



# THE NASHVILLE VOTER

The League of Women Voters of Nashville  
PO Box 158369, Nashville TN 37215 | 629-777-5650  
<http://www.LWVnashville.org>

November 2020  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**November 17, 2020. 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. A Virtual Visit with Elaine Weiss, Author of THE WOMAN'S HOUR.** Sponsored by: [Rutherford Arts Alliance](#), the [American Association of University Women–Murfreesboro](#), the Middle Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women, and the [MTSU President's Commission on the Status of Women](#). At the author's request, donations will be accepted to benefit the [League of Women Voters of Tennessee](#). A shared Zoom link will be available closer to the event date. Please respond to and share [this event on Facebook](#).

**November 18, 2020. 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. The Mission of the ACLU.** Hedy Weinberg, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee. Offered by the [Williamson County League of Women Voters](#). Registration is available through the John P. Holt Brentwood Library through "Adult Programs" at <https://www.brentwoodtn.gov/departments/library/library-programs/adult-programs>.

**December 4, 2020. 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. November Hot Topics presents: Presidential Powers and the Constitution.** James F. Blumstein, University Professor of Constitutional Law and Health Law & Policy, Professor of Management, Owen Graduate School of Management Director, Vanderbilt Health Policy Center. On Zoom. Look for an email to register.

**December 11, 2020. 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. A Conversation with State Senator-Elect Heidi Campbell.** On Zoom. Please mark your calendars and be on the lookout for a Zoom invitation in your email nearer to the date.



## President's Message



Now that the election is over, the [LWVNashville](#) Board and volunteers are excited and **committed** to the efforts of the [League of Women Voters](#) here in Nashville, in Tennessee, and across the nation. For the last 100 years, the [League](#) has made a difference in communities across the nation and will continue to do so. We will continue to sponsor programs to **encourage** informed and active participation in government, work to **increase** understanding of major public policy issues, and **influence** public policy through education and advocacy. We will continue to support the Mission statement of [LWVUS](#) to empower voters and defend democracy, a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge, and the confidence to participate. We will continue to influence governmental decisions in accordance

with **League** positions and policies, use voter education programs to stimulate citizen interest and participation in elections, and increase membership in **LWVNashville** and **LWVTN**.

Our individual portfolio committees on the **LWVNashville** Board set goals in August that we hope will guide activities of our membership and Board in the coming year. There is a lot to be done. We also hope **each** of you finds a way to contribute to these goals with your skills, ideas, time, hands, and resources. Please email me or give me a call for more information, ideas, or questions. I can be reached at [mgarr2@gmail.com](mailto:mgarr2@gmail.com) or by phone at 615-305-5073.

Thank you for all you do.

**Madeline Garr**



## **November State Advocacy Report** **By State Advocacy Chair Debby Gould**

While the pandemic placed limitations on our public voter services interactions, it has also created the **urgency** to explore new techniques for messaging to complement the **incredible** traditional outreach done by **Perry Macdonald** and her **volunteers**. Billboards, sandwich boards, and social media postings have all greatly expanded our communications. This combined outreach has literally made it possible for us to contact thousands of people with information about the complexities of voting during the year of the pandemic.

On a statewide level, **LWVTN** has coordinated with other non-partisan groups such as the **Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights**, which operates a nationwide hotline to handle voter **issues** on election days. There were **no** major systemic problems reported in Tennessee. The majority of calls were related to issues affecting individual voters.

It is easy to see that some of the existing obstacles **could be resolved** through changes in state law. For example, Tennessee is **one of only two** states in the nation that requires absentee ballots to be returned by mail. Other states allow for ballot return by drop boxes or **direct** delivery to election commission offices. **LWVTN** will be actively advocating for changes during the **2021 state legislative session** that address multiple election law issues that **needlessly limit** the ability of **all** eligible Tennesseans to vote. We look forward to having your voice included in these conversations.



## **What is New in Williamson County?** **By Linda Sherman**

The **Williamson County League of Women Voters** meets the **third Wednesday** of the month, and the next meeting is **Wednesday, November 18th** at 1:00 p.m. Our speaker will be **Hedy Weinberg**, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Tennessee. Ms. Weinberg will discuss the **ACLU-TN's** mission to protect and promote the guarantees of the Bill of Rights and the TN Constitution. Advocacy, coalition building, legislative lobbying, public education, policy research and litigation represent the range of strategies used by the ACLU-TN.

Registration for this event is available through the [John P. Holt Brentwood Library](#) through “Adult Programs.”

Quoted in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, LA Times and Washington Post, and appearing on CNN, MSNBC and the BBC network, Ms. Weinberg is a nationally and internationally recognized advocate for her work. Included are awards for her work to **defeat** the Nashville “English-Only” ballot initiative and to promote both reproductive rights and open government. Among her numerous awards are the Tennessee Library Association’s Freedom of Information Award, the Academy for Women of Achievement by the YWCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, and the Bridge Builders Award from the American Muslim Advisory Council.



## Congratulations!!!

Congratulations to **Sue Spickard** and the **PENCIL Foundation** for their work linking community resources to Nashville Public schools and for announcing the launch of *Our Students, Our Future*, an endowment campaign to ensure that a pathway exists for community investment in Nashville public schools indefinitely. Sue Spickard was a founding member of the PENCIL Foundation in **1982** and credits the **League of Women Voters Nashville** for their work on Nashville’s educational needs as instrumental in establishing this organization. PENCIL has aided the public school system immeasurably in **the last 38 years**. For more information, please visit [https://youtu.be/c\\_2wkkZ8Ex0](https://youtu.be/c_2wkkZ8Ex0) and the PENCIL [website](#) .



## Summary of November Hot Topic–Braver Angels By Co-Vice President Ethel Detch

*“I do not like that man. I must get to know him better.” Abraham Lincoln*

The past four years have stirred strong feelings on both sides of the political divide in the United States. Relationships between friends and family members have frayed, and sometimes broken, because of our nation’s polarization. Many people have come to view those of the opposite party as “the enemy” rather than fellow citizens with differing points of view.

**Braver Angels** (formerly Better Angels) is a bottom-up national organization focused on improving communication and reducing animosity between Republicans and Democrats. For the **League’s** November **Hot Topic** meeting, **Lynn Heady**, Co-Director of Field Operations and Tennessee State Coordinator for Braver Angels, spoke about her organization’s work.

Braver Angels was birthed over coffee by two friends of opposite political parties. The organization’s goal is to encourage people to change how they think about each other and hopefully come to discuss their different views easier. By seeking understanding from “the other” the hope is that we can mend as a nation and even find middle ground to meet some of our challenges. Today, Braver Angels has about **15,000** volunteers and **20** paid staff.

Ms. Heady asked the meeting participants a series of thought-provoking questions to help them think about their own perceptions of the opposite political party including:

- How often do I think about people of the **opposite** political party?
- How often do I assign negative emotions to the **other** political party?
- How often do I compare the **worst** behavior on the other side to the **best** behavior on my side?
- How often do I get a rush of **pleasure** when ridiculing the other political party?
- Overall, what do I feel **causes** people of the opposite political party to think differently than me?

Ms. Heady described several initiatives of Braver Angels, all of which have been adapted for on-line participation because of the pandemic. These include opportunities for **one-to-one conversations**, as well as ones designed for **groups**. The most recent program, “With Malice Toward None” has already been used by over 4000 groups. Participants have discussed topics such as **Racism, the Importance of Voting, the Effectiveness of President Trump**, and the **Influence of the Media**.

In closing, Ms. Heady invited League members to **join** a local alliance, each of which is headed by a *red* member and a *blue* member. For more information please visit the Braver Angels’ website at <https://braverangels.org/>.

This **Hot Topics** meeting, as well as others, was recorded and can be watched on the LWVN website at <https://lwvnashville.org/blog/>



## **December Hot Topic Preview: Presidential Powers and the Constitution** **By Co-Vice President Carole Kenner**

We are delighted to have Jim Blumstein as our **Hot Topic 1st Friday** (ZOOM) speaker on **December 4 at noon**. He is the University Professor of Constitutional Law and Health Law & Policy. He also serves as Professor of Management, Owen Graduate School of Management and Director of Vanderbilt Health Policy Center.

Considering our most recent election, I have no doubt that Jim will enlighten us with his insights and knowledge. The course that he teaches on Constitutional Law is a basic study of the distribution of governmental powers between the federal government and the states, as well as the relationship among the three branches of the federal government and the role of the courts in the constitutional scheme. For our program, he will focus on **the scope of presidential powers and the constraints on those powers**

Long recognized as a Constitutional Scholar, Jim Blumstein also ranks among the nation’s most prominent scholars of health law, law and medicine, and voting rights. He is currently one of eight University Professors at **Vanderbilt**. He was the first awarded that title in the law school and was the first to receive a second tenured appointment in Vanderbilt Medical School. He was awarded the Earl Sutherland Prize, which is Vanderbilt’s preeminent university-wide recognition for lifetime scholarly contributions. In 2007, he received the prestigious McDonald-Merrill-

Ketcham Memorial Award for Excellence in Law and Medicine from the University of Indiana. A dedicated teacher, Professor Blumstein has received the law school's student-sponsored Hall-Hartman Teaching Award. He joined Vanderbilt's law faculty in 1970.



**December 4, 2020**

**HOT TOPICS  
Continues on ZOOM!**

**Presidential Powers and the Constitution:  
The scope of presidential powers and the constraints on  
those powers**

**Presenter: Dr. James Blumstein**, University Professor of Constitutional Law and Health Law & Policy, Professor of Management, Owen Graduate School of Management Director, Vanderbilt Health Policy Center.

**Be on the lookout for Zoom registration information  
in your email.**

**Register and tune in on Friday, December 4 at Noon.**



**Voter Services News**

**By Voter Service Chair Perry Macdonald**

*"And now we turn to..."*

I don't know what my colleague **Kerry Burke** had in mind when she agreed to set up the first **LWVN Information Hotline**, but I came to envision her team as *foreign correspondents*, similar to embedded journalists, stationed somewhere in an unfamiliar territory. A team that was ultra-prepared, poised for action...and destined to wait. While Nashville, as well as cities all around the country, braced for an election day marked by uncertainties, Kerry skillfully trained the **8** other volunteers by way of a six-page resource document, covering both technical instructions and anticipated questions and concerns. Hotline volunteers were assigned to 24-hour "shifts" from October 26 through November 9, with periodic communications from Kerry that kept us all 'in the loop.' The good news is that this year's hotline saw **little** action, as Davidson County experienced a smooth, calm and professional election cycle. The even better news is that **LWVN** now has in place a Voter Services Hotline that can be returned to operational mode in just a day's time. **Kerry**, congratulations and **thank you** for making this 2020 goal a reality.

Special thanks as well to our **Administrator, Tracy Depp**, for her critical role in making this all happen. Finally, a salute to those who 'enlisted for duty': **Rita Bullinger, Karen Davis, Beth**

**Gordon, Linda Halperin, Jack McFadden, Bonnie Miller, Haley Miller, and Beth Shinn.**  
Please keep those instructions handy!

Our informal survey of those who worked (or voted) in polling locations around the city has revealed very few glitches in this election cycle. That is, in this writer's opinion, a tribute first to the excellent work of the **Davidson County Election Commission** and its **staff** of part-time and temporary poll officials, and secondly to the organizations and communities that supported and cooperated with them to assure a free, fair, safe and secure election. **Well done, everyone.**



## **Keeping an Eye on Health Care** By **Health Care/Public Health Co-Chair Constance Caldwell**

While votes are continuing to be counted and family decisions are being made as to how the holidays will be celebrated, let's continue to keep our eyes on the health status of the nation and on Tennessee. **No** legislative actions are being introduced, now that our legislators have left and will not be returning until **January 2021**.

There are some **bright** spots that we can outline:

- Tennessee has received approval for a **Katie Beckett Waiver**. This will allow families with severely disabled children and whose income is too high for TennCare eligibility to receive financial assistance from the state. The waiver will use a mixture of state and federal funding and is estimated to cost Tennessee about \$27 million dollars a year. It will benefit about 3,000 children. TennCare will be partly responsible for administering the program and is expected to begin receiving applications for the financial assistance on **November 23**.
- Arguments were heard by the US Supreme Court on **November 10** relative to the constitutionality of the **Affordable Care Act**. Even though the ruling will not be rendered until around **June 2021**, it appears that the majority of the Justices are in favor of upholding the law even without the penalty mandate.
- Great work has been done on developing a **vaccine** for the COVID-19 virus. Pfizer Pharmaceuticals has developed a vaccine that is purported to be at least 90% effective. If approved by the FDA, plans are being made to expedite its distribution.
- On the bleak side of COVID-19, cases are rising all over the nation as well as hospitalizations associated with it. Some hospitals in the nation have exhausted **all** of their ICU beds. Nashville has not gotten to that point, but critical care beds are being monitored.
- With the flu season upon us, Public Health Officials are urging those who can take the **flu vaccine** (especially if you are of high risk) to do so.

Adhering to CDC COVID-19 GUIDELINES is extremely important at this time. Let's keep our guards up as we continue to monitor the status of our nation's health.



## **Rebuild the Tree Canopy in Davidson County** By **Environment Chair Barbara Gay**

Love trees? Need healing from the stressful politics? Join **Root Nashville** to plant trees and make Nashville greener.

Root Nashville is a public-private partnership led by the **Cumberland River Compact** and **Metro Nashville**, with support from the Mayor's Office. Root Nashville will plant 500,000 trees in Davidson County by 2050.

Trees provide clean air and water, cooler neighborhoods, safe and prosperous communities, and they improve our health and well-being. Cities around the world are focusing anew on their tree canopy. As healthy, resilient cities like Nashville make room for trees they will, in turn, reap the benefits.

The Nashville region is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth—with a **45% increase** in its population between 2000 and 2017. Between 2008 and 2016, Nashville's tree canopy in urban zones has **fallen by 15%** and is behind that of many comparable cities across the country. While Metro currently invests more than \$2 million annually for tree planting and maintenance, it's **not** enough to keep pace with the changes we are experiencing.

Working with support from the Mayor's Office, the Cumberland River Compact and Metro Water Services will manage the Root Nashville campaign. Metro will be responsible for planting and caring for trees on Metro properties, such as parks and schools, with support from the campaign in targeted areas. The Cumberland River Compact will work with a variety of partners to plant and increase care of trees on private property."

For more details about how you can help, click [rootnashville.org](http://rootnashville.org). If you would like to join the **LWVN Environmental Committee**, please contact Barbara Gay at [barbara.b.gay@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.b.gay@gmail.com) or Russanne Buchi-Fotre at [russanne@comcast.net](mailto:russanne@comcast.net)



## November Membership Update

By Membership Co-Chairs Reba Holmes and Karen Hernan

With great delight, we announce and welcome our new and returning members that joined the LWVN. It is our privilege to welcome these individuals to the organization: **Sheri Lau, LaQuita V. Martin**, and **Katie O'Hara**.

We are grateful to these members and all our members who support the League's activities, programs, and underwriting.

### **Membership Enrollment**

Our membership continues to grow from month to month. As of **November 2020**, we have approximately **230** active members. Remarkable job, and we are appreciative.

The 2020 Presidential Election has concluded and each of you were responsible for the large voter turnout as a League member, by educating the electorate, registering voters, and participating in poll watching. **You** can celebrate this success.

Post-Election Day, we **still** have work to do. It is critical to continue our efforts to safeguard and defend our democracy by standardizing mail-in-ballots and early voting.

We need **more** advocates to help with the initiatives mentioned above. Invite your family, friends, and co-workers to join the League. Please share this link to the various support levels, <https://lwvnashville.org/membership/>. Together we can continue to “fight the good fight.”

### **Are you looking for a holiday gift?**

What about a membership for the League of Women Voters? Membership allows you to share a year’s worth of experiences promoting democracy, educating others in the community, participating in political discourse, and registering new voters, 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 <https://lwvnashville.org/membership/>



## **Metro Budget and Finance Committee Announces Metro Budget 101** **By Metro Government Chair Winnie Forrester**

Council Members Kyontzè Toombs (Chair) and Delishia Porterfield (Vice- Chair) of the Metro Budget and Finance Committee will be hosting a virtual **Metro Budget 101 Series** over the next few months. The sessions, beginning at **6 p.m.**, will provide transparency and education for the general public concerning **Metro Davidson County** revenues, finances, and the budget process. This series of sessions will provide helpful information to the public. The schedule will be updated as speakers are confirmed. **Questions** from the public may be submitted to [kyonzte.toombs@nashville.gov](mailto:kyonzte.toombs@nashville.gov) by **5 p.m.** on the day of the session, and all questions must be on the session **topic**.

Members of the public may live-stream the sessions at 6 p.m. on the day of the presentations listed below at: <https://www.nashville.gov/Information-Technology-Services/Cable-Television-Services/Metro-Nashville:Network/Live-Streaming.aspx>. Sessions can also be viewed on Comcast Channel 3, AT&T U-verse Channel 99, and Google Fiber Channel 3 and streamed on the MNN Roku Channel.

Upcoming sessions and speakers are as follows:

### **HOW DOES THE CITY GET MONEY?**

- November 19, 2020: **Property Taxes**. Assessor of Property Vivian Wilhoite, Trustee Erica Gilmore.
- December 3, 2020: **Sales Taxes: What about Downtown Revenue?** Council Member At-Large Bob Mendes.
- December 17, 2020: **City/State Revenue**. Finance Director Kevin Crumbo and State Rep. Harold Love

### **HOW DOES THE CITY SPEND MONEY?**



- January 7, 2021: **Metro Nashville Public Schools**. School Board Member Freda Player-Peters and Chief Operating and Financial Officer Chris Henson.
- January 14, 2021: **Metro Public Works and Metro Parks Departments**. Public Works Interim Director Shanna Whitelaw and Metro Parks Director Monique Odom.
- January 21, 2021: **Nashville General Hospital**.
- January 28, 2021: **Public Safety** (Metro Nashville Police Department, Sheriff's Office, District Attorney's Office).

## PANEL DISCUSSIONS

- February 4, 2021: **Community Panel Discussion**
- February 11, 2021 **Expert Panel Discussion**
- February 18, 2021: **How the Budget Process Works**
- February 25, 2021: **Participatory Budget**. Council Member At-Large Zulfat Suara.



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

Thank you!



### LWVN 2020-2021

#### Board of Directors

President: **Madeline Garr**

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

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: **Open**

Secretary: **Elise Lamar**

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#### Portfolio Chairs

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

Education: **Open**

Environment: **Barbara Gay and Russanne Buchi-Fotre**

Fundraising: **Debby Gould and Anne Marie Farmer**

Health Care/Public Health: **Constance Caldwell and Clare Sullivan (on temporary leave)**

Membership: **Reba Holmes and Karen Hernan**

Metro Government: **Winnie Forrester**

State Advocacy: **Debby Gould**

Voter Services: **Perry Macdonald**

*Voter* Newsletter Editor: **Madeline Garr and Elise Lamar**

Williamson County Representative: **June Bond**

Nominating Committee Chair (2020): **Senator Brenda Gilmore**

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Nominating Committee Members: **Betsy Walkup, Constance Caldwell, and Carole Kenner**

