upon us. Can you help with a general or designated donation? Click the donate button on the LWVSC website. You can designate your funds to our general account, to a local League, or to redistricting or voter services. If you want to add the League to your estate plans or host a fundraiser for the League, contact Julie Hussey at copresidentlwvsc@gmail.com or Jane Pulling at (843)209-3505.

— Julie Hussey, Co-President

