



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF THE FAIRFAX AREA

Fairfax VOTER

September 2015

Volume 68, Issue 1

Voter Turnout for Elections Is Declining

This year, 2015, in a Year-3 election, Virginia voters will elect officials who will have direct influence on their lives: transportation, schools funding, property tax rates, etc. Turnout in Year-3 elections has been falling for 30 years. In Fairfax County there will be candidates for 52 offices, but less than 30 percent of eligible voters in Virginia, including Fairfax County, will likely go to the polls to cast a ballot and select leaders for the next four years.

This doesn't track with many other industrial democracies. What is the problem in the USA? What is being done and can be done to improve voter turnout? What should Virginia do to increase the turnout? More time to vote? Fines for not voting? Be sure to attend your unit's meeting and participate in the discussion.

Calendar

August

- 26 Women's Equality Day
19th Amendment ratified
- 31 Live televised event: candidates for
VA State Senate & House of Delegates

September

- 5 Kick-off; Briefing and At-Large mtg**
- 7 *VOTER* deadline
- 8-14 Unit meetings**
- 9 Springfield District Meet & Greet
- 10 LWV-Arlington forum on Medicaid
expansion in VA
- 11 Patriot Day; LWNCA Board meeting
- 16 Mt. Vernon District Meet & Greet
Board meeting
- 17 Constitution Day and Citizenship Day
- 18 In-person absentee voting begins
- 21 Sully District Meet & Greet
- 22 LWVUS Voter Registration Day
- 26 Reston MultiCultural Festival
- 28 Live televised event: other local
candidates

Inside This Issue

Presidents' Message	2
Unit Discussions on Land Use	3
Lethality Assessment Program Results	4
Voter Turnout Is Declining	EF-1
Discussion Questions	EF-6
LWVUS Policy on Voter Turnout	EF-6
League Representatives Needed for Two Committees	5
Learn About VOTE411 and Use It	5
Meet and Greet Undertakes Project	6
Meet and Greet Schedule	6
Boards Sets Goals	7
FCPS Faces \$100M Deficit	7
LWV-VA Workshop Registration Form	8
Unit Meeting Locations	9



Presidents' Message



Welcome back! We hope you had a fun, restful summer and that your batteries are fully charged for an exciting year of activities. Campaign season is almost upon us. The television attack ads will begin, we'll receive too many political robocalls every day. Much of the so-called information we'll see and hear will be half-truths, at best.

Thomas Jefferson said, "Information is the currency of democracy." But to be of any use to voters, that information must be true and accurate. We are pleased that every year more Fairfax County voters turn to LWVFA for unbiased and accurate election information. There several ways we deliver this information to our community:

First, we publish our ***Voter's Guides***. We ask the candidates questions and publish their answers on VOTE411. To keep it fair, we ask the same questions of all the candidates seeking the same office. We'll let you know when the 2015 ***Voter's Guide*** is available.

Second, we publish ***What's on the Ballot***. This double-sided page lists the candidate names, bond referenda and general voter information like how to register, deadlines for registering, when in-person absentee voting begins, etc.

Third, in partnership with other community groups, we hold Meet and Greet candidate forums.

We are pleased that our Meet and Greets attract more voters every year. For 2015, we have planned an ambitious schedule of 13 events. Check the list on Page 6 of this issue of the ***VOTER***, or visit our website (www.lwv-fairfax.org) and look under MEET & GREET 2015 for the event closest to you.

We hope you'll attend the M&G in your area, and tell your friends and neighbors. If you have already volunteered to help at these events, we THANK YOU. If you haven't, we could use your help. As we write this, there are still a variety of things to do. You can time the candidates (timers work in pairs), help with setup and takedown, put handouts on chairs, pass out and collect index cards with questions, or sort the questions and give them to the moderator. To find out which jobs are still open at a forum near you, visit

our website. Under each event, there is a place to click and volunteer. This allows you to see which roles are still open, and the names of other Leaguers who will be volunteering with you. Or you can send your name, which event and which role you want to Sidney Johnson at sidneyjohnson3@verizon.net. She'll be happy to put you on the volunteer list.

We would also like to acknowledge our 2015 Meet and Greet co-sponsors: American Association of University Women (AAUW), Fairfax County Council of Parent Teacher Association (FCCPTA), Voice of Vietnamese Americans (VVA), the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce. We are happy to partner with them in bringing nonpartisan election information to the voters of Fairfax County.

We know our neighbors in Fairfax County appreciate our efforts because they say so. We often hear, "Thank you for all that you do." Anticipating another successful election season, we both say to all of you, "thank you for helping us do what we do best. We couldn't do it without you."

Peggy & Helen

LWVFA Fairfax VOTER 2015 - 2016

This newsletter, partially funded by the League of Women Voters of Fairfax Area Education Fund, is published 10 times each year—from September to June by:

The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area
4026-B Hummer Road
Annandale, VA 22003-2403
703-658-9150 (Info/fax/answering machine)
www.lwv-fairfax.org league@lwv-fairfax.org

Co-Presidents: Peggy Knight 703-532-4417
peggy.knight1@verizon.net
Helen Kelly 703-437-3087
hmkelly1@verizon.net
Editor: Ron Page 703-690-0908
pagegolfer@cox.net
Coordinator: Liz Brooke 703-281-3380
lizbrooke@cox.net

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

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

Unit Discussions: Future of Growth in Fairfax County Must Consider Types of Housing

By Karole McKalip

The May unit discussions focused on examinations of current land use in Fairfax County. What has changed and where is growth going to go? A review of the LWVFA land use positions was also part of the discussion as well as a transportation quiz.

The units concentrated the discussions on examining current land use in the County, and they based their observations as a whole on their communities. The results of changes in land use could revitalize many neighborhoods by getting rid of unkempt structures and possibly provide more affordable housing. Utilities are already in place and higher density around Metro areas could resolve some transportation issues. Extra tax revenues could come with density. But discussions also pointed out that the types of housing must be carefully considered. Large, expensive houses can destroy neighborhood aesthetics, remove the tree canopy, price some residents out of the area, may increase traffic, and possibly increase taxes.

The use of underutilized buildings was seen as a good idea. Some examples cited by members included:

- Senior Centers, mentioned by several units. The Lewinsville Senior Center was developed from an old elementary school.
- Examples of churches moving into empty stores in old shopping marts
- Multi-use buildings such as commercial and housing combined into the same building
- The Workhouse Arts Center built on the old Lorton prison property

Units were asked to determine which seems most likely to meet the needs of our increasing population--increasing density in new construction, infill, and/or repurposing of underutilized structures. There was no agreement on this question. Several thought that a combination of the three suggestions should be used and be dependent upon the situation. But location was crucial—land costs, proximity to Metro, environmental considerations, revitalization considerations, and affordability. Members cited the appeal of mixed use of business/residential areas and liked the idea of walkable streets, such as the revitalized areas like the City of Fairfax. One unit suggested more nearby living space and another suggested a circular bus like in Reston. Impact fees, infrastructure dedications and proffers were

mentioned by all as ways that developers are expected to pay for public facilities.

In examining the North-South Comprehensive Plan and the Fairfax Forward in land use development, the units observed that the differences between the two were mostly in the timing and the frequency of the reviews. The North South Comprehensive Plan proposes a different focus in different years. The Fairfax Forward criteria favor a more holistic approach. Fairfax Forward allows ongoing review providing quicker responses as conditions change and can address emerging issues; it is also more responsive to citizen input.

Transportation Quiz

Most members did not live within daily walking distance of Metro and only one person could or would ride a bike to Metro. Regarding areas in Northern Virginia that would have sufficient density to support transportation other than automobiles:

- Springfield, Manassas, Reston, Loudoun, Tysons could handle heavy rail (train and Metro).
- Reston/Fairfax, the Routes 1 and 66 corridors, Vienna, Fairfax City could utilize light rail.
- Loudoun, Prince William, the Route 28 corridor to Prince William would benefit from express buses and dedicated bus lanes.

When considering whether the Metro system is being built for population growth yet to come and not for the existing citizens, responses were divided. Some agreed saying people who live here now think cars, not walking. (McLean) Perhaps in the near future, people will come here expecting to take the Metro and walk. Many thought that Metro lags in meeting current needs—express lanes are too slow and platforms are too short. (Reston Day)

“Metro was built for the population and communities that have long outgrown the projection. We are concerned about safety with recent accidents and fires; another tunnel is needed to allow more frequent trains. New equipment for the entire systems is going to take years at the rate they are going. The PA system is bad and the announcements are unintelligible, most of the time. Better ways are needed to keep riders informed. It was suggested we look at and discuss Metro as a whole. This conversation got a little passionate as everyone had a story. It seems Vienna does not allow parking overnight

which would help those taking trips from DCA.” (CC)

“We had different thoughts on agreement or disagreement. Some traveling on weekends thought there were not many riders getting on in Tysons and thought the Silver Line was built for future Tysons development. Others traveled on weekends and the trains got filled at the Wiehle station and thought the Silver Line was built for current population and will soon be overcrowded. Northern VA transportation Metro/road builds seem to wait until critical mass is reached and then relief is built somehow—poor planning we thought!!!” (Reston Eve)

Land Use Positions

With regard to the LWFVA positions on Land Use in the policy section of the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan, several units felt that there should be a separate discussion of the LWFVA’s land use positions because of the complexity of issues. There was not sufficient time to do justice to the questions. Members said that there was a great deal of information in the article to merit a separate discussion period. They did not have enough time to address the section on the LWFVA land use positions. One unit indicated that the transportation section could also be a stand alone topic. Reston Evening suggested a separate program to examine the positions and, thereby, be able to answer the questions thoughtfully.

Regarding what the League could accomplish, Reston Day members agreed that the League must continue to monitor and exercise leadership in confronting land use questions; and for now, keep all our priorities-revisiting the position every few years. In particular, changing neighborhoods should be watched, with the realization that they can evolve or deteriorate, and that the timing, intent and focus of changes (including new uses of older structures) need to be evaluated by Fairfax Forward and the North-South Comprehensive Plan. Springfield asked if there was an ongoing plan in progress for future development.

Fairfax Station unit did not review all of the questions on land use positions; instead it reported the following:

Land Use planning positions (from EF 4 & EF-5):

- Support for the wide-ranging use of citizen input into all land use changes to the Comprehensive Plans? Since League principles emphasize need for citizen input, we do not think it is necessary to add to individual positions.
- Public facilities should be scheduled in the Capital Improvement Programs (CIP) for completion within

a reasonable time: Yes, this statement should be added to the position.

- The County should work in partnership in this effort with its local citizens and businesses. Yes, this statement should be added to the position. We suggest adding at the end of the statement, for clarity: “in the affected areas.”
- The LWFVA believes that practicing smart growth and creating suitable communities are essential for the future of Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax. Yes, add this statement
- In order to achieve these goals the County must make more use of the growth control measures available to it. It also must be granted strengthened powers by the state to manage growth. Yes, add this statement.
- We favor stronger regional planning and would be willing to give up some local authority to advance a regional plan and program. No consensus on adding this statement.
- The LWFVA supports the preservation of Fairfax County’s ability to be flexible in negotiating with developers for the cost of providing new, expanded public facilities and for the resolution of other development issues. Yes, add this statement.

Several units decided that a review of the Fairfax League’s land use positions merited its own study. (Reston Day, Reston Evening, and Springfield) Because this topic was broad and challenging, separate discussions would be feasible. Members did not have sufficient time to address all aspects of the issue in one meeting. Members indicated a definite interest for the plans of future of land use in the County.

Lethality Assessment (LAP) Program Results Released

The Fairfax County Police Department has collected some interesting statistics since the Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) began in June. First responders to domestic violence calls are trained to determine if the victim is safe or in immediate danger. In addition they hand out cell phones that can connect victims with the Domestic Violence Hotline and other appropriate services.

During the first month of keeping records for this program, police had 43 calls averaging 1-2 calls a day. The calls were from Mt. Vernon, West Springfield, Reston, Franconia, Sully, Fair Oaks, and McLean. Languages other than English were Korean and Spanish (14), and calls to the language line were increased.

Voter Turnout for Elections Is Declining

By Sharone Lathrop, Pat Nelson-Douvelis, Susan Cowart, Mary Jane Cleary

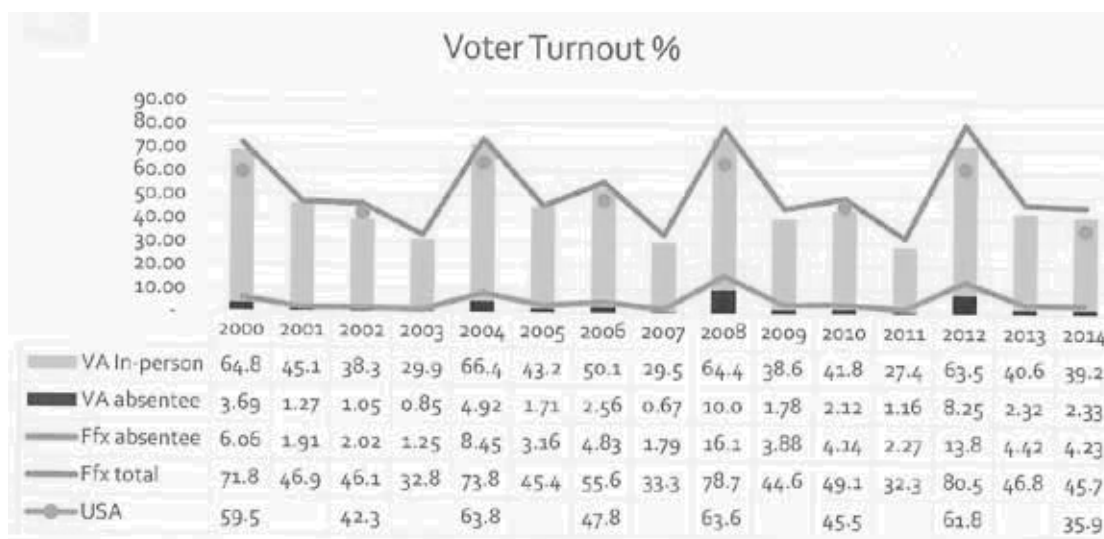
In Virginia, elections are held every year in November: Year 1 is for Governor (last held in 2013); Year 2: the U.S. Congress (2014); Year 3: the Virginia Legislature and statewide and local offices (2015); and Year 4: President and U.S. Congress (2016).

This year, 2015, in a Year-3 election, Virginia voters will elect officials who will have direct influence on their lives: transportation, schools funding, property tax rates, etc. Turnout in Year-3 elections has been falling for 30 years. In Fairfax County there will be candidates for 52 offices, but less than 30 percent of eligible voters in Virginia, including Fairfax County, will likely go to the polls to cast a ballot and select leaders for the next four years. This is not a new phenomenon. Note in Figure 1 the percentage of registered voters who actually voted in presidential vs. other elections and the especially low turnout in Year-3 elections (2003, 2007, 2011).¹

In the last Virginia Year-3 election (2011), few seats were seriously contested. “The combination of winner-take-all rules, incumbent advantages and gerrymandering led many representatives to run unopposed, leaving only one-third of

are competing to control a majority of the 40 State Senate seats, 23 of which will have more than one candidate on the ballot. The percentage of contested seats is down slightly from the Year -3 election in 2011.³ In Fairfax, 3 of the

Figure 1: Percent of Registered Voters



“races contested, most of which were in Northern Virginia.” A mid-October 2011 poll done by Christopher Newport University found that 70 percent of registered voters were paying “little” to no attention to the November 2011 elections. With two-thirds of races uncontested that year, voters already knew who the winner would be before they voted, and had more incentive not to show up on Election Day.²

Throughout most of Virginia, the General Assembly elections this November will be a “mere formality.” The lack of competition is noteworthy in the House of Delegates, where 62 of 100 seats are uncontested. It will be more competitive in the State Senate: Democrats and Republicans

9 Supervisor positions are uncontested as are 3 of the 9 District School Board positions and the Commonwealth’s Attorney position.

Low voter turnout is not new and not limited to Virginia. Nationwide the turnout for presidential elections is highest; while primaries, off-year and midterm elections have significantly lower turnout. However, higher turnout is possible. There are many industrialized democracies with standard turnout for major elections of over 80 percent, e.g., Norway, Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Italy, Turkey, and Belgium. Australia (96 percent turnout) has mandatory voting with fines for those who don’t vote.

The Problem of Turnout

Voter turnout is measured in various ways. The percentage of the total population above the voting age, the percentage of citizens and the percentage of registered voters are typical voter turnout measures. Some statistics include valid only vs. all ballots cast. All measures show the same patterns of turnout.

Nationally, over 19 million registered voters did not vote in the 2012 U.S. presidential election! In the 2014 U.S. congressional primaries, the highest turnout was in Montana with 26.3 percent, and the lowest was Iowa with only 9.7 percent. Some of the reasons for not voting, given nationwide by non-voters in the 2012 presidential election, cited by the Census Bureau,⁴ were:

- A) Illness or disability-14%
- B) Out of town-8.6%
- C) Too busy-18.9%
- D) Not interested-15.7%
- E) Did not like candidates or campaign issues-12.7%
- F) Registration problems-5.5%

In an editorial after the 2014 election, the *New York Times* rued the “abysmally low turnout – the lowest in more than seven decades.” The Editorial Board cited several states that had expanded the opportunities for voting, including by mail, concluding that “when voting is made easier, more people vote.” “Showing up at the polls is the best way to counter the oversized influence of wealthy special interests who dominate politics as never before. But to encourage participation, politicians need to stop suppressing the vote, make the process of voting as easy as possible, and run campaigns that **stand** for something.”⁵

Who Votes Does Matter

A recent study, *Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States*,⁶ by Jan E. Leighley and Jonathan Nagler, supports the *Times* view. The authors analyzed voting data for presidential elections between 1972 and 2008. In their most important conclusion, Leighley and Nagler found that individuals are more likely to vote when candidates take policy positions providing the voter with more distinct choices and when candidates offer policy choices that more closely match the individual’s preference.

“When one candidate’s policy positions are more appealing to an individual than the other candidate’s policy position, the resulting perceived difference *increases* the probability of voting. When candidates’ policy positions are distant from those of the individual, then the resulting perceived policy alienation of the individual *decreases* the probability of voting.”

Leighley and Nagler found substantial divergence over time between how different groups of respondents identified the policy choices of candidates. “After 1980, respondents in the lower income quintile consistently saw the Democratic candidates as less liberal than the respondents in the upper-income quintiles. At the same time, respondents in the lower-income quintile consistently saw the Republican candidate as less conservative than did respondents in the upper-income quintiles.”

Especially on economic and redistributive issues, voters have been shown not to be representative of non-voters. In each presidential election from 1972-2008:

- Voters were more conservative than non-voting citizens on how much government should do.
- Voters were also more conservative than non-voters on partisanship, candidate preference and ideology.
- On values-based issues –aid to the poor, defense spending, etc.– there was no systematic differences between voters and nonvoters (except for gun control).
- On every redistributive issue, non-voters were more liberal than voters.

Leighley and Nagler present other statistics of particular note:

- Nearly 80 percent of high-income citizens vote; barely 50 percent of low-income citizens do. (Although citizens with higher levels of education and income vote at higher rates than the poor, this “income bias” did not change over the period of their study, despite large increases in income inequality over the period. So, while there remains a significant difference in turnout rates between the wealthy and the poor, that ratio has been stable over time.)
- White and black citizens vote at higher rates than Hispanics. Indeed, in every election since 1984, blacks have been voting at substantially higher rates than whites.
- Married citizens vote proportionately more than singles.
- Older citizens vote more than younger citizens.
- Women vote in larger numbers than men. Since 1996, the magnitude of the difference in turnout between men and women has been significant: women are more likely to vote than men of comparable income, education and age, by 5 percentage points.
- Hispanic whites have lower turnout rates than “Anglos”, and there has been no increase in turnout rates of Hispanics over the past 30 years. Leighley and Nagler posit that the turnout gap between Hispanics and Anglos would not disappear even if

Hispanic and Anglo demographic characteristics (education, income, age) became more similar.⁶

Youth Voting

Much has been made recently about millennials – the young demographic group that now outnumbers the baby boomers in the U.S. Millennials (and Hispanics) have the lowest relative turnout among voters. Most young adults who register to vote actually vote in presidential years but in mid-terms, many do not vote. There are some differences between college and non-college youth voters.⁷

Young people who register before reaching voting age are more likely to actually turn out to vote once they turn 18, according to a 2014 Duke University study. Pre-registration is increasingly the more popular of the proposed voting policies aimed at engaging youth. The Virginia legislature defeated two bills in 2015 --HB 2000 and HB 694 -- that would have expanded registration opportunities for young people age 16.⁸

A number of non-profit, non-partisan organizations are devoted to increasing the turnout of millennials and have succeeded in registering many millions of them to vote, for example: Particip8, ActiVote America, Rock the Vote, Declare Yourself, Just Vote, *Voto Latino*, and the Voter Participation Center (Rising American Electorate).

Impact of Not Voting

One of the biggest consequences of low voter turnout is the misrepresentation that then occurs in government. When a segment of the population sits out an election, the results are not representative of the population as a whole. When only a very low percentage of the population votes in an election, the legitimacy of the results can be called into question.⁹

Most democratic organizations require at least 50 percent of eligible voters for a quorum. Yet in the 2014 midterm election, only 45 percent of the voting-age population (VAP) cast a vote. Those who did vote tended to be older, whiter, and more educated. They were not necessarily representative of the population as a whole. Often those who do vote are more partisan; therefore more polarization results in those who are elected.

A similar situation occurred in the 2010 midterm election for the House and Senate--less than 40 percent of the VAP voted. Even though representatives won with an average of

64 percent of the vote, they received only 23.4 percent from those who were actually eligible to vote. When fewer than a quarter of the constituents actually support a candidate, the legitimacy of the outcome might well be suspect and may not truly reflect the desires of those being represented.

What about local elections? It is widely acknowledged that local government has more impact on our daily lives than other levels of government. School boards, police and fire departments, sheriff, soil and water conservation and libraries all fall under local government. For homeowners, it is local government that controls property taxes. Yet votes cast for local officials are generally far below those for state and national candidates. The effects last long after the election; consider the effects of redistricting, appointment of judges and planning for bonds for infrastructure.

Low voter turnout and under-representation appear to be something the people of Ferguson, Missouri, understand

now. In their “normal” city election, about 15 percent of the eligible voters cast a vote, and the six seats on the City Council were occupied by one black and five whites. The population of the city is 60 percent black. After the Justice

Department determined

that the Ferguson courts and police department engaged in racial discrimination, the voter turnout increased significantly and the seats on the City Council are now evenly allocated racially.

As we know, the president’s party almost always loses seats in the mid-term election. This negativity or presidential penalty is seen as a way of expressing levels of dissatisfaction with the president’s performance or ensuring that his party doesn’t control all levels of government. Independent voters tend to vote more in presidential election years where they may feel more represented because the selection of candidates is more visible.

Legislative Efforts to Encourage Turnout

Federal and state legislatures have taken actions over the years to increase turnout. The 1992 National Voter Registration Act (aka “motor voter”) was a significant attempt to make registering voters easier. It mandated states to make available the opportunity to register to vote wherever drivers’ licenses were issued and wherever states provided public benefits. Most states have instituted additional legal measures to increase turnout, such as

Table 1 - Turnout of 18-24 Year-Olds (Percent)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Registered College Students</u>	<u>All College Students</u>	<u>All Registered Youth</u>	<u>All Eligible Youth</u>
2008	87	60	83	48.5
2010	50	26.5	47	21
2012	82	53	77	41

absentee voting, early voting, election-day registration (EDR), registering and voting by mail, - most of which were adopted with the intention of increasing voter turnout of traditionally under-represented groups (e.g., the poor or racial and ethnic minorities). Virginia has absentee voting (but not no-fault absentee voting, which is a form of early voting) as well as online registration.

Contrary to previous academic research on voter turnout, which held that these legal reforms had little impact on turnout, Leighley and Nagler found that some of these reforms have raised turnout or affected disparities in voting rates between different groups of voters. They found that¹⁰:

- “Motor voter” significantly increased registration but not turnout as much.
- “Election-day registration increased turnout by 3-5 percent, but the law has had limited effect on the representativeness of various demographic groups (though it may be more important for younger rather than older voters.).
- Absentee voters are more educated and older than election-day voters; no-fault absentee voting increased turnout by 3.2 percent, which they consider one of the most significant institutional changes made since the Civil Rights Act.
- For early voting, a voting period of as long as 27 days is required to see any positive effect on turnout.
- Election-day registration (EDR) leads to an increase in turnout of 2.8 percent in states with a previous 15-day registration-closing period. A 10-day decrease in the length of the registration-closing period would *in itself* lead to a 1% increase in turnout for states without EDR. Research over several decades also shows that the greater the number of days prior to the election that voter registration closes, the *lower* an individual’s probability of voting in presidential elections.

Virginia has not made progress on reversing regressive voting laws, except to allow for the use of valid student photo IDs that are issued by any private school located in the Commonwealth as a Voter ID. Bills that would have allowed no-excuse absentee voting failed in the legislature this year (HB 1394, SB677, SB 954). All bills on voting rights restoration have failed in the Virginia legislature to date.¹¹

A note of caution: according to Leighley and Nagler, making voting easier will not dramatically change who votes and how many vote. Some electoral reforms modestly increase turnout but by no means produce changes in

turnout anywhere near large enough to close the gap in turnout rates between the United States and many of the other industrialized democracies. However, at 2-3 percent increase in turnout could change the results in a close election.¹²

What Else Can Be Tried to Increase Turnout?

There have also been non-legislative efforts to increase turnout. A Stanford Business School Symposium explored how lessons from behavioral science can help increase turnout. Researchers applying psychology to the realm of politics are finding that giving voters a few strategic “nudges” can push far more people in the direction of polls on Election Day. More voters are motivated to go to the polls when they are told turnout will be high and when they are provoked to discuss plans for getting there. They are also more likely to vote when they are threatened with personal accountability and when they are encouraged to see voting as an intrinsic part of their identity, rather than just “something they do.” Campaign telephone calls must get people to form a voting plan, e.g., when and where will they vote. Two get-out-the-vote field experiments found that messages emphasizing low expected turnout were less effective at motivating voters who were low-participation voters than those voters who are more civically minded.¹³

Some practitioners believe that what really mobilizes groups that tend to vote at lower rates is repeated personal contact. Analysis, based on 268 get-out-the-vote field experiments conducted repeatedly across six electoral cycles from 2006 to 2008, showed that citizens who haven’t voted much in the past can be inspired by either door-to-door visits or live phone calls. Such contacts, especially if repeated, can produce habitual voters. It is the social interaction that seems to matter. Messages designed to appeal to ethnic or racial solidarities are *not* more effective than general appeals to civic duty or other broad concerns.¹⁴

Voting on a Weekend -- Tuesday was set by Congress in 1865 to give voters a travel day after the Sabbath to get to the polls in town. There is bipartisan support for changing to weekend voting, perhaps Saturday from 10 a.m. to Sunday at 6 p.m. Bills to make this change have been introduced in Congress but public support has not pushed them forward yet. Many countries, such as France, have much higher turnout and have weekend voting.

Universal Voter Registration--One way of increasing the number of voters is to have more registered voters. Many countries have opt-out registration. Some such as Norway allow non-citizens to vote for municipal offices.

Voting by mail--This is an effective means of ballot delivery, but only Oregon, Washington and Colorado have fully adopted this method. Generally, millennials like this format but boomers do not. Security is at most a minor problem since mischief is limited to one ballot at a time. Turnout is improved but not wonderful in those states. Virginia provides for voting by mail for absentee ballots and overseas voters. The robust Virginia online tracking system for absentee ballots could be the start of either a completely mail-in or an online voting system.

Web ballots--Voting online has been successfully used by many corporations and associations. It has not been extensively used in the United States in a political context; reasons cited include lack of a paper trail and security concerns. However, online voter activities are simplifying various aspects of voting, e.g., registering, checking registration status, and requesting absentee ballots.

Gerrymandering--Partisan drawing of legislative boundaries suppresses turnout by making seats safe and therefore uncontested. Re-districting based on less partisan criteria should increase competition and turnout. See League positions below.

Limit Campaign Season--Britain has a Parliamentary system that allows for elections to be called when needed to support the position of the party in power. Britain limits campaigns to six weeks and no TV ads are allowed.

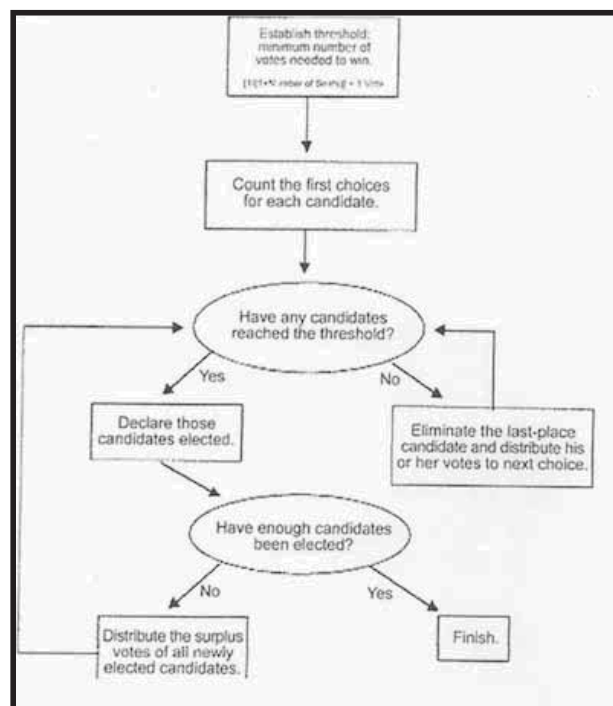
Compulsory voting--Some arguments for compulsory voting include: citizens being more vested in government decisions, voting as educational, fewer candidate resources are used to turnout the vote, and voting as a civic responsibility. So how does it work? About 38 countries have tried compulsory voting for some portion of the country or population since 1900. At least eight countries have discontinued the practice. Compulsory voting is generally enforced by a fine, social pressure, or government not hiring non-voters; imprisonment has generally been discontinued.

Ranked-choice voting (RCV)—This type of voting, also called Instant-runoff voting, has been studied in California, especially the San Francisco area. The voter sees a ballot with multiple places to vote for each office: first choice, second choice, third choice with all candidates listed in each space. Voters are advised to vote for their true favorite as first choice and then for acceptable candidates in order. Results show increased turnout and winners that were preferred when compared one-on-one with each of the other candidates.

Preference voting or proportional voting asks the voter to rank the candidates (See Figure 2 from FairVote.org) and seems most useful in contests with multiple positions for the same office, like at-large-school board members. Cambridge, Mass., has had preference voting for many years and shows less decline in turnout than neighboring cities using more standard voting.

Fairfax County--The Elections Office is not doing anything specific about voter turnout; their mission is registering voters and running elections, not voter turnout.

Figure 2 - Preference Voting



Are there any non-governmental initiatives that might increase voting?--Currently, only merchandisers capitalize on the day by having yet another excuse for a sale. We celebrate July 4, Independence Day, the day we remember the beginnings of our democracy, with much fanfare and fireworks. Perhaps we could create the same enthusiasm each year when exercising our privilege to continue our democratic way of life.

Employers could also assist in creating voter turnout. In advance of Election Day they could remind and encourage their employees to vote. They could provide flexibility in working hours on Election Day so their employees would find it easier to vote.

Endnotes

1 "Virginia Registration/Turnout Statistics, 1976-Present <http://www.fairvote.org>

elections.virginia.gov/index.php/resultsreports/registration-statistics/registration-turnout-statistics

2 Grier, Christina, "The Ongoing Problem of Low Voter Turnout: Kentucky, Mississippi, New Jersey and Virginia", Fair Vote.org, November 10, 2011

3, 8, 11 Lee, Erin Ferns, 'Legislative Threats and Opportunities, Spring 2015', Project Vote Research Memo, 2015

4 U.S. Statistics, especially Census Table 10: www.census.gov

5 "The Worst Voter Turnout in 72 Years," New York Times, November 12, 2014, page A26.

6, 10, 12 Leighley, Jan E. and Jonathan Nagler, Who Votes Now? Demographics, Issues, Inequality, and Turnout in the United States, Princeton University Press, 2014

7 "2014 Mid-Terms: Lessons from 2010 Elections About Turnout Among Registered Youth," Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, Tufts University, 2014

9 "Pratt, L. Henry, of "Win the Future"(c) 3; John S. and James L. Knight Foundation Study: Risks of Not Voting; and www.wtfyoungamerica.org

13 Rigogliosos, Marguerite, "Research-Backed Ways to Get Out the Vote," Stanford Graduate School of Business Symposium, April 17, 2012). www.gsb.stanford.edu/

14 "How to mobilize reluctant voters", Michelson, Melissa, The Washington Post, July 15, 2014.

the Vote," Stanford Graduate School of Business Symposium, April 17, 2012). www.gsb.stanford.edu/

14 "How to mobilize reluctant voters", Michelson, Melissa, The Washington Post, July 15, 2014.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you know someone who didn't or doesn't vote? Why don't they?
2. Discuss some of the consequences of low voter turnout.
3. Why do you think turnout is so low in year 3?
4. What do you think would be some of the more effective ways to increase voter turnout in Virginia?
5. What should/fl can LWVFA do about voter turnout? (The North Carolina League joined with DOJ and others contesting recent changes to NC voting laws.)

League Policy and Positions on Voter Turnout

LWVUS (lwv.org/content/public-policy-positions)

In positions dealing with Public Policy, the national League promotes "an open governmental system that is representative, accountable and responsive." Lobbying/advocacy is the method used to promote league positions.

Voting Rights: The League supports the protection of every citizen of the right to vote and encourages all citizens to vote.

Educating and Engaging Voters (lwv.org/content/educating-and-engaging-voters)

"Voting is the most powerful way to have your voice heard, and it is the core of our democracy. It's your chance to stand up for what matters most to you and have an impact on the issues that affect you, your community and your future."

"Since 2012, the League has been the single-largest on-the-ground partner of National Voter Registration Day (NVRD)." (fourth Tuesday of September, this year on September 22). Secondly, since an informed and educated voter population is the key to our democracy, the League works to educate voters about candidates in races at all levels, federal, state and local.

The LWVUS has national positions opposed to voter photo identification and other measures that restrict the ability to vote. Leagues across the U.S. are working to promote effective non-partisan redistricting activities. <http://lwv.org/content/shining-light-redistricting-lessons-learned-2011>

LWV-VA (<http://lwv-va.org/files/positions>)

The Position in Brief: "The League believes that democratic government depends on the informed and active participation of its citizens; that voting is a right and responsibility; and that election laws, regulations and administrative procedures should be uniformly designed and applied, and adequately funded to facilitate and increase voter participation throughout Virginia."

Specifically, the League's position encourages ways to increase voter turnout by:

- Supporting absentee voting by mail and in-person without a specific reason
- Use of satellite voting facilities
- Online voter registration
- Use of secure electronic means to facilitate registration and absentee voting for Virginia's military and overseas voters.

Since the Virginia State League was founded in 1947, it has always been active in greater voter participation. Studies were conducted in 1965, 1967, 1973, 1975 and 1993. Studies have been appropriate for the issues of the time: poll tax, literacy tests, voter registration, absentee voting. The 1993 study to determine the feasibility of Early Voting was undertaken with the goal of trying to extend the voting period in Virginia. The League adopted a position that would extend the voting period up to one month, allow people to vote on Saturdays and Sundays, and permit absentee voting without a specific reason.

In 2011, the Virginia League sponsored a competition for college students to draw redistricting maps. Currently changes to redistricting methods are being strongly supported, including the current court case on redrawing District 3. The Virginia governor has called a special session in August to consider what to do after the court decision

on District 3. For an interesting discussion of current redistricting in Virginia see:

http://lwv-va.org/files/redistricting_2015_06_01_toolkit_page.pdf

LWVFA (www.lwv-fairfax.org/files/here-we-stand...)

In regards to registration and voting, the Fairfax League “promotes efforts to increase participation in Fairfax County and the City of Fairfax.” These efforts are demonstrated by the following League positions:

- Support for additional hours and the use of appropriate public places for voter registration
- Belief that local government has an obligation to their citizens to facilitate registration and to increase the number of potential voters
- Encourage County and City efforts to disseminate voting information.

Representatives Needed For Advisory and Emergency Planning Committees

The Fairfax League has almost 20 representatives to various local committees and boards. These positions should be filled as a service to the community and a way to make the League presence known. Please consider volunteering to fill one of these open positions. LWVFA needs a representative on the **Airports Advisory Committee (AAC)** and the **Fairfax Joint Local Emergency Planning Committee (FJLEPC)**. Both meet every other month for about 1½ hours, so being our representative on either committee is a relatively small time commitment.

The AAC meets on the 2nd Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. to discuss airport issues that the Fairfax Board of Supervisors should know about. Noise from overhead planes was a big problem

the first years of the AAC, but now the economic impact of Dulles Airport and suggestions to improve Dulles are major concerns.

The FLEPC (see <http://www.lepcfairfax.org/aboutus.htm>) meets on the 2nd Thursday at 10 a.m. The LWV rep to this committee is one of the few volunteer members (in that they are not being paid for their time at the meeting) - most are police and firemen or representatives from the business community. Reports of the recent Hazmat accidents are heard at every meeting. Although LEPCs are mandated by law (see <http://www2.epa.gov/epcra/local-emergency-planning-committees>) LWVFA was instrumental in the founding of this committee.

Let's keep the LWV presence in both of these committees!

Contact Dianne Blais (dblais.lwvva@gmail.com or 703-830-1998) for further information or to volunteer.

Learn About VOTE411 and Use It!

According to the LWVUS website, VOTE411.org is a nationwide online network of electoral information that is made possible by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF). It is an innovative voter information resource that provides citizens across the country with nonpartisan educational information and addresses the issues foremost in the minds of American voters. Also available

are early voting options, absentee ballot information and poll locations. The online voters' guides have candidate information and answers to locally-generated questions that can also be downloaded and sent to print media.

Please read the article on Page 4 of the Summer Edition of *The Virginia Voter* for detailed information about how the content is put together and how it is funded.



Meet and Greets Undertakes Huge Effort: Needs Volunteers

In order to accommodate all of the candidates, we have an ambitious schedule for the Meet and Greets this year. One live broadcast event focuses on the state-level races, while the second one gives the public an opportunity to find out what the Constitutional officers and the Soil and Water Conservation District officers do. The event at Madison High School highlights the county-wide responsibilities of the Chair of the Board of Supervisors and the At Large School Board candidates. Then, constituents in each district can discuss their local concerns with the District Supervisor and School Board candidates. All in all, 13 events (Sully has two).

Our first ventures into broadcasting, the events on August 31 and September 28, will enable voters to view the candidates live on Channel 10 from home and study their positions on video posted on our website throughout the campaign. Jim

Southworth, the producer of the Inside Scoop programs on the Fairfax Public Access TV station, will also videotape the district events and post them on our website and on YouTube. He did a great job for us last year, as you can see if you look at the 2014 Meet and Greets on our website.

Please volunteer for the events in your own magisterial district or in another nearby district. Some districts have few of our members living in them. We owe a lot to the AAUW branches, the Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, the Fairfax County Council of PTAs, the District Councils, and the Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce for the help they are giving us, but we have the main responsibility.

You can volunteer by going to our website, clicking on Meet and Greet 2015, scrolling down to the cream-colored chart that has all the events, finding your own, and clicking on the volunteer link. The Sign Up Genius for that event will come up. If you prefer, just write to Sidney at sidneyjohnson3@verizon.net or phone her at 703-476-0581.

Please just choose a position and join us!

Meet and Greet Schedule

August 31. Monday, 7-10 p.m. One three-hour media event at the Fairfax Public Access TV station (Channel 10) for all candidates for Senate and the House of Delegates.

September 9, Wednesday, 7-9 p.m., Springfield District, West Springfield Governmental Center; Organizer Dianne Blais, 703-830-1998, dianneblais@aol.com

September 16, Wednesday, 7-8:30 p.m., Mount Vernon District, Sherwood Regional Library; Organizer: Jere Gibber, 703-768-6987, jgibber@aol.com

September 21, Monday, 7:30-9 p.m., Sully District candidates for Senate and House of Delegates, Sully District Governmental Center; Organizer: Leslie Vandivere, 571-213-6384, lvandivere@cox.net

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, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Providence District, Providence Community Center; Organizer: Tania Hossain (Chair, Providence District Council), 703-489-5999, taniahossain@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, sidney-johnson3@verizon.net

October 28, Wednesday, 7:30-9 p.m., Sully District, Sully Governmental Center county-level candidates event; Organizer: Leslie Vandivere, 571-213-6384, lvandivere@cox.net

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

Board Sets Plans and Goals for Increasing Diversity, Membership, and Visibility

By Peggy Knight, Co-President

Approximately 20 Board and Off-Board members gathered at Charleen Deasy's home July 28 to plan activities and identify goals for the 2015/2016 League year. The retreat began with introductions and a review of last year's goals to increase the public visibility of LWVFA and to attract a more diverse membership. Increased visibility was achieved through our partnerships with the Meet and Greet Candidate Events and voter registration activities. We have added four men as members (for a total of 16 male members); three of our new members are under 50. Since the retreat last year, we've added 17 new members – close but not quite the goal of two per our 10 units.

This year's goals address donations, increasing membership, and diversity. At least 50 percent of LWVFA members will use social media to advertise LWVFA activities. To achieve this goal, Beth Tudan, gave a presentation about the various social media and how members can use them to promote League activities. We will offer workshops in the fall to help members develop basic skills in social media. The League will work to increase donations from non-members in Fairfax County. Various methods were discussed, including collaboration with one or more partners to have a fundraiser in 2017 with the Capitol Steps as the main attraction. An ad hoc committee will be formed after the elections. Our Non-partisan Policy was reviewed. Revisions to the current policy will be presented to the Board in November.

Community Engagement Meetings on September 9 and 12 . . .

FCPS Faces \$100M Shortfall

by Betty Ellerbee

The Fairfax County Public School System, facing a funding crisis for the fiscal year 2016-17, has formed a 36-member budget task force. This committee, composed of 36 members across a broad array of stakeholders, will hold two community engagement meetings in September. The first meeting, at South Lake High School is from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, September 9; the second meeting is at Mt Vernon High School on Saturday, September 12.

The goal of the task force is to create, by October, a unified, prioritized list of reductions that total \$100 million. It is difficult to imagine that the task force will be able to meet the goal without cutting and/or eliminating highly valued and important programs and activities. To stay informed, visit the FCPS website, attend one of the community engagement meetings, and pay close attention to what the candidates for the School Board are saying.

It was agreed that plans for the Meet and Greets are too far along to change the current policy. The programs for the year are set and include two LWVUS consensus studies. Judy Helein presented revisions for the "Guide for the Unit Discussion Leader." The changes will be distributed at Kick Off and posted on our website.

LWVFA has collaborated with other local Leagues and LWV-VA in creating questions for Vote411 for all the candidates. The final group of questions for Clerk of the Court was presented for selection. The approved questions will be sent to the candidates by August 17. The questions and candidate answers should be ready to post on the Vote411 website on September 5.

We will continue to increase our visibility with limited voter registration activities at the unit level and the Meet and Greet Candidate events. There are a total of 50 questions and 99 candidates on the ballot this year. (See *What's on the Ballot* for the full list.) There will be 13 Meet and Greet events this year. We have added three new partners. Two representatives from LWVFA and three of the partners will appear on Inside Scoop on August 10 to promote the Meet and Greet events and other organizations' activities.



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF VIRGINIA

**You are cordially invited to attend a workshop on two issues
currently being studied by LWVUS:
“Structures of Democracy”**

When: Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015; 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Where: Capitol Building, House Rm. 2 (entrance at 1000 Bank Street)

What: 9:45 Registration/Coffee

10:00 **Dr. Dan Palazzolo, Prof. of Political Science, U. of Richmond:**
“Money in Politics” (to enhance our understanding of the new
schemes and structures used to influence elections and erode
protections against corruption, and to review possible responses to
counter them)

11:15 **Break**

11:30 **Buffet Lunch:** (Cost \$30.00 per person)

12:00 **Dr. David Douglas, Dean, William and Mary School of Law:**
“Amending the US Constitution” (to attempt to arrive at agreement
on what the ideal process should entail, in view of the fact that the
Constitution itself does not spell this out clearly)

1:00 **Break/** (move back to House Rm. 2)

1:30 **Workshop on LWV consensus process/ sharing of LWVUS-
provided materials for the Money in Politics and Constitutional
Amendment studies**

Want Hotel Reservations? We will hold some rooms **until Sept. 16** at a special rate (approx \$128, includes tax) at Commonwealth Park Suites Hotel, 901 Bank St. Please make reservations by calling 804-343-7300. Website is www.commonwealthparksuites.com.

For more information: visit our website www.lwv-va.org **or contact:** schutz67@embarqmail.com

Parking, Directions and Features: <http://www.virginiacapitol.gov/visitors.php?p=index>

Luncheon Reservation Form: (Deadline is September 24. No refunds)

Please Print: Name _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Number of Reservations _____

League or Organization _____ Vegan Choice Needed? _____

Add names on back of this form as needed. Detach and mail completed form with your
\$_____ check payable to LWV of Virginia to LWV-VA c/o Pat Hurst, 12
Georgetown Green, Charlottesville, Va. 22901

This Month's Unit Meeting Locations

Topic: Voter Turnout

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 August 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, Sept 5

12:15 p.m. At-Large Unit and Briefing

****Following the Kick Off****
West Springfield Governmental Center
6140 Rolling Road
Springfield
Contact: Judy, 703-725-9401_

Wednesday, Sept 9

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

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

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. Fairfax Station (FXS)

8739 Cuttermill Pl.
Springfield, VA 22153
Contact: Kathleen 703-644-1555

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

****NEW LOCATION****
Hunter Mill District Community Room B
1801 Cameron Glen Drive
Reston, VA 20190
Contact: Lucy, 703-757-5893

Thursday, Sept 10

9 a.m. Reston Day (RD)

21045 Cardinal Pond Terrace,
#119
Ashburn, VA
Contact: Carolyn 703-729-1133

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, Sept 14

1:30 p.m. Greenspring (GSP)

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

October Meetings:

Redistricting in Virginia



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 ©

September, 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