

March 2023 "eVoter"

News from LWV CVA Community Engagement Committee

By Lisa Hilgartner, LWV CVA Community Engagement Director

Please Join Us at Monticello!

For the second year our local LWV CVA has been invited to be a "Community Partner" with **Monticello on its Founder's Day, Thursday April 13th**. We will be under a community partner tent along with other non-profits chosen by Monticello as groups who actively engage in the commitment to democracy. Our table will have information about our local league and what we do. We'll give out the latest information about the newly formed or changed districts for this year's primary and general elections. Election dates and new changes that affect voting made by the latest session of the General Assembly will also be made available.

The event will be from about 9 to noon. The keynote speaker and recipient of this year's 2023 Jefferson Foundation Medalist in Citizen Leadership is Jason Rezaian, a writer for Global Opinions. He was a correspondent for *The Washington Post* from 2012-2016 reporting from Tehran where he was imprisoned for 544 days until his release in 2016. He is now a CNN contributor.

The event is free to the public. Please come to this interesting and informative event. If you are a new or not-so-new member of the League, this would be an excellent opportunity for us to meet you and for you to see what we do.

Oh, and did I mention free birthday cake? It is Thomas Jefferson's birthday so there has to be cake!

Looking forward to this and hope to see you there. For more information contact, Lisa Hilgartner, email: lisamezzo@gmail.com

Below are (left to right) Lisa Hilgartner, Pat Cochran, and Susan Roberts at the 2022 Founder's Day event at Monticello.

LWV CVA Voter Services Update

From Susan D. Roberts, LWV CVA Voter Services Director

On February 17, 2023 the Virginia Senate passed [HB1948](#) (Bloxom). The House passed the bill unanimously on February 2. **Beginning July 1, 2023, absentee ballots will no longer require the verification of a witness. Instead, voters will be required to provide the last four digits of their social security number along with their date of birth and signature. Please note, however, the witness signature will still be required in the June primaries.**

During the pandemic, the League of Women Voters of Virginia (LWV-VA) partnered with ACLU-VA to bring legal action to waive the witness requirement for absentee ballots. While voters had relief during the state of emergency, the requirement was reinstated once the declaration expired. **LWV-VA President Deb Wake** expressed, "We appreciate the bipartisan support of lawmakers who worked to permanently remove this barrier so that voters wishing to cast an absentee ballot are able to do so without extra hurdles. We especially appreciate Delegate Bloxom's attention to this issue."

"When we successfully went to court in 2020 to waive the requirement, the result was more Virginians being able to vote — and no fraud," said Vishal Agraharker, senior staff attorney for the ACLU-VA. "We look forward to the Governor signing this bill into law."

The League supports allowing voters many options for exercising their right to vote. In the 2022 General Election, 2,044,714 voters voted on Election Day; 666,677 voted early; 296,731 cast their ballots by mail and 14,477 accessed the ballot via the curbside option. Having options increases opportunities for voter participation.

The Future of Albemarle County - An Interactive Session

When: April 11 from 7 to 8:30 pm

Where: Online via Zoom

You may register here: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details>

The League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area, along with Sierra Club Piedmont Group and Piedmont Environmental Council, are co-sponsoring an "online interactive discussion" to solicit your feedback regarding the Comprehensive Plan for Albemarle County. The Comprehensive Plan is a guiding document for growth, development, and investment in the county. The plan is being updated because it is required by the state and it's a way to respond to the changing needs of our community.

An ongoing program, the Albemarle County 2044 Comprehensive Plan update (AC44), began in 2022. This event is part of the AC44 Phase 2 Comp Plan update. The AC44 process is a chance to enhance the quality of life for all members of the Albemarle County community, including residents, workers, and visitors, so that everyone may benefit. This event provides a platform for individuals to share their opinions, perspectives, and knowledge. Feedback from meeting attendees as to what they envision for the next 20 years will be sent to County staff.

We hope you will join us. There will be a short video followed by breakout room sessions to seek your ideas and visions for the future. The Natural Resources Committee is taking the lead for the League on this event. Anyone willing to assist with hosting tasks such as facilitating in breakout groups, please contact Muriel Grim: msgrim2012@gmail.com

Attendance is limited. Please sign up to attend soon!

LWV CVA Gun Violence Prevention Committee Report

From Beth Alley and Maggie Hoover, LWV CVA Committee chairs

The following is an update from Andy Goddard, who tracks GVP legislation in the Virginia General Assembly:

Great day [Feb 20] in the Senate Judiciary meeting! Of the 8 bills we opposed, 6 were Passed By Indefinitely (PBI) by votes of 9-6. These included:

HB 1407 exemption for CHP (concealed handgun permit) holders from prohibition on carry in Capitol Square and government buildings etc.

HB 1462 removing the 30 day waiting period and allowing people with brand new Virginia driver licenses to purchase firearms immediately. (This was put in place to prevent people from coming to VA, getting a driving license and then purchasing handguns as a "state resident" then leaving VA and selling the guns - straw purchases).

HB 1570 exempting highway rest areas from the ban on carrying of firearms and explosives.

HB 2228 allowing renewal of CHP without need for proof of prior training or competency.

HB 2420 creating a default proceed after 90 days for issuance of a nonresident concealed handgun permit.

HB 2460 allowing certain state employees to have firearms in their vehicles parked on state property.

TWO bills were reported, the first was the bill HB2467 which allowed certain individuals who did not allow their photograph to be taken (for religious reasons) to purchase firearms using a special "VA drivers" that has no photo. The bill would only allow the purchase to be from a private seller at a gun show where State Police would be present to perform a background check. This is a very limited situation. However, Lori pointed out that the Federal form needed for such a transaction specifies that the ID must have a photo. Therefore, even if this bill passes to the Governor, State Police would NOT be able to comply with it unless Federal Law was changed.

Finally, switchblade knives! Last year the manufacture and sale of these

knives was legalized and this year HB 2298 would have removed switchblades from the law against carrying concealed weapons. I have repeatedly pointed out that the term "switchblade" is too broad and covers both relatively harmless utility knives as well as knives designed entirely as weapons, with no practical utility except as stabbing weapons. I repeated my testimony, but this time the committee listened and Sen. McClellan moved an amendment to change the bill from removing "switchblades" to instead keeping the prohibition against concealed carry of "stiletto" knives! The bill as amended then passed 12-0.

All in all a VERY good day in the Senate.

Andrew L. Goddard: goddardsinrichmond@yahoo.com

For Andy's "final" report, [click here](#).

For more information about the LWV CVA Gun Violence Prevention Committee, contact Maggie Hoover, email: maggie.hoover@gmail.com or Beth Alley, email: beth.alley@gmail.com.

2023 LWV-VA Convention, June 2-4, 2023

From the LWV-VA website: <https://lww-va.org/lww-va-40th-biennial-convention/2023-lww-va-convention/> Make plans to attend the 41st Biennial LWV-VA Convention in Williamsburg, June 2-4, 2023. In addition to the business meetings, we have great speakers and presentations lined up:

Saturday Welcome Speaker is Provost Peggy Agouris, Chief Academic Officer, William and Mary University. Brenda Andrews, President and Owner at New Journal and Guide Newspaper – Virginia's oldest Black weekly newspaper – is the Saturday lunch speaker.

Professor A.E. Dick Howard, the Warner-Booker Distinguished Professor of International Law at the University of Virginia, is our Special Saturday Banquet Speaker. Prof. Howard rewrote the Virginia Constitution in 1971 to guarantee Black voting rights and was a chief consultant to Governor Terry McAuliffe's efforts to restore rights to returning citizens. He is widely acknowledged as an expert in the fields of constitutional law, comparative constitutionalism, and the Supreme Court.

Sunday Opening Speaker Kimberley Hundley, Williamsburg James City County School Board

Saturday Afternoon Breakout Sessions Presented by:

The Affordable Housing Issue Group

The Voting and Elections Issue Group

Behavioral Health and Criminal Justice Issue Group
LWV Arlington and Alexandria City – Oral Histories Program
Environment Issue Group
Domestic Violence Issue Group

The cost to attend the convention is \$150 per person which includes a morning break, lunch, an afternoon break and dinner as well as entry to all sessions. Additional tickets to the dinner with Professor Howard will be available for \$55 if you would like to bring a guest.

A block of rooms is being held at the Embassy Suites, 3006 Mooretown Road, Williamsburg. Our rate is \$159 per night – double or single. The hotel provides free parking and free breakfast daily and is 1.4 miles from the William and Mary Sadler Center. Breakfast can be purchased in the Sadler cafeteria on Saturday and Sunday mornings, for \$7.50 per meal. Scholarships are available to help defray costs. Contact Debbie at Treasurer@lwv-va.org.

Prior to Convention, all attendees will be invited to virtual meetings to review the four studies and any proposed studies for the next biennium. There will also be a Budget Committee virtual meeting. This will afford attendees the ability to review and digest this essential information well before Convention begins.

LWV CVA members! Are you interested in attending? Our League will have 6 to 7 voting delegates! And there is money in our Operating Budget to support the registration fee. Click [here](#) to RSVP for the convention. Hotel reservations need to be made separately--make them now as they fill up quickly! The information is on the invitation. Let LWV CVA President Meg Heubeck know of your intention to attend. Email: mfh2n@virginia.edu

LWV CVA Health Care Committee Report
By Stephanie Lowenhaupt, Health Care Committee chair

The Health Care Committee has been following Virginia legislation specific to health care equity and access in line with the LWV national position.

“Cover All Kids” (SB1327) would have established a program to provide state-funded comprehensive health care coverage for individuals in the Commonwealth who (i) are under 19 years of age, (ii) are not covered under a group health plan or health insurance coverage, and (iii) but for their immigration status would be eligible for Medicaid. The bill passed the Senate with a vote of 24 Yes and 16 No. Unfortunately, the bill was killed in the Health Welfare and Institutions Committee on a party line vote. Funding for the program is included in the Senate budget, so there is still the opportunity for the program to be included in the compromise budget.

Other legislation we followed included budget amendments by Senator Deeds and Delegate Sickles to streamline Medicaid enrollment for SSI recipients. They were not included in the Senate or House budgets.

HB 1375 eliminates the authority of a health insurance carrier to vary its premium rates based on tobacco use. Under current law, a health carrier may charge premium rates up to 1.5 times higher for a tobacco user than for a nonuser. The bill has passed the House and Senate. The bill is awaiting the Governor's signature.

After the legislative session, we plan to focus our work on access to transportation for medical care in our service area. The prevailing needs to access care that have been identified as most acute are bus routes and shelters, handicap access, ride sharing access, and increasing JAUNT routes to outlying areas.

If you are interested in joining our committee, please contact me at slowenhaupt@gmail.com. We would welcome your participation.

International Relations/Federal Government Meeting Report

By Gerry Kruger

On Thursday, February 16, the LWV CVA International/Federal Government Committee met at Northside Library. Carol Cutler and Susan Roberts filled in for Rice Wagner, our Chair. Also attending were Gerry Kruger, Elaine Longerbeam, Jean Minehart, Bobbie Williams, Katie Angioletti, and Kerin Yates.

Susan Roberts opened the meeting by going through the International Relations section in **2020-22 LWV "Impact on Issues."** We were most interested in studying global issues of governments other than the United States. Carol Cutler agreed to present a report on the "17 Sustainable Goals to Transform Our World" at our March meeting.

Next, we continued our discussion of the Washington Post article entitled "Leaders of Democracies Increasingly Echo Putin in Authoritarian Tilt." We considered the different ideologies of Democrats and Republicans and the concerns that they may have in common. We think Ukraine and immigration could be two things both parties could work on together. The article we discussed said three things authoritarian leaders have in common are populism, polarization, and post-truth. We discussed social media's role in spreading all of these. We contemplated possible consequences for an ex-President who is found guilty of a crime. Most of us felt he should never again hold any government office rather than being sent to jail.

Other conclusions we came to:

1. Supreme Court Justices should be held accountable by an ethics unit. If they fail to follow acceptable standards, there should be consequences.
2. Some judges whom President Trump appointed refused to side with him. This proves there are judges that take their oaths seriously and don't allow partisanship to override the Constitution.
3. The more informed and educated the electorate, the better leaders we will have. This underscores the primary mission of the League.
4. All elected officials should be vetted and required to turn over tax returns.

We invite members to join us on the third Thursday of each month as we meet at Northside Library at noon. Our next meeting will be held on March 16.

2023 LWV CVA Finance Drive Update

By Kerin Yates and Maggie Hoover, Finance Drive Committee

As of February 2023, the Finance Drive has raised \$3780. Members have contributed \$1700 to the Operating Fund and \$1305 to the Education Fund. Friends have contributed \$700 to the Operating Fund and \$75 to the Education Fund. [Contributors who used the "Donate" link on our website are not listed due to a technical problem. We expect that to be corrected by the next e-Voter.] We appreciate the continued support of members and friends and wish to thank:

Members:

Frances Schutz
Becky Bartness
Lydia Peale
Anne Geraty
Kit Murphy McNally
Anita Pilling
Beth Alley
Debby Garth
Harriet Schley
Susan Roberts
Rosalie Simari
Maureen O'Brien
Lulu Meese
Muriel Grim
Shelah Scott
Rebecca Thomas
Sue Friedman
Jean Hammond
Shirley Payne
Maggie and Michael Hoover
Carol and David Hogg

Dena Imlay
Kerin Yates
Lisa Hilgartner
Jean Minehart
Sue Rainey
Flora Patterson
Lois Sandy

Non-Member Friends:

Hope Pribram
Elizabeth Merrill
Wm. Kehoe
Joe Shaver
Sonia Haimes
Great Eastern Management Co.
Donna Goings
Jeffrey Shabanowitz
Kevin Lynch

We thank you for your consideration and support!
Kerin Yates, and Maggie Hoover, 2023 LWV CVA Finance Drive

In Memoriam: Lois Rochester

1928 - 2023

Sadly, we share the announcement of the passing of Lois Rochester, LWV CVA past president (1986-88). Lois along with her husband Dudley of 73 years was a devoted League member. She not only served as president of our local League back in the 1980's, but she also served on the board of the League of Women Voters of Virginia as Vice-President for Organization and Chair of State Financing of Education. In 1986 Lois was appointed to Virginia Governor Robb's Commission on the Future of Virginia and, later, to Governor Baliles' Commission on "Excellence in Education." She was also active in the FOCUS Women's Resource Center and served on the board of the Funeral Information Society of the Piedmont (FISP). A service honoring her memory was held in Westminster-Canterbury of the Blue Ridge on Saturday, February 18, 2023. The obituary in *The Daily Progress* notes memorial contributions may consider a donation to the League of Women Voters (website: lww-cva.org).

Please note: Kerin Yates reports the following donations made "In Memoriam" to the League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area as follows:
Frances Schutz in memory of Lois Rochester, Karen Lilleight, and Ann Harrad.
Jean Minehart in memory of Lois Rochester.

LWV CVA Calendar of Events for March 2023 -

Mark your Calendars!

LWV CVA Board of Directors Meeting - Zoom on Wednesday, March 15, 1 - 3 pm. Agenda and Link forthcoming from President Meg Heubeck.

LWV CVA International Relations/Federal Gov't Meeting - In-person meetings on the third Thursday of the month at Northside Library at noon. March meeting: Thursday, March 16, noon. For more information contact Rice Wagner, email: ricew123@icloud.com

Upcoming in April:

"The Future of Albemarle County" - An Interactive Session by zoom on Tues April 11, 7 - 8:30 pm. You may register here: <https://act.sierraclub.org/events/details>

Founder's Day at Monticello - Community Partner Tent - Thursday, April 13, 9 - noon. For more information, contact Lisa Hilgartner, email: lisamezzo@gmail.com

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area

President: Meg Heubeck

eVoter Editor: Michele Kellermann

Visit our website: lwv-cva.org

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. We are committed to applying the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our operations and activities. We support governmental policies that apply these principles in addressing the social, environmental and economic problems in our communities.

League of Women Voters of the Charlottesville Area | PO Box 2786, Charlottesville, VA 22902

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