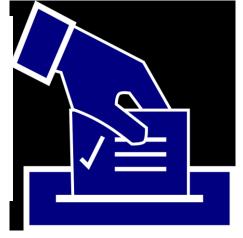


Mailing Address: PO Box 2786 Charlottesville, VA 22902 Telephone: 434 227-3264 Email: <u>lwv@lwv-cva.org</u> Website: <u>lwv-cva.org</u>

LWV CVA Sunday Semínar – A Free Online Event

September 20, 2 to 4 pm "LWV-VA Election Laws Position Study" Update Review Guest Speakers: One or more members of the LWV-VA Project Oversight Team Lisa Koteen Gerchick (Arlington), Sidney Johnson (Fairfax), Jane Newell (Richmond), Allison Brown (Falls Church)

"The Voter"



Join us for a "virtual" discussion on the LWV-VA's **Election Laws Study** Committee's recommendations to guide League members in education and voting advocacy for citizens. **Included in the Study are issues of cybersecurity as well as physical security challenges to the integrity of elections; no-excuse early voting; and LWV-VA's opposition to the photo ID requirement.** Our guest speakers will present what the study is all about. You will be able to use the "Chat" box to pose any questions or concerns about each part of this important study. Your input will help us to prepare our local League's response to the state committee's feedback form. Join us on Sunday, September 20, and become part of this important discussion on Virginia Election Laws Study. This is an online event: **Here is the link to get your free Eventbrite "Ticket":**

To Join the Zoom Sunday Seminar on September 20, Click here <u>on "Tickets"</u>

Or copy and paste this link to your browser:

<u>https://www.eventbrite.com/o/league-of-women-voters-of-the-charlottesville-area-30790593906</u> The link to join will be emailed to <u>tickets</u> prior to the event.

For more information about this Seminar, contact Pat Cochran, lwv@lwv-cva.org.



From LWV CVA President Pat Cochran: I am pleased to announce,

Senior Statesmen of Virginia 5th Congressional District Candidate Forum September 9, 1:30 pm Free and Open to the Public

Mr. Bob Good and Dr. Cameron Webb, candidates for the VA 5th Congressional District, have agreed to participate in the Senior Statesmen of Virginia forum, **Wednesday, September 9, 1:30 pm** meeting. Free and open to the public, *Senior Statesmen of Virginia*, a non-partisan organization, will hold the meeting via Zoom.

Registration is required. Click on this link

(or Copy and Paste this link to your browser):

https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZAsdOihrDkrGtJLrToAKtcAock1pfjKsmRv.

The customary Senior Statesmen of Virginia format will be followed. Candidates will have an opportunity to present their positions and then answer written questions from the audience to be asked by the moderator, Allison Wrabel of *The Daily Progress*. Audience members will be muted and their video turned off during the candidates' presentation, but able to submit questions via the Zoom "Chat" feature after the candidates have spoken.

For more information about this event, contact SSV Publicity Chair, Bonnie Brewer, email: <u>bonniebrewer5@gmail.com</u>.

LWV-VA Fall (Virtual) Workshop – Register at: <u>lwv-va.org</u> Saturday, September 12 ("Doors open" at 8:50 am)

Please RSVP <u>here</u> to get your Zoom meeting link. (The meeting link will be sent three times in the two days prior to the workshop.) Attendance is \$20 (LWV CVA members can be reimbursed: Contact Treasurer Anne Claar, email: anneclaar1@gmail.com). Workshop Agenda:

- 9:00-10:00 AM How to Get Out the Vote (GOTV): Maggie Bush, LWVUS
- break
- 10:05-11:05 AM **How to Combat Voter Suppression**: Andrea Miller, Poor People's Campaign of Virginia
- 11:05 AM-12:00 PM Brunch Break, optional breakout room conversation
- 12:00-1 PM Leadership Development: Kelly McFarland Stratman, LWVUS
- break
- 1:05-2:05 PM Deep Dive into League Positions: Betsy Lawson, LWVUS

Don't miss this chance to connect with members from all over the Commonwealth as you learn new ways to make your League more influential, effective, and efficient.

LWV CVA Voter Services Report By Sue Lewis, Voter Services Director -

From July 22, 2020 LWV-VA Communications

New Voting & Elections Laws took effect July 1, 2020

No Excuse Absentee Voting, HB 1 (Herring), HB 207 (VanValkenburg), SB 11 (Howell)

• Allows any voter qualified to vote in an election to vote absentee without an excuse.

Redistricting Constitutional Amendment, SJ18 (Barker), and Criteria Bill, SB717 (McClellan) / HB1255 (Price)

• Virginia's election maps are gerrymandered. Virginia's Constitution allows legislators to draw boundaries that ensure they are reelected. Legislators are able to use detailed voter data in selecting their own constituents. Last year, after extensive negotiation, Virginia's legislature passed a constitutional amendment for a redistricting commission of 8 legislators and 8 citizens, with a citizen chair. Virginia's legislature passed the constitutional amendment the requisite second time this session, along with criteria legislation from Senator Jennifer McClellan and Delegate Cia Price. The Senate vote was 38 – 2, and the House vote was 46 – 43. The General Assembly also passed a ballot referendum which will put the matter before voters in the November general election. [See pages 6-7 of this newsletter for information about this Amendment.]

Expand Accepted IDs; Eliminating Photo ID Requirement HB19 (Lindsey), HB213 (Sullivan), SB65 (Locke)

- HB19 and SB65 eliminate, for most qualified voters, the requirement to provide photo identification at the polls
- HB213 adds to the list of acceptable forms of voter ID a valid student photo ID card issued by any institution of higher education in any other state or territory of the United States

Repealing Race Based Restrictions on Voting, <u>HB1086</u> (Price), <u>SB555</u> (Spruill)

• Repeals laws that were still on the books relating to voting restrictions, poll taxes, and registration records separated on the basis of race

Automatic Voter Registration, <u>HB235</u> (J. Cole), <u>SB219</u> (Marsden)

• Gives visitors to the Department of Motor Vehicles the choice to opt out of registering to vote instead of an opt in to filling out a voter registration application.

Election Day Holiday, <u>HB108</u> (Lindsey), <u>SB610</u> (Lucas)

• Designates Election Day, the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, as a state holiday and removes Lee-Jackson Day as a state holiday.

High School Voter Registration, <u>HB1491</u> (Guy)

• Requires every public high school to give students, who are eligible to register to vote, access to registration information and applications, or access to the online registration system, and the opportunity to apply during the school day.

Same Day Registration & Voting, <u>HB201</u> (Ayala), *delayed effective date of July 1, 2022*.

• Will let qualified voters register and vote on the same day if they provide proof of residency.

Election 2020 - What's on Your Ballot?

Note: There are two proposed Amendments on the November 3 ballot. Here is the first:

Proposed Virginia Constitutional Amendment Redistricting Commission

BALLOT QUESTION #1: Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to establish a redistricting commission, consisting of eight members of the General Assembly and eight citizens of the Commonwealth, that is responsible for drawing the congressional and state legislative districts that will be subsequently voted on, but not changed by, the General Assembly and enacted without the Governor's involvement and to give the responsibility of drawing districts to the Supreme Court of Virginia if the redistricting commission fails to draw districts or the General Assembly fails to enact districts by certain deadlines? **YES/NO**

EXPLANATION OF PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: The proposed amendment would shift the responsibility of drawing election districts from the General Assembly and the Governor to a bipartisan commission, made up of 16 persons, half being members of the General Assembly and half being citizens of the Commonwealth. This commission would draw the election districts for the U.S. House of Representatives, the state Senate, and the House of Delegates and then submit the maps to the General Assembly for approval. If the commissioners are unable to agree on proposals for maps by a certain date, or if the General Assembly does not approve the submitted maps by a certain date, the commission is allotted additional time to draw new districts, but if maps are not then submitted or approved, the Supreme Court of Virginia becomes responsible for drawing these election districts.

The eight legislative commissioners are appointed by the political party leadership in the state Senate and the House of Delegates, with an equal number from each house and from each major political party. The eight citizen commissioners are picked by a committee of five retired circuit court judges. Four of the retired judges are selected by party leaders in the Senate and the House from a list compiled by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia. These four judges pick the fifth judge from the same list. This selection committee then chooses citizen commissioners from lists created by party leaders in the Senate and the House. Members and employees of Congress or the General Assembly cannot be citizen commissioners. Each party leader in each house gives the selection committee a list of at least 16 candidates, and the committee picks two from each list for a total of eight citizen commissioners.

For a plan to be submitted for the General Assembly's approval, at least six of the eight citizen commissioners and at least six of the eight legislative commissioners must agree to it. Additionally, for plans for General Assembly districts to be submitted, at least three of the four Senators on the commission have to agree to the Senate districts plan and at least three of the four Delegates on the commission have to agree to the House of Delegates districts plan.

The General Assembly cannot make any changes to these plans, and the Governor cannot veto any plan approved by the General Assembly. The amendment also adds a requirement that districts provide, where practicable, opportunities for racial and ethnic communities to elect candidates of their choice. A "yes" vote will make a bipartisan commission responsible for the initial drawing of election districts. A "no" vote will leave the sole responsibility for drawing the districts with the General Assembly and the Governor. *Continued on next page*

Page | 4 – September 2020

PRO AND CON ARGUMENTS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT (Continued from previous page)

Yes – For the Measure: Proponents say: 1. The redistricting commission amendment to the constitution provides for a balanced, bipartisan legislator and citizen membership chaired by a citizen—with meetings and data that are open to the public—and historic, new voting rights protections for racial and ethnic minorities. 2. As a constitutional amendment, the General Assembly can no longer draw the voting maps to the advantage of one party or the other. If the maps fail to be drawn or enacted, the responsibility for drawing the maps transfers to the state's highest court, which is a best practice in other states with redistricting reform. In the past, courts have engaged "special masters" who are experts in drawing voting districts.

No – Against the Measure: Opponents say: 1. The redistricting commission amendment does not provide for an independent commission composed solely of citizens. 2. If the redistricting commission fails to draw district maps or the General Assembly fails to enact district maps by certain deadlines, the responsibility of drawing districts will transfer to the Supreme Court of Virginia, comprised of seven justices who are elected by a majority vote of each house of the General Assembly for a term of twelve years. A constitutional amendment does not allow for any flexibilities if the Supreme Court of Virginia chooses to draw the districts in a partisan manner.

SOURCES

The Explanation was written by nonpartisan legislative staff and was approved by Senate Privileges and Elections, 07/08/2020, with House Privileges and Elections edits: <u>https://www.virginiamercury.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/2020quest_redistrictingcommission_DRAFT_SPEapproved.pdf</u> This Pros and Cons document was prepared by The League of Women Voters of the Fairfax Area Education Fund.

The League of Women Voters Supports the Redistricting Constitutional Amendment:

1. A constitutional amendment creating a bipartisan citizen-led redistricting commission is necessary to achieve binding redistricting reform.

2. A bipartisan, citizen-chaired redistricting commission with an equal number of legislators and citizens would draw the voting maps.

3. The process will be much more transparent with the redistricting public hearings and data open to the public.

4. There are strong criteria for the protection of racial and ethnic minorities and fair district maps.

5. If the maps fail to be drawn or enacted, the responsibility for drawing the maps transfers to the Virginia Supreme Court. In the past, courts have engaged "special masters" who are experts in drawing voting districts.

Redistricting Referendum Update:

LWV CVA Members, Anne Geraty and Kerin Yates, have been working with Chris DeRosa from the State League and others to obtain postcards and yard signs in support of the Referendum on November's ballot. In the Charlottesville Area our Local League has volunteers to write 200 postcards and also to find folks to display 60 yard signs promoting the referendum. The National and State LWV strongly supports passage of the referendum in conjunction with onevirginia2021.org:

https://www.onevirginia2021.org/?gclid=Cj0KCQjws536BRDTARIsANeUZ5-PK_8lb36Cc2MZw mo_fUs4eiV3r9rpxLESf5UXqwU0f74SpRER72saAsqqEALw_wcB

LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee Meeting Report By Muriel Grim, Natural Resources Committee Director

Most of the August 20th Natural Resources Committee virtual meeting was spent on LWV-CVA activities. Pat Cochran reported that LWV-CVA now has a YouTube channel with both public and private access sections. Recorded Zoom meetings will be uploaded to the YouTube channel. Links on the LWV-CVA website will direct people to YouTube recorded meetings. We intend to use this capability to make our Comprehensive Plan "book club" meetings available to the public. We discussed Voter Services activities and members volunteered to help with them. NRC members volunteered to work on voter registration, including the sandwich boards, and the redistricting referendum post cards.

The first meeting of the Comprehensive Plan "book club" will be on Friday, August 28th, from 10:00 to noon. We expect between 10 and 20 participants. Interested in the Natural Resources Committee? Contact Muriel Grim at <u>msgrim2012@gmail.com</u>.

LWV CVA International Relations/Federal Government Committee Update By Marge Cox, IR/FG Chair

The IR/FG committee will meet by Zoom on Wednesday, September 16 beginning at 10 am. New members will be introduced and a report on Cuba will be given by Elizabeth Franks. For more information about this committee and how to attend meetings, contact Marge Cox, 434-245-5228, or email: <u>margevfcox@gmail.com</u>.

LWV CVA Child Care Update By Beth Kariel, Child Care Committee Chair

Beth has been comparing child care in Virginia during the pandemic with child care in other states. While reopening rates and regulations vary somewhat, the economic devastation of the child care industry seems to be universal. Groups are calling for more government subsidies, at both the federal and state levels.

The child care committee is closely following child care in Virginia. Of particular concern to the committee is that there continue to be many waivers of child care regulations. Additionally, inspectors are not going into centers. Instead, they are doing virtual inspections. It is the position of the child care committee that if child care centers are open, inspections should be done in person, for the protection and safety of children.

For more information about the LWV CVA Child Care Committee, email: bethkariel9@gmail.com.

LWV CVA Justice Reform Committee Report

By Kit Murphy McNally, Justice Reform Committee Director

August 16 Sunday Seminar Zoomed in on Hometown Justice! Debuting on Zoom for the first time in LWV CVA Sunday Seminar history, the program proved especially appropriate for highlighting the data meticulously collected and analyzed by Neal Goodloe, Criminal Justice Planner for the Jefferson Area Community Criminal Justice Board. It also enabled participants to visit "Georgia's House" founded by Dorothy Tomkins, MD. Links to Goodloe's graphs and the short video on Georga's are online at <u>lwv-cva.org</u>

Not all the news was not good. The number of women jailed on felony drug charges has risen twice as fast as for men over the last 10 years at the Charlottesville and Central Virginia Regional Jails. That fact stood out among many demonstrating some positive trends during a slide presentation by Goodloe. Goodloe's research underscored the disparity in incarceration between men and women, but also the disparity created by more rural areas with presumably less social services and opportunities for legitimate employment than the more urban Charlottesville/Albemarle area. Untreated drug addiction, mental illness, unemployment and poverty come down hard on women in more rural areas.

Though much more funding for intervention is critical, the good news is that alternatives for women do work, illustrated at the seminar by the founder of *Georgia's House*. This downtown house has proven a highly successful alternative to jail for up to 12 women — and one cat — at a time. Sobriety, self-sufficiency, and shared development of healthy life skills enable the women to find employment and become self sufficient, bypassing incarceration. Presenting at the Seminar, Georgia's founder, Dorothy Tomkins, illustrated the success of Georgia's in a short video featuring some of the women themselves talking about the program and what it has meant to them. Tomkins is also member of the LWV-CVA Justice Reform committee which seeks to study and expand local alternatives to incarceration for women.

As for the local justice system overall, Goodloe's conclusions:

- Violent and property crime has fallen. Jail populations have not.
- Women are taking up a greater percentage of jail bed days than they were 10 years ago.
- Felony drug charges and felony probation violations are significant drivers of this phenomenon.
- Women in jails are significantly more likely to meet the screening criteria for serious mental illness.
- The impact of COVID-19 is yet to be fully appreciated.

Early indicators suggest that the population of women at Albemarle-Charlottesville Regional Jail (ACRJ) is rebounding faster than among men. Jurisdictions across the country have tested and implemented an array of effective alternatives for individuals who, at root, need help not jail. Getting such assistance into less populated areas is difficult but not impossible. Innovative actions elsewhere show promise. Incarceration in jail is often the first stop to prison and it can cost women their children, homes and future employment. The LWVCVA Justice Reform Committee studies how the system works in Virginia, especially at the front end in the five-county area served by the LWV-CVA. The committee now looks forward to contributing to a coordinated plan to overcome default incarceration with constructive community alternatives that can serve as the pathway to treatment, job training, employment and childcare. It can happen here — it has elsewhere.

The Justice Reform Committee draws from extensive research and experiences of other jurisdictions to impact process and legislation, as well as teaming up with LWV justice committees throughout the state and the Covid-19 Justice Coalition, to carry louder voices to the House of Delegates and State Senate. Interested? The committee next meets by Zoom Thursday, September 24 at 11 AM. For more information, contact Kit Murphy McNally, murphymcnally@gmail.com.

LWV CVA Electoral Boards Observer Corps by Kerin Yates, Chair

The **Nelson County** Electoral Board met several times in August. Notice of their meetings (which are in person) are not posted on their website. The link to their minutes follows. <u>http://www.nelsoncounty-va.gov/wp-content/uploads/EB-Minutes-Aug-12-2020 Draft.pdf</u> Clearly they are expecting and clearly preparing for a large number of early voters – in person and absentee. LWV CVA Observer Anne Geraty spoke to someone who voted in Nelson County for the primary, and she said the voter felt entirely safe. Everyone was masked in the building.

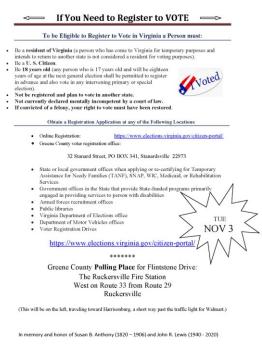
The **Louisa County** Electoral board meets September 1. Here is the link to the Louisa Electoral Board minutes: <u>https://www.louisacounty.com/AgendaCenter/Electoral-Board-3</u> They last met Aug. 4. Minutes are not posted until accepted which will be after the Sept 1 meeting.

Minutes of the **Albemarle County** Electoral Board can be found at the Albemarle County Web site: <u>http://albemarle.org/department.asp?department=registrar&relpage=2933</u>

Meetings were held on August 12 and August 24. On the 24th there was a discussion of using drop boxes but no decisions were made. Many decisions are being held up by the General Assembly. Legislation has been put forth that affects how the elections are to be handled but the bills have not been voted upon. For example: the Legislature must approve the wording on ballots which means ballots cannot be printed until the wording is approved.

The following Email was received from LWV CVA member Diane Inman who lives in **Greene County**: "We were asked to share ideas. I am attaching pictures and documents of a project I did in my neighborhood. One flyer is on registering and voting, one is on gerrymandering. I've sent them in both Word and pdf. I have added the local flyer from the local League to the information (with permission of course.) I've had neighbors stop by to thank me for the information. One woman said this kind of thing needs to be everywhere. Note: The box for holding the flyers needs to be a bit more waterproof. I am working to see if I can get a realtor's box."





Sample Flyer for Greene County Residents: "If You Need to Register to Vote"

Page | 8 – September 2020

LWV CVA Voter Registration and Information Campaign

Our League now has two sandwich boards (pictured below) available for placement at points around our area for specified time periods allowing folks waiting in their cars or visiting farmers markets to get our their phones and "copy" the QR code to the state's election website, <u>elections.virginia.gov</u>. You can help by signing up for a specific time to place the boards in an area near you! Click here to select your time/place slot on for Sign-up Genius: <u>https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0D4DA9A929A0FCCE9-voter</u>



Breaking News: League of Women Voters of Virginia Celebrates a Victory for Voters!

August 21, 2020: Judge rules in favor of waiving witness requirement so voters can safely cast absentee ballots.

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the League of Women Voters of Virginia filed a lawsuit seeking to suspend the requirement that a voter casting an absentee ballot have a witness observe and sign the ballot envelope. Today, a federal judge ruled in favor of LWV-VA, meaning that voters won't have to worry about putting their health at risk to locate a witness to sign their ballot for the November general election. "We saw how Virginians and their votes were protected when the state agreed to waive the witness requirement for the primary election, so we are relieved that the same protection will be in place for November," said **Deb Wake, president of the League of Women Voters of Virginia**. "Amidst all the uncertainty that this pandemic brings, it is incumbent upon our election administrators to provide voters with safe access to the ballot and assurance that their voices will be heard."



2020-21 LWV CVA Handbooks were mailed to all members in mid-August. Our Handbook is a member bonus for belonging to the League of Women Voters! In addition to the 2020-21 League Meetings "Calendar" and listing of our newly elected and appointed directors and committee members, the Handbook contains: Mission Statement and Principles of the League, our Non-Partisan Policy, History of the League of Women Voters, Program "Positioned for Action" statements, Glossary of League terms, Membership and Dues for belonging to the League (which were due on July 1 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020—see reminder below), and current member Roster. Plus ads from our devoted sponsors of many years.

Reminder: Have you paid your dues for 2020-21? We are still looking forward to hearing from **32 Members listed in our Handbook who have not paid their dues!** If you are still remiss, go to the LWV CVA website, <u>lwv-cva.org</u> and open the lead blog, "Join the League/Renew Your Membership!" You can pay by credit card or send us a check!

In Memoriam: We gratefully thank the family of **Kathy Reed**, long-time resident of Charlottesville, for the generous contribution made to our League in her memory and sent to us by Elaine M. Hadden. The note accompanying the gift relates that Ms. Reed's family suggested memorial gifts be made to "one's local League of Women Voters." The check to our League's Education Fund will further our mission "to encourage informed and active participation in government, while working to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influencing public policy through education and advocacy." LWV CVA President Pat Cochran thanks Ms. Hadden and the Reed Family for thinking of the League in their time of loss.

Welcome New LWV Members!

Robert T. Bond 250 Pantops Mountain Rd – Apt 5234 Charlottesville, Virginia 22911 650-380-3045 rtbond@comcast.net

Nancy Sopher 57 Farmview Rd Stanardsville, VA 22973 803-404-7723 nsopher7@gmail.com

Ellen Tobias 814 Swan Ridge Charlottesville, VA 22903 434-295-2577 ellie@braveape.com

2020-21 Handbooks were mailed in August! Please let us know if you haven't received yours, or if we have made any errors by emailing: <u>lwv@lwv-cva.org</u>

ERRATA to be noted:

Correct October Sunday Seminar (on "Affordable Housing") to **Sun Oct 18**

Audrey Dannenberg's phone should be: 434-466-4232

Morgan Butler's address should be: 1607 Jamestown Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22901.

Karen Lilleleht's address should be: 2600 Barracks Rd. #449, Charlottesville, VA 22901



Meetings and Events for September 2020: Mark Your Calendars Now!

Date/Time	Event	Place	Contact
Sept 9, 1:30 pm	5 th District Congressional Forum	Zoom Meeting: free – see p. 4 for link.	For further information, contact Pat Cochran, email: patcochranlwvcva@gmail.com
Sat., Sept 12, 9 am to 3 pm	LWV-VA Fall Workshop	Zoom Meeting: registration is \$20 per ticket – see p. 4 for link.	Registration is \$20. For more information, go to lwv-va.org
Wed., Sept 16, 10 am	LWV CVA International Relations/Federal Gov't Committee Meeting	Zoom Meeting - Free	Contact Marge Cox for how to join this meeting, margevfcox@gmail.com
Wed., Sept 16, 1:30 – 3:30 pm	LWV CVA Board of Directors Meeting	Zoom Meeting (open to the public)	For further information, contact Pat Cochran, email: patcochranlwvcva@gmail.com
Thurs., Sept 17, 11 am	LWV CVA Natural Resources Committee Meeting	Zoom Meeting	For further information, contact Muriel Grim, msgrim2012 @gmail.com
Sun., Sept 20, 2 – 4 pm	LWV CVA Sunday Seminar: "LWV-VA Election Laws Study Update Review"	Virtual Meeting: An Online Eventbrite registration – see p. 1	For further information, contact Pat Cochran, email: patcochranlwvcva@gmail.com
Tues., Sept 22	National Voter Registration Day!	Register to vote at <u>elections.virginia.gov</u>	Or, check your voter registration information at <u>vote411.org</u>
Thurs., Sept 24, 11:00 am	LWV CVA Justice Reform Committee Meeting	Zoom Meeting	For further information, contact Kit Murphy McNally, email: murphymcnally@gmail.com

Upcoming Virginia Election Dates:

Registration Deadline: October 13

Absentee ballot Request Deadline: October 23

> Voting in Person begins: September 18 – October 31

> > Election Day: November 3

Are You a Registered Voter?

You can check at elections.virginia.gov

OR

Check out the Leagues's vote411 - for the links to voter registration



Page | 11 – September 2020