

Post-Convention Program Report & Request LWV-VA 6/2017

Despite the request of several Local Leagues during the Program Planning process this year, that the LWV-VA shrink its focus down to our core mission of helping to register and inform voters, at the LWV-VA Convention 2017 on 6/11, delegates voted not only to retain all current positions, but also to approve two task forces and a major position update going forward. These decisions reflected the delegates' understanding of the need for advocacy in these areas with updated positions.

The first board-recommended item approved was a major update/restudy of the Mental Health position, to include substance abuse, group homes, changes in courts to put mentally ill in treatment facilities not jails, and inclusion of broader services provided by Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.

The second board-recommended item approved by delegates was to use a task force to update our position on Women's Rights and Virginia Law, based on current laws.

The minutes reflect that on Sunday morning, delegates also approved a task force to tackle the Education position, with a focus on the impact of Charter Schools and School Vouchers on public education.

Generally speaking, a task force is more nimble and therefore may use less time than a full study committee. It is intended to address a more immediate and often more focused need than a program study committee working towards consensus and a new position. The task force reports its findings to the LWV-VA Board, which then decides whether to approve it for distribution & action and/or whether to recommend that the task force morph into a study committee. The study committee might present its information to the board for consideration and perhaps recommendation of concurrence by the delegates to Council, to update the position.

All 3 items approved for investigation are on Sue's agenda for reporting at the Fall Workshops, so all will need to begin work ASAP. Fortunately, there was much enthusiasm in the room during the adoption of these three items, and we expect that the several volunteers who stepped forward to form the cores of the committees will be joined by several interested members from local Leagues across the state.

Mostly, I hope the description of the three items and their scopes will help you as local League leaders in recruiting interested members for the 2 task forces and the major update study committee. Once you have identified someone, please forward their name to Anne B. Smith, the Program Director Elect for the LWV-VA. She will

have the task of guiding the three ships away from the shoals of investigative overload, towards a useful position for our advocacy.

Additionally, we passed a resolution for action, which reads:

Resolved that the League of Women Voters of Virginia endorses ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution proposed by the United States Congress on March 22, 1972, and ratified by 36 state legislatures, upon ratification by two more states--*Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*; and be it Resolved further that the League of Women Voters of Virginia will advocate for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment at the state level.

It was a fully active and energized Convention. I urge you to seek volunteers with expertise or the desire to do research on any of the three topics mentioned at the top of this document:

- Mental Health,
- Women's Rights and Virginia Law, and
- Education, with the focus on the impact of Charter Schools and School Vouchers on public education.

Anne Smith, Director-elect for Program, will be eager to hear from you.

Anne Smith

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The Committees need to organize themselves fairly quickly; Sue Lewis hopes to have them make presentations of some sort at the break-out sessions of the Fall Workshop Day in September. I am attaching a list of the early-bird volunteers for the three groups. They will serve as a core for those to follow.

Many thanks for your work during the last two years. If you will be leaving the post you have occupied, would you please pass this note on to your successor so they may begin to recruit quickly.

Thank you!

Frances

Frances P. Schutz

Program Director, LWV-VA 2015-17

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