

The Nashville Voter

Volume 75, No 1-- January 2022

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.

Reminders

State Advocacy Committee: All LWVTN members are invited to participate in our State Advocacy Committee for 2022. Weekly meetings will begin Monday, January 24 at 12:00 pm CST / 1:00 pm EST.

- The advocacy committee will
 - Provide timely and actionable information about upcoming legislation that furthers our advocacy priorities.
 - Identify the best ways that our paid state lobbyist, Stewart Clifton, can help us increase our collective efficacy.
 - Equip all league members with the skills needed to be effective advocates and citizen lobbyists.

Interested? Please email league@lwvtn.org to receive weekly notifications of the Zoom Advocacy Committee meetings along with the agenda.

Sign this Petition to Keep TN Whole: Voters pick our leaders, our leaders should not get to pick their voters. [Click here](#) to add your name to a petition calling on lawmakers to draw maps that keep Tennessee communities whole, instead of drawing maps that divide us for their own political gain.

COVID-19 Tests Available: Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order free at-home COVID-19 tests. [Order your tests](#) now so you have them when you need them at [COVIDTests.gov](https://www.covidtests.gov).

League Events (<https://lwvnashville.org/event-calendar/>)

February 4 at 12:00pm: Hot Topic: An Alternative to Defund the Police: Mental Health Crisis Intervention...Boots

February 16 at 1:00 pm: League of Women Voters of Williamson County Meeting. Guest speaker: Cathy Montgomery, County Health Director of the Williamson County Health Department will be speaking about public health issues, including Covid. [Click here to register](#) or select the Visit Our Calendar tab on the Brentwood John P. Holt Library Website.

Metro Nashville Meetings (<https://www.nashville.gov/departments/information-technology-services/cable-television-services/metro-nashville-network/live>)

January 20: NDOT, Metro Parks, Health and Social Services. Nashville Department of Transportation Interim Director, Faye Dimassimo Metro Parks Director, Monique Odom Nashville General Hospital CEO, Dr. Joseph Webb Metro Affordable Housing Manager, Hannah Davis. [Click here](#) to learn more.

January 27: Debt Service and General Government. Metro Planning Capital Improvement, Greg Claxton Metro Treasurer, Michelle Bosch. [Click here](#) to learn more.



The **LWVN** is kicking off this year with our community outreach initiative. Board members have crafted resource sheets. [Click here](#) to read the resource sheets! This is the first step in our community outreach initiative. We want the **LWVN** to be a resource in the community and help our neighbors advocate and engage in their government. We will be sharing these with council members, and we encourage you to share them with your neighborhood organizations and community groups.

Recently, the Tennessee Legislature unveiled plans for redistricting. The proposed map splits Davidson County into 3 different districts. Read about the redistricting plan to split

Nashville into 3 districts [here](#). The **LWVN** does not believe the proposed redistricting maps reflect the interests of Tennesseans. The **LWVTN** responded with a statement. Read the full statement [here](#). This map disproportionately harms black voters and other minority voters with the way Nashville split. Read about the response from the **TN NAACP** [here](#).

Throughout the redistricting process, we heard from numerous people about “keeping counties together.” Our city is rapidly growing and changing and has different needs with regards to our economy, infrastructure, and constituent services for its residents. Nashville is best served by a representative familiar with the many unique neighborhoods of our city.

The Tennessee Senate also released its redistricting map. See the Tennessee Senate map [here](#).

The Tennessee State House map was released last month. See the map and analysis [here](#).

Lara Webb

February Hot Topic: An Alternative to Defund the Police: Mental Health Crisis Intervention....Boots on the Ground By Co-Vice President Carole Kenner and Karen Wieckert

Our First Friday program speaker for February will be Robin Nobling, Executive Director of Partners in Care, Metro

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Launched in June 28, 2021, the Partners in Care Program provides training to police officers in mental health support, education, advocacy, and awareness, pairing police officers with mental health crisis workers. The program was developed in response to community requests, and after extensive research on response models from around the country.

The first class of sixteen officers from the East and North precincts were trained to work towards a goal of peacefully de-escalating crisis situations, diverting people to mental health services, and limiting force and arrest in an initial response to a crisis. Mental health clinicians supervised by Michael Randolph of the [Mental Health Cooperative's Crisis Services](#) cross-trained with the officers to prepare to accompany them on calls where a mental health response was indicated. [NAMI \(National Alliance on Mental Illness\) Davidson County](#) participated in the training to give first-person views of families and individuals experiencing a crisis that involved police intervention, what was helpful, what was not, and also to open themselves up to questions to increase understanding.

Nobling will share information on the peer-to-peer evidence-based free support groups and education classes that individuals and families have taken part in to reduce crisis in the home. Preliminary data from the program has been excellent with 41% of calls triggering mental health assessments, and only 4% resulting in arrest.

February 4 at 12:00pm: Hot Topic: An Alternative to Defund the Police: Mental Health Crisis Intervention...Boots on the Ground. Robin Nobling, Executive Director of Metro's new "Partners in Care" program which was launched in response to requests from the community. [Click here](#) to register.

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:

- Laura Denison, Barbara Dentz, Diane Honda, Benita Kaimowitz, Lynn Reynolds, and Cynthia Woods
- Anne Dallas Dudley – Kristine LaLonde

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

Join the Membership Committee

We are excited to announce that we are establishing a Membership Committee to provide guidance during the annual membership drive and develop other vital programs related to membership. We invite you to join the new committee to serve as a communication lead, recruiting lead, social media lead, etc.

Membership Committee Job Description:

- The committee
 - Will provide a strategic vision to increase membership, focusing on effective, comprehensive growth, new member integration, and membership retention.
 - Develop a program designed to mentor new members, specifically young adult members.
 - Increase awareness regarding the League throughout our community by working with other portfolio managers to develop a communication and outreach program
 - Develop annual renewal implementation procedures, timeline, communication, and follow-up
 - Develop a strategy to recruit potential members across various demographics

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Meeting Schedule: The initial meeting will be held in February 2022 via Zoom. We will meet monthly after the first meeting.

If you are interested in serving on the committee please send an email to expressing your interest to lwnash@gmail.com.

Member Comments

We want to hear from you! Share your comments regarding why you joined the League of Women Voters! Email your comments to lwnash@gmail.com.

Health Care/Public Health Committee

By Committee Co-Chairs Constance Caldwell and Claire Sullivan

COVID-19 and its variants continue to hold the spotlight nationally and in Tennessee. The Tennessee Department of Health has begun to report cases on a weekly basis rather than daily as was previously done. This change in frequency of reporting could pose a problem for epidemiologists and local health officials in tracking trends and making policies for control of the virus.

It has been identified, not only in Tennessee but also across the country, that reported cases of the virus in rural areas may be more than the figures we have been given. In some counties, deaths are reported by phone to the designated health officials by family members. Those family members may not be aware that patients have a co-morbidity of COVID or some may choose to not have that diagnosis reflected. Limited resources in some areas can not provide for information follow-up or for activities such as post-mortem covid testing so death certificates may reflect incorrect information.

The Public Health Portfolio committee has also been learning about Metro Nashville's programs and services for preventing and aiding unhoused persons and families during this time of intensifying gentrification. We will also be monitoring health related legislation moving through the General Assembly and implementation of the No Surprises Act, which became effective January 1, banning balance billing of insured consumers for emergency medical services beyond the amounts of deductibles and copayments covered by their policies.

LWVNashville members are invited to join us for our biweekly meetings every second and fourth Wednesdays. Please contact Clare Sullivan at clare.d.sullivan@gmail.com if you would like to participate.

Check out our **NEW** Community Resource Sheet: <https://lwnashville.org/community-resource-public-health/>.

Education Committee

By Committee Co-Chairs Jami Oakley and Mary Claire Dismukes

The State Department of Education has released their draft of what will go into a new funding formula for Tennessee's public schools. See the document [here](#) and keep an eye out for additional information and chances to let our elected officials know what we think should be prioritized here in The Voter, in Action Alert emails from the League, and on our social media channels. We'll be talking a lot about the overhaul of the BEP (Basic Education Plan – the state's funding formula for public education) as specific legislation surrounding funding comes to light, so find below some resources to study up on so that you're prepared to help us to take action to ensure that this is the year our legislature prioritizes education for the one million students statewide. Between the attention to the issue and a

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- **What is the BEP and why isn't the current formula working?** Read this BEP Policy Brief from the Nashville Public Education Foundation: https://nashvillepef.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/NPEF_Funding-Our-Schools-Brief_March-2021.pdf.
- **Does funding really matter?** Does an adequate budget affect student outcomes? Read here about numerous studies from last year's Nobel Prize winner in Economics, with plenty of links to read further in the article: <https://www.chalkbeat.org/2021/10/13/22724766/economics-nobel-prize-education-research-school-spending>.
- **What are the questions we should be asking as the state overhauls education funding?** Read some thoughts here from the Education Trust in Tennessee on public school funding reform advocacy surrounding this process: <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Funding-Reform-Advocacy-Guide-3.pdf>
- And, finally, what is the **League of Women Voters of Tennessee's position on public education:** <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lwvtn/pages/47/attachments/original/1621308016/Education.pdf?1621308016.pdf>

Stay tuned as we share our thoughts (and those of educators, parents, students and other key stakeholders) on the evolution of the new funding formula as well as other issues expected to make an appearance this year, such as COVID protocols and their repercussions, "critical race theory," and more.

Check out our **NEW** Community Resource Sheet: <https://lwvnashville.org/community-resource-education>

Environment Committee

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

The [TN Environmental Council](#) is sponsoring TN Tree Day on March 19, 2022. This is America's largest community tree planting event. The League's Environment Committee is hoping to engage our members in this family-friendly activity that plans to involve over 10,000 volunteers in planting 75,000 trees throughout the state.

Join us in this effort by going to <https://www.tectn.org/tennesseetreeprogram> to explore your selections of trees (canopy, flowering and understories), the 112 pick-up sites, and how to place your order.

This is a wonderful opportunity to replant trees lost as a result of development, repair degrading streams and increase habitat for wildlife and pollinators at your home or anywhere you can get permission to plant a tree. If you would like the chance to be more directly involved in the planting and distribution of the trees, please contact Russanne at 615-715-1936.

Check out our **NEW** Community Resource Sheet: <https://lwvnashville.org/community-resource-environment>.

Metro Council Meeting

By Committee Co-Chairs Pat McCauley and Karen Hernan

Pat McCauley and Karen Hernan viewed the Metro Council Meeting livestream on December 21 and January 4. Here's an overview of what happened:

Environment:

- Metro Davidson county will discontinue vehicle emission testing effective February 4

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- Curbside recycling continues to be on hold. Households are strongly encouraged to bring recycling items to convenience centers. Metro citizens are encouraged to help neighbors and friends who are unable to transport recycling items due to physical limitations or lack of transportation. Metro public works/water service and metro council members striving to resolve equipment and labor issues to resume curbside pickup

Criminal justice/ violence prevention

- American Rescue Plan funds directed to programs aimed at violence prevention efforts focusing on Napier-Sudekum Community Safety Plan and Partners in Care pilot program and to create a Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program

Redistricting

- Bill to align Davidson County council districts and school districts with new boundaries formed by redistricting process.

Fair Commission Appointees

- Appointment of Mr. Mario Avila for a term expiring March 30, 2023 and Mr. Jasper Hendricks for a term expiring January 4, 2027.

Planning and Zoning

- Routine planning and zoning approvals to increase multi-family residential housing (apartments).

Check out our **NEW** Community Resource Sheet: <https://lwvnashville.org/community-resource-metro-government/>

Williamson County Update

By Committee Chair Linda Sherman

[League of Women Voters of Williamson County](#)'s February Meeting will feature Cathy Montgomery, County Health Director of the Williamson County Health Department. She will be speaking about public health issues, including COVID-19.

Mrs. Montgomery has served as the County Health Director for more than 9 years. Her career in public health spans more than 20 years where she has worked in both state and local health departments in Florida and Tennessee. Cathy has her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in health education from Florida State University, but she continues to be an avid UT Volunteer fan. She and her husband Jim – a retired police officer and Brentwood Police Department employee, reside in Spring Hill. She is Gigi to two grandchildren, Mackenzie and Miles.

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Communications Committee

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The Communications Committee has spent this month using it's social media platforms to help educate the public on important issues impacting Nashville and Tennessee. Please be sure to like, follow, and share our content to help increase the League's visibility in Nashville.

- YouTube: [LWVNashville](#)
- Instagram: [LWVNashville](#)
- Twitter: [NashvilleLWV](#)
- Facebook: [League of Women Voters Nashville](#)

We are looking for content creators and designers! If you or anyone you know is interested in helping with our social media presence, please email: contact@lwnashville.org!

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.lwnashville.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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