



Redistricting/Reapportionment: The Current Status

The LWVUS has a study underway which may lead to a decision on wording of the national League’s redistricting reform criteria. This month’s unit meetings will be devoted to a discussion on this multifaceted topic based on a study of the present situation in Virginia. The Virginia General Assembly has been told by the courts to redraw the district lines for the Third Congressional District. Our study provides background to help you develop an informed unbiased opinion. It explains several ongoing Court cases and describes the LWV-VA’s involvement in studying and working for reform. The situation is fluid, and it is likely there will be changes before we meet. Updates to the current status will be provided. Your Board urges you to read this issue of the VOTER and actively participate in your unit’s discussion.

Calendar

October

- 1 LWV-VA workshops, Richmond
- 2 Reston Community Center election
- 3 Briefing and At-Large meeting
- 5 Voter deadline
 - Lee District Meet & Greet
- 6 Lafayette Towers condo election
- 7 Providence District Meet & Greet
- 8-14 Unit Meetings**
- 8 Braddock District Meet & Greet
- 9 LWNCA Board meeting, President’s Luncheon
- 13 Meet & Greet, BOS chair & School Board at-large
 - Voter registration deadline
- 14 Dranesville District Meet & Greet
- 15 Woodlake Towers community election
- 21 LWVFA Board meeting**
 - Mason District Meet & Greet
- 24 Hunter Mill District Meet & Greet
- 27 Last day to apply for absentee ballot by mail
- 28 Sully District Meet & Greet
- 31 Last day to vote absentee in-person

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Presidents' Message



It's hard to believe that September is finished. It has been a BUSY month for LWVFA. We began by agreeing to collaborate with Inspire Virginia, a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to transforming high school juniors and seniors into student leaders who will inspire their peers to vote and to actively participate in our democracy. The student leaders have completed the voter trainer course and will conduct student led voter registration drives for eligible high school students. Continuing with this theme of reaching out to the high school population, Maggi Luca and Beth Tudan joined us in a presentation to FCPS social studies teachers at their fall mini conference. The teachers who attended our sessions were very interested in our VOTE411, Meet and Greet candidate forums, and our studies.

Thanks to all of our members who organized and helped out at Voter Service events, community festivals and condo and community elections. If you were unable to help out in September there are still volunteer opportunities for our Meet and Greets and condo/community elections in October. You can volunteer on our website with SignUp Genius. Just click on League Volunteers or Meet and Greet 2015.

Kudos go to Sidney Johnson for the amazing job she is doing with the 13 Meet and Greets that have occurred and will occur in October. Thanks to her efforts and to our many volunteers, including moderators Anne Kanter and Olga Hernandez, we had the first 2015 Meet and Greet on August 31 at Fairfax Public Access. The event was for all candidates for the Senate and House of Delegates. The candidates were divided into three districts, and the Eastern district session, with 14 candidates, was televised live on Inside Scoop. The sessions featuring the candidates from the Central and Western districts will be aired at a later date. All three sessions will be uploaded to YouTube with the link posted on our website.

We want to thank Charleen Deasy and Wendy Fox-Grage for a great KickOff.

Our website provider, League Easy Web (LEW), is setting up beta testing to modify the LEW websites to make them more user friendly. Beth Tudan has agreed to participate in the beta testing for our website. Beth is also doing a great job of promoting the League of Women Voters of the Fairfax

Area on such Social Media sites as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. This is one way to attract younger members. YAY, Beth! Stay tuned for workshops for us all to become Social Media savvy.

Many of you who did not attend the LWV-VA Convention in early June do not know that we passed a resolution to take action to prevent domestic abusers and stalkers from purchasing, accessing or possessing firearms. LWV-VA will now lobby and advocate for stronger laws in Virginia. Ruth Hoffman and Judy Helein will lead the task force to also provide talking points, send out updates and facilitate the flow of information. (See the article on the following page.) Planned actions include engaging candidate forums, participating in League Lobby Day and calling legislators to lobby for legislation during the 2016 session of the General Assembly. If you would like to join the Task Force or to receive updates, contact Judy Helein at judithhelein@aol.com.

Thank you for everything you are doing. We hope you enjoy the beautiful October weather.

Peggy and Helen

Domestic Violence Hotline
(703) 360-7273

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or call 703-658-9150

LWV-VA Establishes a Statewide “Firearms Safety Task Force” to Prevent Easy Access to Firearms by Domestic Abusers and Stalkers

By Ruth Hoffman, Firearms Task Force Member



This past May, representatives assembled at the 2015 League of Women Voters of Virginia Convention and unanimously passed a resolution to take action to prevent domestic abusers and stalkers from purchasing, accessing, or possessing firearms. LWV-VA will now advocate and lobby for stronger laws. Implementation of the resolution starts now with the establishment and mobilization of a statewide task force, referred to as the “Firearms Safety Task Force”.

Other States are taking action - Virginia should, too. In 2014, six states, Minnesota, Louisiana, Washington, Wisconsin, Vermont and New Hampshire, banned the possession of firearms by domestic abusers. In 2015, laws passed in Oregon, South Carolina, Alabama, Nevada and Maine.

Firearms Safety Task Force

Co-captains of the Firearms Safety Task Force are Fairfax League members Ruth Hoffman and Judy Helein. They are ready to form the Team - will you join?

- The Task Force needs a statewide team of League activists, “staff,” strategists, writers, voices, persuaders, researchers, and grass-roots lobbyists.
- The Task Force will help coordinate and organize the League’s efforts to take action through advocacy and lobbying as well as provide talking points, updates, and facilitate the flow of information. Actions will include engaging candidates through candidate forums, participating in Lobby Day and calling legislators to voice our support for legislation during the General Assembly.

Which League members will join this “Firearms Safety Task Force”? **Will you?** If you are interested in participating in, or receiving updates, please contact Ruth Hoffman at rhoffman.virginia@gmail.com and Judy Helein at judithhelein@aol.com

For more information about the risks, see the February 2015 LWV-FA VOTER

The LWVFA VOTER provided significant research and

background on the correlation between mass shootings and domestic violence and other startling statistics. Among the findings were the following:

- Nine American women are shot and killed each week by their husbands or intimate partner.
- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500 percent.
- The majority of mass shootings (four or more people killed in the same incident) involve domestic violence – 57 percent of mass shootings involved a shooter killing an intimate partner or other family members. One study showed 2.5 children, on average, were among the victims.
- Virginia laws lack key measures to help protect victims of domestic violence from firearm injury or death at the hands of their abusers.
 - **Dating Partners:** homicides are increasingly being committed by current and former dating partners. But dating partners are not currently protected.
 - **Stalking:** data show stalking is a predictor of homicide, but currently stalking is not included in the firearm prohibition. One study found that nearly 9 in 10 attempted murders of women were preceded by at least one incident of stalking in the year before the attack.
 - **Possession of a firearm:** Virginia does not prohibit firearm **possession** by domestic violence offenders nor authorize or require the removal of firearms.

For more information go here: http://www.lwv-fairfax.org/files/2015_2_Fairfax_Voter_February.pdf

Families remain at risk when Virginia lawmakers fail to act. Examples of Virginia families devastated through domestic violence shootings:

- February 2014, Glade Springs (Palmer Family): 5 shot, 4 killed, 1 survivor. (1 child, age 17 years) “Kevin Palmer shot and killed his wife Kristen, his 17-year-old son, Griffin, and his mother-in-law Nancy, and

injured his father-in-law, Terry, before turning the gun on himself. Palmer owned nearly 50 firearms... The Sheriff said under the protective order, Palmer wasn't allowed to have weapons, but there's no system in place to search the home or make sure the person doesn't keep their weapons."



➤ June 2014 in Chesterfield County (Jernigan Family) 4 shot, 4 killed (2 children, ages 2 years and 9 years) "Barry Jernigan, 35, shot his 2-year-old son, Seth, dead as the boy lay in his crib, and also killed his stepdaughter Alexis Kellas, 9, and his wife, Renotta Jernigan, 30, police in Chesterfield said. Renotta and Alexis were able to stumble out of the Fox Maple Terrace home around 10 p.m. Sunday before collapsing in the front yard, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* reported."

➤ August 2014 in Culpepper Virginia (Washington Family) 5 shot, 5 killed (3 children, ages 4, 6 and 13) "Family and friends told authorities the couple had been having an ongoing domestic dispute that apparently grew more heated Saturday night. The bodies of Clarence and Shauna Washington, both 35, and their three daughters -- 4-year-old Olivia, 6-year-old Onya and 13-year-old Omesha -- were found inside their home Sunday night."

➤ May 2015 in Chesterfield (Rogers Family): 2 shot, 2 killed (1 child, age 1-year) "Police found two victims, Morgan R. Rogers, 34, and Leah Rogers, 1, deceased from gunshot wounds. Both victims lived at the residence. Through investigation, detectives identified Stafford L. Shaw Sr., 46, as a suspect in the homicide. Shaw is the estranged boyfriend of Morgan Rogers. He was under an emergency protective order at the time of the shooting."

Wylecia Wiggs Harris to Lead League of Women Voters as Executive Director

Washington, D.C. – The League of Women Voters of the United States (LWVUS) announced on September 1 that Wylecia Wiggs Harris has been named as its new executive director. Dr. Harris brings to the League many years of seasoned leadership experience, a passion for organizational development and a commitment to excellence. As executive director, Dr. Harris will be building on strategies and relationships that advance some of the most foundational political principles of our nation.

Dr. Harris comes to the League after 11 years at the American Nurses Association Enterprise serving as chief operating officer for the American Nurses Association (ANA), the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) and the American Nurses Foundation (ANF), and previously as chief of staff/special projects officer for the ANA. Among her most significant achievements at the ANA were the transformation of the association's Race for Relevance, the launch of the Leadership Institute and the reorganization of the American Nurses Foundation. With more than 25 years

of diverse association experience, Dr. Harris brings strong relationship management skills and a proven track record in successfully building and establishing organizations by providing leadership and vision for staff, volunteers and members.

"I am thrilled that Wylecia will be bringing her talents and leadership acumen to the League of Women Voters," said Elisabeth MacNamara, president of the League of Women Voters of the U.S. "Her considerable skills in guiding organizations and setting a strategic vision and roadmap for the future will be incredible assets to the League. Wylecia comes to the League at this exciting and important time as we celebrate 95 years and look toward our 2020 centennial. I am confident that with Wylecia at the helm, we will reach new heights."

Dr. Harris's many executive achievements include serving as the executive director for both the Center for American Nurses and Sister to Sister – Everyone Has a Heart Foundation, a national organization supporting women's health issues and heart disease education. She also served for 17 years with the American Heart Association in positions at the local, regional and national levels.

Redistricting in Virginia: the Current Scene

By Olga Hernandez, with Therese Martin

A Little Background

“... Every electoral district shall be composed of contiguous and compact territory and shall be so constituted as to give, as nearly as is practicable, representation in proportion to the population of the district. The General Assembly shall reapportion the Commonwealth into electoral districts in accordance with this section in the year 2011 and every ten years thereafter. ... The districts delineated in the decennial reapportionment law shall be implemented for the November general election for the United States House of Representatives, Senate, or House of Delegates, respectively, that is held immediately prior to the expiration of the term being served....”
Virginia Constitution, Article II, Section 6.

Although the language in Virginia’s 1970 Constitution newly included reapportionment and redistricting provisions and requirements of federal laws and court decisions of the 1960s, redistricting itself has a long history as a political issue in Virginia as well as in the U.S. In fact, it is as old as the U.S. itself. Virginia’s revered first governor, Patrick Henry, opposed the new U.S. Constitution and sought to punish its author, James Madison, by drawing district lines to disadvantage Madison’s congressional election. It failed, and Madison beat James Monroe for a seat in the House of Representatives.

But the practice of drawing electoral district lines to the advantage of the artist has flourished. Probably the most well-known instance was in 1812, when Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry signed a redistricting bill to benefit his political party. One of the districts looked like a salamander, which led the *Boston Gazette* newspaper to add claws and wings, and print a cartoon naming it a “Gerrymander,” using the Massachusetts governor’s name. Thus the governor became the namesake of the practice, which has stuck and become even more famous two centuries later. In a bit of trivia, Gerry became President Madison’s second Vice President and died in office in 1814.

Today the practice is alive but not well for voters. It is a bipartisan activity that those empowered partake in. The practice generally allows the elected officials to pick their voters, instead of voters selecting their representatives. Jurisdictional boundaries are drawn so safely for one party or the other that opposing an incumbent is almost impossible. It is mostly an incumbent protection plan, and absent death, retirement, or challenge from a more extreme member of the same party in a primary, most officials do not lose in a general election. This makes the primaries the more consequential election if, in fact, they are the means the parties use to select their candidates. The numbers who actually choose their legislators become even smaller if

candidates are selected by a party convention or similar process.

One of the difficulties reflected in Virginia’s Constitutional provision is the speed at which the redistricting must occur. Before “one man, one vote” became the law of the land, Virginia’s practice of holding the majority of its state and local elections in the “odd” – non-federal election years -- had little practical effect on redistricting. This is no longer the case. Today it must use the up-to-date numbers, and the resulting districts must be within the percentage population deviations established by the courts. Because Virginia is one of small handful of states having significant election activity in the years (those ending in a “1”) when the decennial Census numbers are issued, it usually is first in line to get the results. Even so, the entire redistricting process must be compressed into a couple of months, which affects the transparency of and public input into the process.

[*Note:* For an interesting discussion of the reason for Virginia’s “odd year” elections, see: http://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/government-politics/jeff-schapiro/article_88d60bd4-40c3-526a-8450-351d11c8ccff.html]

Virginia’s Third Congressional District Case (*Page et al v. Virginia State Board of Elections et al*)

Virginia’s Third Congressional District boundaries were created after the 1990 Census when the Justice Department ordered the Commonwealth to create at least one minority majority district. Congressman Bobby Scott has held the office ever since. The current case was filed by Democratic voters alleging that racial preference was predominantly used to draw the boundaries. The U.S. Supreme Court recently decided a similar case, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit twice confirmed their decision that the Virginia General Assembly used race to draw the Third Congressional districts with at least a 55

percent African American population. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit set a date of April 1 for the redistricting to be done, the Republicans appealed and the court again confirmed the decision and set a deadline of September 1, 2015.

The issue is that the current district was drawn to include as many minority voters as possible (packed) in such high margin as to diminish the possibility of a minority having the opportunity to be elected in another district. The issue was also visited in the mid 1990s, when a lawsuit was filed by Republicans. The court at that time ruled the district was indeed gerrymandered along racial lines, thus the 1998 map redrawn by the General Assembly. You can see both parties take advantage of the power to draw the boundaries and protect their incumbents.

Figure 1 shows the historical boundaries of the district. They are not connected because they cross bodies of water. This photo is courtesy of the Virginia Public Access Project (VPAP).

Virginia's Democratic governor, Terry McAuliffe, called the Assembly into special session on August 17 to try to meet the court's September 1 deadline. He requested a meeting with the Republican leadership, who rebuffed his request and are again

appealing the Third District case to the U.S. Supreme Court. The House of Delegates wanted to delay dealing with the redrawing until after the November 2015 election when the entire General Assembly is on the ballot. The Virginia Senate is controlled by Republicans by a margin of one, and House of Delegate is in their firm control. The House did not submit a map prior to the special session; they planned to wait until close to the September 1st deadline to prevent the governor from having time to amend it and hoped the Supreme Court might take their case. A couple of Democratic Senators did submit maps, including one of the entries that won a college-mapping contest in 2011.

In the meantime, the special session did convene, but the Assembly was distracted by a recess appointment by the governor to the Virginia Supreme Court. The judicial

candidate had been recommended by a Republican legislator and is deemed well qualified by both parties. But the governor did not consult specifically with the Speaker of the House or Senate Majority Leader about the appointment. Protocol was apparently breached and egos wounded. Members spent hours dealing with the judicial issue while the redistricting issue lay on the side. When they finally started debating the merits and the House Privileges and Elections (P&E) Committee began to hear testimony, the State Senate abruptly adjourned, catching many off guard. One retiring Republican Senator voted with the Democrats to adjourn, thus breaking the tie in the Senate. The House claims to still be in session but they are not meeting in Richmond. This move was a strategy of the Democratic administration, which believed it could not negotiate new boundaries with the Republicans in control of the Assembly. The governor would probably have vetoed whatever they passed.

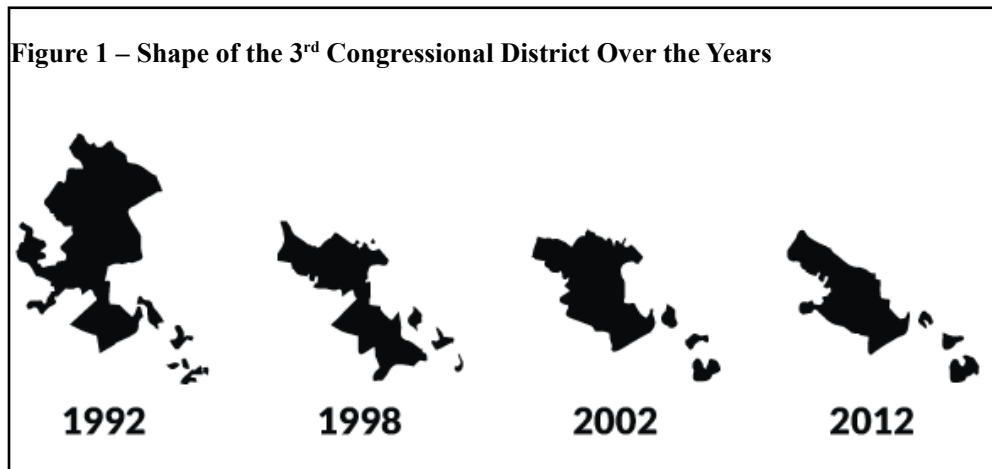
Because the Assembly failed to deal with redistricting, it is now back to the court. On September 3, the U.S. District

Court ordered that a Special Master be appointed to carry out actions on its behalf and gave the parties just one day to submit names of candidates for the position. It set a September

18 deadline for submitting proposed boundaries and October 2 for comments on the proposals. According to a *Richmond Times Dispatch* report, non-parties in the case have been invited to submit proposals to make for a more inclusive and open process.

There is data that court redrawn maps tend to be fairer, we'll see what happens. The court may take a look at those previously submitted as they redraw the lines. Other maps may have been suggested by other people. But regardless, one or all of the surrounding districts, the Second, held by Scott Rigell (R), the Fourth, held by Randy Forbes (R) or the Seventh, held by Dave Brat (R), will be affected.

After the special session, the LWV-VA wrote an op-ed suggesting the some of the college students' winning maps be considered and again supporting the use of a commission.



It was published in the *Reston Now* and *Fauquier Now* online paper news outlets (in early September). http://www.fauquiernow.com/index.php/fauquier_news/entry/fauquier-time-to-reform-virginias-redistricting-process-2015#.VebbxHQeHkI.email

Virginia House of Delegates Court case (*Bethune-Hill et al v. Virginia State Board of Elections et al*)

A similar case filed in federal court was heard in early July. In this case, the plaintiffs, a group of voters in 12 Virginia House districts, which include much of Richmond, Chesapeake, Norfolk and Portsmouth, allege that by packing 55 percent of African Americans into one district, the Republican majority has diminished their influence in the surrounding districts or the other 88 districts of the House of Delegates. One delegate involved in the redistricting process in 2011 testified that the committee considered race among other factors in drawing the 12 minority majority districts mostly in the central-southeastern section of the state. Delegate Chris Jones, then head of the P&E Committee and now chair of Appropriations testified that many delegates came to him to alter and solidify their districts, and that it was a partisan effort.

Although the suit says the districts “are bizarrely shaped . . . split political subdivisions with impunity” and were “drawn with race as their predominant purpose,” Republicans counter that the efforts were political rather than racial and were “based on publicly-stated legal criteria.”

The House’s court challenge has been paid for with taxpayer dollars, so far costing over \$250,000 and counting. As of the end of August the ruling had not been announced but is expected any time and probably will not affect the November 2015 election. No matter the ruling, someone will appeal. If the court rules for the plaintiffs the House may have to run races during the 2016 presidential election, when turnout is the highest. Stay tuned.

The 2015 U.S. Supreme Court

As with many redistricting efforts in Virginia and around the country after each decennial Census, the maps drawn after 2010 have been challenged in court. For example, Florida is also redistricting due to court decisions. Court cases take time to meander thru the appeals process. This decade is no different.

Two cases decided this past session are favorable to the issues in Virginia.

Alabama Democratic Conference v. Alabama, linked with Alabama Legislative Black Caucus v.

Alabama

In March, the U.S. Supreme Court announced its decision in these linked cases remanding the case back to Alabama to comply with the Voting Rights Act and not “pack” African American voters into a few districts. Sound familiar? It is similar to the issues in Virginia’s Third Congressional District case and House of Delegate cases now in court hands.

Arizona State Legislature v. Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission

In late June, the Supreme Court ruled in the Arizona case that commissions were allowed to draw boundaries. Arizona as well as California set up commissions via citizen ballot initiative, a tool Virginia does not have. The process was challenged by the state legislature, but the Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission won the case, giving redistricting commissions legitimacy. This favors the efforts of OneVirginia2021 to empanel a commission with the authority to draw the districts.

Of note: Maryland’s Governor Larry Hogan, a Republican, has empaneled a commission to look at that states’ redistricting issues. The LWV of Maryland has been working hard on this effort and its executive director was named to the seven-member panel.

OneVirginia2021: Virginians for Fair Redistricting

As the LWV-VA did prior to the last decennial redistricting, it has joined with other citizen and nonpartisan groups in a coalition to advocate for a transparent and nonpartisan redistricting process. The bipartisan OneVirginia2021 coalition is working to change the redistricting process altogether. Its “Mission is to advocate for the adoption of an amendment to the Virginia Constitution that will establish an independent, impartial commission to apply a fair and transparent process in drawing political districts after the 2020 census.” Many of the supporters of this coalition also worked with the *Fix the Lines* group earlier in the decade. It is well organized and is a 501c3 organization to educate the public. It also has a 501c4 arm when it takes a stand on candidates in regard to their position on redistricting reform and commissions. In the past June primaries, the group focused on and helped defeat two legislators of opposite parties on their stance regarding reform. The LWV-VA had no connection to the support or opposition of any candidates and issued a new release stating so.

LWV-VA Clarifies Relationship With OneVirginia2012

The League of Women Voters of Virginia issued the

following statement, from President Anne Sterling

“Despite my organization’s strong support for OneVirginia2021, Virginians for Fair Redistricting, I wish to make clear that the League of Women Voters of Virginia dissociates itself from all candidate endorsements. Today’s action by OneVirginia2021, supporting two candidates for the General Assembly, cannot be endorsed by LWV of Virginia or by any local LWV in the Commonwealth.

“A bedrock principle of the League of Women Voters is non-partisanship. We do not support or oppose candidates at any level, for any reason.

“The League of Women Voters will continue to participate in OneVirginia2021 activities aimed at educating the public about the need for redistricting reform. We must publicly step away, however, from the coalition’s actions where they pertain to any candidates for office.

“I am asking my colleagues at every level of the League of Women Voters to cooperate in disseminating this statement.”

As the group’s name suggests, its aim is to work for a better system by the next redistricting year. It supports a commission of bipartisan non-legislators to draw the lines but is open to ideas that will accomplish a better way.

LWV-VA Involvement in Redistricting Reform

Other than supporting efforts to implement the “one man-one vote” requirements of the 1960-70s, the LWV-VA efforts with regard to redistricting were chiefly in the area of Voters Service. With the era’s many changes, including elimination of the poll tax, 18-year old voting, and Voting Rights Act implementation, the Virginia and its local Leagues were hard-pressed to keep voters informed. The situation changed as a result of the state’s redistricting attempts following the 1980 Census.

As it attempted to move from multi-member districts (*the Fairfax area’s 10 members of the House of Delegates at that time were split into two 5-member districts split by a line drawn along Routes 236/50*), the General Assembly’s blatant political and racial gerrymandered redistricting plans of 1981 failed to win approval of both the Department of Justice and the courts—several times. One practical effect was that members of the General Assembly had to run for election three years in a row. The situation was the impetus for the LWV-VA to adopt a redistricting study program and adopt its first positions on this issue in 1985. Similarly, the blatant politically gerrymandered districts that resulted

following the 2000 Census led the LWVFA to conduct its own informational study and convince the LWV-VA members to update its study and position in mid-decade as a prelude to the state’s anticipated 2011 redistricting.

In 2009-11, with heightened member interest and involvement, the LWV-VA worked as part of the *Fix-the-Lines* coalition that lobbied for a better redistricting process. During the campaign of 2009, League leaders met with then-candidate Bob McDonnell and asked him to commit to appoint a redistricting commission. On January 10, 2011, as governor, he did so by signing Executive Order 31; however, it did not give the commission any real power. The Independent Bipartisan Advisory Commission, headed by Political Science professor Dr. Robert Holsworth of Virginia Commonwealth University, had 11 prominent citizen members. They met, held hearings around the state (at which the League testified), and showed that the process can be better. They produced a report <http://cnu.edu/redistrictingcommission/eo-31.asp> and produced potential maps for congressional, state Senate and House of Delegate districts. These options were not taken up by the General Assembly.

In parallel, the *Fix-the-Lines* coalition supported the Virginia College and University Redistricting Competition, sponsored by the Christopher Newport University’s Wason Center for Public Policy and the Public Mapping Project. The student competition was an incentive to draw better boundaries that met the stipulations of the Virginia Constitution. Students were tasked to develop maps “composed of contiguous and compact territory and shall be so constituted as to give, as nearly as is practicable, representation in proportion to the population of the district” [In accord with the Constitution of Virginia]. The LWV-VA hosted a reception to view the maps and announce the winners at the Library of Virginia. Dr. Thomas Mann of the [Brookings Institution](http://www.brookings.edu/) and Norman Orenstein of the [American Enterprise Institute](http://www.americanenterprise.org/) were judges. Those results were also ignored by the General Assembly.

We did our best to show the General Assembly a better way.

The current Virginia redistricting cases remain unsettled as of this writing. We don’t know how the judges will redraw the Third Congressional District or if the U.S. Supreme Court will take that case. What will the ruling be on the House of Delegates case heard in federal court in July? We also don’t have details of a proposed district “compactness” lawsuit by OneVirginia2021. What we do have is the power to tell those on the ballot November 3 that we want a better system. Contact your Senator and Delegate and ask what their position is. They need to know citizens want this reform

and that we object to them picking their voters. But, in this off-year election, we citizens need to show up and vote. By the time we meet in October more decisions may have been made by the court or the legislators. Leaguers need to continue to be vigilant and speak up at every opportunity.

[Editor's Note: Because this situation is so fluid, there are likely to be changes by the time this VOTER is printed. Updates will be distributed at the October briefing and posted on the LWVFA website.]

Discussion Questions

1. What makes redistricting such a challenge in Virginia? Discuss "gerrymandering."

2. Describe Virginia's Third Congressional District. Why is this case of importance?
3. Discuss the recent Supreme Court decisions involving Alabama and Arizona. How might these affect Virginia's efforts?
4. What have been the LWVFA efforts regarding redistricting?
5. Have there been any decisions regarding redistricting since this article was written?

Tell EPA's Administrator, Gina McCarthy, You Support Regulation to Cut Methane Emissions.

By: Elisabeth MacNamara, President LWVUS



The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed the first-ever methane pollution standard for new and modified oil and gas facilities. This is a big deal – right now, the oil and gas industry is leaking millions of tons of methane and other toxic chemicals into the air. The proposed rule would help rein them in.

This regulation is a critical part of President Obama's Climate Action Plan to cut greenhouse gas emissions by more than 40 percent by 2025. Throughout the country, methane and other harmful substances are released and allowed to leak from wells, compressors and pipelines, among other sources throughout the oil and gas sector. Methane emissions from the oil and gas sector are substantial – about one-third of total U.S. methane emissions. Tightly regulating this methane is absolutely critical to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and protecting public health. And cutting methane emissions will save energy since escaping natural gas is composed mainly of methane.

These regulations are an important step forward to protect public health and our planet. Thank the EPA for their efforts to protect our children by cutting methane emissions.

Curbing methane is a "win-win-win-win" that can save fuel, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve air quality and

improve pipeline safety. Doing so is a critical near-term step toward implementation of the Climate Action Plan and continued U.S. leadership on climate protection and healthier air.

The EPA has begun accepting public comments on this proposal. As the oil and gas industry prepare an army of lobbyists and lawyers to oppose the rule, we have to make sure pro-environment voices are heard, loud and clear at the EPA. **Join the League of Women Voters and thank Administrator McCarthy for protecting public health and our environment, and tell the EPA that you support a strong methane pollution standard.**

Take action by accessing the LWVUS website at lwv.org/blog/take-action-support-epas-methane-polution-regulation and signing the suggested letter.

The Voting Rights Act: Before and After

With the recent 50th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 several pieces were written about how the Supreme Court's 2013 ruling in the Shelby, Alabama vs. Holder, Attorney General et.al. case has emasculated the original law. We recommend two articles written on the subject for your reading to better understand the current situation. Although they are lengthy, they are well worth reading. The first article is a history entitled "The Voting Rights Act of 1965 and How America Did Overcome" by Markus Schmidt of the Richmond Times-Dispatch. The URL is http://www.richmond.com/news/virginia/government-politics/article_7d47ec7d-bf98-5014-8e25-5c72b2617a39.html

The Second article is "A Dream Undone" by Jim Rutenberg of The New York Times. It takes a look inside the 50-year campaign to roll back the Voting Rights Act.

Get a Head Start . . .

LWVUS's Constitutional Amendment Study Has Begun: Are You Ready?

By Judy Helein, Co-Program Director

In November the units will be participating in the League of Women Voters of the United States Constitutional Amendment Consensus Study.

Webster defines *consensus* as “agreement, in matters of opinion.” For the League of Women Voters, however, consensus has a far broader meaning. In League parlance, it means **agreement among a substantial number of a representative group of members** – not just a simple majority – **reached after sustained study and group discussion**. Consensus is a prerequisite to the League’s taking any position on national, state, or local governmental issues. Consensus also determines what action, if any, is to be taken on the item after consideration. No action is taken where there is a lack of agreement, and although this may be a disappointment to some members at times, it is essential that when a League position is announced, the members are not only informed but are in basic agreement.

Since determination of consensus within a group is an interpretive process, **it is not decided through a vote of membership**. Voting has an inherent rigidity that makes it difficult to reach essential agreement. **The State and U.S.**

Leagues, for instance, seek broad areas of agreement based on a good cross-section in size, type, and region as well as on substantial numbers. This kind of evaluation is a more interpretive and therefore a more valuable way of reaching agreement than counting noses.

Karole McKalip and Judy Helein have summarized resource materials provided by the LWVUS for the November VOTER, but if you would like to get a head start and preview these resources, you may take the following steps:

- 1) Use the following link – <http://forum.lwv.org>
- 2) League Management Site will pop up.
- 3) In the upper-right-hand corner you will see Search.
- 4) Type in Constitutional Amendment Consensus Study.
- 5) Click on Search
- 6) Click on Constitutional Amendment Study Guide
- 7) If you want to read further, then go back and click on Reading Guide on Amending the Constitution.

Enjoy! It is really very interesting.

Trial Dates Set For Virginia Uranium Complaint

By the GoDanRiver.com Staff

Danville federal court recently set trial dates for Virginia Uranium’s lawsuit against officers of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The company is seeking relief from a statewide ban on uranium mining that dates back to 1982.

The court will hold a pretrial motions hearing at 10 a.m. on Nov. 6. The bench trial date has been set for 9:30 a.m. on Dec. 14. Senior U.S. District Judge Jackson Kiser will hear the case.

Virginia Uranium filed the original complaint in August. Gov. Terry McAuliffe has said he would veto any uranium legislation that passed the General Assembly. Attorney General Mark Herring’s office asked the court to dismiss the case, citing language from the Nuclear Regulatory Agency.

Office of Elections Receives National Award

The Fairfax County Office of Elections has received a 2015 Best Practices Award from the National Association of County Recorders, Election Officials and Clerks (NACRC) for making voter information accessible through a mobile app and Interactive Voice Recognition (IVR) phone system.

“The More Easily Informed Voter” program is designed to help county voters get answers to key voting and election questions at their convenience and at any hour, by using the mobile app or calling 703-222-0776, which accesses the IVR system. For example, voters can find out where they should vote or check their voter registration status. The information is also available in Spanish for both the app and the phone system. Fairfax County is the first jurisdiction in Virginia to offer the mobile app and IVR systems to answer key voter questions.

Nominating Committee Begins Search for 2016-17 Board Members

By Sherry Zachry, Nominating Committee Chair

The 2016 LWVFA Nominating Committee will be looking to fill the following officer and board positions for the 2016-2018 biennium, to be elected at the 2016 LWVFA Annual Meeting. The current term for these portfolios expires June 30, 2016—current officers and directors are listed in parentheses.

Officers:

Co-President (Helen Kelly)

Treasurer (Bill Thomas)

Directors: (we need to elect four directors; others will be appointed)

Current Portfolios are listed, although portfolio can change. We elect as a “Director” not by portfolio.

Action Director – *This position has been vacant for two years*

Domestic Violence Chair (Barbara Nunes) - *Could be a different committee chair*

Program Director- on board (Judith Helein) – *Serves with Program co-director - off board (Karole McKalip); both positions could be on-board.*

Schools Committee Chair (Ginger Shea resigned) - *Could be a different committee chair.*

Unit Coordinator (Charleen Deasy)

To be elected for one year (2016-17) term:

Nominating Committee Chair

Two Nominating Committee Members

PLEASE be thinking about who you would like to see in these positions, **including yourself(!)**, and contact one of the nominating committee members listed below.

2015-16 Nominating Committee:

Elected:

Sherry Zachry, Chair (szachry@verizon.net)

Janey George, (janeyg16@verizon.net)

Gail Richmond, (omarichmond@gmail.com)

Board appointments:

Charleen Deasy, (Charleen.deasy@verizon.net)

Pat Nelson-Douvelis, (gpdouvelis@aol.com)

DV Network Targets an Underserved Population

By Barbara Nunes, Domestic Violence Chair

“Behind closed doors: The Impact of Domestic Violence on Children,” a UNICEF report, states: “The single best predictor of children becoming either perpetrators or victims of domestic violence later in life is whether or not they grow up in a home where there is domestic violence.”

In March 2013, the Needs Committee of the Fairfax County Domestic Violence Network (DV Network) met with other groups to identify gaps in family law services for victims of domestic violence and their families. They determined the greatest need was for victims who earn too much income to qualify for legal aid services but not enough to pay a private attorney for a lengthy contested custody or divorce case.

The DV Network, working with the Domestic Violence Action Center (DVAC), Legal Services of Northern Virginia (LSNV) and the George Mason School of Law, and the

support and endorsement of the Fairfax Bar Association, created a legal fellowship position to target this underserved population.

An initial donation and sustaining commitment from Needs Committee member Melanie Dunn-Chadwick, enabled this program to hire a graduate of George Mason School of Law. In September 2014 the first Dunn-Chadwick Fellow was hired. As of June 2015, she has served 54 clients, 16 of them in court or negotiations. Issues include custody/visitation 39 percent, protective orders 19 percent, divorce 14 percent, child support 18 percent, spousal support, and other 4 percent.

Additional support has come from the Fairfax Bar Association. The Needs Committee continues to raise funds for the second year of this fellowship.

Domestic Violence Hotline
(703) 360-7273

June Affordable Housing Discussions . . .

People of All Ages Need Affordable Housing in Fairfax County

By Karole McKalip, Program Co-Chair



Who are the people in Fairfax County that need affordable housing and what types of housing do they need? What are the obstacles in obtaining these? How should Fairfax County proceed in the development of affordable housing for those in need? Finally, should the League be involved in these discussions? The June units focused on these questions.

The answers to the first question (Who needs Affordable Housing?) consumed a large part of the unit discussions. Members described the very broad range of people in need. But Fairfax/Vienna opined that “everybody needs affordable housing!” Specifically, those who need help can be young single people without well-paying jobs and those with overwhelming college loans; single mothers, especially those with few skills, low-paying and/or part-time jobs; those who have lost jobs and are unable to find well-paying work; those who bought homes with bad loans and have lost them; individuals with mental and other disabilities; the elderly without sufficient savings or income. People earning minimum wage cannot afford housing in our area. McLean added to that group: personal service workers, firefighters, police, other public-safety people, teachers, entry-level workforce people, chronic substance abusers and mentally ill (a small, intractable number), those newly released from prison, mental hospitals, and substance abuse treatment, teens who cannot live with parents or who have aged out



of the Foster Care system.

Members noted a range of obstacles to affordable housing in the County:

- High costs of land, houses and rental units
- The “not in my backyard” resistance to incorporating low-cost units into a variety of neighborhoods
- Lack of public transportation where rentals are available
- Occupancy codes that limit a variety of housing arrangements

All units discussed the need for multiple options. Several suggested changing the housing codes to accommodate flexible and affordable housing. Members were open to greater development of micro units, residential studio units, and walking access to transportation and services. Fairfax/Vienna pointed out that low-cost units work when they are scattered; they do not work when they are clumped. Greenspring observed that what works now is the inclusion of affordable units in new developments.

Members had several suggestions regarding County strategies to help those in need of housing.

- Getting help from religious and non-profit organization (McLean and Mt Vernon Eve)
- Proffers, the Housing Blueprint, a Meals Tax could provide money (Briefing & Centreville/Chantilly)
- Require developers of multi-family units to include a percentage of low income housing in the complex (Fairfax St)
- The 2015 Blueprint gives some hope that improvements could be made (Reston Eve)
- Explore the feasibility of “Housing First” (Springfield)

League Welcomes Nine New Members Since January 1

Please welcome new and reinstated members of LWVFA since January 2015. They are:

Anjali Chadha, McLean; **Rhonda Paterson** and **Cynthia Wrisley**, Reston Day; **Ashlie Strackbein**, Fairfax/Vienna; **Diana Willers**, Mount Vernon Day; and **Carol Campbell**, **Clayborn Campbell**, **Jack Cowart**, and **Robin Milburn**, all members at large.

Meet and Greet Schedule Announced

September 28, Monday, 7-9 p.m. One two-hour media event at the Fairfax Public Access TV station featuring interviews with candidates for the four countywide positions, who have fewer opportunities to meet the public.

October 5, Monday, 7-8:30 p.m., John Marshall Library; Organizer: Jane Hilder, 703-960-6820, jc.hilder@verizon.net

October 7, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m., Providence District, Providence Community Center; Organizer: Tania Hossain (Chair, Providence District Council), 703-489-5999, tania-hossain@aol.com

October 8, Thursday, 7-9 p.m., Braddock District, Kings Park Library Community Room; Organizer: Maggi Luca, 703-978-4916, mkluca@aol.com

October 13, Tuesday, 7-9 p.m. LWVFA-PTA event for Chair of the Board of Supervisors and At-Large School Board. Madison High School; Organizer: Beth Tudan, 571-340-5819, league@lwv-fairfax.org

October 14, Wednesday, 7-9p.m., Dranesville District, McLean Community Center; Organizer: Pat Nelson-Douvelis, 703-790-1092, gpdouvelis@aol.com

October 21, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m., Mason District, Woodrow Wilson Library Community Room; Organizer: Janice Hill, 703-415-1537, janicelh21@verizon.net

October 24, Saturday, 2-4 p.m., Hunter Mill District, Reston Community Center (the only afternoon session);

Organizer: Sidney Johnson, 703-476-0581, sidneyjohnson3@verizon.net

October 28, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m., Sully District, Sully Governmental Center county-level candidates event; Organizer: Leslie Vandivere, 571-213-6384, lvandivere@cox.net

Please Volunteer to help at an event.

- * OFFER TO DRIVE OTHERS TO AN EVENT,
- * HELP WITH PUBLICITY,
- * SUBMIT A QUESTION, AND
- * MOST OF ALL, ATTEND AN EVENT!

Sidney Johnson 703-476-0581
sidneyjohnson3@verizon.net



Moderator Kathleen Pablo looks for the next questioner as candidates Cora Zon Foley (candidate for Board of Supervisors) and Elizabeth Schultz (candidate for School Board) are poised to respond at a recent Meet and Greet. Fifty five people showed up to learn more about the candidates .Springfield supervisor Pat Herry had a schedule conflict.

League Urges IRS to Adopt New 501(c)(4) Regulations

On September 9, the League of Women Voters joined with other concerned organizations to urge the Internal Revenue Service to adopt new regulations that properly interpret the statutory eligibility requirements to qualify for tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(4) “social welfare” organization.

The letter read, in part:

“Our organizations are writing to strongly urge the Internal Revenue Service to adopt new regulations

that properly interpret the statutory eligibility requirements to qualify for tax-exempt status as a 501(c)(4) “social welfare” organization.

“Our groups include the Campaign Legal Center, Common Cause, Demand Progress, Democracy 21, League of Women Voters, People For the American Way, Public Citizen, and Sunlight Foundation.

“Proper new IRS regulations must, among other things, limit to an “insubstantial” amount, the campaign-related expenditures that a “social welfare” organization can undertake.”

Fall Kick-Off Attracts 40 . . .

Leaguers Learn Details of of the Year's Program Topics and Voter Service Activities

The annual fall kick-off of the LWVFA was recently held at the West Springfield Government Center with about 40 attendees. Most importantly, the study topics for this year were presented by co-program chairs Karole McKalip and Judy Helein.

- September Who Votes?
- October Reapportionment/Redistricting Update
- November Constitutional Amendment Study (LWVUS)
- December Money in Politics (LWVUS)
- January General Meeting
- February Do Your Own Thing (based upon League positions)
- March Non-Profit VOTE
- April Annual Meeting
- May Mental Health in Fairfax County
- June How Can State Laws Differ From Federal Laws?

Several members of the Voter Service Committee also brought the group up-to-date on the status of the various handouts distributed by the League. With the busy election season is upon us, it is important for units to plan local registration activities that are best for each neighborhoods. Lots of opportunities are there, depending upon the preference of local League members.

Co-presidents Peggy Knight and Helen Kelly thanked everyone who attended the event, recognizing that it was on a holiday weekend. "we know this is going to be an exciting year ahead and look forward to you participation in the many events planned for 2015-2016."



Therese Martin shares her knowledge of League history to the group.



Discussion leader briefing in preparation for the September unit meetings.



Another important topic was discussed by Sidney Johnson, who presented Meet and Greet plans that included 11 magisterial districts, 2 televised events for legislators and other down-ballot candidates, a large forum for at-

large candidates and school board candidates. Members were encouraged to sign up to help out with the many sessions planned.

Membership chair, Pat Nelson-Douvelis, reported that there are 209 members on the rolls, some of whom have not renewed their memberships for 2015-2016. A plea was made to remind these members to renew as quickly as possible. Signing up new members was considered an important task as well.



This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

Topic: Reapportionment/Redistricting Update

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 September 1, 2015, 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, Oct 3

10a.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing

Packard Center
4026 Hummer Road
Annandale 22003
Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401_

Thursday, Oct 8

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

11020 Burywood Lane
Reston 20194
Contact: Viveka 703-404-0498

9:30 a.m. Springfield (SPF)

Packard Center
4026 Hummer Road
Annandale 22003
Contact: Marge 703-451-0589

10 a.m. Centreville-Chantilly (CCD)

Sully District Gov. Center
4900 Stonecroft Blvd.
Chantilly 20151
Contact: Leslie, 571-213-6384

1 p.m. Fairfax/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, 703-960-6820

Monday, Oct 12

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

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

Wednesday, Oct 14

9:30 a.m. McLean Day (McL)

StarNut Café
1445 Laughlin Ave.
McLean 22101
Contact: Sharone 703-734-1048
or Adarsh (703) 795-7281

10 a.m. Mt. Vernon Day (MVD)

Mt. Vernon Dist. Government
Center
2511 Parkers Lane
Alexandria 22306
Contact: Gail, 703-360-6561

10 a.m. Fairfax Station (FXS)

7902 Bracksford Ct.
Fairfax Station 22039
Contact: Lois 703-690-0908

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

****NEW LOCATION FOR THIS MONTH ONLY****
Reston Community Center at
Hunters Woods
2310 Colts Neck Rd
Reston 20191
Contact: Kelly 202-263-1311

November Meetings:

Constitutional Amendment



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.
 U.S. Postage Paid
 Merrifield, VA
 Permit No. 1202

**The LWVFA Fairfax VOTER ©
 October, 2015
 Peggy Knight, 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, 2016.)

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