



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

Fairfax VOTER

January 2014

Volume 66, Issue 5

Program Planning for LWVUS & LWVFA 2014-2016 Your Chance to Choose League Program

It is that time of year again -- program planning! Think about the LWV program on the national and local levels. Do our long-standing positions still have relevance? Can they be more effective if reworded or re-studied? Are there issues that need the League's voice; and if so, should we embark on a new study?

The LWV derives its strength from being embedded in and reflective of member interest. So tend to your "grassroots," weigh in on our programs for the next two years and send a message to you local and national Leagues.

A special treat at our January meeting will be a presentation by our own Kathleen Pablo who has been warmly received all over Virginia for her dramatic recreation of the moment when the fight for women's suffrage finally was won. Entitled "The Night of Terror," this was long overdue to be enjoyed by our Fairfax League.

Calendar

January

- 1 New Years Day
- 3 LWVNCA Board meeting
- 6 VOTER deadline
- 8 General Assembly convenes
- 15 Women's Legislative Roundtable
- 15 Board Meeting**
- 18 General Meeting**
- 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 20 School holiday
- 22 Women's Legislative Roundtable
- 29 Women's Legislative Roundtable
- 30, 31 Student holiday

Inside This Issue

- Presidents' Message 2
- LWVUS Gives Background Reading for
Agriculture Study 2
- Should Fairfax County Adopt
a Meal Tax? 3
- Registration Form for General Meeting 4
- LWV-FA December Board Notes 4
- National and Local Program Planning EF-1
- Pre-Session Huge Success EF-6
- Pre-Session Identifies Top Issues EF-6
- Pablo to Speak at General Meeting 5



Presidents' Message



Happy New Year! We hope all of you enjoyed a wonderful holiday season full of good company, good times and good food. At the start of this new calendar year, we hope to repeat the successes of last year. In 2013, for the first time, we did program planning as a group at the General Meeting, and most of you told us that you prefer doing it this way.

This year's General Meeting will take place on Saturday, January 18. The speaker will be our own Kathleen Pablo, who will describe how the Suffragists earned us the right to participate in the political process and make our voices heard on matters of public policy that affect us all.

Kathleen's talk will provide the perfect lead-in to our program planning session after lunch. Like the Suffragists, who worked toward their goals as a group, we'll work as a group to decide the LWVFA program for the coming League year. We hope you can join us to catch up with fellow League members, to hear Kathleen's talk and to participate in our program planning discussions.

Another 2013 success was our series of candidate Meet-and-Greets. In partnership with other local organizations, we arranged one of these events for every supervisor district in the county. We appreciate the efforts of Peggy Knight who organized them, Jane Pacelli who publicized them and every one of you who participated in any way to make them a success. We couldn't have done it without you. As we look forward to a year of continuing successes, we thank each and every one of you who make everything we do possible.

Julie and Helen

Background Reading for LWVUS Agricultural Study

The LWVUS voted in 2012 to form a committee to study agriculture in the U.S. LWVFA will have consensus meetings this winter. Results of our consensus meetings will be reported in April and presented to the national convention in June. Before our meetings, you may want to visit some of the sites that the committee recommends.

The update will focus on: 1) current technology issues in agriculture, including genetically modified organisms (GMOs), herbicides, pesticides, agricultural water pollution, aquifer depletion, antibiotics in livestock, and accurate food labeling; and 2) current agricultural finance issues, including consolidation in agriculture industries, crop subsidies and the federal agricultural regulatory process.

The Committee has identified three specific background documents that provide a broad and relatively neutral overview of the complex set of issues addressed by U.S. agricultural policy and three websites that provide similar types of information, but from the website sponsor's point of view. The Committee points out that each of the documents and websites presents information consistent with the mission of the authors and/or sponsoring organization, so League members must be willing to read widely to get a balanced understanding of agricultural policy challenges facing the U.S. and the world in general.

The documents are a U.S. government report: *Challenges and Opportunities in U.S. Agriculture* (Chapter 8 of the *Economic Report of the President- 2013*); a Union of Concerned

Scientists policy brief titled *The Healthy Farm: A Vision for U.S. Agriculture*, and a short article in *Scientific America*, "Will Organic Fail to Feed the World?" The first website is supported by USDA (Know Your Farmer) about local foods. Others are sponsored by the National Sustainable Agriculture Council and the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance "Food Dialogue." To find these documents and websites, go to the LWVUS website and follow leads to the agricultural update page. We will also have a link on our website.

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2013 - 2014

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

Summary of November Unit Discussions . . .

Should Fairfax County Adopt a Meals Tax?

By Karole McKalip

The possibility of a Fairfax County Meals Tax to increase revenue for County programs continues to be a topic of considerable interest. In particular, County school officials who are concerned about cuts in funding for class programs and staff are looking to a meals tax dedicated to education. In October, School Board members asked the Virginia legislature “to amend the state constitution to grant them independent taxing authority.... A movement pushing for a 4 percent meals tax in restaurants is gaining momentum in Fairfax as a means to raise about \$100 million a year for the schools.” (*Washington Post*, November 26, 2013, p. B2) Our November unit discussions examined the meals tax as a whole and more specifically as a way to add revenue not only for schools but also for other areas such as libraries, special transportation projects, fire/police needs, parks, and affordable housing.

Unit members generally agreed that new sources of revenue to support County programs were necessary and that implementation of a meals tax would be desirable. While the majority of units were positive about such a tax, there were concerns about the effects on some residents such as the working poor and homeless. Members had mixed reactions to using the tax for specific purposes as opposed to placing it into the general fund. Most units recognized that designating a specific purpose would facilitate voter support. Some in the Reston Evening unit voiced a concern that a referendum would not be supported if the revenue would go into the general fund. Mt. Vernon Evening members said that opinion was split between having the tax earmarked or for the general fund; some felt that tax would be easier to pass if it was designated for a particular area. The Springfield unit thought that earmarking the tax would be a device for ensuring passage, but that general funds would then likely shift to other areas. The unit believed it would be necessary to periodically review such a tax. Most units believed that 4 percent would be a reasonable rate.

Because the Dillon Rule limits what counties can use for new sources of steady revenue (Reston Day and Reston Evening), a dedicated meals tax would provide the county with extra income. In addition, because some surrounding towns and other jurisdictions already have meals taxes, Fairfax/Vienna did not think it would cause much harm to the restaurants in the county. In examining the negatives of such a tax, Reston Evening pointed out that businesses have not supported this initiative in the past. And, as was stated earlier, if the

county would use the tax to support a specific program, i.e., education, there was a concern that the State would reduce their funding in that area. Centreville/Chantilly wondered about the administration time and cost to small business owners. Most units, however, decided the effects of such a tax would be minimal. Several units felt that the passage of a meals tax would require an effective public relations campaign, to include outreach to the business community for its support.

All of the units had questions for the Board of Supervisors on this issue.

- ✓ What exactly would be taxed? For example, grocery stores offer prepared deli items, salad bars, etc., would the tax apply?
- ✓ How would the revenue be used?
- ✓ How would such a proposal by the Board of Supervisors be presented to the public?
- ✓ What other plans does the BOS have for increasing needed revenue? For example, has it looked into hotel or car rental taxes?
- ✓ What lessons can be learned from counties that already have such a tax?
- ✓ What is the appropriate timing to present this tax as a referendum?
- ✓ Is the BOS prepared to “sell” such a tax to the public?
- ✓ Is the BOS prepared to administer the tax?

None of the units felt that the current positions of the LWV-FA on fiscal policy need to be revised. The positions are comprehensive and allow it to support action for the meals tax. Mt. Vernon Day said this was an issue that the League should really push forward. Its members generally believed that our current positions are sufficient to allow us to pursue the topic and to testify in support of a meals tax. Several other units proposed that the League support a PR campaign for the referendum by speaking at BOS meetings, working to educate people on the benefits and coordinating with other organizations to put together community information sessions. Some units, however, were more cautious and suggested that the League should reach a consensus concerning lobbying in support of the tax (Reston Evening). Fairfax Station suggested that before supporting the tax, the League should challenge the BOS to justify the need for additional revenue and to identify specific needs where the additional revenue would go. Centreville/Chantilly’s view was that the League should concentrate its efforts on education rather than support.



~ You are cordially invited to attend



The LWV of the Fairfax Area
General Meeting

Saturday, January 18, 2014

COUNTRY CLUB OF FAIRFAX
5110 Ox Road (Route 123 & Braddock Roads)
Fairfax VA 22030
9:00 a.m. – Registration & coffee

9:30 a.m. LWVUS program planning discussion

10:30 a.m. Speaker: Kathleen Pablo
“History of the Suffrage Movement”

11:30 – Luncheon
(Reservations required for luncheon only)

Luncheon Reservation Deadline January 8, 2014-- Cost: \$35 per person

Menu: House Salad With Raspberry Vinaigrette, Chicken Entree, Chef’s Vegetables, Rolls and Butter, Dessert, Coffee Service

Program is free; Luncheon, \$35 per person.

Make checks payable to: **LWVFA** and mail with reservation form to:

2014 General Meeting, 10172 Turnberry Place, Oakton, VA 22124

Name _____ Lunch @\$35 ea. _____

Phone Number & E-mail _____

Guest(s) Name(s) _____ Lunch @\$35ea. _____

Total Enclosed \$ _____

For special dietary needs or questions, call Mary at 703-319-2185

LWV-FA Board Notes for December

At its November meeting, the LWVFA Board confirmed and/or approved the following appointments: Betty Ellerbee, who was appointed Sequoya Condo Chair prior to the elections; Ann Kanter to Fairfax County’s Information Technology Policy Advisory Committee, and Marcia McDevitt to the Community Action Advisory Board. The Board also noted that the library issue was a hot topic at October unit meetings. Members agreed that there seemed to be no need for a change in our position at this time. We will consider sending a regular observer to the Library Board meetings.

*Don’t Forget to
Register to Attend
the General Meeting
January 18*

National and Local Program Planning: Time to Make Your Views Known for 2014-2016

January's General Meeting is a time to reflect on the issues truly important to League members. We cannot do everything, but we are certainly good at having an impact on a few issues at a time. Your views will feed into a consensus that will help decide both local and LWVUS program for the program year that begins in the fall.

One important aspect of League program is that it includes both study and action. Members will be asked to identify positions that should have the highest priority for action as well as a very few areas that need to be reviewed for a possible update or studied anew. Reviews or studies lead to concurrence or consensus.

As you evaluate issues, ask yourself these questions: Is there widespread member interest? Is this a timely issue? Is government action the most effective way to address the problem? Do we have the people to work on this? Feedback forms will be available at the General Meeting and will also appear on our website, www.lwv-fairfax.org.

Members will be asked, on both LWVUS and LWVFA levels to 1) decide if there is an issue that they would like to be reviewed; 2) decide if there is an issue on which they would like a new study; 3) decide if there are any issues that should have priority for action; 4) decide if there are any positions that should be abandoned, 5) and very importantly, who is willing to work on the issue. For LWVFA program, you will be asked if there are topics on which you would like informational programs. You may also decide that you have considered everything and do not want to recommend any changes.

Remember that during the past year, Fairfax Area League members reviewed the League's local and national positions on housing, libraries and taxes as we studied those issues in unit meetings. After discussing those issues, most unit members felt that the positions on libraries and taxes were adequate and needed no change, but the local position on housing needed some editing due to redundancy.

I. ABOUT LWVUS (National) PROGRAM PLANNING

We are being asked by LWVUS to provide feedback before March, so that our delegates to the June convention will be

attending with a purpose, not subject to pressure by one interest group.

Resources and Volunteer Time

Before recommending a study, review or concurrence, Leagues need to consider the resource commitment required for their own local League as well as for the LWVUS. A recommendation of a new study, review or concurrence is a request to give the recommendation a high priority for the biennium at both the LWVFA and LWVUS levels. If a recommendation is adopted, local Leagues and LWVUS, with limited resources – money, but even more important volunteer time -- may find it necessary to drop other activities in order to participate. Although technology has made it possible to reduce expenses, there are still significant staff time costs, even with unbelievable hours of volunteer work by the national study committee. Each study or update includes the process of choosing a committee which then meets for a number of months to work on study materials and consensus questions. So as Leagues consider the scope of any proposed study or update remember that consensus process must be capable of completion between July 2014 and April 2016.

New Study, Review, or Concurrence?

In recent years, local and state Leagues have had the option to choose one new study, or one review and update, or one concurrence or to make no recommendation. This biennium, the response form will accept two recommendations, which can be any combination of study, review/update or concurrence. The second is not required, but the option is provided for Leagues that cannot reach consensus on proposing only one program item. This option gives Leagues the opportunity to choose a second program item that can be a study, review/update or concurrence no matter which of the three categories was the first choice. So, a League's proposal could be two studies, two concurrences, two review/updates or any combination thereof. Only two items will be accepted from any one League and the second item will be weighted at 50 percent of the first.

New Study/Program Item: To propose a new study, our League will need to fill out that section on the response form by including a brief statement (300 words or less), stating the scope of the study. We will list this statement under the appropriate position heading—Representative

Government, International Relations, Natural Resources, or Social Policy. A statement of scope includes the areas to be explored, the emphasis on a particular aspect of the issue, and the parameters of the study. The staff and Program Planning Committee have asked if several Leagues are proposing or supporting the same study, that they use the same position heading and consistent wording in the brief summary of scope. In addition to checking the LWVEF Clearinghouse before proposing a study on a new topic, Leagues are encouraged to use the Convention and Leaders Forums to inquire if any state or local League has a position on the proposed topic. If so, a League might consider proposing a concurrence rather than a new study.

Review/Update: Likewise, Leagues may recommend a LWVUS position for review/update during each biennium. Again, it will be helpful to the staff and Program Planning Committee, if several Leagues are proposing or supporting the same review/update, that they use the same position heading and consistent wording in the brief summary of scope.

Concurrence: LWVUS's response form includes the option to recommend a program item for concurrence. The proposed concurrence must be based on a previous state or local League position, and the League needs to provide the title and scope of the position it proposes for concurrence and the name of the League that did the original study.

What Positions Are Already on the Books?

The short version is reproduced below. The full text of our LWVUS positions is too long to include in the *VOTER* but makes for fascinating reading, complete with background of how changes have been made over the years. Please make every effort to download [Impact on Issues 2013](#) from the website: www.lwv.org.

From LWVUS Program Planning Leader's Guide 2013-2014 11/11/2013 by Jessica Jones

II. LWVUS PUBLIC POLICY POSITIONS in brief 2012-2014

A. REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT: Promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive.

1. Voting Rights

Citizen's Right to Vote. Protect the right of all citizens to vote; encourage all citizens to vote.

DC Self-Government and Full Voting Representation. Secure for the citizens of the District of Columbia the rights of self-government and full voting representation in both houses of Congress.

2. Election Process

Apportionment. Support apportionment of congressional districts and elected legislative bodies at all levels of government based substantially on population.

Campaign Finance. Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Selection of the President. Promote the election of the President and Vice-President by direct popular vote. Support uniform national voting qualifications and procedures for presidential elections. Support efforts to provide voters with sufficient information about candidates.

3. Citizen Rights

Citizen's Right to Know/Citizen Participation. Protect the citizen's right to know and facilitate citizen participation in government decision-making.

Individual Liberties. Oppose major threats to basic constitutional rights.

Public Policy on Reproductive Choices. Protect the constitutional right of privacy of the individual to make reproductive choices.

4. Congress and the Presidency

Congress. Support responsive legislative processes characterized by accountability, representativeness, decision-making capability and effective performance.

The Presidency. Promote a dynamic balance of power between the executive and legislative branches within the framework set by the Constitution.

5. Privatization Ensure transparency, accountability, positive community impact and preservation of the common good when considering the transfer of governmental services, assets and/or functions to the private sector.

B. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: Promote peace in an interdependent world by working cooperatively with other nations and strengthening international organizations.

1. United Nations. Support a strong, effective United Nations to promote international peace and security and to address the social, economic and humanitarian needs of all people.

2. Trade. Support U.S. trade policies that reduce trade barriers, expand international trade and advance the achievement of humanitarian, environmental and social goals.

3. U.S. Relations with Developing Countries. Promote U.S. policies that meet long-term social and economic needs of developing countries.

4. Arms Control. Reduce the risk of war through support of arms control measures.

5. Military Policy and Defense Spending. Work to limit reliance on military force. Examine defense spending in the context of total national needs.

C. NATURAL RESOURCES: Promote an environment beneficial to life through the protection and wise management of natural resources in the public interest.

1. Natural Resources. Promote the management of natural resources as interrelated parts of life-supporting ecosystems.

2. Resource Management. Promote resource conservation, stewardship and long-range planning, with the responsibility for managing natural resources shared by all levels of government.

3. Environmental Protection and Pollution Control. Preserve the physical, chemical and biological integrity of the ecosystem, with maximum protection of public health and the environment.

Air Quality. Promote measures to reduce pollution from mobile and stationary sources.

Energy. Support environmentally sound policies that reduce energy growth rates, emphasize energy conservation and encourage the use of renewable resources.

Land Use. Promote policies that manage land as a finite resource and that incorporate principles of stewardship.

Water Resources. Support measures to reduce pollution in order to protect surface water, groundwater and drinking water.

Waste Management. Promote policies to reduce the

generation and promote the reuse and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes.

Nuclear Issues. Promote the maximum protection of public health and safety and the environment.

Public Participation. Promote public understanding and participation in decision making as essential elements of responsible and responsive management of our natural resources.

4. Agriculture Policy. Promote adequate supplies of food and fiber at reasonable prices to consumers and support economically viable farms, environmentally sound farm practices and increased reliance on the free market.

D. SOCIAL POLICY: Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

1. Equality of Opportunity

Equal Rights. Support ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment and efforts to bring laws into compliance with the goals of the ERA.

Education, Employment and Housing. Support equal access to education, employment and housing.

Federal Role in Public Education. Support federal policies that provide an equitable, quality public education for all children pre-K through grade 12.

2. Fiscal Policy

Tax Policy. Support adequate and flexible funding of federal government programs through an equitable tax system that is progressive overall and that relies primarily on a broad-based income tax.

Federal Deficit. Promote responsible deficit policies.

Funding of Entitlements. Support a federal role in providing mandatory, universal, old-age, survivors, disability and health insurance.

3. Health Care. Secure equal rights and equal opportunity for all. Promote social and economic justice and the health and safety of all Americans.

4. Immigration. Promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment

needs of the United States; be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises; and provide for student visas. Ensure fair treatment under the law for all persons. In transition to a reformed system, support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status.

5. Meeting Basic Human Needs. Support programs and policies to prevent or reduce poverty and to promote self-sufficiency for individuals and families.

Income Assistance. Support income assistance programs, based on need, that provide decent, adequate standards for food, clothing and shelter.

Support Services. Provide essential support services.

Housing Supply. Support policies to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for every American family.

6. Child Care. Support programs and policies to expand the supply of affordable, quality child care for all who need it.

Early Intervention for Children at Risk. Support policies and programs that promote the well-being, development and safety of all children.

Violence Prevention. Support violence prevention programs in communities.

7. Gun Control. Protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. Support regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

8. Urban Policy. Promote the economic health of cities and improve the quality of urban life.

9. Death Penalty. The LWVUS supports abolition of the death penalty.

10. 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.

Whatever the issue, the League believes that efficient and economical government requires competent personnel, the clear assignment of responsibilities, adequate financing, coordination among levels of government, effective enforcement and well defined channels for citizen input and review.

From LWVUS.org/content/public-policy-positions (revised 2013)

III. ABOUT LWVFA (local) PROGRAM PLANNING

The same principles apply for local program planning, except that we adopt our program for the next year at our April Annual Meeting rather than at a June convention. We already have a few suggestions from earlier unit and other meetings.

IV. LWVFA POSITIONS IN BRIEF

A. GOVERNMENT

1. Fairfax County & City of Fairfax (1987-1996)

Support an effective, responsible and accountable form of government that includes opportunities for citizen participation in the decision-making process by scheduling time for public comment at board and council meetings and holding magisterial district town meetings in the county. Support for the concept of an independent auditor for program review.

2. Fiscal (1970s-2008)

Support for an effectively administered, equitable tax system and the sale of bonds for capital improvements including the construction and renewal of school facilities. 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.

3. Public Libraries (1984-2006)

Support for selection policies and procedures of the Fairfax County Public Libraries (FCPL) that ensure its collection contains a wide variety of books, digital resources, and other materials representing a diversity of views to serve the educational, informational and recreational needs of the residents of Fairfax County/City.

4. Registration and Voting

Support efforts to increase voter registration and voter participation in Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax.

5. Transportation (1981-2004)

Support for an effective, well-coordinated and adequately financed system of public transportation in Fairfax County/City, and an active role by Fairfax County in the planning of its road system and the financing of road improvements

B. NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Environmental Quality (EQ)

Solid Waste (1980-1990)

Support measures to protect the public and the environment and to encourage alternative methods of disposal of solid wastes. Source reduction, as well as reuse and recycling, should be emphasized over incineration and land filling.

Hazardous Materials (1985-1994)

Support establishment and maintenance by Fairfax County and Fairfax City of a comprehensive local hazardous materials program, including safe disposal of hazardous waste, to protect the public and environment.

Sensitive Areas (1988-1994)

Non-tidal wetlands are a valuable resource that is in need of protection from destruction by conversion to other uses. Both tidal and non-tidal wetlands should be protected against damage from sedimentation and pollution.

Air Quality (1992)

To achieve and maintain acceptable air quality, development of less polluting alternative fuels should be a high priority with preference for compressed natural gas, reformulated gasoline, electricity and hydrogen. Support for a change in parking subsidies away from those favoring low occupancy vehicles to those favoring efficient transportation modes.

Climate Change (2009)

Localities must play a significant role in addressing the causes of climate change. The League supports and encourages the County and City of Fairfax to adopt and carry out programs that will minimize the causes and effects of climate change. The League also supports the coordination of these efforts with those of other localities.

2. Land Use Planning (1984-2000)

Support for well-coordinated and environmentally sound comprehensive land use planning in Fairfax County/City, efforts to ensure that growth is balanced and orderly, preservation of historic and archaeological sites and areas, coordinated revitalization and redevelopment, and coordination of land use and transportation planning.

3. Water (1990s)

Support for Fairfax County taking measures necessary to effectively protect the Occoquan Reservoir from pollution.

C. SOCIAL POLICY

1. Health Care (1984-1988)

Support publicly funded health planning to control costs and support Fairfax County/City having a role in the health care of its citizens, which should include participation in programs that subsidize health care for the medically indigent through private physicians and primary care clinics placed in appropriate locations. Support for an aggressive community-based out-reach program to inform the public about available health care programs.

2. Human Services (1976-1990)

Support equal opportunity for education, employment and housing; promote provision of services for the elderly; work to ensure adequate, affordable and appropriate housing for low-and moderate-income families and individuals; support a wide range of housing arrangements for mentally disabled adults; and support permanent shelters for homeless families and individuals.

3. Judicial System (2000)

Support court, correctional and law enforcement systems for Fairfax County/City that are conducted in a just and dignified manner; that minister to all people without legal, economic or administrative discrimination; that require efficient administration and competent personnel who are given a clear assignment of responsibility and adequate financing; that require proper planning and coordination between related agencies; and that encourage the active and informed participation of citizens.

4. Juvenile Problems (1994)

Support measures for problem youth whereby the major goal of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court for Fairfax County/City is the protection and rehabilitation of problem youth. Support for alternatives to detention and a variety of individual and group homes located throughout the county/city, in preference to institutions. These facilities should provide for separation of various types of juveniles according to their individual needs.

5. Schools (2007-2008, 2010)

Promote equal opportunity for a quality education in Fairfax County/City schools. Support for proper planning; competent

administration; full-day kindergarten and minimum of 20-minute daily recess in all elementary schools; programs to meet special needs; adequate personnel, facilities and financing; well defined channels for community input and

review; and appropriate books and materials to support and enhance the instructional program.

For complete wording, see [Here We Stand](#), revised 2011, on LWVFA website – Action page: www.lwv-fairfax.org

Pre-Session Legislative Forum Is Huge Success

Imagine the surprise of participants in the Pre-Session Legislative Forum in Richmond, on December 4, when in walked Governor-Elect Terry McAuliffe who asked for the group's help in making sure every eligible voter is given the opportunity to exercise the right to vote. He also mentioned several of his campaign promises he plans to address such as a push for non-partisan redistricting. The Governor-Elect had been formally invited to attend. But his visit was ensured when a quick-thinking board member, Olga Hernandez, met him by chance and asked him to come the next day.

More than 120 people attended the morning session at the State Capital where 17 organizations and coalitions reviewed their priorities for the 2014 legislative session. Governor-Elect McAuliffe also sent two members of his transition team to gather information from presenters. Suzanne Denslow, Deputy Chief of Staff and Tracy Retchin, Policy Advisor, attended the morning session and were recognized with a round of applause. In addition, Secretary of Finance, newly appointed to the McAuliffe Cabinet, Ron Brown, spoke on the key features of the 2014 State Budget and the main points of contention to be expected.



President Anne Sterling thanks Governor-Elect Terry McAuliffe for taking time to visit with the Pre-Session Legislative Forum participants.

The luncheon program included presentations by Susan Schaar, Clerk of the Senate of Virginia and G. Paul Nardo, Clerk of the Virginia House of Delegates. They talked about what their jobs entail and shared some amusing anecdotes of their relationships with the senators and delegates. Carol Noggle, LWV-VA Legislative Coordinator, was responsible for lining up speakers and Brenda Carswell, LWV-VA Events Coordinator, made all the arrangements.

The forum, moderated by the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA), encourages participation by the League's coalition partners on many issues. This was the 33rd year of the event. The group will continue the tradition and meet each Wednesday during the 2014 legislation, starting January 15, from 8:30-9:30 a.m. in the 3rd floor west conference room of the General Assembly Building.

[Ed. Note From LWVUS website. Used with Permission.]

Pre-Session Legislative Forum Learns Medicaid, Voting and Civil Rights Top Issues for 2014 General Assembly

by Helen Kelly, Co-President

The League of Women Voters 33rd Pre-Session Women's Legislative Round Table on December 4 featured speakers who advocate for equality of opportunity and easier access to state benefits for the needy. Here are a few of the legislative priorities of the groups represented at Pre-Session:

Top Issue

- ✓ Medicaid Expansion – Several groups made this their top priority, claiming it is the single most important

issue for the residents and for the economy of Virginia. It would create jobs, and would enable the Commonwealth to use federal dollars to care for its aging prison population. The Virginia Poverty Law Center urges legislators to raise the income eligibility level for a family of four from \$10,000 per year to \$30,000 per year. Organizing Virginia and the Commonwealth Institute of Fiscal Policy also recommend Medicaid Expansion.

- ✓ Cautionary Note – Ric Brown, the Secretary of Finance for 12 Virginia governors of both parties, including Terry McAuliffe, was less enthusiastic about Medicaid Expansion. He noted that the reduction in federal spending will have a negative impact on Virginia’s economy. With sequestration and economic uncertainty, defense contractors and their supply chain companies will cut back, reducing tax revenue for the state. Also the recession has already added many more Virginians to the Medicaid rolls. He estimated the cost to the Commonwealth after the federal government drops back to paying 90 percent of Medicaid costs, will be \$550-\$700 million in General Fund money. He claims this will impact discretionary spending on things like education.

Voting Rights

- ✓ Nonpartisan Redistricting – In the 2013 election, of 100 delegate districts, no more than 15 were competitive races. The future of officeholders should be decided by the voters, not by legislators’ redistricting to protect fellow party members. California, New Mexico and Iowa have all instituted nonpartisan redistricting. The group One Virginia 2021 recommends a

constitutional amendment requiring nonpartisan redistricting.

Civil Rights

- ✓ Marriage Equality - Equality Virginia advocates for marriage equality: Legally married same-sex couples who can file a joint income tax return under federal law, should also be able file jointly under Virginia law.
- ✓ Immigrants’ Rights – Fairfax delegates Kaye Korey, Dave Albo and Tom Rust have all agreed to support in-state tuition rates for immigrants who obey the law and finish high school. The ACLU and the Va. Coalition of Latino Organizations advocate for this issue.
- ✓ Reproductive Rights – Since new regulations requiring abortion clinics to meet hospital standards and their providers to have admitting privileges in a hospital, of the original 21 women’s health centers, 17 have closed. Complication rate for safe and legal abortions is 1 percent. The NARAL Pro-Choice Coalition wants these regulations repealed.

The “Night of Terror”

Pablo to Speak on the History of Women’s Suffrage Movement at General Meeting

One elderly woman was picked up by two prison guards and thrown into her cement cell. Her head hit the metal bed frame and she was unconscious – and unattended – so long that her cellmate thought she was dead and suffered a heart attack herself. The other 32 women arrested in front of the White House that afternoon were beaten, shackled to the bars of their cells, stripped and humiliated, fed gruel infested with moving maggots, and denied contact with each other and the outside world. Some protested with a hunger strike, and were strapped down and force-fed through an inserted tube.

Where did such cruelty occur? Right here in Northern Virginia, at the Occoquan Workhouse. What crime earned such brutality? Silently picketing the White House for women’s right to vote.

Now, when the percentage of eligible voters who actually cast a ballot continues to fall, it’s important to reflect on how and when and why women were so long denied. Perhaps when citizens realize the price the Suffragists were willing to pay for the right to vote, they will better value and exercise their franchise. This presentation will focus on

the personalities and singular courage of some of the major figures in the long struggle to ratify the 19th Amendment, the turning point in that struggle (the Night of Terror), and the emergence of Carrie Chapman Catt’s “Mighty Political Experiment,” a League of Women Voters.

Kathleen Pablo is a member of the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area (Fairfax Station Unit) and has traveled all over Virginia giving this presentation to mostly women’s organizations. She is on the Board of Directors of Turning Point Suffragist Memorial Association and uses her presentations to raise awareness not only of the League but also of the effort to raise funds for the memorial slated to be built in Occoquan Regional Park

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



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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 \$ ____
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We value membership. A subsidy fund is available, check block above and include whatever you can afford.

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