



THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

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www.LWVnashville.org

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January 2019

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- January 19, 2019, 11:00 a.m. Inauguration of Governor-Elect Bill Lee.** Legislative Plaza, 301 6th Avenue N., Nashville, 37243.
- January 19, 2019, 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Women's Wave TN Rally.** 1 Public Square, Nashville, 37201.
- January 21, 2019, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. LWV Tennessee State Advocacy Meeting.** Tennessee Disability Coalition, 955 Woodland Street, Nashville, 37206
- January 31, 2019, 4:00 p.m. "Muslim College Students at the Intersection of Laws, Politics and Religion".** With Shafiqah Ahmadi, Associate Professor of Clinical Education at the Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California. Vanderbilt University, Wyatt Center Rotunda.
- February 1, 2019, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Hot Topics: TBA.** Goodwill Lifsey Center, 937 Herman Street, Nashville, 37208. *Program starts at Noon. Bring your own lunch.*
- February 13, 2019, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Hot Topics: TBA.** Green Hills Public Library, 3701 Benham Ave, Nashville, 37215.
- February 16, 2019. Voter Registration at United Way's "Taxathon".** 302 Foster Street, Nashville, 37207
- April 6-7, 2019, 1 p.m. April 6 to Noon April 7. 2019 LWV of Tennessee Convention.** Murfreesboro, TN. *Please mark your calendars.*

President's Message



LWV has as its focus *"Making Democracy Work, Empowering Voters, and Defending Representative Democracy."* In support of the work of state leagues around the country, the **national** LWV organization is proposing a unifying statement regarding elections. In preparation for the state LWV convention that will be held in Murfreesboro on **April 6-7**, the **Nashville LWV** board voted to place the following position statement on that agenda: *"Support election methods at each level of government that encourage participation, are verifiable and auditable, and enhance representation for all voters."*

All members will have access to the complete position statement prior to the April convention.

Our state legislature has many new faces and we need **all** our members to follow this new administration and legislation. The **LWVTN Advocacy Committee** meets on **Monday, January 21st**. Please see the calendar for time and place. In addition, we hosted a lunch and conversation with two new Davidson County legislators, **Bob Freeman** and **Jason Potts** at noon at Lentz Health Center on **Wednesday, January 16th**.

There will be a **Women's Rally** on Saturday, **January 19th at noon** on the **Metro Court House Public Square**. Although LWVN is not one of the sponsoring organizations, we will have a table to register new voters and provide information.

I hope League members are energized to meet the challenges of this new year.

Barbara Gay



A Great Way to Begin Our Advocacy for the 2019 Legislative Session

By State Advocacy Chair Debby Gould

Newly elected State Representatives **Jason Potts** (House District 59) and **Bob Freeman** (House District 56) met with a packed room of LWVN members and guests on **January 16**. It was a great opportunity to learn more about their areas of interest for the upcoming session and helped **League** members highlight our organization's policy priorities and the issues they hope to see addressed this year by the state legislature. Thanks to **Clare Sullivan, Perry Macdonald, and Winnie Forrester** for helping to organize the meeting.

What a great way to jumpstart our advocacy work in the months ahead. The **LWV Tennessee State Advocacy Committee** meets regularly with **Stewart Clifton**, our lobbyist, to discuss the best ways for our members' voices from across the state to have an impact on the state's legislative actions. **All** LWV members may attend in person or dial in to the meeting for a video/audio connection. Our **first** meeting is **Monday** morning, **January 21**, in the conference room of the Tennessee Disability Coalition, 955 Woodland Street, Nashville from 11:30-12:30. Parking is available in the back of the building. Future meetings will be on the **first and third** Monday morning of the month. If you cannot attend in person, you may join by connecting with video (<https://zoom.us/j/551656376>) on your computer or with audio only at +1 720 707 2699 with Meeting ID: 551 656 376. Of course, you will also receive weekly legislative reports by email every weekend that the legislature meets.



Notes from January Hot Topic: Looking into the Crystal Ball: Preview of the 2019 Legislative Session

By Voter Editor Madeline Garr

Stewart Clifton is no stranger to the **League of Women Voters**. As the League's lobbyist, he has lobbied and advocated for good governmental policies for many years. The **purpose** of his presentation was to give the audience a quick overview of what has changed in the General Assembly of Tennessee, an overview of the issues that are of concern in the upcoming session, and guidance on how to get involved so that our efforts can be effective. He reminded the audience that it is important to establish credibility at the legislature and that advocacy is serious. He also pointed out that it is possible to effect change, but legislative change takes time.

What are the changes?

With the election of **Governor-Elect Bill Lee**, the power in the state has shifted to **Williamson County** as both the Governor and the Speaker of the House are from this county. As a result of the latest election,

there are **28 new** Representatives in the House and **4 new** Senators in the Senate, three of whom moved up from the House. The makeup of the Republicans has shifted from moderate to more conservative. The Democrats picked up **one** seat in the house. As a result of all these changes, new relationships need to be created.

What are the issues?

Currently, we know that the new Governor has made several cabinet appointments and has also kept several people in cabinet positions from Governor Haslam's administration. Governor-Elect Lee has appointed **Tony Niknejad** as his policy director, demonstrating Lee's pledge to provide more choices for parents when it comes to educating their children. As a result, bills related to **vouchers** are sure to be an issue to follow. **The League** takes the position of supporting public education and will be following the impact of any bill with that position in mind.

Other League issues that Stewart will be monitoring are bills surrounding **Open Government**. Stewart indicated that this is a bipartisan issue and feels confident that coalitions can be successful promoting bills that will ensure citizens have access to their government. In addition, any bills focusing on **Elections** will be important. The key issues the League is concerned about are **student absentee voting, voter verified paper ballots, and ex-felon voting**. Finally, the League will follow health care bills, especially around **access** to Medicaid and Medicaid work requirements. Other issues of concern are lead in school water fountains and the [TennCan](#) effort to increase recycling in the state.

Questions were raised about bills dealing with immigration, sex trafficking, the Katie Beckett waiver, and a push on constitutional carry. Stewart pointed out that the League works with other organizations that follow such bills.

How to Stay Informed and Advocate

The best way to monitor and evaluate legislation is to use the **Tennessee General Assembly Website** for the latest information and actions on bills and amendments. Individuals can also use this website to access the calendar, listen to committee meetings, and find information about elected representatives. Stewart also recommended using data and talking points from scholarly sources and/or non-partisan news outlets that the General Assembly trusts such as the **Sycamore Institute, FrameWorks Institute, Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth, and TNJ: On the Hill**.

Stewart also reminded us that building relationships with the staff and with our legislators is an important first step in advocacy. One way to do this is to become knowledgeable about what is important to the individual senator or representative in relation to a policy agenda for you or your organization **prior** to contacting them so that you can identify common ground. Take a look at their social media (Facebook, Twitter, Google).

It is also very important to get to know the **staffer** assigned to your Representative or Senator. Each has only one staff person who does everything. This person is key to reaching your representative or senator, making appointments, or getting information. Again, it is about relationship, not content. Finally, advocates are more successful if they are aligned with an organization. Teamwork is important and can lead to success over time.

In the end, **communicating** with your legislator either by handwritten letters or emails, **making appointments** to talk about an issue for which you have prepared, and **thanking** them for their time are all ways that you can "show up" and work toward your advocacy goals. Stewart quoted **Winston Churchill**

to emphasize the importance of persistence: “*Continuous effort-not strength or intelligence-is the key to unlocking our potential.*”



The League of Women Voters of Nashville

Presents

First Friday Hot Topics at Lunchtime

Friday, February 1, 2019

11:30 am to 1:00 pm

Goodwill Lifsey Center

937 Herman Street, Nashville, TN 37208J

Bring Your Own Lunch. Program begins promptly at noon.

&

Second Wednesday Evening Encore

Wednesday, February 13, 2019

6:00 to 7:00 pm

Green Hills Public Library Community Room

3701 Benham Avenue, Nashville 37215

Topic To Be Announced. Stay Tuned.

Free and open to the public. No reservations needed.

Parking at both locations is Easy & Free!

For additional information, contact LWVNash@gmail.com



Quarterly Report ending on December 31, 2018

By Treasurer Susan Matson

The **League of Women Voters of Nashville** ended **2018** in good financial condition. Our financial accounts total about \$47,000 to fund our programs and services. Income in the first 6 months of our FY2018-19 included \$4,800 in membership dues, over \$3,000 in additional donations for the Ballet Suffrage Project, and a net of \$2,500 from our Fall Fundraiser. Expenditures have included our annual membership payments to the U.S. and Tennessee Leagues, administrative and communication costs, as well as several Voter Services events focused on the local and mid-term elections. **LWVN** also funded \$750 for billboards to publicize its VOTE411 on-line Voters' Guide. **LWVN** has now paid for the Nashville Ballet production “**72 Steps**” on the passage of the 19th Amendment/Women's Right to Vote. Funds remain to support the presentation of the ballet to educate students and others.



Tennessee Election Security Report Released

By Secretary Ethel Detch

In December 2018, the **Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR)**

released a staff report entitled *Tennessee Election Security: A Staff Update*. (TACIR is a state government research agency comprised of state and local officials, established to serve as a forum for the discussion and resolution of intergovernmental problems.)

Because of recent concerns about attacks on election infrastructure, **Senator Frank Niceley** had requested that the commission revisit its **2007** report entitled *Trust but Verify: Increasing Voter Confidence in Election Results*. The earlier report had examined Tennessee's election security and included several findings and recommendations. Senator Niceley specifically asked that the new report address **the most cost-effective and efficient voter-verified paper audit trail options** for Tennessee counties, a concept that the League of Women Voters has also supported. After the release of the earlier report, state law was amended to **require** all counties to move toward such a system. The requirement was subsequently **repealed**, however, because of the costs of implementation, particularly for small counties. Even so, as of August 2018, **fourteen** Tennessee counties had systems that allow for some type of paper verification.

The 2018 report affirms the 2007 recommendations and encourages county election officials who want to keep current machines to consider adding printers, when available, or to make them paper trail capable. The report describes various kinds of voting equipment technology that facilitate confirmation of voting results. The TACIR staff report also encourages the state to continue implementing electronic voter registration processes, making it easier to register, improving accuracy of voter rolls, and potentially saving money.

The 2018 report can be found at https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/tacir/2018-publications/2018_Elections.pdf



Voter Service Report for January

By Voter Services Chairs Hazel Thornton and Perry Macdonald

Both the **Davidson County Election Commission (DCEC)** and the **State Election Commission (SEC)** face a number of concurrent and interrelated challenges to accomplish the acquisition of new voting machines (and operating software) and new voter registration database systems. The SEC's primary task is to evaluate and, as applicable, certify vendors for both categories of acquisitions. In parallel with this process, DCEC has issued two Requests for Proposals (RFPs): one for new machines and one for voter registration database. While awaiting guidance from the State, DCEC is proceeding with evaluations of the vendors' responses.

A primary functionality for new machines is the "**paper trail**" we have been hearing about since this fall. The apparent frontrunner for DCEC offers what is known as a "hybrid." There is a touch screen very similar to what we are currently using, but smaller and attached to a printer that produces a narrow (perhaps 4" across) printed version of the voter's marked ballot. After completing the ballot on the touch screen, each voter takes the printed/marked ballot (checking it over, one hopes) and then scans it into a scanner/lock box, which is **where** and **how** the ballot is actually counted. The tabulation is made electronically and paper ballots remain in the lock box.

While obviously dependent on vendor certification by SEC and whatever else Tennessee procurement regulations require, DCEC is planning to have signed contracts in place the **first of April** and hopes to have functionality confirmed for use throughout the county in August.

While at DCEC, we learned there is a **new** coordinator for the high school registration program. We are looking forward to meeting and working with her. **Congressman Cooper's staff** is **not** taking a lead role in coordinating this effort this year, so we will look to work with DCEC...both for registration and voter education events...and team with our energetic **Education Chair Lara Webb** to keep up our focus on young and upcoming voters!

We will have a voter registration table and perhaps some **roving** "registrars" at the **Women's Rally** this coming **Saturday, January 19**. The weather forecast is dismal, but our resilient spirit, ever strong, will prevail come what may.



Report on ACE Nashville Public Policy Workgroup and a Legislative Petition **By Vice President Clare Sullivan**

All Children Excel

The **ACE (All Children Excel) Nashville** is a collaboration among **50** Nashville agencies and organizations to “*build a trauma-informed Nashville*”. On January 10th, ACE Nashville’s Public Policy Workgroup hosted a conversation about social-emotional educational policy with **Dr. Tony Majors**, Executive Officer of Student Services at Metro Nashville Public Schools. MNPS has been the recipient of a three-year pilot grant from the State’s ***Building Strong Brains Tennessee Innovation Grant***. This grant is now entering its final year. The purpose of the grant has been to **begin** a comprehensive teacher and staff training and student service program around the principles of **social-emotional learning, restorative discipline, and trauma-informed care**. Dr. Majors described the three-tier project in the schools where it has been implemented as demonstrating success in **improving** student and family engagement in learning, **decreasing** disciplinary incidents, **improving** student academic outcomes, and **providing** needed short and long-term support services to students who have experienced adverse childhood events in their families and neighborhoods. The project has involved close collaboration with the Metro Police Department, Juvenile Courts, Department of Health, and mental health providers at Centerstone and Vanderbilt University Medical Center. MNPS hopes to continue funding and growing this program with Metro funds; however, the recent shortfall in city revenue may jeopardize efforts to expand without strong community support and private partnerships. The **LWV Nashville Board** will continue to monitor this important initiative and engage members in encouraging our community leaders to invest in this effort! [See <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/ACE-nashville> for more information about ACE Nashville's work and goals].

Legislative Petition to revisit Medicaid Expansion in Tennessee

The **Tennessee Health Care Campaign**, a **LWV TN** partner organization, has initiated a statewide petition to urge the new state legislature to reconsider the **upside** of Medicaid expansion for Tennessee. Tennessee remains one of only 14 states that have not taken advantage of a **90% federal match** to expand health coverage to single adults or parents of adult children who earn **below** 138% of the federal poverty level. In Tennessee, 300,000 persons would qualify for such coverage—including persons working in service sector or seasonal employment, persons with disabilities or chronic illnesses, persons with caregiving responsibilities that limit their ability to work full-time, and tens of thousands of veterans. Please click [here](#) to review the petition, and share it with others.



Membership Update for January

By Membership Co-Chairs Reba Holmes and Tracy Smith



It is with great delight that we announce and welcome our new and returning members that joined the Nashville League of Women Voters. It is our privilege to welcome these individuals to the organization: **Jeanne Ballinger, Carole Bucy, Melissa Cooke, Barbara Devaney, Amy Kurland, and Irwin Venick**. Many thanks to these members and all our members for their support of the League's activities and programs.

Invite Your Friends to Join Anytime

We encourage you to invite your family members, friends, and colleagues. Membership allows you to share a year's worth of experiences promoting democracy, educating others in the community, participating in political discourse, registering new voters, just to name a few. **Plus**, the annual membership **includes** membership to the **national, state, and local** LWV organizations.

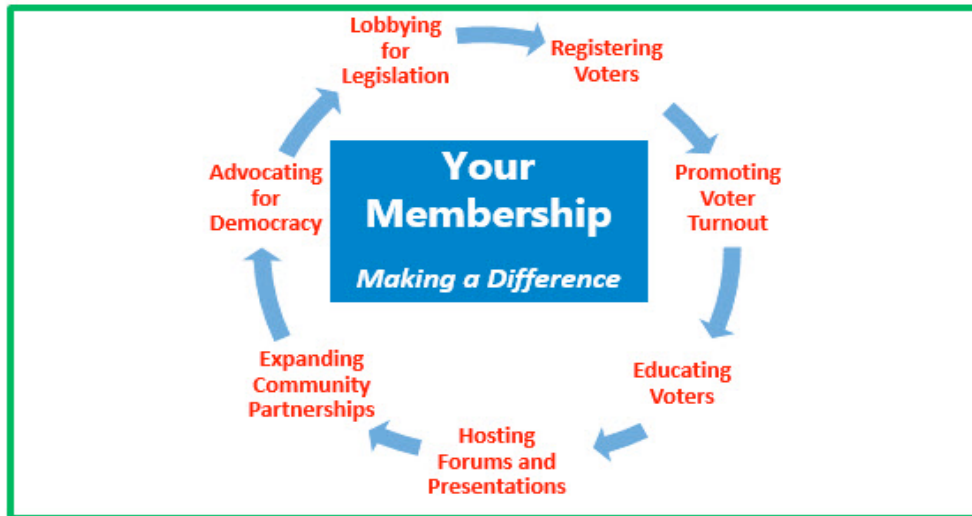
Details regarding the various support levels may be found on our website <http://lwvnashville.org/join/>.

Comments from members as to why they joined the League

“In order to function well, democracy requires well-informed, voting citizens. That means that each citizen, ideally, will know and assess issues of public policy on every level of government. I'm not, by myself, capable of obtaining and disseminating accurate information in the many areas which concern me; with the League of Women Voters, I can”

“As voter suppression increases with every election through discriminatory voter ID laws, partisan and racial gerrymandering, long voter lines, and voter purge activity. I wanted to get involved to allow everyone access to the voter ballot on a local, state and national level. Voting is the core of our democracy.”

“I like the fact the League is non-partisan”



Where Do We Go From Here? By Health Care Co-Chair Constance Caldwell

For several months, your health care observers have shared with you the **status** of Tennesseans as related to their health. We have highlighted the issues of **disparity** in **cost**, **accessibility**, **quality** and **quantity** of care. You have been made aware of the statistics for infant and maternal mortality, the continued rise in cancer deaths and the ever-worsening opioid crisis. So the question arises: **Where do we go from here?** We have a new state administration, newly elected legislators, and distractions at the Federal level which **hinder** local governments from being attentive to constituent needs. It then behooves each of us as individuals to do **what we can** on a personal level to make health improvements.

1. Make a **commitment** to live healthy, paying attention to diet, exercise, mental health and stress;
2. Get **involved** in local efforts to encourage others to do the same such as health classes in schools, churches, senior citizen centers, daycare centers and community citizens;
3. Make an **effort** to understand the issues that contribute to poor health: underemployment, food deserts, insufficient or unavailable transportation, poor budgeting, and lack of nutritional and health maintenance knowledge;
4. Become **acquainted** with community leaders (both elected and informal) to ascertain their focus on community needs;
5. Be **open** to local research efforts by medical schools, hospitals, and other community entities;
6. Stay **abreast** of legislative issues and actions;
7. **Hold** elected officials accountable.

We have to remember that we, too, have responsibilities to our communities.



Please let us know if there is a death in your family so that the membership may be aware of your loss.

Thank you!



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