



CALENDAR | NASHVILLE VOTER

The Nashville Voter

Volume 74, No 12-- November 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

Mark Your Calendars!

November 1, 2021 to January 15, 2022. Open Enrollment for the ACA. Call **844-644-5443** to see if you're eligible for help, for information, or to make an appointment. This number is supported by the [TN Health Care Campaign](#).

November 16, 2021, 12:00 PM CT. In Support of Medicaid Expansion, Part 2. Senator Richard Briggs and Representative Gloria Johnson will discuss why they are supportive of Medicaid Expansion. Register [here](#) for the Zoom presentation.

November 17, 1:00-2:00 PM CT. [The League of Women Voters of Williamson County](#) and Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America will hold a Zoom meeting about gun violence prevention. To attend, [please click here to](#)

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November's Co-President Message

November has arrived. You may be asking yourself “**What is Happening in November?**” Even though it is not an election year, the **League of Women Voters Nashville** community is not idle. Not by a long shot.

Here's what we've been up to:

- **Winding** up our membership drive. Thanks to all of you who have either renewed your membership for 2021/2022 and to those who have newly joined. Your support and voice are important to the League here in Davidson County and across both the state and the nation. If you haven't renewed yet, please go to <https://lwvnashville.org/membership/>.
- **Remaining** committed to monitoring redistricting within our community and across the state. For the most recent information on redistricting here in Davidson County, go to <https://redistrict.nashville.gov> . Here you will find the most recent information and the revised maps.
- **Continuing** to monitor the Davidson County Election Commission and planning for future voter registration events.
- **Monitoring** the Metropolitan Davidson County Council Meetings and reporting on those both to the Board and in the Voter.
- **Supporting** efforts to enroll Tennesseans into TennCare or the Affordable Care Act and attending the bi-weekly Metropolitan Nashville Health Committee meetings.
- **Building** partnerships within the Nashville community to advocate for those issues that affect all of us.

If you would like to volunteer for one of these efforts, please email me at mgarr2@gmail.com .

In addition, the **League of Women Voters of Tennessee** is looking for volunteers for their Restore Voting Rights initiative. Currently, there is a need for volunteers to conduct phone interviews during the winter months. These interviews involve contacting agencies in each county which have oversight on the restoration of voting rights. For more information or to volunteer, contact Margaret Massy-Cox at marg7951@aol.com

As you can see, there is much to do. Have a busy and wonderful November and a grateful Thanksgiving.

Madeline Garr

In Memoriam

It is with sorrow that we remember the death of Kay Simmons, a remarkable woman who contributed so much to the League of Women Voters Nashville, to Metro Schools, and to a host of other organizations. We offer our deepest condolences to Pat Snyder, her sister. May her memory be a blessing.

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:

- Suzanne Allen, Jeanne Ballinger, Jennifer Corwin, Bill and Margaret Howell, Benita Kaimowitz, Sally Kanaday, Jan Sobotka, and Irwin Venick.

Anne Dallas Dudley Member

- Mina Johnson

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

It's Never Too Late

Our annual membership continues, and many of you have renewed or joined the league for the first time. **As of November 2021, we have approximately 213 active members!** 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 community members like you; please encourage your family, friends, and co-workers to join the league. A League membership is a

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Membership allows you to share a year's worth of experiences promoting democracy, educating others in the community, supporting efforts to stop the spread of misinformation and disinformation, 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 want to hear from you! Share with us why you joined the League of Women Voters. Email your comments to lwvnash@gmail.com

Health Care/Public Health Committee

By Committee Co-Chairs Constance Caldwell and Claire Sullivan

The LWVNashville Public Health Committee met in the Votes for Women room of the Nashville Public Library this past month and also toured the Civil Rights room with guide David Ewing, whose grandmother was the first African-American woman to register to vote in Tennessee. The visit inspired us all to stay the course in efforts to improve health equity for Nashvillians and to realize how deeply those inequities permeate our city's past.

That visit coincided with the opening session of the Tennessee General Assembly's Special Session on COVID, and some of the members observed the opening session [see photo]. After only three days of mostly closed door deliberations the session produced a package of state legislation which undermines efforts by local governments and businesses to enact best practices to prevent spread of COVID and directly contradicts federal OSHA and CDC recommendations and policies.

This legislation restricts local government entities including school boards and university boards from instituting mask and vaccine mandates unless there are 1000 COVID cases per 100,000 population, which is 10 times higher than what CDC considers a seriously high case rate. However, the legislation enables private education facilities to proceed as they see fit to protect their students and staff – or not.

The legislation also overrules decades of precedent in Nashville and the four other major municipalities in the state which have had independent Departments

Our committee will continue to monitor the impact of this state omnibus COVID legislation and the lawsuits that result, with an eye on working to amend some of the worst impacts in the 2022 General Session. We continue to monitor efforts to include a pathway to healthcare coverage for the over 300,000 Tennesseans denied access to Medicaid expansion coverage in the Build Back Better bill, and will watch the Supreme Court's deliberations on a Mississippi lawsuit designed to overturn Roe v Wade protections scheduled for early December.



LWV NASHVILLE Public Health Committee members Pat Post MPA, Jeanne Ballinger MD and Linda Halperin MD join with other medical providers attending the opening of the October General Session on COVID-19.

Education Committee

By Committee Co-Chairs Jami Oakley and Mary Claire Dismukes

Metro Nashville Public Schools (MNPS) school board met this week and finalized details of a controversially approved new charter school in West Nashville. Earlier this year, Nashville Classical School of the Arts, which already operates an East Nashville campus, [was denied approval](#) by our locally elected school board to open a new school in the Bellevue area. The charter school then appealed to the newly appointed (by the Governor) [Tennessee Public Charter School Commission](#), which overturned that decision and gave the group approval.

At the Tuesday, November 9 school board meeting there was a vote to determine whether the school should fall under the jurisdiction of the local school district or under state control, since the school was approved at the state level rather than locally. A close vote determined that it will be placed under the local MNPS umbrella.

Proponents of the new charter are enthusiastic about offering parents more school choice and note the school's success in East Nashville, while opponents fear that the charter will slow down the progress of local neighborhood elementary schools such as the Gower and Charlotte Park Elementary schools by diverting students and funds away from them.

School funding – a state and local hot topic heading into the legislative session. One thing the school board seems to be unified about is that the district needs and students deserve a higher level of funding from the state, which remains one of the lowest-funded states for public education in the nation. The Education Law Center released their annual report this month, and Tennessee has failing grades across the board in funding level (F), funding distribution (D) and funding effort (F). See the [report](#).

The BEP Review process that the governor announced last month is in full swing, with only two of the eight scheduled regional meetings left. In most meetings, there was a mix of local public school advocates calling for more funding for things like counselors, social workers and better teacher pay alongside a contingent voicing support for funding that “follows the student,” assumably all the way to a potential voucher program.

The meetings are collecting public input, which then goes to 18 different subcommittees who will come up with recommendations on changes to the BEP formula in order to inform potential legislation to be proposed when the session begins this winter. It's important to note that a long-delayed lawsuit against the state regarding the BEP and its inadequate funding to districts throughout Tennessee is also scheduled to be heard in February.

For now – send your input here: tnedu.funding@tn.gov for consideration in the ongoing conversation.

Separate from the governor's statewide canvassing campaign for input regarding how to reformulate the BEP, the official BEP Review Committee released its annual report in October, which called for several changes to the formula, many of which have been called for year after year with not much change.

Highlights of their recommendations include items for which the LWV advocated last year and will again this year:

1. Funding the number of school nurses at a level closer to national best practices
2. Funding the number of school counselors at a level closer to national best practices

4. Continued commitment to increased teacher compensation
5. Increased funding for technology and accessibility

Additionally significant is the committee's statement on the BEP salary component gap: "For the 2021 fiscal year (FY21), the BEP salary component was \$48,330, compared to an average actual statewide licensed salary of \$55,917. This represents approximately a 15.7% gap in licensed salary funding levels." You can read the entire report [here](#).

Legislative Special Session Bills Affecting Education

Several of the bills passed during the legislative special session in October will affect schools, notably including one that prohibits mask mandates in public schools unless five difficult criteria are met, including extremely high standards for the definition of "severe conditions." Private schools, meanwhile, are free to enact or retract mask mandates independently of the government.

Another bill allows for school board elections to be partisan, though a last minute edit to the bill changed the language from partisan school board elections being mandatory to being "optional." A major concern of school board elections becoming partisan is that it brings more politics into the education sphere, taking the focus off of the students and what's best for them. In addition, it may dissuade non-politically-motivated, neighborhood-focused individuals from entering a race to serve on their school board at all.

Community Connections

By Committee Co-Chairs Sabina Mohyuddin and Felisha Baquera

Community Connections would like to gather resources from other LWV members such as partner organizations and individuals whom you've contacted. This directory can help each committee connect with local partners and find internal resources amongst LWV members and make our work as efficient and collaborative as possible.

Can you please visit the spreadsheet below before November 30 and include as much info as you have for any current connections? Please include yourself, if you are able to serve as a resource on a topic (registration, restoration, redistricting, etc.). We are seeking members who can be virtual or in-person speakers, as well.

To start, I've included examples. If you have a relationship with an organization that has been included, you can add contacts or notes to [the spreadsheet](#).
(Duplicates are allowed.)

Environment Committee

By Education Co-Chairs Russanne Buchi-Fotre and Barbara Gay

[Elder Climate Action](#) is the home to elder climate activists committed to a non-partisan effort to end the Climate Crisis and build a just and sustainable future for our youth. This group is dedicated to using their wisdom and strength, time, and resources, believing that collective action is the most effective way to force policy change. It is an inclusive national organization that offers educational opportunities and projects dedicated to using the power of caring to take care of our Earth. To join the Tennessee Chapter of Elder Climate Action, [click here](#).

Voter Services

By Committee Co-Chairs Beth Gordon, Allison Haymer, Emily Grohs

The [League of Women Voters of Tennessee](#) is looking for volunteers for their Restore Voting Rights initiative. Currently, there is a need for volunteers to conduct phone interviews during the winter months. These interviews involve contacting agencies in each county which have oversight on the restoration of voting rights. For more information or to volunteer, contact Margaret Massy-Cox at mmc7951@aol.com.

Metro Council Meeting

By Committee Co-Chairs Pat McCauley and Karen Hernan

LWVN members Pat McCauley and Karen Hernan will monitor future meetings and report on resolutions and bills relevant to League portfolio positions. [Metro Council Meetings](#) can be found online at <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>.

Metro Council Meeting Notes

- Participatory Budget Meetings are being held over the next few weeks in each district.
- The Executive Committee planned to meet November 3 to analyze and

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measures and centralizing decision making with the TN Health Commissioner and Governor.

- Ongoing meetings and maneuvers concerning private property land (trailer housing neighborhoods) on Dickerson Pike that will be sold to developers, thus requiring current tenants to find alternative housing.
- Legislation and policy for video license plate reader technology.
- Continued focus on tree restoration and tree planting.
- Continued work and legislation with zoning and historic overlays in specific neighborhoods.

November Hot Topic: What a Waste!

By Committee Chair Karen Wieckert

Our November program was focused on the issues surrounding waste disposal in Nashville/Davidson County. Our speaker, Jenn Harrman, Zero Waste Program Manager with the Metro Water Services Division of Waste Services, explained to us what Zero Waste means, minimizing the waste we generate and maximizing the diversion of materials from landfills through sustainable solid waste management practices. This is a most important issue for us as we are running out of places to “ditch” our trash. With a Zero Waste mindset, we can transition from a linear economy that focuses on the start and end of a product’s life, to a circular economy that captures and reincorporates materials.

According to Ms. Harrmann, [The Zero Waste Plan](#) for Nashville has the following goals:

1. Reach zero waste, defined as diverting 90% of Nashville waste away from landfills.
2. Increase recycling, food waste reduction and recovery, and composting throughout Davidson County.
3. Adopt recycling and recovery programs targeted towards the construction and demolition waste stream.
4. Strengthen public education programs to help Nashvillians refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle and compost.

While Ms. Harrman felt we were moving forward in meeting the goals, she hopes more community support and education will speed up the process. She encouraged each of us to “pitch in”. For more information go to <https://www.nashville.gov/departments/water/waste-and-recycling>.

December Hot Topic: Thistles are Fierce But Resilient

By Co-Vice President Carole Kenner

On Friday December 3rd, Dorris Walker-Taylor the Senior Ambassador of Community Relations at Thistle Farms will present our Hot Topic. Ms. Walker-Taylor will discuss the history, present and future of Thistle Farms as well as Magdalene, the unique sanctuary house here in Nashville, and their expanding national network emanating from Nashville. Although we are not in person yet, Ms. Walker-Taylor will provide a discount code for products from the social enterprise. The thistle signifies the strength of the women involved with the social enterprises -- it has a deep root that can break through concrete and survive drought. For more information about Thistle Farms, Magdalene, and their founder Becca Stevens, visit the website at <https://thistlefarms.org/>.

Williamson County Update

By Linda Sherman

[The League of Women Voters of Williamson County](#) and [Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America](#) will hold a Zoom meeting about gun violence prevention. Our Guest Speaker will be Jody Barnwell Smith - the co-Leader of the Williamson County volunteer chapter. Jody became a Moms volunteer after the [mass shooting at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School](#) in Parkland Florida.

[Moms Demand Action](#) is a non-partisan, grassroots movement, created to reduce gun violence by passing stronger gun laws, closing legal loopholes and encouraging a culture of responsible gun ownership. If you're interested in joining Moms Demand Action, [click here](#) to attend their statewide interest meeting. [Every Town for Gun Safety](#) has chapters in every state with more than six million supporters and 375,000 donors.

Join Us: Wednesday, November 17, 1:00-2:00 PM. To attend, [please click here to register](#) or visit the [John P. Holt Brentwood Library website](#).

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.

ATTENTION: *Please show your support by following us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [YouTube](#). Let us know what you think and send us feedback!*

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