

The Nashville Voter

Volume 74, No 12-- October 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

October 20, 2021. 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. The Criminalization of Survivors & Women of Color. Sponsored by the YWCA of Nashville & Middle Tennessee. On **Zoom**. Register [HERE](#).

October 20, 2021. 1:00 p.m. LWV of Williamson County monthly program at J.P Holt Brentwood Library: **Carbon Pricing and Climate Change**. Speaker: Fred LeMay, Citizens' Climate Lobby. Register [HERE](#).

October 20, 2021. 7:00 p.m. Inaugural Women's Leadership & Legacy Night. Celebrating women of Nashville, their success and inspiring future generations in their goals. Support the Nashville Soccer League and Thistle Farms by buying or donating a ticket. Please click [HERE](#).

November 5, 2021. 12:00 p.m. Hot Topic: Sustainability in Nashville. Speaker: Jenn Harrman, Zero Waste Program Manager, Metro Water Services, Division of Waste Services. Look for an email to register for this **Zoom** program.

November 2, 2021. 11:00 a.m. **In Support of Medicaid Expansion Forum – Part 1.** Sponsored by the TN Health Care Campaign. On Zoom. Join [HERE](#).

November 16, 2021. 11:00 a.m. **In Support of Medicaid Expansion Forum – Part 2.** Sponsored by the TN Health Care Campaign. On Zoom. Join [HERE](#).



October's Co-President Message

Welcome to October! Even though this year is not an election year, the **League of Women Voters Nashville** has been busy with voter registration, community events, and connecting with other civic nonprofits in the area. On National Voter Registration Day, I spoke with the Music City Links to

help them kick off their voter education campaign. Other board members have been busy meeting with and making connections with others in the city. It's been a great time to meet with people and share common goals. One concern that comes up is how to help voters understand the importance of local elections and not just voting in the presidential elections. As we head into the next year, we will continue to tackle this challenge.

The board members have written goals, and we invite you to read the goals <https://lwnashville.org/portfolio-goals/>. Over the course of the next few months, I want to highlight some of the great work being done by our board. For example, Karen Hernan and Pat McCauley, the Metro Government Co-chairs, have been watching Metro council meetings and following issues of particular interest to the **LWVN**. They have been following issues related to affordable housing, the Community Oversight Board, and how the COVID-19 relief money is being spent. We appreciate their diligence as watching those meetings is no small feat!

Redistricting continues to be an important topic. The League of Women Voters of Tennessee continues to lead these efforts by hosting meetings. Per the web site, the 10/19 11:00 event we wanted to invite people to has been cancelled due to the special legislative session that has been called by the Governor ... not sure what to say here about the topic ...

Thank you for continued commitment to civic action!

Lara Webb

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Membership Committee

By Reba Holmes

With great delight, 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:

Burkley Allen, Mary Allen, Barbara Bauer, Eileen Beehan, Eric Bond, Susan Brandenburg, Marcia Colone, Meredith Denney, Ophelia Doe, Ann P. Duncan, Robert English, Jennifer Foley, Melissa Holden, Linda McFadyen-Ketchum, Dr. Steve McFadyen-Ketchum, Mary McDaniel, Dr. Margaret S. Norris, Judy Raines, Madeleine Richhart, Patricia Scott, Jackie Shrago, Virginia "Tracy" Smith, Clare Sullivan, The Enrichment Zone, Martha Trammell, and Andrea Upchurch.

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

Anne Dallas Dudley \$250.00

- **Delta Davis**

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Annual Membership Drive Continues

Our annual membership continues, and many of you have renewed or joined the league for the first time. Outstanding effort, and thank you!

You matter and your involvement in all we do makes a difference. Our collective voices will make a difference. We are counting on you to serve or continue to serve as an advocate to defend and protect our system of democracy and its cornerstones. We need more advocates like you; please encourage your family, friends, and co-workers to join the league.

Membership allows you to share a year's worth of experiences promoting democracy, educating others in the community, supporting redistricting reform and ending gerrymandering, registering new voters, participating in the overall political discourse, to name a few. Plus, the annual membership includes membership to the national, state, and local LWV organizations. Details regarding various support levels may be found on [our website](#).

If you prefer to pay by check, please mail it along with a "[Membership Form](#)." The words "Membership Form" is an active link, if you click on it a form will appear for you to download or print.

We also want to hear from you! Share your comments regarding why you want to join the League of Women Voters and email us your comments to

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.

Here is what one of our members said:

The world is topsy turvy today. One thing I know for sure, in a representative democracy, voters should choose their representatives, not the other way around. Joining the League of Women Voters is perfect. I can be a change agent for GOOD!

Education Committee

By Committee Co-Chairs Jami Oakley and Mary Claire Dismukes

As the school year moves forward, we're thinking about high school voter registration events! While it's still unclear how things will play out in the spring due to COVID restriction uncertainty, now would be a good time to contact the LWV Nashville Voter Services committee (bethgordon524@gmail.com) if you think you'd like to participate in any events that we plan at local high schools in March or April.

Both the local Nashville chapter and the Tennessee state Leagues advocated strongly last year for more state funding for public education, as Tennessee sits firmly in the bottom 10 states in the nation for per-pupil funding. Last week, Gov. Lee announced a critical review of the state's funding formula (the Basic Education Program, or BEP), which hasn't been significantly altered in about three decades and is currently under attack in a lawsuit that alleges that the way the formula is calculated leaves too much of a burden on locally-sourced funds vs. state funds. The formula is reviewed each year by a state-appointed committee, though the committee's recommendations have not been fully adopted in a number of years. This year, a stronger approach is being taken, and input is being requested from citizens as well as from 18 different committees, the heads of which were announced a few days after the news that the formula was being examined.

Read more about the announcement, the process and the committees here:

- [Tennessee Governor to Change How Schools are Funded](#)
- [Governor Lee Announces Plan to New Public Education Funding Formula](#)
- [Governor Lee Calls for Review of State Education Funding Formula](#)

Notably, the recently announced winner of the Nobel prize in economics did most of his work studying the relationship between funding and learning – and determined that more funding is, in fact, tied to better student outcomes. Read more [here](#).

If you'd like to offer support of more funding for our public education system as the governor's office and these 18 committees seek feedback, you can enter your information into the form linked [here](#).

By Committee Co-Chairs Pat McCauley and Karen Hernan

Metro Council meets on the second and fourth Tuesday at 6:30pm. Committee meetings begin at 12:00 pm and are scheduled through the afternoon as well as other specific days and times. The schedule for Metro Council meetings and committee meetings is found online

<https://www.nashville.gov/departments/council/boards/metro-council/meetings>. One can view meetings online accessing

<https://www.nashville.gov/Information-Technology-Services/Cable-Television-Services/Metro-Nashville-Network/Live-Streaming.aspx>.

September Metro Council Meeting Notes

- A mask mandate for all individuals in public spaces was deferred indefinitely.
- Metro Department of Housing Authority (MDHA) continues the eviction moratorium for pandemic.
- Legislation is being developed to give the Transportation Licensing Commission (TLC) the authority to regulate the party buses. Whatever the final version, it will not take effect until April. A group of Hume Fogg students spoke saying they can hear the party buses and stated they wanted a peaceful learning environment.

LWVN members Pat McCauley and Karen Hernan will monitor future meetings and report on resolutions and bills relevant to League portfolio positions.

Health Care/Public Health Committee

By Committee Co-Chairs Constance Caldwell and Claire Sullivan

The Public Health Committee continues to monitor what is happening in Congress around the health care infrastructure aspects of the Build Back Better Budget Reconciliation package. Last month we alerted you to the Medicaid Saves Lives bill which would create a Medicaid look-alike program on the Affordable Care Act Marketplace for low income individuals in non-Medicaid expansion states like Tennessee. This would enable an estimated 400,000 Tennesseans – and 2.2 million Americans in total – an opportunity to gain access to health insurance being denied to them by their state legislatures. Another significant health investment is expansion of Medicare benefits to include vision, hearing, and dental care access to all senior and disabled Medicare recipients. As far as we know both of these health components of the Build Back Better package are still on the list, but pressure to reduce the overall cost of the package may impact this.

Health care providers and others serving TennCare recipients continue to await a response from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid to reopen comments on the TennCare III (modified block grant) waiver approved in the waning days of the past administration. The LWV submitted testimony that was critical of the new

financing approach which incentivizes on-going reductions to TennCare funding and minimizes federal oversight of the program.

We will also be watching the Supreme Court hearing on the Mississippi abortion law, now scheduled for December 1, and understanding what the impact of a decision in support to this law would mean for our state.

On the local front, the Public Health Committee continues to meet twice monthly to explore health care concerns in Davidson County. We met this month with Ron Johnson, the Mayor's Community Safety Coordinator to learn about this new role, the underlying issues surrounding community and youth violence in Nashville, and promising approaches to prevention. We also continue to monitor the Public Health Department Board of Health monthly meetings and how our city's response to COVID is developing.

One other issue which bears watching is the increase in drug usage and deaths by overdosing. In 2020, there were over 3,000 overdose drug deaths in Tennessee-an increase of 45% from the previous year. Nationally, for that same period of time, the overdose rate was just 30%. Counterfeit pills containing Fentanyl have been the major problem. The largest number of victims have been those between the ages of 35-44 years. According to the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Disorders, Tennessee not only has problems with counterfeit pills but it has an addiction problem.

The Public Health Committee has a growing concern for the support given to our COVID critical care providers who are coping with burnout and hostility from patients questioning their diagnosis and treatment. The latter issue is becoming more prevalent.

Environment Committee

By Education Co-Chair Barbara Gay

The Sierra Club is one of the largest and oldest environmental groups in the county. Their mission statement is:

To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth;

To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources;

To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

Our board member, Rita Bullinger writes a column, "Dear Eartha" for the newsletter, Tennes Sierran from the Sierra Club Tennessee Chapter. To learn more and volunteer go to: <https://www.sierraclub.org/tennessee/middle-tennessee/ico-activities-nashville>.

October Hot Topic: I'll Take You There, Exploring Nashville's Social Justice Sites

By Committee Chair Karen Wieckert

Our First Friday presenters in October were Learotha Williams , PhD., and Amie Thurber, Ph.D. They engaged us with wonderful stories that form the basis of their book, "I'll Take You There, Exploring Nashville's Social Justice Sites". They, and some of their students, interviewed folks who lived where much of the Civil Rights Era work took place. Engaging ordinary folks, inquiring about what they had seen during that period, the writers discovered a plethora of information from oral history perspectives that added dimension and salience to the sites listed in their book. The book offers a social justice tour guide covering sites from the Civil War onward, reflecting Nashville as a place where we, the citizens, can and do move forward re-imagining what and who Nashville is. Copies of the book can be obtained by contacting Karen at kwieckert@gmail.com.

November Hot Topic: What a Waste!

By Co-Vice President Carole Kenner

The November 5th Hot Topic will feature Jenn Harrman, Zero Waste Program Manager with the Metro Water Services Division of Waste Services. She will discuss Davidson County's long-term zero waste plan, as well as current issues with recycling, waste services, and landfills. Once again, we will be on Zoom at noon. Hope to possibly start meeting in person in the new year.

Williamson County Update

By Linda Sherman

On October 20 at 1:00 p.m. the LWVWC planned to host a discussion on redistricting, voter participation and other legislative issues. However, due to the Governor calling a special session, this has been postponed until the spring. Instead, our program will be on Carbon Pricing and Climate Change with Speaker: Fred LeMay, Citizens' Climate Lobby.

[Click here](#) to visit the Brentwood Library Website and register.

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

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.

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