

Fairfax VOTER

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The League of Women Voters and Reparations: Part I

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This month, we discuss Part I of this study which addresses the relationship between the League at all levels with African American activists for women’s rights. It will also contain a brief history from Reconstruction to the Civil Rights movement and a brief preview of Part II, which we will discuss in the Fall.

Calendar

- 3 *Fairfax VOTER* Deadline
- 6 LWNCA Board Meetings -- Virtual
10:30am – 12:00pm
- 7 LWNCA Annual Convention
9:30am – 2:00pm, Clyde's of Gallery
Place Restaurant
- 7 LWFVA At-Large Meeting and Briefing
Virtual, 10am – 12pm
- 8 – 12 LWFVA Unit meetings
- 18 LWFVA Board Meetings - Virtual
10am – 12pm

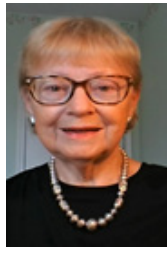
Remember to check the website at lwvfa.org for additional Voter Registration events!

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Presidents' Message



Dear Fellow Leaguers,

History was recently made when Ketanji Brown Jackson was confirmed as a Supreme Court Justice. She will be the first Black woman and the sixth woman to serve on the Supreme Court following Sandra Day O'Connor (1981–2005), Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1993–2020), Sonia Sotomayor (2009–present), Elena Kagan (2010–present), and Amy Coney Barrett (2020–present). In addition, she will be the first Justice with experience as a Federal public defender and the first one since Justice Thurgood Marshall with significant experience as a criminal defense attorney on behalf of indigent defendants.

Before Thurgood Marshall was a Supreme Court Justice, he argued the case *Brown v. Board of Education* before the Supreme Court. On May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that the segregation of public schools “solely on the basis of race” was unconstitutional; however, that ruling was not implemented in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) until 1960. In other parts of Virginia, school integration took even longer. This was a period of “massive resistance” in Virginia. There was an effort to close public schools in protest of integration; however, the League of Women Voters of Virginia headed by Betty Farwell of Fairfax County released a statement calling for the defense of public education saying in part, “Can you now remain silent while the very existence of those schools is threatened?” This quote and additional information about this desegregation in FCPS can be found at: <https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/history/records/desegregation/writings>

Indeed, it was the United States Supreme Court that in 1967 officially overturned the Racial Integrity Act in their ruling *Loving v. Virginia*. This act reinforced racial segregation by prohibiting interracial marriage and classifying as “white” a person “who has no trace whatsoever of any blood other than Caucasian.” (Racial Integrity Act of 1924)

Today, as our high school voter registration volunteers visit FCPS high schools, they see the diversity within the student population and are impressed with the students’ desire to become active citizens who vote. When our volunteers visit food banks, festivals, and New Citizen Ceremonies,

they see and celebrate diversity. As Leaguers, it is our duty and privilege not only to help people register, but also to help them become knowledgeable about voting and the issues and candidates that are on the ballot. The League is one of the few nonpartisan organizations that provides factual and non-biased information.

Thank you for your continued willingness to support this work of LWVFA through your volunteer efforts and your contributions.

Anu and Pat

Fairfax County 24-hr.
Domestic & Sexual Violence Hotline:
703-360-7273; 711 TTY

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2021 - 2022

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Subscriptions to the *Fairfax VOTER* are available to non-Fairfax League members for \$15 per annum. Send your check to the above address and request a subscription.

Please e-mail address corrections to the office
or call 703-658-9150.

LWVFA Thanks Our Local Election Heroes

On Monday, April 11, LWVFA members went to the Fairfax County Government Center and then to the Fairfax City Government Center to deliver flowers, balloons, treats, and Thank You cards to the Office of Elections to thank them for all they do to support honest and fair elections. LWVFA members were able to talk with staff and learn more about how they work “behind the scenes.” Eric Spicer, Fairfax County Registrar; Cheryl Jones, Fairfax County Assistant Registrar; and Brenda Cabera, Fairfax City Registrar, all expressed deep appreciation



for these visits and the recognition. We are proud of our continued partnership with these Offices and appreciate their efforts to ensure that voting proceeds smoothly and every vote is counted accurately.

Dozens of similar events were held across the country in honor of Thank Election Heroes Day of Action on April 12.

Photos by Katarina Gollner-Sweet

Environmental Update: PFAS, the Forever Chemicals

By Elizabeth Lonoff

Of the thousands of perfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), the most extensively produced and studied go by the initials PFOA and PFOS. These are industrial fluorinated chemicals originally developed by DuPont in the 1940s. PFOA and PFOS do not substantially biodegrade and can impact human reproduction, development, and immunity in addition to being likely carcinogens. Widely used to resist water, grease, and stains in consumer products, including cookware and

paper packaging for food, you probably have detectable levels in your blood.

How concerned should you be?

PFOA and PFOS blood levels have been decreasing since U.S. production voluntarily ended in 2015, at least for most uses. Most ongoing human exposure to PFAS is from ingestion, such as eating fish from contaminated water or food packaging materials containing PFAS. PFOA and PFOS also can be found in drinking water, usually near where these chemicals were produced or used to make other products or an airfield where they were used for firefighting. In

a 2018 report, the nonprofit Environmental Working Group (EWG) estimated that more than 100 million Americans might have PFAS in their drinking water. The U.S. Geological Study reported in February that, in analyzing for 24 PFAS in five aquifers in 16 Eastern states, PFAS were detected in 20% of private wells and 60% of municipal wells sampled.

Per the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulatory activities in 2021 automatically triggered adding four PFAS to its Toxics Release Inventory this January. For example, EPA issued a final toxicity value last April for PFBS, a replacement for PFOS that has been found in surface water, wastewater, drinking water, dust, carpeting and carpet cleaners, and floor wax. In another case, the trigger was EPA's completing its review of a confidential business information claim. In accordance with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, facilities required to track their activities involving these PFAS are to report them for 2022 to EPA by July 1, 2023.

In October, EPA put in place a comprehensive national strategy to address PFAS pollution, including establishing timelines to set enforceable drinking water limits. In March, EPA removed two PFAS on its Safer Chemical Ingredients List since 2012 following a review of these substances. EPA's voluntary Safer Choice program uses the List to publicize products certified to contain ingredients that are safer for human health and the environment for their functional use. See an example of an EPA action in its recent enforcement alert about ski wax in EPA Document #305S21001.

Since PFAS are not yet a federally regulated contaminant, there is little monitoring data of PFAS occurrence in Virginia's public water systems. In our area, the EWG identified the presence of PFAS in three drinking water systems near Dale City and on a dozen military bases between the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay in 2021. PFAS aren't being considered in the Bay's cleanup efforts.

Help Wanted!!

Volunteer Opportunity: Editor of Fairfax Voter

(Current Editor is nominated to serve as Fairfax League Co-President.)

If you have an eye for detail and are comfortable with publishing software (or willing to learn!) please consider being the next editor of the *Fairfax Voter*.

This opportunity allows you to volunteer approximately 12 hours over the course of a week early in the month, and can be done anywhere you have a computer.

For more information, contact Katherine at kmingmanson@yahoo.com or Judy at Judy.helein@lwv-fairfax.org

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR COMMUNITY ELECTION

McLean Community Center Election
Thursday, May 19, 1-6 PM
Validating Affidavits from Early Voting

Saturday, May 21, 10 AM - 8:30 PM
(Multiple shifts)

McLean Day: Election Officers
Evening: Vote Counters

Please sign up <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0d48afa82fa7f94-spring> or via the League website.

Questions? Contact Susan Cowart,
sfcowart@aol.com,
703-893-2229(H) or 703-915-3444(C)

Much needed funds for League activities are raised running these elections and it is fun to meet other League members!

The League of Women Voters and Reparations: Part I

By Sidney Johnson with Pam Berg (LWVArl), Janice Hill, Amy Leeson, Kevin Pullen, Anne Strange, and Gail Van Buren. Thanks to all the members of the group who contributed ideas and materials: Donna Blake, Carol Bradley, Donald Craig, Melissa Fitzgerald, Andrienne Konstas, Joann Phillips, Lanita Thweatt.

African Americans have sustained injustices originating from social and political causes that still need to be resolved. The term “reparations” has been used in a narrow sense of the return of property or money to individuals, usually after a war, and in a broader sense of ensuring that justice is done by acknowledging past harms and reforming systems to eliminate unjust practices. We are looking at both senses. White Americans of European descent are now learning much about their impact on many groups who have suffered losses under government and social practices over time. This study deals with the accumulation of injustice and the remedies that may be considered for one of these groups: African Americans. Virginia, with its history, has considerations that it may meet in both the narrower and the broader senses.

Part I of this study will address the relationship between the League at all levels with African American activists for women’s rights. It will also contain a brief history from Reconstruction to the Civil Rights movement and a brief preview of Part II.

Part II will focus on the generational effect of economic losses in income, land use, and home ownership that African Americans have sustained, with examples from Northern Virginia. Fairfax County is working toward equity through the One Fairfax policy. This part will also point to an objective way of framing the issue and finding equitable solutions: The United Nations Human Rights Framework.

Introduction

The members of the study group came together because they felt a need to understand reparations as widely reported in the media, often in ways that highlight controversy. This study will briefly survey the evolution of the League’s attitude, narrate the historical background of the African American experience in Virginia, and introduce an objective and comprehensive method of analyzing mechanisms for reparation: the human rights guidelines promulgated in full by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 2005.¹ These guidelines have been summarized as the Human Rights Framework by the African American Redress Network.² Part I of the study includes brief definitions for terms in the media. Part II has arguments for and against monetary reparations as commonly understood.

Evolution of the League’s Behavior Toward African American Women

Side by side, but not together, for voting rights.

The League of Women Voters at all levels has a his-

tory of promoting equality and fairness for all, believing that the civic engagement of all citizens will beget improvements in laws and social practices. During the League’s centennial year, members learned through several books^{3,4,5} that activists for woman suffrage did not always live up to these ideals. Those who fought for suffrage and then worked to engage women in civic life after 1920 were torn between their own personal desires to include all women and appeasing the prejudices of many European Americans. Most of the leaders yielded to the European Americans to retain their support for suffrage and, later, their support for the League.

For twenty years before the Civil War, abolitionists and woman suffrage activists had worked together. After the war, Frederick A. Douglass felt that it was realistic to focus on suffrage for recently freed men and temporarily withdrew his advocacy for woman suffrage. Susan B. Anthony felt betrayed by him. The passionate argument between them is recounted in *History of Woman Suffrage*. At the American Equal Rights Association conference in 1869 Anthony said that, if one group was to be preferred over another, it should be the best educated and intelligent, by which

she meant women of her own class. Douglass held that, for black men gaining security from the right to vote was literally a matter of life and death, whereas women were physically safe, and they could afford to wait. In that same meeting, other women argued that women were financially dependent and that they, too, suffered losses, even the loss of their children, under a patriarchal society. The issue was not resolved at the meeting. The National Woman Suffrage Association and the American Woman Suffrage Association formed, ending the Equal Rights Association.⁶ But the words of Douglass have endured; he said that black women as well as men faced these conditions:

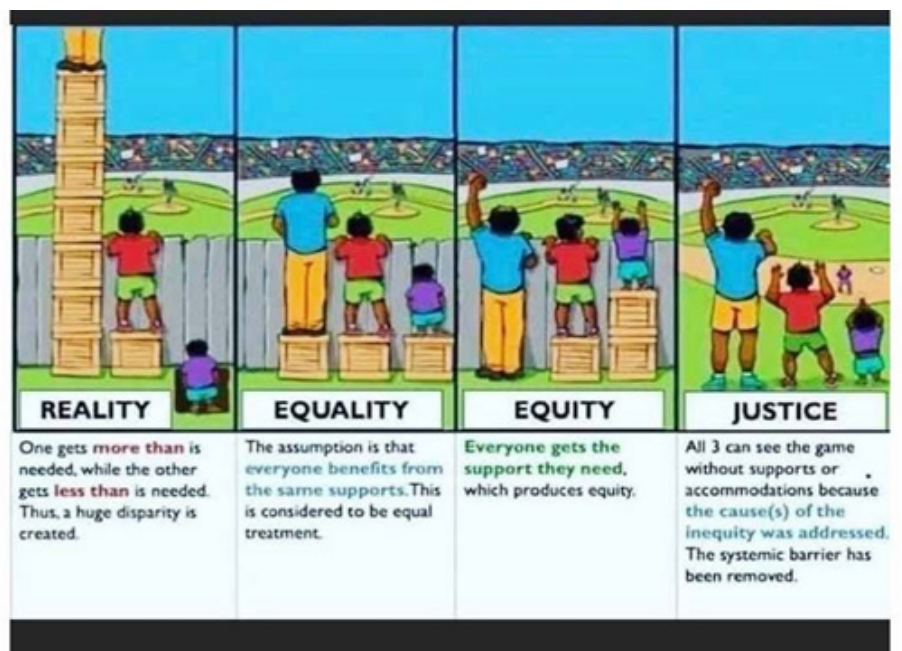
When women, because they are women, are hunted down through the cities of New York and New Orleans; when they are dragged from their houses and hung upon lamp posts; when their children are torn from their arms and their brains dashed out upon the pavement; when they are objects of outrage and insult at every turn; when they are in danger of having their homes burnt down over their heads; when their children are not allowed to enter schools; then they will have an urgency to obtain the ballot equal to our own.⁷

Carrie Chapman Catt and Alice Paul, in their turn, rejected requests from African American women's groups to join their fight for ratification of the 19th Amendment.⁸ Leaguers will remember that the Delta Sigma Theta sorority of Howard University marched in the woman suffrage procession of 1913, though they were relegated to the rear. Instead of going back there, Ida B. Wells defied the leadership and stepped off the curb to march with the Illinois contingent.⁹

As Dr. Martha Jones documents in her book, *Vanguard*, African American women struggled to gain respect among their own church members as having an equal right to be ordained and to address public meetings.¹⁰ They repeatedly took risks to be allowed to travel in the smoke-free ladies' cars on the trains. No

matter how respectably they were dressed, conductors and porters frequently forced them to ride in the uncomfortable and much less healthy smoking cars, even when they were carrying sick children.¹¹ For decades, many women challenged discrimination in public transportation, leading up to Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott.¹²

After suffrage was achieved, the new National League of Women Voters still rejected overtures from African American women's groups who wanted to work together, partly because these were organized into clubs that had social as well as political functions¹³ and partly because the new League had nation-wide aspirations that did not take into account the challenges faced by African American voters, especially in the South.¹⁴ The clubs worked separately to teach their own members how to overcome voting restrictions by encouraging them to register despite waiting in long lines, enduring taunts and humiliating questions. The NAACP organized mass meetings to bring large numbers of applicants to the registrar's offices. There were Citizenship Schools, leaflet campaigns, and appeals to national leaders for an investigation into African American disenfranchisement. Appeals for help from the National Woman's Party and the new National League of Women Voters were rejected or just ignored.¹⁵



RASR, Inc. from Reddit user r/coolguides

Parallel with African American men's fraternities, college and university women at HBCUs founded sororities in the early 1900s. The four major sororities are Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, and Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority. Their purpose and activities, still strong today, were to "make a lifetime commitment to continue the legacy of building social capital and uphold the strong ideals of education, integrity, public service, and activism."¹⁶

Support for African American educational and employment advancement, but not membership in the League.

The National League of Women Voters (NLWV) cared about social justice for poor people generally, including African Americans, from the foundation of the organization in 1920. It advocated for collective bargaining, improved child labor laws, minimum wage, compulsory education, and equal opportunity for women, and the landmark Social Security and Food and Drug Acts. Its first legislative success was its support of the Sheppard-Towner Act, which provided federal aid for maternal and child care programs.¹⁷ In advocating for social reforms, however, the League did not then challenge fundamental white privilege or Jim Crow laws.¹⁸ These laws, named for a derogatory term for African Americans, enforced strict segregation of African Americans into their own parts of town, inferior schools, discriminatory employment, punitive justice, and poor public facilities labeled "Colored."¹⁹

The League's national convention of 1921 established the Special Committee on the Study of Negro Problems.²⁰ Realizing that this title was offensive to African Americans,²¹ the League changed the name to the Special Committee on Inter-Racial Relations in 1927. Adele Clark, President of the Virginia League of Women Voters (VLWV) from 1921-1925 and 1929-1944, was also the chair of this committee from 1927 onwards. The committee was to work with educational institutions on educating African Americans for citizenship.²² Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, the first African American President of the LWVUS (1998-2002), contends that this shift to focus on education enabled the NLWV to avoid confronting its own prob-

lems with integrating African Americans as full members.²³ She says that the committee foundered from the start because of its equivocation on its goals and the lack of consistent leadership. It gradually ceased to function in the 1930s.²⁴

From the 1920s onwards state and local Leagues worked with African American women's groups to advocate for education and employment opportunities. They assisted these groups in getting African American women registered and voting. Adele Clark and her friends once rented cars and drove around to the polling places in Richmond to make sure the African American women were not intimidated.²⁵ However, state and local Leagues decided on their own whether to admit African Americans as full members. The St. Louis and Illinois Leagues stand out as early integrators, but most Leagues worked alongside African American women and had them as occasional speakers without inviting them into full membership.²⁶

At the national level, the League did not examine its own behavior, stating that it did not collect individual data about its members by race because that would contradict its mission to be open to everyone.²⁷ The NLWV was re-organized and renamed the League of Women Voters of the United States at its convention in 1946.²⁸ Anna L. Strauss, the LWVUS President, acknowledged in a letter to all Leagues in 1948 that the League should work for diversity in its own membership,²⁹ but progress took decades. The policy of not collecting data on race continued until 1978.³⁰ There were parallel "colored" local Leagues, but they could not "leverage the complete resources of the League for their cause"³¹ because they had no standing according to the bylaws.³² Differential membership rules continued into the 1950s, as the League continued to take up other considerations and put race to one side.³³

This practice led to a gap in the League's history of advocacy. It did not have a national position that would enable it to advocate for desegregation and federal funding of schools when the Supreme Court made the *Brown vs the Board of Education of Topeka* decision in 1954.³⁴

Chris Carson and Virginia Kase Solomon, President and CEO of LWVUS in 2018, added this emphasis:

Even during the Civil Rights movement, the League was not as present as we should have been. While activists risked life and limb to register black voters in the South, the League's work and our leaders were late in joining to help protect all voters at the polls. It wasn't until 1966 that we reached our first position to combat discrimination. Still, our focus on social policy was from afar—not on the front lines.³⁵

as possible. But we couldn't do very much about it because we were afraid of being accused of being carpetbaggers, so that we [laughter] had to stay out of it to a certain extent.³⁶

Local Leagues' support for African American voter registration, focusing on Fairfax.

In the following decades state and local Leagues confronted racial discrimination with concrete actions. In 1964, just after the poll tax became illegal, the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA) invited every organization in the County to send it their membership lists, which they checked against the lists of registered voters. The organizations would “receive back a list of the non-registered members, whom the organizations might then urge to register and vote.”³⁷ In the 1970s, the LWVFA President wrote to legislators, “...busing is a tool that must be held available to remedy serious inequities in education.”³⁸ LWVFA also engaged in many voter education drives in low-income neighborhoods and mailings to local organizations. They advocated for registration to be available beyond the registrar's office, in mobile registration units.³⁹ At that time, voters could register only in person with the registrar. (Many thanks to Therese Martin whose material, organized by Julie Jones, is now in the historical file in the LWVFA office.)

**NO TAX RISE;
NO COUNTY
BONDS**

Federal funds have already been appropriated for planning and construction of low-rent housing by local authorities. Rents must cover operating and management costs. The Authority's housing program will not cause any bond obligation on the county.

**28 YEARS OF
FEDERAL TAXES.
BUT NO HOUSING**

We have helped pay for over a half million housing units in other communities through our Federal taxes. This is our chance to receive something in return for our tax dollars.

**COUNTY
CONTROLLED**

The County Board of Supervisors appoints five local citizens to run the Authority. The Board of Supervisors must approve the housing proposed by the Authority. Projects must comply with local building codes, zoning and master plans. Rents, income limits, and residence requirements are all determined locally.

**AUTHORITY
CONTRIBUTES
REVENUE**

While the County would not tax housing owned by the Authority, approximately 10% of rents would be paid to the County as the Authority's share of the cost of regular municipal services.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL: League of Women Voters—Fairfax Area, SO 8-9327 or Fairfax County Citizens for Adequate Housing, JE 4-4085.

**UNLESS
YOU VOTE
YES ON
NOV 2
FOR A
REDEVELOPMENT AND
HOUSING AUTHORITY**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**THIS AUTHORITY IS
NECESSARY BECAUSE:**

County long-term residents are being forced from their homes by housing code enforcement and suburban development.

Those low-income families displaced cannot afford housing in the County or metropolitan area.

Private builders have not been able to construct low-cost housing.

The County should not continue to displace these workers and their families without ensuring they have a place to go.

A local Redevelopment and Housing Authority using Federal funds can provide truly low-rent housing.

**ALL
WILL
BENEFIT**

Families with low incomes will be able to afford decent housing for the first time.

Fathers will be able to keep their jobs in the area.

Mothers will have more money to feed and clothe their families, when housing costs are reduced.

Children will be given a "head start" at school, with better conditions at home enabling them to study and get a good night's sleep.

The elderly, most often victims of poverty, can live in housing designed for their special needs, with social and medical services readily at hand.

County taxpayers will benefit from reduced health and welfare costs as improved housing conditions, lower disease rates, and lower rents help families remain independent.

Private employers and county government can better retain lower skilled workers in essential service operations. At present these workers cannot find housing in the area or are being forced to leave. Many become discouraged at having to commute long distances to work, and quit.

Private contractors will build the housing for the Authority, and thus will be able to serve the low income market while making a fair profit.

**RESIDENCE
REQUIREMENTS
CUSTOMARY**

Our local Authority can, and most authorities do, set up residence requirements to ensure that the housing is built for Fairfax County residents.

Center for Local History, Arlington Public Library

By avoiding the contradictions of its stance on equality and its willingness to yield to pressure, the League evolved as it did. Adele Clark, herself a Southerner, said in an interview in 1964:

But we never had the nerve to enroll the Negro women in the League of Women Voters. I've always regretted it, but we just couldn't bring the middle-of-the-road thinkers to the point of bringing the Negro women in. A number of us, especially Lucy Mason, went to groups—Negro clubs and all—and talked to the Negro women about civic affairs. And we made as much contact with them

LWVFA also supported the establishment of the Fairfax County Housing and Redevelopment Authority, which was founded in 1966 to provide affordable housing.⁴⁰

LWVFA participates in the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA) campaign for automatic restoration of voting rights for citizens who have completed their sentences.⁴¹

Acknowledgement of the Need for Redress

Current League positions show an evolution of understanding. The League's advocacy for equity for everyone requires acknowledging that African Americans

and other people of color have experienced differential harm. That realization comes out in the resolution passed by the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) in 2020, quoted below.

LWVFA's Social Policy position supports equitable provisions for County residents in health care, human resources, housing, the judicial system, juvenile justice, and schools. While justice for African Americans is not explicitly mentioned, LWVFA wants public and private institutions to work together to provide such benefits as education and employment opportunities for all, programs to reduce poverty, housing for low-income persons, and alternatives to incarceration.⁴² These actions benefit African Americans, who are more likely to be incarcerated. See "Here We Stand," revised January, 2022, pp. 13-19. <https://www.lwv-fairfax.org/positions-1>

The League of Women Voters of Virginia's Social Policy position covers a spectrum of social needs from affordable housing through child care and education, mental health services, and a system of justice that promotes prevention, alternatives to incarceration, and successful re-entry, including the restoration of civil rights upon release. In several places the position statement specifies non-discrimination and equal access to services. African Americans are not singled out, but these services, if equitably provided, would remedy many damages they have experienced over time.⁴³ See "Positioned for Action," pp 17-33. <https://lwv-va.org/lwv-va-positioned-for-action/>

The most direct recognition of racial disparities comes from the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy developed by LWVUS and adopted by all state Leagues. Its website states that "...(T)here shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization" on the basis of any characteristics, including race and ethnicity, that might distinguish one person from another.⁴⁴ See Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy, <https://www.lwv.org/league-management/policies-guidelines/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-policy>

The latest intention of purpose by LWVUS comes in the partial text of the resolution passed at the LWVUS Convention 2020, as published on the LWV-VA website.

RACIAL JUSTICE FOR BLACK PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR, sections 8 and 9. Full text may be found on the LWV-VA web page <https://lwv-va.org/2020/07/30/racial-justice-resolution-passed-at-lwvus-convention-june-2020/>

8. We Resolve First, That the League advocates against systemic racism in the justice system and, at a minimum, to prevent excessive force and brutality by law enforcement. We also call for prompt actions by all League members to advocate within every level of government to eradicate systemic racism, and the harm that it causes; and,

9. We Resolve Second, That the League help our elected officials and all Americans recognize these truths to be self-evident; that Black people and all people of color deserve equal protection under the law; and that we demand solutions for the terrible wrongs done to Black people and all people of color across the nation so that, regardless of race, racial mixture, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, gender or sexual orientation we may truly become a nation "indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."⁴⁵

The Past is Still Present

As shown in the evolution of its positions (see above), the League at all levels understands that complex interrelated social, health, educational, economic, and justice inequities for African Americans have lasted to the present day. American attitudes and laws post-Emancipation contributed to embedded institutional practices that resulted in the financial and societal disenfranchisement of generations of African Americans.

Brief History with a Focus on Income, Land Use, and Housing

Though we recognize the interrelationship of injustices, the study group narrowed the scope of this review to cover only the effects of policies on income, land use, and housing. Going back briefly to the Reconstruction period after the Civil War, we will show how disparities developed through time, using examples from Virginia or the Washington, D.C., metropolitan region.

The era known as Reconstruction lasted roughly ten years, between 1865 – 1877. It was a time of contradiction, including moments of hope and long-term prejudice. Reconstruction legislation, including the Civil Rights Act of 1866 as well as the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, passed in 1865, 1868, and 1870, respectively, laid the foundation for equal rights for newly freed African American slaves and voting rights for black men.⁴⁶

Between 1864-1867, a significant expansion of political involvement and leadership developed within the African American community. Their community leaders joined with former Union Army veterans newly arrived in the South and Southerners who remained loyal to the Union throughout the Civil War. They formed a block known as the Southern Republicans. In 1867, a significant African American voter turnout won the Southern Republicans the majority of delegate seats at the constitutional conventions scheduled for former Southern states. White Southern voter turn-out was low, either because many still could not vote because of post-war restrictions or because they hoped to win if not enough black people voted. Most of the state conventions developed democratic constitutions that guaranteed black civil and political rights. While there was mixed success in ratifying the proposed constitutions, many passed. Within three years after the Confederacy fell, Republicans came to power in most of the Southern states and Black representatives served at all levels of local, state, and national politics.⁴⁷

Concurrent with these activities, Reconstruction was already beginning to falter in meaningful ways. In early 1865, Lt. General William Tecumseh Sherman led an effort to redistribute Southern coastal land taken by the Union Army. Under Special Field Order No. 15, Lt. General Sherman reserved abandoned and confiscated coastal land in South Carolina and Georgia for settlement by former slaves and promised protection. This event is the origin of “forty acres and a mule,” later supported by the Freedmen’s Bureau Bills, which had initial success but ended when the Bureau was disbanded.⁴⁸ Thousands of former slaves moved onto the land. However, by late 1865, President Andrew Johnson had reversed all land redistribution plans.⁴⁹

Johnson restored land to Confederates who pledged allegiance to the United States.⁵⁰ This was followed by a shift in Republican Party priorities following the 1867 elections, after which the party faced backlash in the North from focusing on racial issues. The party retrenched, focusing on devotion to the Union and fiscal responsibility, rather than civil and political equality. Issues of Reconstruction were no longer paramount, and Southern Republicans found themselves struggling for survival between 1868-1870. In order to survive, they needed to court the White vote. By 1871, most voting restrictions against those previously supporting the Confederacy had been removed, increasing the number of White voters, leading eventually to a resumption of control over state legislatures. Governors also engaged in patronage, rewarding White local leaders with offices for their political loyalty, thus defusing concerns of Black takeover of the South. Violence was routinely used to discourage Black communities from voting.⁵¹

In the decades after the Civil War, the Southern states enacted or revived Black Codes. In Virginia these enabled public officers, sometimes self-appointed, to bring anyone they suspected of vagrancy before a justice, who would sentence that person to be hired out for three months initially for a wage to support his family. If the person left the employment, he could be brought back to finish the time without pay or be put to work on a public project or in a workhouse. He could be “confined by ball and chain.” Since the Code of 1886 was introduced by a definition of a colored person as one having “one-fourth or more of Negro blood,” it was clear that African Americans were to be targeted as vagrants.⁵² They were subject to conditions like enslavement, not by a master, but by the State.⁵³

These political and economic losses were followed by multiple legal losses, which essentially dismantled the Amendments passed to protect former slaves, especially the 13th and 14th Amendments. One notable case was *US vs Reese* in 1876, which struck down key sections of the Enforcement Act of May 1870. The Act was meant to outlaw any interference in voting. The Court ruled that the 15th Amendment did not guarantee every person the right to vote. It stopped racial limitations, but the Justices said that language

in the latter part of the Act was not specific enough.⁵⁴ The Court determined that States had power to establish voting qualifications. Through this ruling and several others, the Supreme Court dismantled Reconstruction protections, clearly indicating the Federal government would not interfere with States' rights. The states could ignore the equality suggested in the "separate but equal" interpretation of the Supreme Court's decision in *Plessy vs Ferguson* in 1896.⁵⁵

Within this permissive atmosphere, Southern states began to take action. In 1890, the State of Mississippi, with other Southern states soon following, readdressed State constitutions passed during Reconstruction with Black participation and ratification. The constitutions were rewritten to disenfranchise and remove protections for the Black communities within the states. They also introduced Jim Crow laws, which would remain in place until the Civil Rights Movement in 1960s.⁵⁶

Virginia's Constitution was amended in 1902 to require a poll tax to be paid for three years consecutively and to require that a prospective voter demonstrate an understanding of the Constitution. Members of the Constitutional Convention specifically said that White people would be given easier readings than Black people, but, even so, the outcome of this new Constitution was that some White people as well as all Black people lost their rights to vote, too. Not all White people could pay the poll tax or read well. Also, felony convictions for a wide variety of offenses resulted in disenfranchisement.⁵⁷ (Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Constitutional_Convention_of_1902) Although the Civil Rights movement stopped the poll tax and the interpretation requirement, the Commonwealth has yet to restore automatically the right to vote to persons who have completed their sentences.

Coming Next: The League of Women Voters and Reparations Part II

In the next part of this study we will show that income, land use, and housing practices over time resulted in generational inequities. Part II will provide more information about the United Nations Human Rights Framework and show how Fairfax County's

Strategic Plan, adopted in October 2021, can fit into it. This plan, also known as *One Fairfax*, is a comprehensive effort to provide equitable treatment for all residents. A notable early part of this effort was the establishment of the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority after a County-wide referendum in 1965 approved it. LWVFA was strongly in favor of the referendum, as will be shown in Part II.

Preview: The United Nations Human Rights Framework.

We sought an objective method for categorizing the ways justice might be accomplished. The United Nations Human Rights Framework⁵⁸ provides such a method. We learned about it thanks to our introduction by Stair Calhoun, an LWVFA member, to a very active grassroots movement, the Virginia Redress Coalition. This group is part of the African American Redress Network (AARN), which identifies and maps instances across the United States in which injustices are currently being addressed and rectified.

We have met with members of the African-American Redress Network and another organization, Resolutions Against Systemic Racism (RASR).⁵⁹ The leaders of this organization also use the Human Rights Framework as summarized here. Monetary reimbursement is only one way to accomplish justice.

Restitution: measures that restore victims to the original situation before they suffered gross violations of international human rights law...for example, restoration of liberty, identity, family life and citizenship, return to one's place of residence, restoration of employment and return of property.

Compensation: a monetary quantifiable award for any economically accessible damage...as appropriate and proportional to the gravity of the violation and the circumstances of each case.

Rehabilitation: medical and psychological care as well as legal and social services.

Satisfaction: a broad category of measures ranging from cessation of violations, truthseeking, the search for the disappeared, recovery and reburial of remains, public apologies, judicial and administrative sanctions, commemoration and memorialization, and human rights training.

Guarantees of non-repetition: a broad category including institutional reforms...strengthening judicial independence, the protection of human rights defenders, the promotion of international human rights standards in public service, law enforcement, the media, and psychological and social services. (See Endnotes 1 and 2)

Terms in the News

Cancel Culture

a) This term and its variant, call-out culture, is a modern form of ostracism in which someone is thrust out of social or professional circles for acts or speech considered questionable or controversial – whether it be online, on social media, or in person. Those subject to this ostracism (often celebrities) are said to have been "cancelled". The expression "cancel culture" has mostly negative connotations and is used in debates on free speech and censorship.

b) Notably, many people claiming to have been "cancelled" often remain untouched and continue their careers as before. Moreover, some cancellations have also been defended as exercising free speech and promoting accountability. Others criticize cancel culture as creating a chilling effect.¹

Woke

This term means that one is alert to racial prejudice and discrimination. It originated in African American Vernacular English (AAVE). Beginning in the 2010s, it came to encompass a broader awareness of social inequalities such as sexism; it has also been used as shorthand for left-wing ideas involving identity politics and social justice, such as the notion of white privileges and slavery reparations for African Americans.²

Appreciation vs. Appropriation

Appreciation is seeking to understand and learn about another culture in order to broaden one's perspective and connect with others cross-culturally, whereas appropriation is simply taking, adopting or "cherry-picking" one aspect of a culture that is not your own and using it for your own personal interest.³

ARC - Acknowledgement, Redress, and Closure

ARC is the acronym that stands for Acknowledgement, Redress, and Closure. Acknowledgement involves recognition and admission of the wrong by the perpetrators or beneficiaries of the injustice.... Redress potentially can take two forms, not necessarily mutually exclusive: restitution or atonement.... Closure involves mutual conciliation between African Americans and the beneficiaries of slavery, legal segregation, and ongoing discrimination toward Blacks.⁴

CRT - Critical Race Theory

a) This is an intellectual movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of color. Critical race theorists hold that the law and legal institutions in the United States are inherently racist insofar as they function to create and maintain social, economic, and political inequalities between Whites and non-Whites, especially African Americans.

b) Critical race theory (CRT) was officially organized in 1989, at the first annual Workshop on Critical Race Theory, though its intellectual origins go back much farther, to the 1960s and '70s.⁵

Culturally Responsive Program for Teachers

This is a program for teachers in many school districts in Virginia, including Fairfax County. It is designed to enrich teachers' understanding the diverse populations in their classrooms with sensitivity borne of an understanding of their cultures.⁶

Equality and Equity

Equality refers the right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment.⁷ Equity is fairness or justice in the way people of varying positions or abilities are treated. In making these decisions we should be governed by the principle of *equity*.⁸ For example, the polls are equally open to everyone from 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM in Virginia. But persons with disabilities need equitable provisions, such as curbside voting and adapted voting machines so that they can actually vote.

Racial Disparities

This term refers to the imbalances and incongruities between the treatment of racial groups, including economic status, income, housing options, societal treatment, safety, and myriad other aspects of life and society. Contemporary and past discrimination in the U.S., and globally, has profoundly impacted the inequalities seen in society today.⁹

Redress and Reparations

Redress is an effort to make up for something done wrong, to remove the cause of a grievance, or to exact reparation for something.¹⁰ Reparations responds to the need to making amends, offer expiation, or give satisfaction for a wrong or injury,¹¹ particularly by the payment of damages. Redress and reparations overlap in meaning, but it is helpful to think of redress as repairing wrongs so that they don't occur in the future, while reparations pay for wrongs done in the past.¹²

Sundown Towns

These are also known as sunset towns, gray towns, or sundowner towns, are all-White municipalities or neighborhoods in the United States that practice a form of racial segregation by excluding non-Whites via some combination of discriminatory local laws, intimidation or violence. Entire sundown counties and sundown suburbs were also created by the same process. The term came from signs posted that "colored people" had to leave town by sundown. The practice was not restricted to the Southern states, as "at least until the early 1960s...northern states could be nearly as inhospitable to black travelers as states like Alabama or Georgia."

Discriminatory policies and actions distinguish sundown towns from towns that have no black residents for demographic reasons. Historically, towns have been confirmed as sundown towns by newspaper articles, county histories, and Works Progress Administration files, corroborated by tax or U.S. Census records showing an absence of black people or sharp drop in the black population between two censuses.¹³

Systemic Racism

This term refers to the policies and practices that exist throughout a whole society or organization, embedded in its processes, that result in and support a continued unfair advantage to some people and unfair or harmful treatment of others based on race.¹⁴

The Green Book

In full, The Negro Motorist Green Book, The Negro Travelers' Green Book, or The Travelers' Green Book, travel guide published (1936–67) during the segregation era in the United States that identified businesses

that would accept African American customers. Compiled by Victor Hugo Green (1892–1960), a Black post man who lived in the Harlem section of New York City, the Green Book listed a variety of businesses—from restaurants and hotels to beauty salons and drugstores—that were necessary to make travel comfortable and safe for African Americans in the period before passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.¹⁵

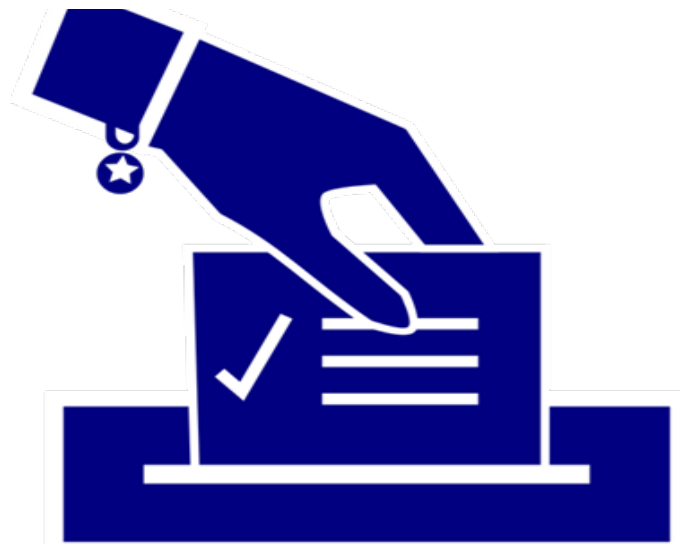
Unconscious Bias

Individuals form social stereotypes about certain groups of people outside their own conscious awareness. Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups, and these biases stem from one's tendency to organize social worlds by categorizing. Unconscious bias is far more prevalent than conscious prejudice and often incompatible with one's conscious values. Certain scenarios can activate unconscious attitudes and beliefs. For example, biases may be more prevalent when multi-tasking or working under time pressure.¹⁶

Full Endnotes to this report are in the electronic version on the LWVFA website.

Discussion Questions for Part I

1. How would you describe the change in the League's thinking about minorities?
2. After reading Part I of the report on the League's history and the history from Reconstruction to Civil Rights, what surprised you the most?
3. What is your first impression of the Human Rights Framework?
4. How do you understand the difference between equality and equity?
5. Why is the right to vote important to achieving equity in the law and social policies?



Further Reading

Websites

LWVUS, LWV-VA, and LWVFA: links are in the text.
 African-American Redress Network (AARN) <https://redressnetwork.org/>
 Resolutions Addressing Systemic Racism (RASR) <https://theracismcrisis.com/>
 See what other state Leagues are doing by googling the League for each state and *reparations*.

Books

Foner, Eric. (2014). *Reconstruction: American's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*. New York: Harper Perennial.
 Gates, Henry Louis Jr. (2019). *Stony the road: Reconstruction, White Supremacy, and the Rise of Jim Crow*. New York: Penguin Press.
 Jefferson-Jenkins, C. (2020). *The untold story of women of color in the League of Women Voters*. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.
 Jones, M.S. (2020). *Vanguard: How black women broke barriers, won the vote, and insisted on equality for all*. New York: Basic Books.
 Shuyler, L.G. (2006). *The weight of their votes: Southern women and political leverage in the 1920s*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.
 Weiss, E. (2019). *The woman's hour: The great fight to win the vote*. New York: Penguin Books.
 Wilkerson, I. (2020). *Caste: The origins of our discontent*. New York: Random House.

Unit Discussion Meeting Locations

Topic: Reparations

Members and visitors are encouraged to attend any meeting convenient for them, including the “At Large Meeting” and briefing on Saturdays when a briefing is listed. As of April 1, 2022, the following information was correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. The May unit meetings may be in person, virtual or hybrid. If virtual, the unit leaders will send login information to every unit member.

Saturday, May 7, 2022

10 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing - Virtual

Contact: Jessica, 301-704-7854 or jessica.storrs@lwv-fairfax.org

Monday, May 9

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP) – In Person

Hunters Crossing Craft Room
7430 Spring Village Drive,
Springfield
Contact: Judy,
jjsmith64@earthlink.net,
703-342-3353 or
Pat, pmcgrady308@gmail.com

Tuesday, May 10

2:30 p.m. McLean Day (McL)

– In Person
StarNut Café
1445 Laughlin Avenue, McLean
Contact: Adarsh, 703-795-7281,
adatrehan@gmail.com

Wednesday, May 11

10 a.m. Mount Vernon Day (MVD) – In Person

Mount Vernon Government Center
2511 Parkers Lane, Mt. Vernon
Contact: Diana, 703-704-5325 or
jfdw1111@gmail.com

10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS) – Virtual

Contact: Bev, 703-451-4438,
rbdahlin@verizon.net
or Sue, 703-266-0272,
sueoneill1@hotmail.com

Thursday, May 12

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD) – Virtual

Contact: Barbara (703) 437-0795,
bseandlte@earthlink.net

10 a.m. Springfield (SPF) - Virtual

Contact: Jane, 703-256-7834,
patchwork1@verizon.net

11:30 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD) – In Person

Lunch at Food Court, Wegman’s
14361 Newbrook Drive, Chantilly
Contact: Susan, 703-391-0666,
sadill@cox.net

1 p.m. Oakton/Vienna (OV) - Virtual

Contact: Mary, 703-932-3665,
mmvalder@aol.com

7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE) – In Person

Meeting at Wendy’s
Contact: Wendy, 703-319-4114,
wendy.foxgrage@gmail.com

7:30 p.m. Mount Vernon Evening (MVE) - Virtual

Contact: Jane, 703-960-6820,
jane@hilderwilliams.net
or Susan, 703-587-4790,
scash5002@email.vccs.edu

June Meetings

Do your own thing!



The League of Women Voters® of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)
 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403
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**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER®
 May, 2022**

Anu Sahai, Co-President
 Pat Fege, Co-President
 Katherine Ingmanson, Editor

The League of Women Voters® is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages the public to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, regional and national levels the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any person at least 16 years old, male or female, may become a member.

The League of Women Voters® never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters® name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

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LWVFA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM

Dues year is July 1 – June 30

Name: _____ Unit (if renewing): _____
 Name of Second Household Member (if one): _____
 Street Address: _____ Condo/Apt No: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code +4: _____
 E-mail: _____ Phone: (C) _____ (H) _____

Membership Status: _____ New _____ Renewal

Membership Level (please check one):

Basic Membership:

Individual (\$75); Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$100);
 Limited Income (suggested donation: \$10); Student (Free!)

Membership Plus:

Suffragist (\$100); Advocate Household (two members who share the same mailing address) (\$150);
 Champion (\$300); Founders' Circle (\$500)

Membership Plus levels include basic membership PLUS a donation to the LWVFA General Fund. This money will support members of limited income, help invest in LWVFA web site technology, and support other priority projects. General Fund donations are not tax deductible.

Volunteer Interests:

Please visit surveymonky.com/r/LWVFAFairfaxVols to let us know your interests.

Please mail this completed form along with payment to:
 LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403