



# SC Voter

Post Office Box 8453 • Columbia, SC 29202 • Phone & Fax: (803) 251-2726

Website: [www.lwvsc.org](http://www.lwvsc.org)

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## Legislative Expectations

Aside from bills introduced to deal with the SCANA situation and the very obvious need for regulatory reform, little has changed since the last report since the General Assembly has not been in session. Bills dealing with regulatory reform include the following:

- **H.4022** Amends the Base Load Review Act (BLRA) to introduce consumer protections (bill previously introduced by Rep. Finlay and advanced through subcommittee in 2017)
- **H.4375** Rate determination under the BLRA (filed by House Ad Hoc Committee)
- **H.4376** Reforms the Public Service Authority (Santee Cooper) board (filed by House Ad Hoc Committee)
- **H.4377** Public Service Commission membership and authority (filed by House Ad Hoc Committee)
- **H.4278** Utility Oversight Committee (replaces Public Utilities Review Committee but with little change in legislative dominance and political influence, which has been the greatest problem in utility regulation) (filed by House Ad Hoc Committee)
- **H.4279** Establishes a Consumer Advocate in the Office of the Attorney General (where its very different function from the remainder of the office virtually guarantees withering on the vine) (filed by House Ad Hoc Committee)
- **H.4380** Provides for refunds to taxpayers for costs associated with V. C. Summer (a legally difficult area; no one should count on a check in the mail soon) (filed by House Ad Hoc Committee)
- **H.4419** Public Service Commission Composition
- **H.4420** Limits severance packages for utility executives
- **H.4421** Utility Consumer Bill of Rights
- **H.4425** Public Utility Consumer Protection Act
- **H.4414** Public Service Commission appointments by Governor
- **H.4417** Lobbyist reports related to utilities
- **H.4415** Public election of Public Service Commission members
- **H.4401** Nuclear energy experts to be retained to advise on selling Santee Cooper

We hope to see movement for the bill introduced by Rep. Gary Clary and Mandy Powers Norrell to insure reporting of dark money contributions and expenditures, H.3514. There is otherwise to date no rush to file bills in response to the grave deficiencies in State House ethics apparent from current criminal investigations.

We hope to see filing and movement of a bill to insure that redistricting is done in the interest of voters rather than incumbents and parties, incorporating sound elements from bills filed previously in the House by Funderburk (H.3339) and in the Senate by Setzler (S.341). We are working with a legislative team and with partner organizations to advance this important effort.

We are tracking many other bills on behalf of the League, and expect that there will be surprises along the way as the pre-filing and filing continues and as the session gets underway. However, the areas that have been discussed here will be the primary focus of League advocacy in 2018.

— Lynn Shuler Teague  
VP for Issues and Action, LWVSC

### Highlights

<i>Co-President's Message</i> .....	2
<i>Education Update</i> .....	3
<i>The V. C. Summer Failure and our Regulatory System</i> .....	4
<i>Environment Update</i> .....	5
<i>Redistricting Update</i> .....	6
<i>LEAD</i> .....	7
<i>Calendar</i> .....	7
<i>Membership</i> .....	8



## Co-President's Perspectives



Whether it is at the local, state, or national level, members of the League of Women Voters are working to empower voters and defend democracy. In South Carolina, this means keeping our government accountable at all levels so every person can have the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate. The League has been working at dining room tables, voter registration booths, public meetings, policy or candidate forums, and legislative hearings for 97 years, but there is no time to rest on our laurels. The LWV and its federated organization is needed now more than ever as trust in the American people and our national political leaders to make political decisions is at an all time low. On the heels of recent elections that welcomed lots of new women and minority candidates, statehouse ethics probes that have revised our calls for reform, the V.C. Summer debacle that spotlights why we need the League to serve as government

watchdogs, and redistricting programs across the state that demonstrate our power to inform, LWVSC and all our local organizations are gearing up for the 2018 SC Legislative Session and 2018 elections. Committed to empowering voters:

We will continue to register voters at high schools, naturalization ceremonies, and local events. We are also working on a new effort with SC's Department of Corrections to improve registration rates of ex-offenders.

- We will remind voters that SC does not require party registration and that primary voting matters.

Committed to preparing our members and community to participate fully in the political process:

- We will learn to become successful fundraisers and data users in 2018.

Committed to defending democracy:

- We will continue our call for ethics reform, including support for H.3514 to fight dark money in our elections.
- We will demand accountability with VC Summer and the Base Load Review Act and testify before legislative panels and the Public Service Commission of South Carolina for rate relief.
- We will support legislative bills, such as H.3339 that call for an independent redistricting panel.
- We will work to establish redistricting criteria with compact

contiguous districts, preservation of political subdivisions and communities of interest, and the prohibition of strategies protecting incumbents and/or partisan advantage.

- We will keep insisting that students across the state should receive a high quality education even after the SC Supreme Court has ended the Abbeville Case.

All of this work is extremely important and none of it is possible without you.

**Democracy is thankful for your 2017 efforts and needs you even more in 2018.**

Thank you for adding your energy and support to our cause in 2017 and consider adding our commitments to your personal goals and efforts for 2018. Democracy needs you now more than ever.

*Julie Hussey, Co-President, LWVSC*

Want to stay up to date with the latest news and events? Looking for resources? Visit:

[lww.org](http://lww.org) ★ [twitter.com/lwv](https://twitter.com/lwv) ★ [facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters](https://facebook.com/leagueofwomenvoters)

Search for your local chapter on Facebook



## Education Update

Three public education issues will be in the forefront when the General Assembly reconvenes in January. Foremost is the recent S.C. Supreme Court decision reversing its 2014 ruling that required the state Legislature to annually report on its progress toward equalizing funding among South Carolina's 82 public school districts. Last month, the state Supreme Court decided by a 3-2 vote that the Legislature had demonstrated enough progress toward school funding equity that court oversight was no longer needed. In 2014, the Supreme Court ruled – also by a 3-2 vote – that the General Assembly had failed to meet the constitutional requirement to provide a “minimally adequate education” to all children, regardless of poverty, location, and access to resources. In addition to the 2014 finding in the Abbeville County v. the State of South Carolina lawsuit, the court maintained jurisdiction over the case, requiring a yearly legislative report on progress to alleviate the equity problem. After the 2014 decision, the Legislature complained about judicial overreach, which was the main assertion made by the court when reversing its decision in November.

In addition to potential action on the Abbeville court reversal, the Legislature will consider recommendations on how to better recruit and retain public school teachers. Under legislative proviso, a statewide task force, chaired by state Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman, worked this summer to address the state's growing teacher shortage. With more teachers retiring and fewer students selecting teaching as a career, projections show South Carolina facing a significant teacher shortage, particularly in rural areas and poor districts. Task force recommendations, which include better teacher pay, expansion of student loan programs, and more alternative pathways to certification, will be presented to the General Assembly in the upcoming session.

Also, South Carolinians for Responsible Government, a group supporting school choice and vouchers, announced an effort to double state revenue appropriated for the school choice program. Currently, the Legislature appropriates \$11 million annually to allow students with disabilities to attend private schools. South Carolinians for Responsible Government will lobby for \$25 million to be allocated for the state's school choice funding program.

— Sally Huguley  
Education Chair, LWVSC

Let's all VOW to **VERIFY** what may or may NOT be news!

- V** View
- E** Evaluate
- R** Research, if needed
- I** Identify truth? Or
- F** Falsehood?
- Y** Yes or No?

Supporting responsible news reporting is part of making democracy work!



Show your love for redistricting in bumper sticker form!

This conversation-starting bumper sticker was designed by the Clemson League member and graphic designer Christine Prado to help raise awareness of the redistricting issue.

We are accepting orders, minimum of ten bumper stickers, at \$2 each, postage paid. Stickers will also be available individually at LEAD on January 27th.

Send your orders with a check made out the LWVSC to:  
**Holley Ulbrich**  
2 Birch Place  
Clemson SC 29631  
Questions?  
Call 864-654-6828





# The V. C. Summer Failure and our Regulatory System



Photo courtesy SCE&G

The League has been actively involved for about two years in addressing problems in South Carolina's system for the regulation of utilities. Serious problems were brought to public attention by the failure of the V. C. Summer Nuclear Units # 2 and #3 in Fairfield County, culminating in the abandonment of construction of that project announced on August 1, 2017. At present, 18.3% of SCE&G customers' bills and an unknown percentage of Santee Cooper customers' bills (including electric cooperatives) are paid to cover the cost of financing for the construction.

The League is not principally concerned with those rates, but rather with the regulatory system that helped to produce them. This is an aspect of our overall concern with government

accountability. We are addressing the problem on several fronts.

In the 2017 session we worked with Rep. Kirkman Finlay and allied citizen groups to file H.4022, a bill to amend the Base Load Review Act (BLRA). The BLRA unwisely placed the burden of proving imprudent project management on those who object to rate increases and reduces utility responsibility for the actions of its contractors. Freed from the need to justify its costs to the extent normally required, the SCE&G contract with Westinghouse to build its nuclear reactors did not even require that Westinghouse meet project benchmarks before being paid. The consequence is that neither contractors nor SCANA had commercial incentive to finish the project. In fact, the more the project cost, the more

everyone involved made. This is clearly not in the public interest. Accordingly, the Attorney General has issued an opinion that the BLRA is constitutionally questionable. This question will play out as central to resolving the V. C. Summer situation through the regulatory, judicial, and legislative processes.

We found, however, that the BLRA was not the whole problem. Economists have a concept called "regulatory capture" in which government regulators over time learn to see things from the perspective of the regulated industry. This has happened in South Carolina. With the regulatory structure embedded in the General Assembly, the influence of lobbyists and campaign contributions as well as the hope of jobs and tax revenues from economic development produced a willingness

to view utilities as "friendly corporate partners" rather than for-profit entities in need of regulation to prevent abuse of captive customers. The Public Utilities Review Committee (PURC) oversees the regulatory system, and is made up of legislators and legislative appointees. They have responded very positively to the industry in overseeing the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS), the Public Service Commission (PSC), and the Public Service Authority (PSA, or Santee Cooper).

What is to be done? The House and Senate are working separately on addressing this situation. The League has been represented at every meeting of their committees and has testified before the House Ratepayer Protection Act Committee. On November 9, six bills were pre-filed in the House to restructure regulation of utilities. The League testified in favor of those bills, with recommended amendments, in a November 14 subcommittee hearing. We will continue to follow these bills, as well as other related bills introduced by Representatives Finlay, J. Smith, Stavrinakis, McCoy, Putnam, and Rutherford.

In addition, Vice President for Issues and Action Lynn Teague has filed as an intervenor in the PSC docket responding to a request by the ORS to suspend collection of rates based on Summer construction pending resolution of the issues around the BLRA in courts and in the legislature. League Co-President Holley Ulbrich and state board member Sarah Leverette provided expert witness testimony in that filing. Oral arguments will be heard by the PSC on December 12.

Meanwhile, numerous lawsuits have been filed. The League is not party to those, but will continue to argue for accountable and transparent regulation of utilities in the public interest as the legislative and regulatory processes play out over the next months, and doubtless years.

— Lynn Shuler Teague  
VP for Issues and Action, LWVSC



Vice President for Issues and Action Lynn Teague

## Time to Protect and Assure Citizens' Rights, Not Abandon Them

The VC Summer nuclear plant debacle, with its underlying betrayal of ratepayers by the utilities and our legislators, creates an opportunity for much-needed energy reform. As initiatives on this issue are rushed to the legislature and as other bills are primed for debate this term, one notes a common theme: that citizens' rights to protection and regulation of their own property, their communities, and the state at large are seriously threatened.

South Carolinians committed to protecting the state's natural resources will vigorously oppose several bills. For example:

- Two bills (S.105, H.3565) will gut the Automatic Stay of its power to provide due process to citizens wanting time to examine development projects before irreparable harm is done;
- Another bill (H.3529) will prevent communities from regulating plastic bags and other waste products through local ordinances;
- Two bills (S.323, H.3653) will prevent citizens from taking legal action against nuisances (e.g., noise, odors, pollution) caused by nearby industries;
- An additional bill (H.3929) will ease permitting requirements for poultry houses and limit the ability of neighbors to challenge a permit.

In contrast, a bill to be supported is H.3416; it calls for placing a referendum on the next statewide ballot that would, if passed, amend the state constitution to establish an Environmental Bill of Rights. This would grant standing for individuals to conserve and protect the environment and grant authority for local governments, under the principle of home rule, to enact environmental regulations more protective than state law.

Stand ready to contact your legislators; your voice will be needed!

— Christe McCoy-Lawrence  
Director, Natural Resources, LWVSC





# Redistricting Update

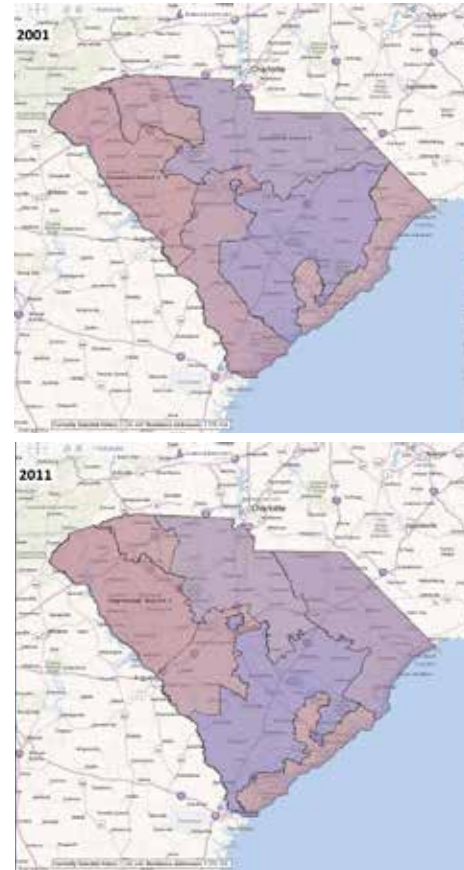
What do we want? Competitive elections. Why do we want competitive elections? Because a legislator who is just a tiny bit worried about losing the next election is a legislator who is more inclined to listen to his or her constituents. When do we want them? As soon as possible. We want to encourage candidates to run for office and voters to turn out for primary and general elections in 2018, but we definitely want competitive elections after the 2020 Census when the district lines are redrawn. How are we going to make it happen? By constantly reminding our legislators and the public that we are going to hold their feet to the fire until they do it right.

Our commitment to redistricting is moving ahead in several significant ways. Much of our effort must be directed to insuring that citizens speak out to their legislators. This is essential if we are to succeed. We held two training sessions for representatives from local Leagues in Greenville and Columbia in September, to prepare them to hold meetings and stir up interest and awareness in their local communities. Packets of information were distributed to each local League. A meeting of redistricting partner organizations and interested individuals, including NAACP, AARP, and other organizations,

was held in Columbia on November 4th. This provided another opportunity to train local League members. Almost all of our local Leagues took advantage of these learning opportunities to prepare themselves to start this long battle for competitive elections. Most of our local Leagues have had or have scheduled an informational meeting on redistricting, and several of them have sent out speakers to other local groups.

At the Columbia meeting, speakers included two of the eight house members (Gary Clary and Laurie Funderburk) who are sponsoring a bill to create an independent redistricting commission and to establish the criteria for drawing district lines. Clear criteria will offer not only guidelines but also establish a basis for challenging the new districts after the 2020 Census.

Charleston has developed a lively computer slide presentation that local Leagues can download from the Charleston League website. Clemson has developed a second one with more detailed information that local Leagues may want to use for presentations or as a resource, which is available from Lynn Teague or Holley Ulbrich. A bumper sticker is in progress, which we hope to have available for sale at LEAD on January 28th. Stay tuned as the League



and its partners move forward to insure that our votes matter and our elected officials are accountable.

— Holley Ulbrich, Co-president, LWVSC

# Save the Date: LEAD Jan 27, 2018

The LWVSC Board is planning another great Leadership, Education, and Advocacy Day for the last Saturday of January with the focus on Making Democracy Work at the Statehouse and across SC.

Mark January 27th on your calendar from 10 am until 2:30 pm. We will return to The South Carolina Education Association building on Zimalcrest Drive.

Lynn Teague will be back to get us ready for the new legislative session. Laura Hart, one of the attorneys who argued the Abbeville case, will bring us the latest news of the status of our poorest districts and the legislative (non)response to the state Supreme Court. Lynn Teague will do double duty by regaling us with the war stories of the V.C. Summer nuclear plant and the Base Load Review Act and the quagmire of regulatory agencies needed to deal appropriately with this case of mismanagement. Matt Saltzman, a Clemson League member, mathematician, and trained expert witness on redistricting, will bring us up to speed on new developments in redistricting. We will also have time for local Leagues to share their progress on redistricting and other matters.

State League has offered to pay mileage at 17 cents per mile for one car from each local League. Ready to register? Sign up today for just \$25 per person to cover coffee and snacks, breakfast, lunch, and materials. A registration form has been sent to all local presidents or you can register individually. You can send your registration and a check to our treasurer Fran Holt, 54 Wax Myrtle Ct., Hilton Head Island, SC 29926. If you want to pay at the door, please let Fran know (franholthhbl@gmail.com) how many of you will be coming because we need a head count.



Last year's co-President JoAnne Day and Charleston Board Member Shayna Howell listen intently to words of wisdom from our senior board member Sarah Leverette.

## LWVSC Planning Calendar 2017-18

### 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

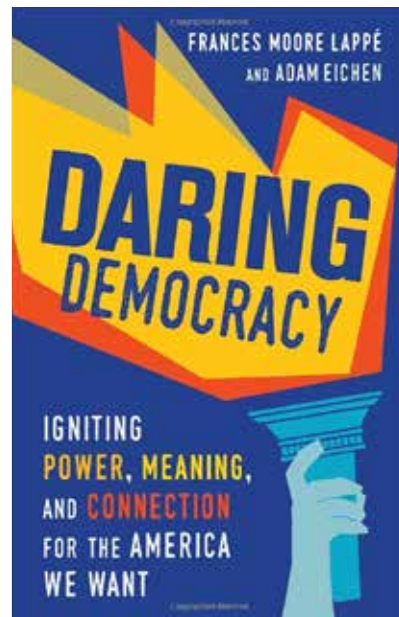
- 27 State Council
- State Board TBA

### May 2018

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

### June 2018

- 5 Primary elections
- 28 July 1<sup>st</sup> National Convention in Chicago



### Book Review

## Daring Democracy: Igniting Power, Meaning, and Connection for the America We Want

By Frances Moore Lappé and Adam Eichen

Published by Beacon Press, 2017, 204 pages.

How did American politics get out of sync with the expressed preferences of the American people on so many issues from gun control to health care to tax reform to regulation? The authors describe the deliberate creation and funding of an ideological infrastructure consisting of think tanks, media, and political organizations, including ALEC, which develops and disseminates "model" legislation that furthers the goals of certain powerful groups. Among the results have been voter suppression, dark money in politics, and gerrymandered districts, three of the battles that we as a League are fighting on the state and national level. But Lappé and Eichen don't just chronicle despair. They also offer stories of hope, of strategies that we can pursue, of grassroots organizing, coalition building and engaged citizens from Maine to California with a long stop in North Carolina for the Moral Mondays movement. It's a book every League member needs to read.

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: Julie Hussey  
Holley Ulbrich

Editors: Holley Ulbrich and  
Linda Powers

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Voters of SC*  
PO Box 8453  
Columbia, SC 29202  
Phone/Fax:  
(803) 251-2726  
Website: [www.lwvsc.org](http://www.lwvsc.org)

## We Can Grow!

Can plants grow and survive without nourishment? And, exactly, what kind of nourishment is needed? Not just any kind of nourishment. Plants need good nourishment in their roots and from the sun. What kind of nourishment does our organization need in order to grow? Our membership will not grow strongly without proper nourishment.

Our current membership has skills to help this growth happen. And we can review these skills with our members to strengthen their approaches and abilities.

Some skills that will help recruit and keep new members include:

- **Embracing** – In order for individuals to be fulfilled and for the League to build for the future, we must work in groups or teams. It is critically important that the team have the right number and mix. If the team doesn't understand its purpose, then how can it succeed? It is important to build bonds between members of a team.
- **Visibility** – Marketing is the strategy to make sure the right audience hears the League message.
- **Collaboration/Partnering** – Many organizations and groups in our community may work on issues and activities that are similar to or related to those of the League. We can maximize our efforts by prioritizing which organizations and opportunities to pursue.

- **Retaining new members (Retention Worksheets)** – There is much that can be done to keep interested members from becoming dissatisfied and alienated. Keep up with what members are thinking and whether they are satisfied.
- **Pay special attention to new members** – Communicate with new members frequently. Provide new members with an orientation. Offer new members a volunteer job in keeping with their expressed interests and time limitations. Assign someone to be the new member's buddy and mentor.

Leagues that have been coached have notebooks filled with tools that we can use to involve our total membership in reaching out.

We have some resources. Let's use them.

As we get new League plants growing, we need to address the kind of nourishment they may need — from within and from outside.

Our National League and State league have resources to help this building process at [lwvus.org](http://lwvus.org) and [lwvsc.org](http://lwvsc.org). Our state League website has materials on recruitment, retention and how to be a successful membership chair. Check out some of these resources to help our building process. You'd be amazed at how much your League will grow.

— Joyce Franklin

Vice President for Member Services, LWVSC

