

The Nashville Voter

Volume 74, No 11-- May 2021

Welcome to this issue of the *LWVN Voter*. You'll notice that the Emma page design allows you to access the LWVN Calendar by pressing a button at the top of the page!

Please note, you can increase your screen size within your personal information manager (i.e., Microsoft Outlook). In the Microsoft Outlook Message Bar at the top of the e-mail page, choose "Other Actions" and then in the dropdown menu choose "Zoom." The Zoom window allows you to increase the file size; try 140% for easier onscreen reading.

Also, please note that if you want to share/forward this newsletter to others, you **MUST** click on the **envelope icon** at the upper right side of this emailed version

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 19, 2021, 1:00 p.m. **A Conversation with State Senator Jack Johnson, of the 23rd District in Tennessee.** Sponsored by the **League of Women Voters Williamson County**. On Zoom. Click [here](#) to register.

May 19, 2021, 6:00 p.m. **Walk Bike Nashville Advocacy Corner Monthly Meeting.** [Register to join the meeting via Zoom](#) or watch the livestream through [Facebook](#).

June 4, 2021, 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. **Hot Topics: A Presentation on the BEP by Katie Cour,** Nashville Public Education Foundation. Look for an email to Register on Zoom.

June 10, 2021, 5:30 p.m. **League of Women Voters Nashville Annual Meeting.** On Zoom. Please look for an email to register to attend.

June 16, 2021, 1:00 p.m. **A Conversation with Emily Baird-Chrisohon,**

meeting is available at the John P. Holt Brentwood Library Adult Programs website beginning June 1. All are welcome!



President's Message

May has arrived in all its beauty! I hope you all are doing well and enjoying each day. As we move toward summer, the **League of Women Voters Nashville** remains involved in many ongoing efforts. First, May begins our **annual** Membership Renewal and New Membership

Drive. Please look for email communication from us and open it to respond. Your matter and your involvement in all we do makes a difference.

Second, the **League of Women Voters Nashville** is holding the Annual Membership Meeting on **June 10 at 5:30 p.m.** on **Zoom**. You have received an invitation and a packet of important information on which the membership will vote at this event. This packet contains the 2021-2022 approved budget, the slate of the new board for 2021-2022, amended LWVN by-laws, and the Strategic Focus. We will also present the **Molly Todd Award** that evening. I hope to “see” each of you on Zoom!!!

Finally, all summer long, the **League of Women Voters of Tennessee** will be offering programs regarding redistricting, a vital piece of our representative democracy. Please check [here](#) for more information on upcoming events. Thank you for all you do.

Madeline Garr

May Membership Annual Drive Has Begun By Membership Co-Chair Reba Holmes

With great delight, we announce and welcome new and returning members that joined the Nashville League of Women Voters. It is our privilege to welcome these individuals to the organization:

- Rita Bullinger, Catherine Gwyn, Melissa Hamilton, Alison Haymer, and Madison Leathers
- Mary Dismukes - Anne Dallas Dudley

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

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

We Continue to Grow

Monthly, our League Administrator Tracy Depp reconciles our membership roster. The official League of Women Voters Nashville count as of May 2021 is 268. With your help, our membership will grow each month, as more advocates join us to defend and protect our system of democracy and its cornerstones.

Annual Membership Drive

It's that time again... Our annual membership drive began May 1, 2021. 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, just to name a few. Plus, your annual membership includes membership in the national, state, and local LWV organizations. Details regarding various support levels may be found on [our website](#).

Why join the League of Women Voters? Below, is what one of our members said:

I joined the League due to my interest in policy work and politics. In high school and college, I ran voter registration campaigns, and I wanted to get back to this work. As I am still fairly new to Nashville, I wanted to get involved with the community, while networking with and meeting outstanding women engaged in comparable work. I feel that the League of Women Voters Nashville is an important place for me to "plug in", and a place to learn more about the Nashville community, which I hope to serve in my capacity as a teacher and through future policy work.

Proposed LWVN Budget FY2021-2022

By Treasurer Susan Mattson

The LWVN Board approved the FY2021-22 budget included below on April 8, 2021, and the full membership will vote on the budget at our June 10, 2021, annual meeting. The budget projects an income of \$32,125 and expenses of \$36,073, with the difference coming from the approximately \$56,000 in fund reserves.

Spending initiatives include a \$2,650 effort focused on youth voter outreach and \$1,000 for translating LWVN voting information pamphlets into different languages. Additional funds are budgeted for increased administrative support and applications for our electronic platforms used to spread our message and to inform and recruit members. Funds are included for some issue-related, in-person meetings and Community Forums (\$2,500). Given that FY2021-22 is a limited election year, funds are not included for VOTE411 billboards (\$3,600 in FY 2020-21). Additional funds are budgeted for increased per member payments due to the

Please review the Board proposed FY2021-22 Budget below and plan to vote on June 10, 2021. You can direct any questions to me (s.mattson@comcast.net) or to President Madeline Garr (mgarr2@gmail.com).

News from the State

By LWVTN President Debby Gould

LWVUS is promoting a national program, *People-Powered Fair Maps*, to highlight the importance of public engagement in the redistricting process that will occur in every state in 2022. This summer, an ad hoc committee for redistricting will be appointed by Speaker of the House Cameron Sexton to draw the lines for the state's 9 congressional districts, and for TN Senate, and TN House districts. LWVTN, along with other non-partisan organizations, is advocating for public access to these committee meetings so that we understand the process.

In preparation, LWVTN is educating its members about the fundamentals of redistricting so that we are better advocates for drawing political boundaries that make sense for constituents. A recording of the latest LWVTN webinar on Communities of Interest (COI) is posted at <https://www.lwvtn.org/redistricting>. This will be especially important for people living in Nashville and Middle Tennessee, since there may be significant alterations in the size and shape of the lines drawn for political districts.

Meanwhile LWVTN is already looking for the best way to advocate during the legislative "off season." One is to deepen our relationships with legislators of both parties to learn more about their priorities and about bills they want to introduce in 2022. Our fledgling league to the south of us, LWV Williamson County, will be kicking off this next phase of our statewide activities with a conversation with TN Senator Jack Johnson, Senate Majority Leader, at noon CST on May 19. To register for that event, go to: [May meeting registration](#)

Education Legislation and Issues

By Education Chair Jami Oakley

The League's final activities regarding education in this past legislative session were an Action Alert and coordinated media statement. Both urged voters to directly contact the Governor's office to make a last effort to encourage reconsideration of the budget regarding school funding. The topic was top-of-mind for the League and for other public-school advocacy and policy groups and was featured consistently in the media statewide this year. The issue is not going away and will continue to be a centerpiece of our education-focused work next

amendment to an education bill to restrict classroom discussion of systemic racism. The bill was swiftly passed through both houses.

Read more about it here:

- [Tennessee ban of critical race theory in education a mistake](#)
- [Tennessee bans critical race theory from schools, will withhold funding](#)

We will stay on top of how it is implemented and determine what action the League can and should take moving forward.

On a brighter note, two Student School Board members will be added to the MNPS School Board next year, and the League is represented on a panel that is working this month to determine finalists for the positions. Students applied for the positions and will serve for one or two years, depending on their grade level. We're excited to support this effort to engage students in the very specific civic activities that directly affect them and their peers.

June Hot Topic: Public Education Foundation

By Co-Vice President Carole Kenner

Do Nashville's public schools receive sufficient state money to provide an adequate education to its students? Since 1993, state public education dollars have been distributed through a formula known as the Basic Education Program, commonly known as "the BEP". The formula was developed to improve funding equity between Tennessee's urban and rural school districts, but some public education advocates believe that the BEP doesn't provide enough money, particularly to the state's urban school systems.

On **Friday, June 4th, at 12:00 Noon**, join Katie Cour, President and CEO of the Nashville Public Education Foundation, to learn more about the BEP, how it affects the Metro Nashville school system, and the Foundation's recent efforts to raise awareness about needed changes.

The meeting will be free and open to the public. Be on the lookout for ZOOM registration information.

June 4, 2021
12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m.
HOT TOPICS
Continues on ZOOM!

The BEP: How does it affect the Davidson County School System?

Presenter: Katie Cour, President and CEO of the Nashville Public Foundation

Be on the lookout for Zoom registration information by your email, Facebook or the League website.

Register and tune in on Friday, June 4, 2021 at Noon.

Summary of May Hot Topic – Redistricting 101

By Kären Wieckert

Debby Gould, incoming LWVTN President, gave an informative introductory presentation on the redistricting process nationally, with specifics relevant to Tennessee. This is part of the LWVUS outreach program called [People Powered Fair Maps](#). Although this write-up is detailed, I recommend watching the presentation in its entirety. It is excellent and can be accessed at <https://lwnashville.org/blog/>.

Background: Redistricting happens every ten years. The purpose is threefold:

- To define boundaries for political districts, from school boards to the US Congress
- To calculate the number of people to be reapportioned per district
- To guide distribution of Federal dollars – upwards of \$500 billion – to districts.

Every ten years, a constitutionally-mandated national census is conducted, census data are sent to the states, states review that data, and draw maps. Maps are submitted for approval, and new maps are implemented to govern voting for the next decade.

Ideally, redistricting should be non-partisan and focus on providing appropriate representation for the people of various states and districts. However, the process is rarely smooth or nonpartisan.

One historical concern is *gerrymandering*, named for an 1812 district boundary resembling a salamander created by Governor Gerry of Massachusetts. Although this happened long ago, many states still continue to draw odd-shaped districts. Gerrymandered districts often favor one political party, intentionally minimize the influence of marginal/minority interests, and favor incumbents going forward for

Packing concentrates political interests into single districts in order to create large political majorities. *Cracking* spreads marginal or minority political interests across districts to dilute their influence in representing the district as a whole.

The Supreme Court's historic modification of the Voting Rights Act in 2013 regarding pre-clearance, as well as numerous cases afterwards regarding gerrymandering, allowed redistricting for partisan ends but not explicit racial categorization of district populations. Now, with standards relaxed, every state is allowed to set its own redistricting process.

States have varying redistricting laws, including:

- Requiring public meetings for community input (currently mandated in 33 states)
- Requiring public hearings on redistricting (26 states)
- Drafting maps for analysis (33 states)
- Requiring the redistricting process to be nonpartisan (a handful of states).

Specifics in Tennessee

In Tennessee, the State Legislature draws districts. After receiving federal apportionment data from the census, they then draw geographic lines for 9 US Congress, 99 State House, and 33 State Senate seats. Federal laws require that districts be approximately equal in population and that racial voting strength not be intentionally diluted. Tennessee state law requires districts to be connected and compact, and the Governor can veto the final maps.

Because populations change, maps change. For example, in Tennessee in the upcoming redistricting process, congressional districts will cover approximately 767,871 people, 62,000 more than currently represented, which will mean increases and/or changes relevant to state house and senate districts as well.

Generally, LWVTN and other affiliated groups support redistricting maps that avoid oddly-shaped districts, keep city/county boundaries within districts, keep *communities of interest* (groups that share economic and/or social interests) within districts, and create competitive, not *packed* districts.

To that end, an *ideal* map-making process includes:

- Clear public criteria
- Minority and political competitiveness
- Rules that support negotiation and compromise
- Public opportunity for input
- Transparency
- Sufficient time, money, expertise, and other resources
- An independent commission.

In 2012, many of these ideals were not met in Tennessee. Training is now available to provide for the best process, nationally and here in Tennessee.

In general, please:

- Support HR 1/SR 1: For the People Act
- Support TN legislation for fair map making
- Request a guide that clarifies how the TN Public Records Act and Open Meetings Act apply to redistricting.
- Demand that the meetings be open and public hearings be held
- Attend/participate in state and local redistricting meetings
- Define/protect *communities of interest* to you, and ensure that TN provides census and geographic data to that end;
- Write/call legislators, pen op-eds, send letters to the editor, post on social media, discuss with friends and colleagues.

The national, state, and local league will be continuing to bring expertise and training to members. This Hot Topics meeting, as well as others, was recorded and can be watched on the League of Women Voters of Nashville's website at <https://lwvnashville.org/blog/>.

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

Thank you!

Stay Informed about Upcoming Calendar Events!

If you get the **electronic** version of the Voter, we want you to know that the upcoming calendar events are available on our wonderful, new website - www.lwvnashville.org. On The calendar scrolls on the events of the current and upcoming events thanks to **Tracy Depp**, who keeps the calendar current. If you haven't taken a look, do so to make sure you mark your calendar so you won't miss a thing!

ATTENTION: *The Nashville Voter* is a digital publication. If you have received this copy of the *Voter* in the mail, it means the League of Women Voters of Nashville does not have an e-mail address for you. Please help us by sending your e-mail address to LWVNash@gmail.com. Being on the LWVN e-mail database ensures your receipt of all LWVN newsletters, event invitations, meeting announcements, and Call to Action alerts.

2020-2021 LWVN Board of Directors

President: **Madeline Garr**

1st Vice Presidents: **Ethel Detch and Carole Kenner**

2nd Vice President: **Open**

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Secretary: **Elise Lamar**

Treasurer **Susan Mattson**

Portfolio Chairs

Communications: **Lara Webb** and **Ophelia Doe**

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

Education: **Jami Oakley**

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

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

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

Membership: **Reba Holmes** and **Kathy Hernan**

Metro Government: **Winnie Forrester**

State Advocay: **Debby Gould**

Voter Services: **Perry Macdonald**

Williamson County Representative: **June Bond**

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

Nominating Committee Members: **Betsy Walkup**, **Constance Caldwell**, **Brenda Wynn**,
June Bond and **Hasina Mohyuddin**

Share this email:



emma[®]

[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

PO BOX 158369
Nashville, TN | 37215 US

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.