



# THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville

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

<http://www.LWVnashville.org>

Volume 73, No. 9

February 2020

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**February 17, 2020, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Advocacy Committee of LWVTN.** Tennessee Disability Coalition, 955 Woodland Street, Nashville, TN 37206.

**February 18 to 21st, 2020, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Nashville Ballet Performance of 72 Steps.** TPAC. *Open to Tennessee Middle School Students only.*

**February 19, 2020, 7:00 p.m. Walk the Talk on Gun Violence: A conversation about Safety Rights and Legislation.** The Temple, 5016 Harding Road, Nashville 37205. Sponsored by The Temple.

**February 19, 2020. Early Voting for the Presidential Preference Primary and County Primary, Berry Hill Municipal Elections.** All Locations. Check <http://www.nashville.gov/Election-Commission.aspx> for times and locations. For information about candidates, see <http://www.Vote411.org>

**February 27, 2020, 3:00 to 4:30 p.m. Panel Discussion: Music to Mobilization in a Racial Justice Movement.** YWCA Nashville and Middle Tennessee. *Register here:* <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/91205208233>

**February 29, 2020. LWV Voter Registration.** Financial Empowerment Center, 302 Foster Street, Nashville, TN 37207.

**March 2, 2020, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Advocacy Committee of LWVTN.** Tennessee Disability Coalition, 955 Woodland Street, Nashville, TN 37206.

**March 3, 2020. Presidential Preference Primary and County Primary, Berry Hill Municipal Elections.** Check <http://www.nashville.gov/Election-Commission.aspx> for times and locations. For information about candidates, see <http://www.Vote411.org>

**March 6, 2020, 12 Noon. Hot Topics: Conversations with Davidson County State Senators and Representatives.** Senator Brenda Gilmore, Senator Jeff Yarbro, and Representative Vincent Dixie. **Different Location!!!** Swett's Restaurant, 2725 Clifton Avenue, Nashville, TN 37209. **Lunch available for purchase. Please arrive early!!!**

**March 11, 2020, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. Hot Topics Encore: Conversations with Davidson County State Senators and Representatives.** Representative Bob Freeman and Representative Bo Mitchell. Green Hills Library, 3701 Benham Ave., Nashville, 37215.

**March 16, 2020, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Advocacy Committee of LWVTN.** Tennessee Disability Coalition, 955 Woodland Street, Nashville, TN 37206.

**March 18, 2020, 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. Building Civic Engagement in Our Communities: The Work of the League of Women Voters.** Brentwood Library, 8109 Concord Road. Brentwood, 37027.

**March 26, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Lunch and Learn: Disenfranchisement, Voter Restoration and a Path Toward Racial Justice.** YWCA, 1608 Woodmont Blvd. Nashville, 37215. Sponsored by the YWCA. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/91226120783>.

**March 30, 2020, 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Advocacy Committee of LWVTN.** Tennessee Disability Coalition, 955 Woodland Street, Nashville, TN 37206.

**April 14, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: Women in the Movement: A Multigenerational Conversation about Nashville Rights and Racial Justice Movements.** YWCA, 1608 Woodmont Blvd. Nashville, 37215. Sponsored by the YWCA. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/91226120783>

**April 22, 2020. Stand Against Racism Community Rally.** Public Square Park, Union Street & 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. N., Nashville 37423. Sponsored by YWCA.

**May 6, 2020. The Big Payback.** A Community Day of giving in support of area non-profits. [www.thebigpayback.org](http://www.thebigpayback.org).

**May 15, 2020. Anniversary Celebrations of League of Women Voters.** Rotunda of State Capitol, 600 Dr. M.L.K. Jr. Blvd. Nashville, 37243. **Please save the date and attend this special event!!**

**May 23, 2020. “We Count: First Time Voters” Exhibit.** Frist Art Museum, 919 Broadway, Nashville, 37203.



## President's Message



It is time to vote again! **Early voting** has started and runs through **February 25th** and **Election Day** is on **Tuesday, March 3rd**. Please remind your family and friends to vote. Tennessee is toward the bottom in voter turnout. **Madeline Garr, Debby Gould, Kristin Hightower**, and **I** participated in Vice Mayor Jim Shulman's **Special Committee on Voter Turnout** chaired by Councilwoman **Ginny Welsch**. The Committee met from November through January to determine why voter turnout is low in Nashville and to make recommendations that can be implemented by the Metro Nashville Government to **remove** barriers and **improve** voter participation in local elections.

We looked at research and also conducted field surveys at the Farmer's Market with 327 individuals about their attitudes toward voting and their voting history. There are **both psychological** and **structural** barriers keeping people from going to the polls. These barriers include **lack of civics education** and **understanding** the importance of voting, **lack of communication** about elections and **knowledge** about the government positions and candidates. There is **confusion** about **polling precincts and locations**. Tennessee has numerous **restrictive voting laws** requiring **IDs**, restrictive voter registration **deadlines**, requirement to vote the first time in person, and very demanding laws to restore voting rights for ex-felons. The **LWVTN** is involved in a lawsuit against the Secretary of State to remove the law passed last year that would penalize groups that register voters and turn in incorrect or incomplete registration forms. This case will **not** be heard until **February 2021** so these harsh threats will not apply to this election.

Many of the voting barriers in Nashville will have to be solved at the **state** level. However, the committee recommended some steps that the **Davidson County Election Commission** can take to improve voter turnout:

- Establish a precinct on TN State University's campus;
- Make early voting locations the same as election day precincts;
- Allow early voting on Sundays.

**Voting Centers** were successful in Rutherford County and our Election Committee could apply to the state to establish them here. **Vote411** could be included in the sample ballot sent out to guide voters to more candidate information. More information could be made available on civics education. Other suggestions would **require** a Charter Amendment to coordinate local and national elections, to establish rank choice voting, or to change the threshold for winning races to eliminate runoffs.

Several **LWVN** members participated in a town hall filming by Nashville Public Television. **Marian Ott, LWVTN President, Debby Gould, LWVTN Advocacy Chair**, and **Madeline Garr, LWVN Co-President** spoke eloquently about voting issues. The program will be aired on **Wednesday, February 26th at 7:00 pm**.

Thank you to **Susan Mattson** for preparing our **Vote411** website listing information and candidates for the current election. All the candidates who met the **National League criteria** were included. Please **share** widely and **vote!**

**Barbara Gay**



### **Poll-Watching Opportunity** By State Advocacy Co-Chair **Debby Gould**

Tennessee ranks near the bottom in the nation in its **rates** of voter participation and, for those individuals with physical disabilities, participation is almost **12% lower** than the general population. **LWVTN** is encouraging members to be part of a statewide poll-watching project of **Disability Rights Tennessee**, a non-profit legal services organization that protects the rights of Tennesseans with disabilities. [www.disabilityrightstn.org](http://www.disabilityrightstn.org)

With an easy-to-use phone app, volunteers will be able to **evaluate** accessibility at individual polling sites during the **March 2020** primary and report them to **Disability Rights Tennessee**. This information will be aggregated and shared with county election commissions so that they can remedy problems in preparation for the **November** presidential elections. Sign up to volunteer at [https://disabilityrightstn.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_b1rnhbU1p5Ijrlb](https://disabilityrightstn.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1rnhbU1p5Ijrlb)



### **February Hot Topics: Metro Nashville Schools: Opportunities and Challenges** By Co-Vice President **Ethel Detch**

Metro School Board members, **Amy Frogge** and **Freda Player-Peters** shared their perspectives about Nashville's schools at two February "Hot Topic" meetings. Ms. Frogge, who represents **District 9** and is the **Board's Vice Chair**, emphasized the Board's **three** keys to success for Metro Schools: **Investment, Equity, and Support**.

Because Nashville's schools have a higher concentration of children whose first language is not English, as well as children who live in poverty, Nashville's schools face **challenges** that other school systems do not. At the same time, because Nashville (and Tennessee's other large cities) have a wealthier tax base than suburban and rural counties, Davidson County receives **less** state school funding through the state's funding formula, the **Basic Education Program, (BEP)**. State law also **requires** that Metro fund its **28 charter schools and the Achievement School District schools** "off the top," often leaving the traditional schools suffering **cuts**. Ms. Frogge noted that where school funding is concerned, equity is **not** the same as equality—some children require **more** resources than others to educate. The school board, however, is committed to giving **all** children what they need.

Ms. Frogge briefly discussed the recent lawsuit that Metro Nashville and Memphis have filed against the state in protest of last year's voucher legislation, affecting only those two school systems. Allowing vouchers will siphon off **even more funds** from traditional public schools.

She noted that in addition to these challenges, many citizens don't want to fully embrace public schools because they're not personally affected, or don't understand how important public education is to communities.

**Freda Player-Peters** represents **District 7** and is the school board's newest member, having been appointed by the Metro Council to fill a vacant seat. She noted that for the first time, the school board members are all women. She has been pleasantly surprised to find out that the board is not as divisive as the media portrays it.

Ms. Player-Peters' has worked previously on the **Mayor and Council side of Metro Government** and she shared some of her observations from that perspective. The schools must **compete** with all of the city's other interests, such as paying down debt service and providing police and fire protection. In addition, the city's rapid growth is creating pressure on the school system's budget. The Metro School System actually has 1,000 **more** employees than the rest of Metro Government and must deal with the entire 600 square mile county area. Most people don't think about that.

Ms. Frogge also noted that there will be a **Rally for School Funding** on the War Memorial Plaza on March 16<sup>th</sup>.

This First Friday "Hot Topic" was streamed on **Facebook Live**. To watch the entire meeting, please go to [https://www.facebook.com/pg/LWVNashville/videos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/LWVNashville/videos/?ref=page_internal)



## **Expanded Programming in Williamson County** By State Advocacy Co-Chair **Debby Gould**

In response to interest from new **LWV members** from **Williamson County**, we are thrilled to be expanding our **monthly** program offerings. **LWV** will host a series of topical programs at **Brentwood Public Library** on the **third Wednesday** of every month at **1 p.m.**

The first program of **March 18<sup>th</sup>** will provide an overview of the programs that **LWV** is currently undertaking as well as description of volunteer opportunities for members. **Deb Fisher**, Executive Director for the **Tennessee Coalition on Open Government**, will speak **Wednesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>**.

All programs in the series are **free** and **open** to the public. For more information or to suggest future topics of interest to the community, contact **Bette Holmes**, [eholmes@comcast.net](mailto:eholmes@comcast.net).



## **March Hot Topics Features Davidson County Legislators** By Co-Vice President **Ethel Detch**

For the **March "Hot Topics"** several of Davidson County's state senators and representatives will address the League. On Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, **Senator Brenda Gilmore**, **Senator Jeff**

**Yarbro, and Representative Vincent Dixie** will join us at **Swett’s Restaurant, 2725 Clifton Avenue, Nashville. (PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF LOCATION)**. Speakers will start promptly at 12:00 noon, but lunch will be **available** for purchase before the meeting. **So** come early, go through the line for some delicious Southern cooking, and enjoy conversation with your state legislators.

Our **second** monthly meeting will feature two **different** legislators—it’s **not** an “encore” in March. On Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m., **Representatives Bob Freeman and Representative Bo Mitchell** will address attendees at the Green Hills Public Library, 3701 Benham Avenue, Nashville, TN 37215.

Can’t decide which meeting to attend? We’d love to see you at both. Meetings are open to the public.



## **The League of Women Voters of Nashville**

*Presents*

### **Conversations with Davidson County State Senators and Representatives**

**Friday, March 6, 2020, 12 noon**

**Senator Brenda Gilmore, Senator Jeff Yarbro, and  
Representative Vincent Dixie**

**DIFFERENT LOCATION**

**Swett’s Restaurant**

**2725 Clifton Avenue, Nashville, 37209**

**Lunch available for purchase. Please arrive early.**

**&**

**Second Wednesday Evening**

**Representative Bob Freeman and Representative Bo Mitchell**

**Wednesday, March 11, 2020**

**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.**

*For additional information, contact [LWVNash@gmail.com](mailto:LWVNash@gmail.com)*





## February Voter Services Update

By Voter Services Co-Chairs Kristin Hightower and Perry MacDonald

We have observed something like "**Groundhog Syndrome**" over this past month, with organizations and individuals coming up to the '**winter light**' and realizing that deadlines were approaching and elections appearing on calendars. **Time to get going!** We have been responding to requests for guidance from individuals whose churches, neighbors, and condo associations would like to "*do something*" to assist with voter registration and education. These are not the usual venues for us, but we are attempting to broaden our scope and meet these requests as we can.

Down at **NES** on Church Street, **Maureen Organ** and her team of stalwart volunteers finished up their first 3-week '**run**' in strong form, with 14 registrations and almost as many voter education encounters. This group has taken special interest in encouraging those who face the significant hurdles in place for citizens whose voting rights were taken away as a result of incarceration. Our ongoing thanks go to Maureen and her steadfast volunteers.

Across town at **Nashville State Community College** we provided our expertise and assistance to students on the evenings of **January 28, 29 and 30**. With good support from the Office of Student Services and the Student Government Association, we had lively and productive interactions with students and staff during these sessions. Increasingly, we find that people everywhere are in need of current, correct information. The pervasive impact of voter suppression and misinformation is clear.

On **February 14**, we celebrated our **100th LWV Anniversary** and were warmly welcomed by **Congregation Micah** to its weekly Friday evening Shabbat service. The theme for the evening was "**Voting**," with Congressman Jim Cooper speaking during the service. Our table with materials was right at the entrance, allowing opportunity to engage both congregants and staff. A delightful evening!

At the end of this month, we'll return to the **Taxathon**, offering registration and voter education to those getting their taxes done at the **Financial Empowerment Center**. In other words, full citizenship assistance! We also plan to set up registration for the **March 24 NASW Day on the Hill**. Additionally, we are also pleased to have been invited by the **YWCA** to work with Equity Alliance on voter registration during its **Stand Against Racism** community rally on **April 22**. Details will follow an organizational meeting.

We have materials and will travel. All are welcome to join us on our journey.



## Vote 411.org Ready for March 3<sup>rd</sup> Election

By Treasurer and Vote 411 Coordinator Susan Mattson

**Are you ready to vote in the March 3 Presidential and local primary elections?** Check out the **LWV non-partisan** [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) to learn more about the candidates and spread the word to others in Nashville.

**The League of Women Voters** has again compiled responses from candidates to a series of questions. Their **unedited** responses are posted so that voters can assess their choices and create their own personalized ballot. [www.VOTE411.org](http://www.VOTE411.org) also provides information on early voting, polling place locations, and sample ballots.

Information on the March 3 races in Davidson County include:

- U.S. Presidential Democratic Primary\*
- Nashville Davidson County Trustee
- Nashville Davidson County Property Assessor
- Nashville Davidson County Criminal Court Judge, Div. IV (unexpired term)
- Nashville Davidson County Chancery Court, Part I (unexpired term)
- Early voting is February 12 through February 25. Election day voting is March 3, 2020.

Please share [www.VOTE411](http://www.VOTE411.org) with others to help them make informed decisions about elected officials and as always, **help get out the VOTE!**

\* **LWVUS** did not include the candidates in the **U.S. Presidential Republican Primary** since its **criteria** for inclusion were not met by the candidates.



## **Upcoming Important Meetings Regarding the Budget** **By Metro Government Chair Winnie Forrester**

Please make plans to attend two separate important **county-wide community meetings** that will be held in various parts of the city during **February and March 2020**. One will **focus** on the upcoming **Metro Nashville city budget** and the other will **present** the **Metro Nashville Public Schools budget**. Both are critical to the future of our city and schools, a key focus for the **League of Women Voters Nashville**.

### **COUNTY-WIDE METRO BUDGET MEETINGS**

As part of the process, Budget Committee **Bob Mendes** and Budget Vice Chair **Kyonzte' Toombs** will conduct six community budget meetings around the county.

The idea behind these meetings is to give the public an opportunity to see and hear the budget information that the Council has seen and heard **over the last 90-days**. During that time, the Council heard from the Comptroller for the State of Tennessee and Metro Finance Director **Keven Crumbo** about the **size and scope** of the city's budget problems and the types of



solutions that are available. They want to make sure that the public has this same information and an opportunity to talk about it before **Mayor Cooper** presents his budget on **March 31, 2020**.

**Tuesday, February 25, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Northwest Family YMCA – 3700 Ashland City Highway, Nashville, 37218**

**Wednesday, February 26, 2020. 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.**  
**Smith Springs Community Center – 2801 Smith Springs Road, Nashville, 37217**

**Wednesday, March 4, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Studio 615 – 272 Broadmoor Drive, Nashville, 37207**

**Monday, March 9, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Church of Christ in Green Hills – 3805 Granny White Pike, Nashville, 37204**

**Tuesday, March 10, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Nashville Public Library Bellevue Branch – 720 Baugh Road, Nashville, 37221**

**Thursday, March 12, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Nashville Public Library Hermitage Branch – 720 Baugh Road, Nashville, 37076**

## **METRO NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLANS SERIES OF COMMUNITY BUDGET MEETINGS**

As the district prepares a budget proposal for the Board of Education, **Mayor John Cooper, Metro Council, and MNPS** will hold a series of Community budget meetings throughout the city.

The series of meetings will give parents, families, and staff the opportunity to learn more about the district's budget process and its priorities for **the next fiscal year**, which starts July 1. Interim Director of Schools **Dr. Adrienne Battle** will present her operating budget proposal on February 11. Board members will **discuss** this proposal on February 25 and vote on **March 10** before sending the plan to **Mayor Cooper**.

The community budget meetings are scheduled to take place within the four MNPS quadrants. **All** meetings are open to the public.

**Monday, February 17, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**Cane Ridge High School**

**Monday, February 24, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.**  
**McGavock High School**

Wednesday, February 26, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.  
Hillwood High School

Thursday, February 27, 2020. 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.  
I.T. Creswell Middle School



## Update on Medicaid Expansion Efforts By Health Care Co-Chair Clare Sullivan

LWVTN has been an advocate for Tennessee to expand its Medicaid program to low-income adults who do not have minor children since that became an option for states under the **Affordable Care Act (ACA)** in 2014. The ACA provided states with 100% of the costs of expansion for the first three years, and then gradually reduced the federal match over five years to **90%**. That 90% match is maintained going forward. [*The current federal match rate for Tennessee's "standard" Medicaid population is 65%*]. It is estimated that Tennessee **forfeits** over *\$1.4 billion in our taxpayer dollars each year*, funds that could be invested in the health of low-income Tennesseans.

LWVTN also supported Governor Haslam's **modified** expansion proposal—*Insure Tennessee*--which was introduced in 2015. *Insure Tennessee* created both a *Volunteer Plan*, that would enable the state to use Medicaid expansion funds to help low-income workers pay for coverage offered through their employers, and a *Healthy Incentives Plan* that would allow persons not offered work-related coverage or those unemployed to enroll in a TennCare MCO plan and to earn credits through healthy lifestyle choices to help afford the modest cost-sharing measures (limited premium contributions and co-pays) that would be required as part of this proposal. *Insure Tennessee* **never** made it out of committees in the General Assembly that year, and although Medicaid expansion bills have been proposed every year since, none have come to a full vote in the General Assembly.

What is different in this session is that **a bill to reintroduce *Insure Tennessee* has been sponsored by Republican lawmakers**. The Senate sponsor **Dr. Richard Briggs** has been one of the few Republicans to be an ongoing supporter of expansion. The Republican House sponsor, **Representative Ron Travis** has only recently changed his position.

In order to move forward, these bills will need additional co-sponsors and a strong network of supporters. The **LWV-Nashville** will work in **coalition** with other groups to move this bill forward. If you are interested in being part of this effort, please contact health committee co-chair Clare Sullivan at [clare.d.sullivan@gmail.com](mailto:clare.d.sullivan@gmail.com).

*Speaking of Medicaid....Update on Work Requirements for Medicaid Recipients*

**Background.** To date, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) has approved **10 states** that requested a waiver to impose work requirements on adults who became eligible for Medicaid through **Affordable Care Act's** expansion of Medicaid. **Arkansas** was the first state to implement work requirements, which required any "able-bodied adult" in the expansion population to either find employment or eligible volunteer work and to report their hours monthly to the state. Within the first four months of implementation, **18,000 Arkansans**, including those who were working but could not meet the reporting requirements, **lost** coverage. **The National Health Law Program, Legal Aid of Arkansas, the Southern Poverty Law Center**, and a private law firm **sued** CMS in the District of Columbia federal district court over Arkansas' program on the basis that it ran **counter to the purpose** of the Medicaid program, which is to provide **health coverage** to low income families, children and adults and persons with disabilities. There were similar legal challenges in other states as well, so other states put implementation of their work requirement programs **on hold** until these challenges are resolved in court.

The lower court **blocked** Arkansas from further implementation of the work requirement, and this decision was appealed by the Trump administration. The 3-judge panel of the **Federal Appeals Court** for the District of Columbia, composed of judges appointed by **both** Republican and Democratic administrations, has just unanimously upheld the DC District Court ruling. It is not yet known whether the administration will appeal this ruling to the Supreme Court.

**Impact on Tennessee work requirement waiver request.** Although Tennessee has not yet expanded Medicaid, the General Assembly mandated that Tennessee become one of the first states to request CMS to approve work or community engagement requirements for its current **non-disabled Medicaid-eligible adults who are caregivers for minor children**. Given the rationale for the courts' decisions to overturn work requirements—that work requirements are counter to the primary, original purpose of Medicaid which is to provide health coverage to low income children, families, aged, and disabled persons-- it is **unlikely** that approval for TennCare's proposal will be forthcoming unless and until the Supreme Court would overrule the Appeals Court decision.

**CMS proposes drastic changes to state Medicaid financing options.** CMS has **also** proposed changes to the way that states are allowed to raise funding for their "match" of federal funds [in Tennessee, the state contributes 35% to the cost of TennCare, and the federal government covers the remaining 65%. If we were to expand Medicaid as discussed above, our state would also be responsible for 10% of the additional cost]. Currently, the state relies heavily on healthcare facility "assessments". For example, a hospital that serves a mix of Medicare, Medicaid, privately insured, ACA-insured, and self-pay patients is responsible for an assessment currently capped at 6% of net revenue that is generated by this mix of private and public dollars. If the hospital sees a high proportion of Medicaid patients, which typically reimburses at rates below Medicare and well below private insurance, it may receive additional funds in the form of disproportionate share payments or other supplemental payments. States would also have to share with CMS details about how supplemental payments are allocated in an effort to develop uniform federal guidelines. This new proposal would **restrict** state match funds to public

dollars, which would drastically **undermine** the current financing infrastructure in Tennessee (which pioneered this assessment system) and across the nation. There has been considerable pushback from states about this, but if CMS moves ahead it could mean either a larger share of the state budget to support TennCare or drastic cuts in TennCare services.



## **Educational Savings Account Update**

**By Education Chair Lara Webb**

Last year, the Tennessee General Assembly passed **Educational Savings Account (ESA)** legislation that created a voucher program for **Davidson** and **Shelby** Counties. The **LWV** opposed this legislation.

The legislation was passed in a questionable manner as then **Speaker Glen Casada** left the vote open to pressure legislators to change their vote. The legislation has been in the news again this time because of a **no-bid** contract given to a vendor, **ClassWallet**, to oversee the program. Legislators on both sides of the aisle are concerned about this contract because ClassWallet will be paid \$1.25 million dollars a year, which is twice the amount that the legislature had apportioned for overseeing the ESA program launch.

Currently the contract is for two years with an option to extend it for 3 more years. The launch of ESA's was pushed up a year by **Governor Lee** from **2021-2022** to **2020-2021**. The **TN Department of Education** is scrambling to meet the deadline for launch for the school year of 2020-2021, which is another concern of legislators.

During the **State of the State** Governor Lee promised money for teacher pay raises. Legislators are concerned that the money for the raises is being diverted to cover the costs of the contract. The Department of Education will be back in front of the education committee on **February 19** to answer more questions about the ClassWallet contract.

To keep up to date on education across the state, consider subscribing to [Chalkbeat.org](https://chalkbeat.org) for their free daily education newsletter. Click the link below to read more about committee hearings about the ESA no-bid contract:

[https://chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2020/02/12/no-bid-voucher-contract-with-classwallet-unleashes-ire-of-tennessee-gop-lawmakers/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=cb\\_bureau\\_tn](https://chalkbeat.org/posts/tn/2020/02/12/no-bid-voucher-contract-with-classwallet-unleashes-ire-of-tennessee-gop-lawmakers/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=cb_bureau_tn)



## **Environmental Updates**

**By Environment Chair Barbara Futter**

**Advocate for a bill to prevent dumping of Used Tires!**

Have you ever been hiking somewhere or walking along a creek as it meanders along the bank and enjoyed the beauty of nature but then seen an old tire lying in the river or beneath a tree? Or maybe you've seen an old tire by the side of the road? The **General Assembly**, courtesy of **Senator Steve Dickerson**, is trying to do something about it. He needs our help. Please consider contacting members of the **Senate Energy, Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee**. Urge them to vote **YES** on [SB1801](#) (Dickerson and Lundberg), which will be a huge step forward in the recycling of used tires.

This bill will provide strong incentives for tire dealers and others to recycle. It follows the recommendations of a recent and thorough report from **TACIR (Tennessee Advisory Council on Intergovernmental Relations)** on this subject. This bill gives advocates a chance to be **for** something. Senator Dickerson's Amendment is not on the bill yet. However, the bill follows the TACIR report's recommendations. Go to [www.capitol.tn.gov](http://www.capitol.tn.gov) and click in the box to search for bills. **SB1801**.

You can also read the very important TACIR report at [TN.gov/tacir](http://TN.gov/tacir) publications by clicking on the mustard colored bar at the top that states: *New TACIR Report offers Recommendations on Preventing and Cleaning up illegal Tire dumps in Tennessee*. If you need to find your senator or house representative, go to: [capitol.tn.gov](http://capitol.tn.gov) to click on the menu bars at top right and click on **Find My Legislator** then scroll down until you see *Find My Legislator*. The website will give you your representatives' phone number and email. Put them in your contacts since to be a regular voice for Tennessee's environment.

## Conservation 2020 Priorities

The **League of Women Voters Nashville and Tennessee** is a member group of **Tennessee Conservation Voters**. Each year TCV gets together representatives of environmental groups to develop legislative plans. Here's this year's plan:

- Improve our ability to recycle used tires (which now often end up dumped illegally and often in our waterways);
- Reduce plastics in our waterways and landfills;
- Ban grocery stores from providing plastic bags;
- Responsibly regulate billboards;
- Keep lead out of the water in our schools;
- Protect existing revenues and add to dedicated revenues to be used to protect and conserve forests, fish, wildlife habitats, and state and local parks; conserve lands that protect drinking water sources and the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams; and to provide opportunities for our children and families to play and enjoy the outdoors.

This year some of the bills we **oppose** include:

- Legislation to **terminate** the Department of Environment and Conservation;

- Legislation to rush through a misguided and ultra-political process of **promoting** new coal mines in Tennessee;
- Legislation to establish an unrealistic, hurried deadline for issuing water permits -- allowing **discharges** into our waters automatically if unrealistically short time limits are not met.

## Conservation Education Day at the General Assembly

Come participate on *Environment on the Hill* day and talk to your legislators about the environment! **Conservation Education Day** is on **February 19, 2020** from 10-4. Contact **Betsy Garber** to sign up at [garberb@hotmail.com](mailto:garberb@hotmail.com). On **Tuesday, February 18, 2020** from **6 to 8:30 p.m.**, **Stewart Clifton** will do a training which is not required but helpful. This will be held at **Glendale Baptist Church, 1021 Glendale Lane Nashville, TN 37204**.



## February Membership Update

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: **Angela and Craig Becker and Kittler Zibart**.

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

## Join the League and Celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary

As we prepare to celebrate the **100th anniversary** of the right of women to vote and the 100th anniversary of the **League of Women Voters**, consider inviting your friends and family members to join. They can enjoy both historical events and the various celebrations all year long.

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**

*One of the best decisions I've made was joining the League of Women Voters. I believe it to be the most effective grassroots organization. In the current political climate, it is crucial to have a group that advances our democratic policies and civil discourse. I like the consensus to position process.*

### **Question from membership**

**Question:** *In the state of Tennessee, when you register to vote, are you asked about your party affiliation?*

**Response:** *In Tennessee, it is not necessary to declare your party affiliation when you register to vote. When you vote in the presidential primary, you will be asked by the election officer if you want a Democratic or a Republican ballot. The party preference can be changed in future primaries if you wish.*



### **2019-2020 LWVN Board of Directors**

President: **Barbara Gay and Madeline Garr**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: **Ethel Detch and Carole Kenner**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: **Clare Sullivan**

Secretary: **Elise Lamar**

Treasurer **Susan Mattson**

### **Portfolio Chairs**

Communications: **Harriet Vaughan-Wallace and Kieran Bailey**

Community Connections: **Sabina Mohyuddin and Tamanna Qureshi**

Education: **Lara Webb**

Environment: **Barbara Futter**

Fundraising: **Cindee Gold and Debby Gould**

Health Care: **Constance Caldwell and Clare Sullivan**

Membership: **Reba Holmes and Tracy Smith**

Metro Government: **Winnie Forrester**

Voter Services: **Kristin Hightower and Perry Macdonald**

*Voter* Newsletter Editor: **Madeline Garr**

Nominating Committee Chair (2017-2019) *Off Board*: Chair **Representative Brenda Gilmore**

Nominating Committee Members: **Betsy Walkup, Diane Dilanni, Cindee Gold, Constance Caldwell, and Carole Kenner**

