



# Fairfax VOTER

## Is a “Meal Tax” the Best Way to Raise Additional Taxes for Fairfax County?

Last month’s program on the Fairfax County Library System was eye-opening regarding the 23% reduction in the library’s budget in the last few years. Some of your other favorite county services may have also faced funding reductions. State and federal funding has dried up in certain areas. What’s a county to do that wants to continue to provide the level of services that maintains our way of life?

Perhaps it’s time to look again at the Meals Tax that so many of our surrounding cities and towns have already enacted. Due to the Dillon Rule, Fairfax County is more restricted in its fund-raising options than our smaller surrounding cities and towns. They can enact a meal tax without referendum. We cannot. County officials tried to introduce a meals tax before, only to have the referendum fail on a fairly close vote. Are League members willing to support an effort to try this again?

We also urge you to decide if our current fiscal policy positions would enable us to support such an effort, if we should want to.

### Calendar

- 1 LWVNCA Board meeting
- 2 **Briefing and At-Large meeting**
- 2 In-person absentee ballot application deadline
- 3 Daylight Savings Time ends
- 4 *VOTER* deadline/ student holiday
- 5 **Election Day**/student holiday
- 11 Veterans Day
- 11-14 **Unit Meetings**
- 14 Springfield Unit annual book sale  
(see unit meeting locations page 7)
- 16 LWVNCA marijuana decriminalization program
- 18 General Assembly pre-filing begins
- 19 Sequoyah election
- 20 **Board meeting**
- 27 LWVFC forum on campaign finance reform
- 27 Chanukah begins
- 28 Thanksgiving
- 28-29 School holiday

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**Tell your friends to consult this source.**





## Presidents' Message



This election year, in partnership with the AAUW, the AARP, citizens associations and district councils, LWVFA sponsored, coordinated and staffed a candidate Meet and Greet for every Supervisor district in Fairfax County. This is the first year in recent memory that we have held so many Meets and Greets that were so well attended. We thank Peggy Knight for contacting the candidates, and efficiently pulling these events together, and Jane Pacelli for doing a great job publicizing them. And we thank every volunteer whose help made it possible for Fairfax County voters to hear their candidates' visions for solving local problems, and to ask questions about issues that concern them.

Our volunteers also registered voters at multiple events around the County and helped Office of Elections staff hand out voter information at public libraries. We thank all our members whose efforts made these events possible. We couldn't have done it without you. We hope this year's many successes will become our League's standard for future election cycles.

At the beginning of October, we watched Washington dysfunction continue with a partial government shutdown, and with both sides refusing to negotiate for days on end. In their book on political gridlock, *It's Even Worse Than It Looks*, Mann and Ornstein claim that getting more people to vote will reduce this problem because it will bring more moderates into the discussion. This should help bridge the gap between those on the far Right and those on the far Left. As members of the League of Women Voters, that's what we are trying to do with our voter registration and education activities. We want to bring more voices into the discussion. And that benefits everyone.

But no matter what the politicians are doing, we look forward to the holidays and to the time we can spend with family and friends. We wish all of you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

*Julie and Helen*

## Help Wanted: Sequoyah Election Officials Needed

The call is out for a few volunteers to work at the polling place for the Sequoyah Condominiums Election November 19 in Mt. Vernon. This event earns \$1,200 for our league's Education Fund and is critical in keeping the budget balanced. The actual address of the ballot processing is not known at press time, but is expected to be at one of Mount Vernon's elementary schools from 6-9 p.m.

If you can donate a few hours of your time to this important event, contact Rona Ackerman, at 703-282-2262 or <League@lwv-fairfax.org>

**- Please volunteer for this important fund raiser. -**

### Good for a Chuckle!

The LWVMC announced that the local post office got into a tizzy one day because a "man" was trying to use the league's bulk mailing permit.

### LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2013 - 2014

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

## September Unit Discussions Proved Valuable to Members

By Karole McKalip, Program Co-director

Vigorous discussion, numerous suggestions, and an overall engaged membership constituted the unit meetings on voting rights in the U.S. and Virginia in September. Past procedures, current issues, and future directions were covered.

Voting impediments experienced early on by some unit members included registration occurring in private homes and imposition of poll taxes, both of which members observed could be viewed as barriers to vote. Long voting lines with no expectation of extended hours can be a discouraging factor for many voters. Some felt that voting absentee could be a very disorganized process.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 required that Virginia must receive a federal pre-clearance before any changes to voter participation could be effected. This Act led to an increase in voting participation by making the voting process less discriminating for some voters and outlawing, as one unit (Fairfax Station) suggested, a “bunch of nasty practices.” Voter registration increased; the poll tax was eliminated; and no longer were blank ballots issued to some voters.

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 continued the rise of registered voters by allowing prospective voters the opportunity to register to vote when receiving their drivers’ licenses at the DMV. Mail-in registration also was implemented.

Given Virginia’s history of voting problems, members said Virginia’s election processes would be negatively affected by the Supreme Court’s decision (McLean). Since Virginia no longer has to submit any election changes for a review, the General Assembly is free to pass anything (Centreville/Chantilly). It will be more difficult for Attorney General to stop laws that impede voting rights or discriminate (Reston Evening). And, the Mt. Vernon Day unit was very concerned that redistricting will no longer have to be pre-cleared. Attendees at the Briefing noted that the Court’s decision could have both positive and negative changes. For example, by getting rid of the pre-clearance requirement, registrars are free to add voting hours in an emergency (Fairfax/Vienna).

The discussions on possible registration and voting legislation members would like to see enacted elicited many suggestions.

- Nonpartisan redistricting
- Repeal of photo ID requirement
- More satellite sites for absentee voting

- Information and transportation provided to get photo ID’s
- League assistance to aid those who need to acquire free photo ID’s

Regarding the need for voters to produce any type of identification, those members who worked at polls indicated that this was not a problem. Only one unit noted that a voter had no ID and was not allowed to vote. The League needs to publicize that currently some type of identification is needed. Units suggested what kind of information about registration and voting issues or changes they would like to receive.

- Updates on proposed legislation
- Any changes to state or national laws
- More information on photo ID requirements
- List of acceptable ID’s
- Any possible roadblocks set up to disenfranchise minority voters

They also suggested some ways to disseminate the information.

- Use “Action Alerts,” that is, emails telling members of any Virginia changes
- Place any changes in highlighted box in the monthly Voter
- Facts for Voters
- What’s on the Ballot
- State and Fairfax websites

The discussions related to nonviolent and violent felons brought mixed responses. The units were divided. Several units felt that the distinction between violent and nonviolent felons should be retained.

All agreed that nonviolent felons should have voting rights restored; however, there was no consensus about the definition of violent. Some observed that the term “violent felony” had an arbitrary definition and that it has changed over the years (more crimes seem to be labeled violent, with no consideration given to rehabilitation). But many agreed with the idea that anyone who served their term should be able to vote.

Overall, the units felt that the topic was information that League members needed and that it is very likely that more changes in our voting laws will occur. Supreme Court decisions may open the door to other types of election laws. Members want changes and updates to the study to be publicized in advance of elections.

## Nearby Forums of Other Leagues . . .

# LWVNCA to Host Forum on Decriminalization of Marijuana

League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area has scheduled a forum on “The Pros & Cons of Decriminalizing Marijuana” on Saturday November 16, 11a.m. – 12:30 p.m. in the A5 room of the D.C. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, 901 G Street, NW – Gallery Place Metro.

In 2012, the LWVUS Convention adopted the Statement of Position on Sentencing Policy:

*The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.*

The LWVNCA 2013 Convention identified discussion of the pros and cons of decriminalizing the use of marijuana and other drugs as a topic of educational importance for the 2013-14 League year. Twenty States, including Maryland

and the District of Columbia, now have laws that legalize marijuana in some form. Colorado and Washington are the only States that have legalized marijuana for recreational use. Illinois has approved a pilot program for medical marijuana use.

### LWVNCA Forum Speakers:

- David Grasso, At-Large (I) DC Council Member
- Rachele Yueng, Legislative Assistant, Marijuana Policy Project
- Cathy Lanier, Chief of Police, District of Columbia (invited)
- Representative of Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, Alexandria, VA (invited)
- Moderator: Phil Fornaci, former chair - Prisoners’ Rights Project, Washington Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights
- Other speakers from the law enforcement and medical communities will be invited

Following the Forum, League members and guests are invited to a no-host luncheon in the Atrium of the National Portrait Gallery and a tour of the Gallery (assuming the Federal Government facilities are re-opened). For more information, please contact Linda Garvelink, LWVNCA Director, at [Garvelink@Earthlink.net](mailto:Garvelink@Earthlink.net).

# Former Senator Whipple to Speak at LWVFC Forum on Campaign Finance Reform

On **Sunday, October 27, 3 – 4 p.m.**, the League of Women Voters of Falls Church is hosting a forum “The Corrupting Influence of Big Money in Campaigns.”

This forum is designed to: 1) Explain the enormous potential for corruption that has been unleashed by the Citizens United decision; 2) Review what can and is being done to stop it; 3) Generate a lively discussion about the need to reform our campaign finance system.

### Speakers:

- Mary Margaret Whipple, former Senator Commonwealth of Virginia
- Sean Barnett, Northern Virginia Move to Amend
- Dick McCall, FCC Citizen, former legislative aide
- Moderator: Robert Crowe, FCC Citizen & LWVFC member

The following statement represents the LWVUS response to the Supreme Court decision on this matter. “The day the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision in Citizens United v. FEC, the LWVUS said the “Court has made a tragic mistake. Their decision ... is constitutionally irresponsible and will surely bring about an anti-democratic revolution in how we finance elections in this country. Today, basic pillars of American democracy have been undermined – that elections should not be corrupted by vast corporate wealth and that the voters should be at the center of our democratic system.” (LWVUS, 1/21/10).

**Forum Location:** Senior Center, Falls Church City Community Center, 223 Little Falls St., Falls Church, VA 22046. Plenty of free parking.

For more information, contact Linda Garvelink @ [garvelink@earthlink.net](mailto:garvelink@earthlink.net) or 703-532-2859.

**Domestic Violence Hotline**  
(703) 360-7273



Looking For Additional Revenue . . .

# Is a “Meal Tax” the Best Way to Raise Additional Taxes for Fairfax County?

County budgetary issues such as sources of revenue and their allocations have been of keen interest to many of our citizens. Given the fact that the real estate tax provides the bulk of revenue for schools, public safety, human services, and other public services and programs, the Board of Supervisors has a goal to diversify the tax base and revenue sources.

To that end, the Fairfax County Department of Management and Budget has published a paper concerning the possibility of instituting a county-wide meals tax, subject to a voter referendum. Some local jurisdictions already have a meals tax. This Voter article looks at the county’s description of such a tax and reports the positions that the Fairfax League has previously taken that would apply to such a tax and the uses of its proceeds. Finally, members are asked to consider the tax rate, to whom it would apply, its effect on meals taxes already in place, and to provide some input into the pros and cons of a meals tax.

## Description

The meals tax is a tax imposed on the purchase of all prepared and ready to eat food and beverages. All restaurants as well as grocery stores and convenience stores selling prepared foods at a delicatessen counter must collect this tax from their customers if a locality levies the tax. As authorized by §58.1-3833 of the *Code of Virginia*, the tax may be levied if approved in a voter referendum. The voter referendum may be initiated either by a resolution of the Board of Supervisors or on the filing of a petition signed by 10 percent of the voters registered in the County. Cities and towns may impose a meals tax without holding a referendum. In addition, several counties have been exempted from the voter referendum requirement provided that a public hearing is held before adoption and the governing body by unanimous vote adopts the tax by local ordinance. The counties that have been granted an exemption to the voter referendum requirement are Arlington County, Roanoke County, Rockbridge County, Frederick County, and Montgomery County.

As with many other local taxes, counties are restricted in their authority to levy the meals tax within an incorporated town unless the town grants authority to the county. While Fairfax County does not levy the meals tax, the Town of Vienna levies a 3.0 percent meals tax and the Town of Herndon imposes the meals tax at 2.5 percent. Other Northern Virginia localities that tax meals are: Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax City, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park. Each of these jurisdictions levies the meals tax at 4.0 percent. The tax is in addition to the state’s sales tax. According to the *2012 Tax Rates: Virginia’s Cities, Counties and Selected Towns Rates*, all 39 cities, 46 counties, and 115 of the reporting towns in Virginia levied a

## To What Kind of Items Does the Meals Tax Apply?

- A tax on prepared food and beverages (ready-to-eat) at restaurants, lunchrooms, cafeterias, coffee shops, cafes, taverns, delis, push cart operations and hot dog stands
- Includes alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages served with a meal
- Does not apply to groceries; grocery and convenience stores only collect the tax on ready to eat foods -- such as the deli or salad bar
- Does not apply to vending machines

meals tax during the 2012 tax year. The State of Maryland, Montgomery County, and Prince George’s County do not levy a meals tax. Maryland’s sales tax is 6.0 percent.

Table 1 below shows the meals tax rates and revenue for surrounding jurisdictions that levy a meals tax.

## Revenue Estimate

Based on calendar year 2012 taxable sales at food and drink places in Fairfax County, a 1.0 percent meals tax is estimated to generate approximately \$22.0 million in revenue in FY 2014. At the maximum 4.0 percent rate, a county meals tax would generate annual revenue of approximately \$88.0 million.

**Table 1 - Meals Tax Rates and Revenue Generated**

Locality	FY2014	FY 2014 Meals Tax Rate (%)	FY2014
	Sales Tax Rate Paid on Meals* (%)		Estimated Meals Tax Revenue (Millions)
Northern Virginia			
Alexandria	6.0	4.0	\$17.6
Arlington	6.0	4.0	34.7
Falls Church	6.0	4.0	2.7
Fairfax City	6.0	4.0	5.4
Herndon	6.0	4.0	2.0
Vienna	6.0	3.0	1.9
District of Columbia**	0.0	10.0	331.3

\* Rate as of July 1, 2013

\*\* In DC, the sales tax does not apply to meals. The revenue shown for the meals tax in DC represents FY2012 data and includes taxes on rental vehicles.

**Effect of Meals Tax on Average Resident at 4% Tax Rate?**

- On a \$5 “fast food” meal, tax would be 20 cents
- On a \$50 meal at a “nice restaurant,” tax would be \$2.00

**Tax Limitations**

Counties in Virginia are limited to a rate of up to 4.0 percent and must gain voter approval in a referendum before levying the tax. There are no restrictions on the use of the tax revenue generated by the meals tax. However, some localities that levy the meals tax earmark a portion or all the revenue to a specific purpose. For example, Vienna’s meals tax revenue goes entirely to the debt service fund. Herndon dedicates approximately 1 percentage point of the 2.5 percent tax rate to economic development initiatives and capital improvement projects. Some counties that have asked voters in recent years to approve the meals tax had planned on dedicating at least a portion of the revenue to a specific purpose such as schools operating expenditures or new school construction.

**Who Would Pay the Meals Tax?**

- Commuters, travelers and tourists who pass through Fairfax County on a daily basis
- County residents who choose to dine out

**Issues**

- A meals tax would further diversify the County’s revenue base. **A 4.0 percent meals tax is equivalent to over 4 cents on the FY 2014 Real Estate Tax rate.** When the County increases the real estate tax, this applies to all property-owning County residents, regardless of their ability to pay. If the County imposed

**Tourist Spending in Fairfax County**

- Annual tourist spending in Fairfax County: \$2,648 million\*
- Average percentage of tourist spending on eating out in Northern Virginia: 22%\*
- Tourist spending on eating out in Fairfax County: \$582.6 million
- Estimated 4% meals tax revenue generated from tourists: \$23.3 million
- *Source: Virginia Tourism Corporation*

a meals tax, it would apply to tourists, commuters and travelers, as well as residents who choose to dine out. Based on visitor spending data from the Virginia Tourism Corporation, it is estimated that between 26 and 31 percent of meals expenditures in Fairfax County are generated by non-County residents.

- The Fairfax County restaurant customer base is comprised of many non-residents. For example, **348,004**

individuals commute into Fairfax County on a daily basis, almost three times more than into Arlington County:

- Demand for restaurant meals is relatively inelastic and therefore a meals tax would likely have minimal impact on the price or quantity of sales. The decision to eat out is not entirely an economic one but to a large extent is driven by convenience, adjacency, food selection, ambience, and other non-economic factors. For example, when Arlington instituted a meals tax in 1991, the County saw restaurant revenues increase

**Administering the Meals Tax**

Typically, in localities that levy the meals tax, the Commissioner of the Revenue is responsible for administering the tax. All restaurants and other places that sell food and drinks in a form ready for consumption, on or off their premises, must collect this tax from their customers when the charge for the food and beverages is paid. They are then required, within a specified period, to prepare and file monthly reports and to remit to the Commissioner of the Revenue the taxes collected in the previous month. For the purpose of compensating their collection efforts and timely

Commuting Patterns in the Northern Virginia Region	Fairfax County	Arlington County	Prince William County	Loudoun County
People who live and work in the area	233,954	16,388	41,738	47,685
In-Commuters	348,004	118,026	59,869	81,550
Out-Commuters	264,565	89,320	135,551	110,234
Net In-Commuters (In-Commuters minus Out-Commuters)	83,439	28,706	-75,682	-28,684

Source: "Virginia Workforce Connection - Community Profiles"

in the year after its meals tax was implemented. The National Restaurant Association reports having no research that shows an overall negative impact on restaurant sales of a restaurant meals tax. Restaurant sales are more heavily impacted by other cyclical economic trends. From 2006 to 2012, restaurant sales in Fairfax County increased 32.6 percent, or an average annual growth of almost 5 percent. During the recent economic recession, restaurant sales in the County fell 0.6 percent between 2008 and 2009.

- Sales tax on unprepared food is considered a regressive tax since lower-income households tend to spend larger fractions of their incomes on necessities such as food and clothing. This is why it is typical for unprepared foods to be taxed at a lower tax rate than other items or even to be exempt from sales taxes altogether. Restaurant meals are not necessities and, based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditure Survey, higher-income households tend to spend a larger share of their food budget on eating out.

filing and remittance of the tax, businesses are allowed a commission or a dealer’s discount, the size of which varies by locality. For example, Falls Church allows a 2 percent commission, Fairfax City and Vienna – 3 percent, and Herndon – 6 percent.

**Steps to Initiate Meals Tax Referendum**

- The process requires approximately a 4-month lead time
- Board of Supervisors (BOS) approves, by majority vote, a resolution to initiate a referendum
- Office of the County Attorney writes a petition to the Circuit Court asking for an order for a special election on the meals tax question. The petition would include a certified copy of the BOS resolution and a draft order for the court to enter
- Absentee ballots must be available 45 days before the election

For a November ballot, the resolution by the Board of Supervisors would need to be approved by the end of May to early June. This is the same time frame used for a bond referendum.

These are only the requisite technical steps required by law that the Board of Supervisors must follow for a meals tax referendum. For a successful referendum outcome, a lot more needs to be done ahead of time. The Board of Supervisors would have to seek and build a broad consensus in the community including residents, businesses, neighborhood and civic organizations. This would entail actively engaging all the stakeholders in a discussion about the pros and cons of levying a meals tax.

### Recent Meals Tax Voter Referendum History

- A Fairfax County meals tax was put to voter referendum in April 1992, but was defeated 58 percent to 42 percent with approximately 102,000 votes cast, representing about 25 percent of total registered voters in 1992.
- In 2004, legislation was introduced to exempt Fairfax County from the voter referendum requirement. The legislation was passed by the Senate but failed in the House.
- Loudoun County held a referendum for a meals tax in November 2008 but it failed by a vote of 70 percent to 30 percent. The new tax would have funded new school construction.
- Henrico and Chesterfield Counties will hold a meals tax referendum in November 2013. Henrico has indicated that it would earmark the money for schools, while Chesterfield would use the funds generated for both education and public safety. Neither county plans to lower the real estate tax rate should the meals tax get implemented.

Note: Marcia Wilds, Revenue and Economic Analysis Coordinator at the Department of Management and Budget, reports that “Fairfax County no longer needs a pre-approval by the DOJ to put a referendum on the ballot. The timeframe to initiate a meals tax referendum is reduced from 6 to 4 months.”

## LWV-FA Position on Fiscal Policy

The LWVFA believes the autonomy of Fairfax County should be enhanced, particularly through the granting of flexible taxing powers. (1970s)

The local tax system, taken as a whole, should be fair and equitable, provide for adequate funding of services and facilities, distribute the tax burden equitably among all sectors of the community, and provide for a stable and reliable revenue stream.

The following important characteristics should be

considered when evaluating a tax: fairness and equity progressivity, revenue yield, ease and cost of collection and administration, and the degree of difficulty in avoiding payment. Other factors that should be considered include; the stability of the revenue stream from the tax, who really pays, and the political acceptability of the tax. (1991)

If additional revenue is needed, and in order to diversify the tax system and reduce reliance on the property tax, a combination of adjusting the rates on existing taxes and/or fees and enacting new taxes and/or fees should be considered. (1991)

Earmarking all or part of a tax for a specific purpose is appropriate under certain circumstances, balanced against maintaining the local government’s flexibility in making budgetary decisions. The need for the dedicated revenue should always be compelling, and a sunset or review provision should be included. (1991)

The LWVFA supports:

- Provisions for relief from the real property tax that are limited to those whose income and assets fall below a designated level. The percentage increase in the amount of one’s real property tax over the previous year should not be a factor.
- Taxing agricultural and forest land according to use, with deferred taxes to be collected if the use changes. (1991)

The LWVFA believes that some kinds of services and/or benefits should be supported by general taxes, while others may be more appropriately financed by those persons using a given service or receiving a specific benefit offered by the local government.

- General taxes should support basic governmental services, such as public education, police and fire service and libraries, which should be available to all residents.
- Criteria for financing by user fees should include the level of choice involved in use of the service or benefit. One example of appropriate use fee financing is recreational facilities in the public parks. (1991)

**(from LWV of the Fairfax Area, “Here We Stand” 2008 Edition, revised June 2009 and June 2010, republished September 2011, p. 4)**



# Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Approves Latest Development Proposal



On September 24, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors approved Tysons West, the latest development proposal for Tysons. Developer JBG's plans call for two new apartment buildings with 700 units in total, a 20-story office building and 100,000 square feet of retail.

The developer also will provide 3,500 square feet in one of its high-rise buildings for a public arts agency for up to 30 years, and it will pay \$350,000 to help create a county Master Plan for the Arts.

The 16-acre site is now home to the Sheraton Premiere hotel, along with a recently opened gym and Walmart. The hotel will remain as part of the new development. Most of Tysons West will be within a 1/3 mile from the Spring Hill Metro, the western-most Silver Line stop in Tysons.

The entire project will be built in phases. JBG plans to build an approximately six-story, 400-unit apartment next to the Sheraton first. This building will front Leesburg Pike, and it will feature an interior courtyard and underground parking.

Next, the developer intends to construct the 20-story residential and office buildings at the corner of Leesburg Pike and Westwood Center Drive. Both buildings will perch

atop a shared, six-story parking garage, which will have ground floor retail and architectural treatments to mask the structure.

The high-rise apartment building will provide 269 units spread across 300,000 square feet. The office building would be a maximum of 380,000 square feet.

In keeping with the county's plans for Tysons, JBG will make 20 percent of its apartments affordable, and it will seek LEED certification for the residential buildings and at least LEED Silver certification for the office building. Additionally, it will provide two charging stations for electric vehicles in each garage.

Tysons West also will feature nine pocket parks on site, totaling 1.6 acres. This includes a playground, an off-leash dog park with a dog-friendly water feature, half basketball court and bocce court. JBG will pay to buy a half acre of land for an athletic field at Westgate Park or elsewhere in Tysons. Additionally, the company will give the county \$50,000 for trails or other improvements at Old Courthouse Spring Branch Stream Valley Park.

While additional zoning approval would be needed, JBG will give the county land for a future ramp to the Dulles Toll Road after 10 years. This ramp may be placed behind the Sheraton, although the exact location will be decided later. The ramp is intended to be built in conjunction with Boone Boulevard, a street proposed to connect Gosnell Road to the Toll Road. Boone will serve as an east-west alternative to Leesburg Pike.

## Fall Kick-Off Declared a Success

By Charleen Deasy, Program Director.

A very successful 2013 fall Kick off workshop was held on Saturday September 7 at the Springfield Governmental Center. Thank you to the 35 LWVFA members who attended the morning session. There were unit folders for all with the latest forms and documents. Presentations varied from a simple explanation of a form to a more extensive explanation of the LWVFA fall voter service activities. All activities are important; it is impossible to emphasize candidate Meet and

Greet events over major voter registration drives or work as election officers – opportunities for all.

A list of 29 "lessons learned" has been developed to guide the planning for the 2014 fall Kick off. If you have further ideas please let the Unit Coordinators know.

All units were represented by one or more individuals: chairperson, co-chairs, other officers and new members. After the morning workshop, the monthly briefing was facilitated by Judy Helein, LWVFA ensued. Ideas and discussion allow unit facilitators the knowledge to led the *VOTER* discussion in their unit.

## State Workshops Focus on New Laws

By Helen Kelly, Co-president

At the LWV-VA Workshops on September 28, the class presented by Olga Hernandez posed the question “Will Virginia Be the new North Carolina?” After the Supreme Court invalidated Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act, the North Carolina legislature passed a series of voting law changes that may create barriers to some citizens’ right to



Hernandez reviews details about North Carolina’s newly passed election laws with leaguers.

vote. Here are a few important changes to North Carolina election law:

- **No Same-Day Registration:** Everyone must be registered 25 days before the election to be eligible to vote.
- **Early Voting Days Reduced from 17 to 10**, but hours have been extended.
- **Authority to Extend Voting Hours** is limited to the State Board of Elections. The counties cannot extend hours in the case of long lines or mechanical problems.
- **Absentee Ballot Changes** now require ballots to have the signatures of two witnesses or one notary public (no fee allowed), and the voter must provide one of the following: driver’s license or non-operator ID number, last four digits of the social security number or a mail document with the current address.
- **Poll Observers Increased to 10 per party.** Some feel that these poll observers will challenge voters.
- **More Voter Challenges** with provision that now that any voter in the county may challenge any other voter. Formerly, only voters in a precinct were allowed to challenge another voter in the same precinct.
- **Student IDs Discontinued.** Now students must obtain the same types of ID as other voters.

- **Free IDs Provided** after voter proves that he cannot obtain one any other way.

How likely is Virginia’s legislature to pass similar laws? We won’t know until legislators start filing their bills in November. Watch for Action Alerts after the start of the new session.

A related workshop, “Putting a Face on Legislative Action” presented by Carol Noggle of the Prince William League, taught us how to track legislation using software called Lobbyist in a Box. This program allows a citizen to track five pieces of legislation free and to substitute another bill for an original entry as the General Assembly session proceeds.

Bills start their journey in the House of Delegates when the Speaker refers them to one of 14 standing committees. After the committee studies, discusses and votes on each bill, it may proceed to the full House for a vote. If the legislation passes, either with or without amendments, it is then sent to the Senate. In the Senate, the bill follows the same process, although the Senate has only 11 standing committees. Through each of these steps, Lobbyist in a Box sends e-mail notifications about any hearing where a particular bill will be discussed or put to a vote.

This is very useful for anyone who wants to lobby for or against a piece of legislation. It allows the League to contact committee members, our own delegate or senator



Workshop attendees learn about tracking legislation with new computer software.

to advocate for the League’s position on the issue before a vote is taken.

And if any changes are proposed to Virginia’s election law, Leaguers who have signed up for Lobbyist in a Box will spread the word, so we can contact our Senators and Delegates and make our voices heard.

## This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

### Topic: Should Fairfax County Adopt a Meal Tax

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 October 5, 2013, the locations were correct; please use phone numbers to verify sites and advise of your intent to attend. Some meetings at restaurants may need reservations.

#### Saturday, November 2

##### **10 a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing**

Packard Center  
4026 Hummer Rd.  
Annandale 22003  
Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401

#### Monday, November 11

##### **1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)**

Hunters Crossing Classroom  
Spring Village Drive  
Springfield 22150  
Contact: Kay, 703-644-2670

#### Tuesday, November 12

##### **10:30 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD)**

Sully District Gov. Center  
4900 Stonecroft Blvd.  
Chantilly 20151  
Contact: Olga, 703-815-1897

#### Wednesday, November 13

##### **9:30 a.m. Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)**

Mt. Vernon Dist. Government Center  
2511 Parkers Lane  
Alexandria 22306  
Contact: Louise, 703-960-0073

##### **9:30 a.m. McLean Day (MVD)**

Star Nut Café  
1445 Laughlin Ave.  
McLean 22101  
Contact: Peggy, 703-532-4417 or Sharone 703-734-1048

##### **10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)**

8739 Cuttermille Pl,  
Springfield 22153  
Contact: Kathleen 703-644-1555

##### **7:30 p.m. Reston Evening (RE)**

Reston Art Gallery at Heron House  
Lake Anne Village Center  
Reston 20190  
Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

#### Thursday, November 14

##### **9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)**

21045 Cardinal Pond Ter. Apt. 119  
Ashburn 20147  
Contact: Carolyn, 703-729-1133

##### **9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)**

9607 Laurel Oak Place  
Fairfax Station 22039  
Contact: Nancy, 703-256-6570 or Peg, 703-256-9420

##### **1 p.m. Fairfax City/Vienna (FX-V)**

Oakton Regional Library  
10304 Lynhaven Pl.  
Oakton 22124  
Contact: Bobby, 703-938-1486 or Liz, 703-281-3380

##### **7:45 p.m. Mt. Vernon Evening (MVE)**

Paul Spring Retirement Community  
Mt. Vernon Room  
7116 Fort Hunt Road  
Alexandria 22307  
Contact: Jane, 703-960-682

## December Meetings: Nutrition in Schools



The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (LWVFA)  
 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403  
 703-658-9150. Web address: www.lwv-fairfax.org

Non-Profit Org.  
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**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER ©  
 November, 2013  
 Julie Jones, Co-President  
 Helen Kelly, Co-President  
 Ron Page, Editor  
 Liz Brooke, Coordinator**

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 citizen of voting age, 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.

**LWVFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**  
 (Dues year is July 1 through June 30. Current dues year ends June 30, 2014.)

**Membership Category:** Individual \$65 \_\_\_\_; Household (2 persons-1 VOTER) \$90 \_\_; Donation \$ \_\_\_\_  
 Student \$32.50 \_\_\_\_; (Coll. Attending \_\_\_\_\_)

**Membership is:** New \_\_\_\_; Renewal \_\_\_\_; Reinstate \_\_\_\_; Subsidy Requested \_\_\_\_  
 We value membership. A subsidy fund is available, check block above and include whatever you can afford.

**Dues are not tax deductible. Tax-deductible donations must be written on a separate check payable to LWVFA Ed. Fund.**

**Please Print Clearly!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (M) \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for checking off your interests:**

<input type="checkbox"/> County Govt	<input type="checkbox"/> Voting Procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/> Schools
<input type="checkbox"/> Fiscal	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Human Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Use Planning	<input type="checkbox"/> Judicial Systems	<input type="checkbox"/> Affordable Housing
<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Water	<input type="checkbox"/> Juvenile Problems	<input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence

Mail to: LWVFA, 4026-B Hummer Road, Annandale, VA 22003-2403