



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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June 2020

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 1, 2020. “We Count: First Time Voters” Exhibit. <https://fristartmuseum.org/calendar/detail/we-count-first-time-voters>

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June 17, 2020. 6:30 p.m. American Experience: The Vote. Screening and Discussion. Click [here](#) to register.

June 20, 2020. 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. In-Person Voter Registration Event. League of Women Voters Nashville in Partnership with the Nashville Black Covenant Coalition. 1401 14th Ave. South, Park at Edgehill. Please email **Perry MacDonald** at macdonald5pa@gmail.com to volunteer.

June 24, 2020. 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. Stand Against Racism: Voting in a Time of Crisis. Join the YWCA via Zoom for a webinar on addressing racism and advocating for expanded civic engagement during a time of crisis. [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#) .

July 10, 2020. 12 Noon. Hot Topics on Zoom!!!! Facing Challenges and Changes in the 2020 Election Cycle. Jeff Roberts, Davidson County Election Commission. **Be on the lookout for an email to register and join on Zoom.**

Presidents’ Message



Dear Members,

It has been a privilege to serve as President for the past two years. I owe a special thanks to **Madeline Garr** for stepping up to be Co-President this year. It has been a pleasure to work with this talented, creative board.

Congratulations to this year's Molly Todd award winner, **Clare Sullivan**. Clare has a distinguished career as a long-time advocate for public health. Her efforts to expand TennCare have been tireless, and the League is proud to honor her. Read more about her below.

The **League** is currently focused on fair and efficient elections for the **August 6th** and **November 3rd** elections. The pandemic has resulted in fewer voter registrations, confusion about absentee voting, and a shortage of poll workers. We suspended **in-person** voter registration events in March. This month we have been asked to partner with the Nashville Black Covenant Coalition to offer an in-person event on June 20. The League has agreed to doing this under the direction of **Perry MacDonald** and other volunteers who are interested in participating in an in-person event. We also hope to disseminate

information by social media about **online registration, how to obtain an absentee ballot, and Vote411 information**. We are waiting for the courts to settle the conflict over who may utilize an absentee ballot. If you are interested in **volunteering** for voter registration, please contact Voter Service Co-Chairs, **Perry Macdonald** at macdonald5pa@gmail.com or Kristin Hightower at khightower234@gmail.com.

We have resumed our **Hot Topics** public presentations via **Zoom**. The next one will feature **Jeff Roberts**, Davidson County Election Administrator. League members have been attending the Davidson County Elections Committee meetings. Mr. Roberts will share all the steps he has taken to ensure our elections run smoothly. Plan to join us at **noon on Friday, July 10th**. We usually meet on the first Friday of the month but moved the date because of the July 4th holiday.

The **LWVNashville** has suspended the events we had planned to celebrate the passage of the **19th Amendment 100 years ago**. We were fortunate that the contracted ballet, **39 Steps**, was performed at TPAC for area middle school students in February. We hope to reschedule other events in the future when it is safe to do so.

It is time to **renew** your membership and encourage others to join us in this critical time for democracy. We are all disturbed by the police violence and inequality that has been highlighted by the pandemic in our culture. See the **LWVN statement** below. Please help the **League** continue to work for fair elections, open government, and justice for all through education and public policy. Everyone stay safe.

Barbara Gay



Letter to League Board Members

Dear **Nashville League Members**,

Across the nation, communities have responded in outrage to the murder of African Americans, including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, at the hands of police. The African American community is being traumatized by the systemic racism that pervades the structures that rule our citizenry. Our African American neighbors live in fear that their name will be next, or that someone they love will be murdered by someone sworn to protect them.

To our **African American League members**, we acknowledge the systemic racism that you and your family face each day. We cannot ignore that reality. The **LWVN** must be committed to doing the hard work of actively advocating for anti-racist policies particularly at the state and local levels.

We must also redouble our efforts to make sure that **all** parts of our community have a voice that is heard. Our organization believes in the **power of the vote**. We must continue to work in coalition with others to insure not only that citizens register to vote, but that they use the power of the vote to move our city, our state, and our country to a future in which our democratic ideals are more fully realized.

We echo the statement put out by **LWVUS**:

As an organization whose mission is to empower voters and defend democracy, we stand in solidarity with all Black communities. The League shall do so not only by speaking out against racism in all forms, but by doing the work required of us to be anti-racist. We are committed to

listening to and amplifying Black voices and educating ourselves and our children on the historic and ongoing systemic racism that plagues this country.

The League acknowledges, painfully, that America is a nation founded on racism. Therefore, all who live in this country must contribute to and participate in organizations actively working to achieve full liberation and inclusive freedom. We must all advocate for anti-racist policies at every level of government.

Read the full statement here: <https://www.lwv.org/newsroom/press-releases/lwvus-responds-police-killing-george-floyd>.



The Molly Todd Award 2020

The **League of Women Voters Nashville** presented this Award to **Clare Sullivan** on June 2nd at the Zoom **Annual Meeting**. Although we couldn't be together in person, we arranged to have the Award plaque, along with the pin and a dozen yellow roses, delivered to Clare's porch by **Diane Dilanni's** spouse, **Scott**, and presented to Clare by her spouse, **Mark**. We asked Mark to write his perspective as a way of introducing Clare and giving us all insight into who she is and what she has done and continues to do. He wrote:

*I am delighted to be able to share my thoughts on the decision by the League of Women Voters Nashville to grant the **Molly Todd Award** to **Clare Sullivan**, my life companion and best friend.*

After learning about the bold spirit and optimism of the Molly Todd and her commitment to human rights, I can only say that if Molly were alive today, I would feel compelled to nominate her for the Clare Sullivan Award.

*Members of the League will be familiar with Clare's commitment to the right of every person to have access to affordable, high quality health care. You may **not** be as familiar with Clare's many other careers and commitments, including as:*

- ✓ *A public high school teacher during the stormy 1970's for young people in Brockton, Massachusetts;*
- ✓ *A union organizer with a passion for defending the safety and health of her coworkers at Harvard University;*
- ✓ *An occupational safety and health professional for union workers and families in the paper industry;*
- ✓ *An anti-war activist throughout our nation's grievous military adventures abroad;*
- ✓ *A school nurse serving children, youth, and families in Nashville's public schools;*
- ✓ *A health policy analyst whose insights into the fragility of human health in our global community should put to shame the shocking indifference of today's political leaders in this age of pandemic;*
- ✓ *A safety and health advocate who would hike down to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back up in a single day, despite every sensible, official government warning.*

*Clare grew up near Syracuse, New York, the daughter of a professional **nurse** who served in George Patton's army in the struggle against fascism during World War II, and a father who was one of the early **organizers** for the Communications Workers of America, and who later retired as a manager with AT&T.*

*Clare graduated from the University of Dayton in 1972 with a degree in Biology, and quickly plunged into a visionary **organizing** project in Brockton, Massachusetts, designed to help **reshape** that city into a model of better local democratic government. She then went to work as a **staff employee** at Harvard University and – having witnessed firsthand careless health and safety practices in Harvard labs – volunteered as an **organizer** for what eventually became a successful, 20-year union-organizing campaign for Harvard's professional and technical employees.*

*Meanwhile, Clare enrolled in **Harvard's School of Public Health**, earning her Master degree in **Health Policy and Management** in 1979. After working in a community health center in Boston for two years, she moved to Nashville in 1981 to serve as an occupational health specialist for the United Paperworkers International Union.*

*After years defending the health and safety of union workers and their families, Clare enrolled in the **nurse practitioner program** in the Vanderbilt University School of Nursing, graduating in 1995 with a Master degree in Nursing Practice. After graduation, Clare worked for 22 years for Vanderbilt to advance public health, first for the School of Nursing, managing and staffing a network of clinics in Nashville public elementary schools and as an instructor in clinical nursing, and later as a community-engaged research coordinator for the Medical Center.*

*Clare “retired” from Vanderbilt in 2017, but in truth continues to devote her talents and countless hours to community service, including as a board member for the Tennessee Health Care Campaign and the **League of Women Voters**, and as a volunteer at Ten Thousand Villages.*

*Every waking day, I wonder at how lucky I am to share this life’s journey with a passionate feminist and human rights activist; a mother and guiding light for two brilliant, caring, and visionary young adults; a 1970’s era activist who continues to blaze new trails every single decade; and my best friend and companion – all bundled up into a single, amazing person. – **Mark Brooks, Clare’s spouse***

Finally, if you do not know who **Molly Todd** was and what she did, please click [here](#).



Summary of June Hot Topic: Sharon Roberson, YWCA President Speaks on Domestic Violence

By Co-Vice President Carole Kenner

Through ZOOM, the **LWVNashville** was able to continue our **Hot Topics** with an excellent program about unfortunate increases in domestic violence during the pandemic. Our speaker was **Sharon K. Roberson, Esq.**, President and CEO of **YWCA Nashville & Middle Tennessee**. She shared with us information on the **Weaver Center**, the largest domestic violence center in the state. Today, **sixty-six people**, over half of them children, are housed at the domestic violence shelter. The Covid 19 pandemic has provided the perfect storm for an increase in domestic violence. The downturn in our economic situation, stay-in-place orders, job loss, and loss of the ability to gather at places of worship, at camps, and at schools all have had an impact on how we handle stress in our lives and has led to violence, particularly against women. The **YWCA Weaver Center** provides a safe place for families to heal and move forward. Initially, when a person arrives, they are placed in quarantine until Covid 19 test results come back. Then, for **up to 45 days**, a variety of services are offered to help the domestic violence victim begin to move forward. Each time a new family unit moves out, the rooms they had occupied are rigorously cleaned in preparation for the next group.

In an effort to combat domestic violence over the years, the **YWCA** has also worked on engaging men and boys in programs that change the culture that supports violence against women. They have also worked with the police and other law enforcement/court offices combatting violence against women. The **YWCA**, in dealing with the way the pandemic has affected their other services, has begun to rely on online services, providing a camp for girls, adult outreach services, and classes.

Ms. Roberson responded to a number of questions from **LWVN** participants and ended her presentation with a brief PSA: Want to volunteer? Contact Allison Adams at: allison.adams@ywcانashville.com.



July **HOT TOPICS** Returns on **ZOOM!**

**Be on the lookout for Zoom registration information.
Register and tune in on Friday, July 10th at 12:00 Noon.**

July's "**Hot Topic:**" Facing Challenges and Changes in the 2020 Election Cycle
With
Jeff Roberts, Davidson County Administrator of Elections

Jeff will share vital information about what to expect in the upcoming August and November elections. He will discuss absentee voting in Tennessee, as well as safeguards his office has planned to make in-person polling places safer during the pandemic.

Be on the lookout for Zoom registration information in your email!!!!



Voter Services Updates
Voter Services Co-Chairs **Kristin Hightower and Perry MacDonald**

It seemed more than somewhat curious...

...for there to be '**Breaking News**' developed overnight at the **Davidson County Election Commission**. But for those of us "tuning in" on June 12 at 10:00 a.m. (DCEC meetings are now being conducted entirely by phone) that was exactly what we heard. Responding virtually immediately to **Chancellor Ellen Hobbs Lyle's** admonishment and directive, the staff of DCEC worked overnight to **revise** the Davidson County application form for **requesting** an absentee ballot. These changes **expand** two currently existing excuses (for applying for an absentee ballot) by **addressing COVID-19 concerns**. In doing so, Davidson County continues to stay ahead of all other counties in preparation for the **August 6** election. We who are observers/listeners continue to be impressed with DCEC's planning and implementation for an election year like no other in memory. Click [here](#) for further information.

The Administrator of Elections, **Jeff Roberts**, reported that, as of June 12, DCEC had processed **over 10,000 applications** and was 'current' in mailing out ballots. Nearly **3,000 ballots** have already been **returned**. New staff have been hired, trained and are on the job. Roberts is confident there will be sufficient poll workers to keep all voting locations open for the August election. Additional poll workers are being hired, and both new and returning poll workers are receiving on-line training. Roberts warned that despite these preparations, a "wave of requests" on July 30 would be an enormous challenge for the staff. In the meantime, DCEC is processing **300 to 350 applications for an absentee ballot per day**. Judge Lyle's directive is likely to increase that number, perhaps significantly.

We have distributed **LWVN FAQs** on Absentee Voting and received grateful responses from organizations and individuals (Thank you, **Debby Gould**; you may be sheltered in place but you're busy as ever.) If you know of an organization or community site that could benefit from this information, **please** let us know.

Restless as we are to get back to on-site voter registrations, it is incumbent on us to remain cautious and compliant with Metro Guidelines. In the meantime, we are grateful to the board for brainstorming, encouragement, and for lending us your area of expertise to reach more voters and voters-to-be. We have also heard from several new members who have joined the **League** primarily to become involved with **Voter Services**. **Welcome** Newcomers!

From **Kristin: May 2020 Twitter Analytics:**

- * Followers: 189
- * Tweets: 133
- * Impressions: 23,838 (views)
- * Engagements: 964
- * Pinned tweets:
 - Impressions: 1801
 - Engagements: 36

Finally, we are pleased to have been invited to participate in the **Nashville Black Covenant Coalition's** celebration and **Voter Equity Rally** this Saturday, June 20, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Edgehill Park. Participating will move us in the direction set by **LWVUS** President Chris Carson, who said in her June 8 Update, "we acknowledge that the League hasn't taken such a strong stance against racism in the past and as we move into the next century of work, we hope to play a bigger role in fighting for social justice."



Don't wait! – Renew Today!
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: **Vanessa and Chris Allwardt, Susan Brandenburg, Ann Ercelawn, Winifred Forrester, Anna Garr, Madeline and Tony Garr, Megan Garr, Colleen Gill, Elizabeth Holmes, Kathy Ingelson, Ann K. Lucas, Hasina Mohyuddin, Maureen and John Organ, Diana Page, Avi Poster, Madeleine Richhart, Loretta and Robert Rittle, Jo Singer, Virginia (Tracy) Smith, Betsy Walkup, Jennifer Westerholm**

- **Anne Dallas Dudley – Susan Doughty**

- **Susan B. Anthony – Marian Ott and Phillip Craig**

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

Annual Membership Drive

Hope you received your email regarding the annual membership drive. If you did not, please click the link below to renew your membership.

During this Covid-19 pandemic, your membership is even more vital than ever before. Your membership supports the development of the nonpartisan election informational portal, VOTE411.ORG. The website provides essential details regarding candidates and their views on various issues, election dates, polling locations, to name a few. Most importantly, your membership allows the League to continue promoting a safe and fair election process, and fight against voter suppression.

Please **renew** your membership, **consider** making an additional contribution to the League, and, most importantly, **reach out** to your friends who are not now members to ask them to join.

Click the link <https://lwvnashville.org/membership/> to view the various support levels. You may pay online or send a check.

Comments from members as to why they joined the League

I joined to prevent disfranchisement through the use of those “old school” tactics that could be used on marginalized citizens. We need to get these citizens registered and to the polls.



Letter to Governor Lee **Health Care Co-Chair Clare Sullivan**

The following letter was sent to Governor Lee. The League of Women Voters Tennessee is one of the organizations that have signed onto this letter.

June 15, 2020

Honorable Bill Lee
Governor of Tennessee
State Capitol, 1st Floor
600 Dr. Martin L King, Jr. Blvd
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee:

In 2017, 52 women in Tennessee died after their two months of postpartum coverage ended and within a year of giving birth, according to Stephen Smith, Deputy Director for TennCare. A disproportionate number of these 52 women who died were Black. Director Smith acknowledged that extending coverage from two months to a full year postpartum could really make a difference in addressing this problem. A spotlight is now shining brightly on the inequities in Tennessee as well in our country. We have seen the

inequities for Black Americans in policing across the country and more recently in Minneapolis. Yet, right here in our state, injustice is playing out under proposed budget cuts of about \$6.6 million in postpartum coverage while protecting close to \$400 million in TennCare reserves.

On Feb. 3, 2020, before a joint session of the General Assembly, you said that “infant mortality and maternal health are challenges for our state. One in two Tennessee births are covered through our Medicaid program. That's why we're proposing two new initiatives to expand prenatal and postpartum coverage for our TennCare recipients.”

Since then a lot has happened: Legislative Budget hearings, COVID-19, loss of over 400,000 jobs, and a spotlight on all the inequities that Black Americans have endured for the last 400 years.

We've seen the data. Black Women in America are:

- Three to four times more likely to experience a pregnancy-related death than white women;
- More likely to experience preventable maternal death compared with white women;
- Three times more likely to have fibroids (benign tumors that grow in the uterus and can cause postpartum hemorrhaging) than white women, and fibroids occur at younger ages and grow more quickly for Black women;
- More likely to display signs of preeclampsia earlier in pregnancy than white women. This condition, which involves high blood pressure during pregnancy, can lead to severe complications including death if improperly treated;
- More likely to experience physical “weathering,” meaning their bodies age faster than white women’s due to exposure to chronic stress linked to socioeconomic disadvantage and discrimination over the life course, thus making pregnancy riskier at an earlier age.

Now is not the time to cut postpartum coverage that is lifesaving from your budget, especially when we know that cutting these services will disproportionately and negatively impact Black women.

We implore you to stand against racial inequities and restore a full year of postpartum coverage to the budget.

Sincerely,

Organizations:

A VOICE for the Reduction of Poverty

Cookeville Putnam County NAACP

Edgehill United Methodist Church

Healing Trust

Healthy and Free Tennessee

Insure Tennessee Works Working Group

League of Women Voters Tennessee
Mental Health America of MidSouth
NASW, Tennessee Chapter
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Tennessee
SisterReach
Tennessee Catholic Public Policy Commission
Tennessee Charitable Care Network
Tennessee Citizen Action
Tennessee Conference United Methodist Church Board of Church & Society, Middle & West TN
Tennessee Health Care Campaign
Tennessee Justice Center
The Nashville Jewish Social Justice Roundtable
United Ways of Tennessee

Individuals:

Margaret Axelrod, MD/PhD student, Vanderbilt
Debbie Barnard, Professor, Cookeville, TN
Teena Cohen, concerned citizen and advocate
Kitty Calhoun, retired lawyer and member of NOAH and Nashville Jewish Social Justice Roundtable
José B. Davila, Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Christian Brothers University
Barbara Dentz MD, FAAP, Child Health Advocate, Franklin
The Rev Scherry Fouke, Morristown
Tony Garr, Advocate for Insure Tennessee Works Working Group
Richard Henighan, Retired Nurse Practitioner, Seymour
Lucy B. Henighan, Retired Teacher, Seymour
Dr. Everlena Holmes, Executive Director, Enroll the Region, Hamilton County
Alex J. Hurder, Murfreesboro
Karen Joyce concerned nurse and citizen that supports funding for mothers and babies in Tennessee.
Jordan Jurinsky, Med, Doctoral student in Community Research and Action at Vanderbilt University
Terry Katzman-Rosenblum, retired, mental health center administrator
Benita Kaimowitz, Nashville
Patricia Meadows, Nashville, TN

Patricia A. Post, MPA, Former Executive Director, Tennessee Perinatal Association

Avi Poster, Community Activist, Nashville, TN

Barbara Reynolds, PhD, Retired Dean of Nursing, Whitson-Hester School of Nursing, Cookeville

Howard H. Rosenblum, MD, Nashville

Thomas Savage, Retired UAW International Representative, President NAACP 56AA, Cookeville

Patti Scott, DNP, RN, PNP, NCSN, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Public Health Nurse Leader, Co-
Lead, Tennessee Action Coalition

Tracey Stansberry, MSN, APRN, AOCN, concerned nursing professional

Mary Comfort Stevens, Registered voter, Davidson County

Dorothy Sinard MD, FAAP, Child Health Advocate, Brentwood

Sally Smallwood, Director of Coalition for a Strong Tennessee

Clare Sullivan, RN, MSN, MSPH, Nashville

Mary Williams

Rev. Merrilee Weinger, Minister of Discipleship, Edgemoor United Methodist Church, Nashville

Mary Wrasman, Retired attorney, Murfreesboro



LWVN 2019-2020

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