



THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

PO Box 158369, Nashville TN 37215 | 629-777-5650

<http://www.LWVnashville.org>

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May 2019

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 6, 2019, 6:30 p.m. League of Women Voters of Nashville Annual Meeting. Home of Susan Mattson, 1733 Woodsong Drive, Brentwood, TN. **Mark your calendars and plan on coming!!!**

June 7, 2019, 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Hot Topics: Rank Choice Voting. Red Cross Center, 2201 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, 37209.

June 12, 2019, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Hot Topics: Rank Choice Voting. Green Hills Public Library, 3701 Benham Ave, Nashville, 37215.

June 18, 2019, 6:00 p.m. Candidate Forum for Metro Council, District 18, Martin Professional Development Center, 2400 Fairfax Avenue, Nashville, TN 37212, Sponsored by Hillsboro-West End Neighbors, Hillsboro-Belmont Neighbors, Belmont University, and Vanderbilt University.

July 5th and July 10th. Hot Topics takes a Summer Break.

President's Message



Thank you so much to all those who pledged to the **League of Woman Voters of Nashville** during the Big Payback on **May 2nd**. Your support makes a big difference.

Our next big event will be our **Annual Meeting** on **Thursday, June 6th** from **6:00 to 8:00 pm** at the home of **Susan Mattson, our Treasurer, 1723 Woodsong Drive, Brentwood, TN 37027**. Refreshments will be provided and we will have a brief business meeting to vote on the new officer slate and to celebrate the **Molly Todd Award** winner. Please plan to join us.

It will be a busy summer with the **August 1st** mayoral election that will introduce new paper trail voting machines. The **Voter Service Committee** will be registering voters and demonstrating the new voting machines. **Check** the website for events in your area. **Susan** is busy preparing **Vote411** to inform voters about all the candidates' concerns and positions on issues. The League plans to schedule events for voters to meet and interact with **Council Member at Large** candidates.

The **Tennessee State Legislature** has wrapped up their session. The **League of Women Voters of TN** has signed onto a lawsuit with the **ACLU** and other groups to challenge the new voter registration legislation that will **punish** groups that register voters and turn in incomplete or faulty forms. The **LWV** feels this is an attack on our democracy and an attempt to suppress voter participation. Voting should be made **easier** not more difficult and our freedoms should never be taken for granted.

In preparation for the **2020** centennial celebration of the passage in **Tennessee of the 19th Amendment**, League members are reading **The Woman's Hour** by Elaine Weiss about how women won the right to vote. We are organizing book groups to discuss this dramatic history. Please plan to take part.

Barbara Gay



The League of Women Voters Nashville
Invites you to the
Annual Membership Meeting
&
Reception

Thursday, June 6, 2019 – 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Home of Susan Mattson
1723 Woodsong Drive
Brentwood, Tennessee 37027

**Join League members for a very brief Annual Business Meeting
and enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres**

[Download Annual Membership Packet](#)

Please RSVP by calling 629-777-5650 or email LWVNash@gmail.com.



In Memoriam

We are saddened to learn of the passing of **Joyce Manyik**, a lifetime member of **LWV**. She was an active member in West Virginia and served as president of the Charleston League. Joyce **volunteered** for many years as a lobbyist in the state legislature and was gratified to be voted as the most trustworthy lobbyist by the West Virginia Legislature. Several years ago, she and her husband Bob moved to Nashville and enjoyed participating in our monthly programs. It is no wonder that her daughter, **Margie Parsley**, was inspired by her mother to take on key leadership roles in the Nashville and Tennessee LWV and continue the family tradition.



State Advocacy Update
By State Advocacy Chair Debby Gould

This was quite a legislative session and our volunteers were engaged as never before. Without a doubt the

most significant bill that impacts **LWV** directly was the passage of **SB971/HB1079**. It will create a chilling effect on voter registration drives in the state and our print and online communications with voters.

Despite our multiple **action** alerts, our **testimony** in committees, our **meetings** with legislators, our **letters** to the editor, and our **letters** to the governor, an amended version of the bill **passed** and was immediately signed into law by the governor. It is scheduled to go into effect **October 1, 2019**.

As a result, **LWVTN** along with four other plaintiffs impacted by this legislation, **Rock the Vote**, **American Muslim Advisory Committee**, **Mid-South Peace and Justice Center**, and **Spread the Vote**, filed a federal lawsuit against the state. We will be represented by **ACLU**, **Campaign Legal Center**, and **Fair Election Center**. See our full press release for more details.



Tennessee's 1919 Limited Suffrage Bill **By State Advocacy Chair Debby Gould**

It may come as a surprise to many of you that **1919** saw a **limited** suffrage bill pass the legislature allowing Tennessee women to vote in municipal elections. What better way to honor this event than to urge Nashville's women to vote in the Metro elections on **August 1**? We will be working hard this summer to encourage voter participation and to promote the use of our voters guide <http://www.vote411.org>.

Stay tuned as well for announcements of an **LWV** book club this summer to discuss **The Woman's Hour**. This book provides fresh insights into Tennessee's pivotal moment in Suffrage history. The author, **Elaine Weiss**, will be speaking at the downtown library auditorium on **August 18** and you won't want to miss it!



Legislation Requires Trauma-Enforced Disciplinary Policies Across the State **By Vice President Clare Sullivan**

A bill sponsored by **Representative Harold Love Jr.** (Davidson County) and **Senator Katrina Robinson** (Shelby County) was passed in the General Assembly this session. This bill requires each local education agency and public charter school in the state adopt a trauma-informed disciplinary policy. The bill directs the Tennessee Department of Education to develop guidance on trauma-informed disciplinary practices that local education agencies can use in their own policy development. Key principles intended by the legislation to be reflected in new disciplinary policies include the following:

- Balances accountability with an understanding of traumatic behavior;
- Teaches school and classroom rules while reinforcing that violent or abusive behavior is not allowed at school;
- Minimizes disruptions to education with an emphasis on positive behavioral supports and behavioral intervention plans;
- Creates consistent rules and consequences;
- Models respectful, nonviolent relationships.

The original version of the legislation specifically mentioned the need for an **Adverse Childhood**

Experiences assessment before suspending, expelling, or requiring a student to attend in-school suspension or alternative school. However, the specific reference to an ACEs assessment was eliminated from the final bill.

The **Nashville League of Women Voters** is a participant in ACE (All Children Excel) Nashville. To learn more about All Children Excel Nashville please go to <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/ACE-nashville>. To learn more about Adverse Childhood Experiences go to <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html>.



TennCare Block Grant Legislation Awaits Governor Lee’s Signature or Veto **By Vice President Clare Sullivan**

The controversial Block Grant legislation mandates the state to submit yet another TennCare waiver to the **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS)**. This waiver would permit CMS to provide a **fixed** amount of block grant funding for TennCare in return for allowing the state "flexibility" from the rules that apply to Medicaid programs in 49 other states. It is now sitting on Governor Lee's desk awaiting his signature.

While he is expected to sign it, calls to his office are still appropriate to alert him to the fact that **League of Women Voters** members do not see how **limiting** funding for a needs-based program will be in the state's best interest. If he chooses not to veto it *now*, we will join those advocates monitoring the resulting waiver proposal, and hold him to his promise to reject it *later* when it turns out it will *not* to be in the best interests of Tennessee children, families, elders and disabled who depend on TennCare for services.



Notes from May Hot Topic: Landfills and Quarries: Patterns of Environmental Injustice **By Debby Gould**

Dr. David Padgett, associate professor of geography at TSU, gave us a new and deeper understanding of environmental injustice for our May hot topics programs, “**Landfills and Quarries: Patterns of Environmental Injustice**”. Using geographic and health data from Nashville and middle Tennessee, he illustrated the ways that urban eyesores disproportionately impacted African American communities and how their rehabilitation and cleanup as brown fields has created gentrified pockets of development that often don’t enhance the lives of residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. He also highlighted the lack of recycling centers in areas of the city such as the area near TSU as another inequitable distribution of community resources that impacts the North Nashville community.



The League of Women Voters of Nashville

Presents

Hot Topics: Rank Order Voting
Presented by Rank Order Tennessee

First Friday Hot Topics at Lunchtime

Friday, June 7, 2019
11:30 am to 1:00 pm

New Location!!!!

Red Cross Center

2201 Charlotte Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209

Bring Your Own Lunch. Program begins promptly at noon.

&

Second Wednesday Evening Encore

Wednesday, June 12, 2019

6:00 to 7:00 pm

Green Hills Public Library Community Room

3701 Benham Avenue, Nashville 37215

Free and open to the public. No reservations needed.

Parking at both locations is Easy & Free!

For additional information, contact LWVNash@gmail.com



Voter Services Update for May 2019

By Voter Services Chairs Hazel Thornton and Perry MacDonald

After a deeply dispiriting session of the **Tennessee Legislature**, we turned our attention to the Davidson County Election Commission (DCEC) and to the opportunities we have for voter education and registration this summer. DCEC has significant challenges, both internally and externally, as it prepares to utilize **new** voting machines for the **August 1** election. With no funding available for education and with trained poll workers stretched thinly throughout the county, Commissioners and Administrator **Jeff Roberts** are understandably concerned about how smoothly the **August 1** election will run. Thanks to a longstanding relationship with **LWVN**, particularly with Voter Services stalwart **Debby Gould**, DCEC has agreed to allow us to take a few of the new machines into community meetings for demonstration and education purposes.

At its May meeting, **DCEC** commissioners and staff spent considerable time discussing its response to a request from Metro Council for feedback on the proposed amendment to the **Metro Charter** concerning **rank choice voting**. As currently drafted, the **Amendment** would **limit** the rank choice voting to the top 5 candidates. It would be implemented in **2023**. With very little hard data available on the experience of rank choice voting (Maine is the only state to have implemented it statewide) it seems that the only concurrence on the issue is **"There are a lot of unanswered questions."**

We are beginning to receive requests for voter registration events, so look for our invitations to join us in this most **fundamental** of our efforts. Community meetings for the At-Large Metro Council candidates are also under discussion. Stay tuned!

Finally, from one Co-Chair to the other: **Hazel**, we **commend** and **thank you** for your years of contribution to **LWVN** and to the **State League** on behalf of **Voter Services**. Your quiet dedication and commitment have contributed significantly to the League's presence and participation at many levels. Best wishes in your new North Carolina home!



Update on Environment Bills at the General Assembly By Environment Chair Barbara Futter

It has been a wild crazy session this year. But that doesn't mean there isn't good news! The good environmental news is that there were **no** significant or devastating **defeats!** Working with our partner **Tennessee Conservation Voters (TCV)**, **LWV** members became informed and very active. Here are things to celebrate.

Utility Round Up programs: Round up programs by local utility companies help low-income residents get weatherization and energy efficiency aid and other positive benefits. Opt-out programs are a step toward responsible energy policy. The sponsor tried to outlaw these programs even if they were locally supported. Thanks to widespread concerns from citizens and utilities, the bill that became law allowed existing programs to continue. But, they must notify customers in writing that they have the option of choosing not to participate. New programs may be started up until December 31, 2020. After this date, programs will only enroll customers who choose to participate in the round up programs. In **January, 2019**, Nashville's Metro Council decided **not** to have an opt in program, but with this amended bill Metro could still pass opt out. At present, you can choose to participate if you want.

Plastics!! Local governments may not regulate plastics or other one-time use items. A last-minute surprise amendment to a general boundary bill made it **illegal** for cities to regulate, prohibit or charge fees for single-use pollutants (aka plastics.) We **opposed** this bill since it would preempt local communities from instituting any controls on single use plastic containers and bags. We didn't like the state's over reach into local communities decisions. We will continue to be active on this issue and find areas to advocate for reduce plastic use. (Talk to stores where we shop, to companies that produce items and to our schools too.)

Here are some good results!!

Open TVA board meetings: Please thank **Senator Yager** for sponsoring a resolution that asks Congress to **require** all board committee meetings of the **TVA Board of Directors** to be open to the public. We support open government and this was a strong step.

Lastly, **Senator Yarbrow** and new **Representative Freeman** showed strong leadership in their bill to create an advisory task force on **Community Resilience**. This task force would review our state's response to extreme weather and natural disasters to assess Tennessee's vulnerabilities. The bill was sent to TACIR (the state agency that researches and studies intergovernmental issues) to be studied in more detail. We will continue to monitor this important bill, (which may well be acted upon next year.)

As you can see, there was not as much damage as we feared. Thank you for your diligence and hard work. We partner very closely with **TCV** to monitor bills so that our members can be informed and active in legislative work. Enjoy the environment and the outdoors this summer!!



Metro Renewable Energy Bills Need Your Support and Action! By Environment Chair Barbara Futter

As environment policy person for the Nashville chapter of the League, I want to tell you about **three**

important local bills pending before our Metro Council. Our state and federal governments are not likely to move forward right away in significant ways. But surely Metro can and will.

To learn more about the bills, google them by bill number and contact your council person and At Large members. **Third** vote will be May 28.

METRO RENEWABLE ENERGY PORTFOLIO - 100% CARBON FREE BY 2041

[Bill BL2019-1600](#)

METRO SUSTAINABLE BUILDING STANDARDS

[Bill BL2019-1599](#)

METRO FLEET ELECTRIFICATION PROGRAM - ZERO EMISSIONS BY 2050

[Bill BL2019-1598](#)



Vouchers in Tennessee

By Education Chair Lara Webb

Late in April, the **General Assembly** passed **HB 939/SB 795** paving the way for a voucher program in Tennessee that applies **only** to Davidson and Shelby Counties. There is still much that seems up in the air about the bill, and lawsuits are forthcoming. As of the writing of this newsletter, the law has not been sent to Governor Lee. There is a federal investigation around this legislation reportedly about whether or not campaign donations were promised for “Yes” votes.

One of the things that we can do as LWVN members can do is to **pay** attention to how the program is implemented. We will continue to monitor and report findings. For further reading on vouchers, here are some links:

<https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2019/05/08/the-fine-print-five-important-things-to-know-about-tennessees-final-voucher-legislation/>

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/politics/2019/05/02/tennessee-school-vouchers-coming-nashville-memphis-things-know/3643477002/>



Renew Your Membership and Invite Others to Join LWV Nashville

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: **Teena Cohen, Susan Mattson, and Lisa Mingrone.**

Many thanks to these members and all our members for their support of the League's activities and programs.

Starting soon...

We will begin our annual membership in **June**. Be on the lookout for a letter via email or USPS. More details to come.

Remember that memberships make great birthday, graduation, and anniversary gifts. 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

"I am planning to renew my membership during the annual drive because our democrat process is in jeopardy. Throughout all levels of government, our liberties are being threatened; we must protect our rights and fight to ensure our elections are free, fair, and accessible to all."



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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