



Voter

League of Women Voters of Loudoun County

January 2006

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The following Letter to the Editor was sent to Loudoun and Fairfax County media.

Citizens who live within the 33rd Senatorial District will go to the polls on January 31 to elect a new state Senator. The Leagues of Women Voters of Loudoun County and the Fairfax Area encourage all voters to take part in this very important election.

Upon hearing of the special election, we immediately set plans to schedule a candidate’s forum to provide an opportunity for the public to learn more about the candidates. This special election has a short campaign time frame and getting information out is critical for all voters. All candidates were promptly invited and given the opportunity to participate. However, we could not come to an agreement with one of the candidates; in the meantime, a debate sponsored by Falcon’s Landing could not come to fruition as one of the candidates did want to debate in a closed forum. Since the Leagues’ main focus is to provide information to the voters of the 33rd Senate District, we are very concerned and disappointed that a debate/forum could not be agreed upon by the candidates before this special election.

As it has been for more than 85 years, the League of Women Voters does not endorse candidates or any political party. Our mission is to encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government, which we take very seriously. We work very hard to ensure that the same opportunity is given to all candidates in order to provide voters with the information they need to make an informed decision at the polls and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

Betsy Mayr, President, LWV Loudoun County

Sherry Zachry, President, LWV of Fairfax Area

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One of the evils of democracy is you have to put up with the man [or woman] you elect, whether you want him or not.

Will Rogers

Loudoun County LWV Public Policy Positions

Did you participate in Program Planning this year? Only 13 members attended the Program Planning meeting on January 12 to review our Public Policy Positions and those of the US League of Women Voters. Would you still like to participate? It's not too late, although you did miss a wonderful pot luck dinner. *Your voice can still be heard.* Download the policy position forms at <http://www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/program.html>. Indicate your positions and mail or e-mail the forms to program@loudoun.va.lwvnet.org by February 15, 2006.

Please include any suggestions for improving our Program Planning, suggested topics, and how you would prefer to participate – via meeting, Web response, e-mail, phone, or mail.

Redistricting – Hear All About It on February 9

Therese Martin, LWV of the Fairfax Area, takes a look at one of the country's hot electoral topics – congressional and state legislative redistricting at the LWV Loudoun general membership meeting on February 9. Ms. Martin will discuss the legal constraints and political aspects of drawing electoral district lines and the ways Virginia and other states currently handle or could improve the process.

The Virginia League adopted this two-year program topic for study and action by all Leagues throughout Virginia after becoming increasingly concerned about the effects of political gerrymandering on the number of uncontested elections.

The meeting begins at 7:00 pm at the Leesburg Airport, 1001 Sycolin Road, S.E. Leesburg, VA 20175.

LWWVVA Action Alert

For the latest information on redistricting and other legislative topics, visit <http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org>.

What's New at

www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org

- The LWVLC *Voter* is on the website at: www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/Pubs.html
 - Calendar section for dates pertaining to the General Assembly
www.loudoun.va.lwvnet.org/calendar.html
 - To contact members of the General Assembly and for information about committee meeting dates, legislation, and whatever they are up to in Richmond
virginia.va.lwvnet.org/va_genassembly.html
- Be sure to refresh your browser to make sure you are looking at the latest updates.

Meet Your Legislator in April

Quick – Name Loudoun's State Legislators. (answers below)

Students from Loudoun County's high school government classes will have the chance to meet these men (yes – they are all men) in April. Each year, the League sponsors the event, which brings together the legislators, students and their teachers, and members of the public. Each legislator makes a brief presentation and students are given the opportunity to ask questions. The dates and locations for each high school will be announced in the next *Voter*.

Answer: Sen. Russell Potts (R-27th), TBD (33rd), Del. Chuck Caputo (D-67th), Del. Robert Marshall (R-13th), Del. Joe May (R-33rd), Del. David Poisson (D-32nd), Del. Tom Rust (R-86th).

People often say that, in a democracy, decisions are made by a majority of the people. Of course that is not true. Decisions are made by a majority of those who make themselves heard and who vote – a very different thing.

Walter H. Judd, Congressman, editor
& radio commentator, medical
missionary

National, State, and Local League News

Balancing Homeland Security and Civil Liberties

Saturday, March 25

10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

ML King Memorial Library, Room 443

901 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001

Co-sponsored by League of Women Voters of the National Capital Area and the District of Columbia Public Library System

Panelists

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) lawyer

American Library Association spokesperson on

PATRIOT Act, privacy issues

American Red Cross (National Capital Area)

Manager, Disaster Operations

Metropolitan Washington Council on

Governments' Executive Director

Metropolitan Washington Council on

Governments' Legal Counsel

Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, Bioterrorism

Expert

Contact Andrea Gruhl, LWVNCA, 301-596-5460

Directions to parking area: Go west on H Street. Turn left at Hyatt Hotel and go south on 10th Street. Turn left on G Place. Turn right onto diagonal access path into clean, well-lit, security guarded basement parking. Or take Metro to Gallery Place.

Alexandria League of Women Voters presents

Dr. C. Eugene Steuerle, Urban Institute Senior Fellow - How Can Uncle Sam Keep All Those Promises?

February 25, 2006, 9:30 am

Burke Library, 4701 Seminary Road, Alexandria

Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and tax breaks...these programs present staggering future bills. Meanwhile, the nation's tax system is insufficient to meet those promises as a smaller group of taxpayers must pay for the large baby boomer's benefits.

Contact Kay Youngflesh, rkyflesh@comcast.net

LWVVA - Legislative Information

By Lulu Meese, President, L WVV A

A few pertinent facts about Virginia:

- We are the 12th most populous state in the US, with personal income average of \$50,028, the eighth highest in the U.S.
- We rank 43rd in state and local taxes with percent of personal income 9.2% for taxes.
- We received \$12,150 federal dollars per resident in 2004.
- We have about four million registered voters; 1.94 million voted in the November 8,2005 election.

A few pertinent facts about the League of Women Voters of Virginia:

- We have more than 2,100 members in 13 League organizations.
- We have sent each of our 140 legislators a letter introducing Lulu K. Meese, President and Chair of Women's Legislative Roundtable and Anne Sterling, our lobbyist.
- We listed our priorities for action as transportation, environmental protection, women's issues, indoor clean air, and reapportionment and redistricting with ongoing support for adequate public school funding. We also told them of our plans for League Lobby Day, February 8.

Our action position support will include:

- Gov. Warner's budget item of \$625 million infusion of new money into Virginia's transportation system.
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation request for General Assembly to establish an annual, reliable, sufficient funding source for clean water. We need to build upon the historic down payment of \$50 million made during 2005 General Assembly to secure reliable funding in 2006. This will be a budget issue and will be supported by the fact that nearly two-thirds of the river miles that Virginia monitors are polluted... 6,948 miles. Learn more by asking for Virginia's

dirty-water report:

www.deq.virginia.gov/wqalir2004.html.

- Support for pro-choice positions on support for expanding low-income women eligible for family planning services through the Medicaid program and expand prenatal care for low income women and support for Planned Parenthood Resolution urging FDA to approve over the counter plan B emergency contraceptive medication and support for resolution on family life education programs in Virginia public schools.
- Support for the enactment of Comprehensive Clean Air legislation that will restrict smoking in all public indoor environments thereby protecting all Virginians from further health risks.
- Gov. Kaine's Start Strong plan for all of state's 100,000 4-year-olds at a cost of \$296 million a year when fully funded.

- Presently publicly funded preschool is offered to about 27,000 disadvantaged Virginia children.
- Support for restoring Voting Rights for Felons, using LWVUS Voting Rights position, "The League believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed."

The League acts after study and member agreement to achieve solutions in the public interest on key community issues at all government levels, to build citizen participation in the democratic process and engage communities in promoting positive solutions to public policy issues through education and advocacy. Look for regular updates on Legislative Action during the 2006 General Assembly. An updated Legislative Directory should be ready in February.

Olga Hernandez, Vice President of the LWVVA, notified us that the following resolution has been offered in the 2006 General Assembly session and quotes the Virginia League's state study.

Senate Joint Resolution No. 84

Offered January 11, 2006, Prefiled January 10, 2006

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the redistricting process. Report.

Introduced by Senator Martin Williams (R) of Newport News

WHEREAS, Article II, Section 6 of the Constitution of Virginia provides that the General Assembly shall redraw state legislative and congressional district boundaries every 10 years following the United States Census; and

WHEREAS, the decennial redistricting process followed by the General Assembly in 1991 and 2001 reflects new developments and problems now inherent in the process, including the use of sophisticated technology, more frequent division of localities among two or more districts, less attention to the compactness and contiguity of districts, a more intense reliance on political data, increased protection for incumbents, a severe reduction in the number of competitive contests for state legislative and congressional seats, and a consequent decline in voter participation; and

WHEREAS, the lack of competition in Virginia's legislative and congressional elections is demonstrated by the following statistics: (i) only 38 of 100 Delegate

Races were contested by both major parties in 2005, only 11 races were decided by a margin of less than 10 percent, and only three incumbent members were defeated; (ii) only eight of 11 congressional district races were contested by both parties in 2004; and (iii) the margin of victory was less than 20 percent in only one congressional race, that of the Second District where the margin was 10 percent, and no incumbents were defeated; and

WHEREAS, the lack of competition is even more pronounced in off-year elections as demonstrated by these statistics: (i) only 35 of 100 Delegate races and only 19 of 40 Senate races were contested by both major parties in 2003; (ii) only eight of 100 Delegate races and only four of 40 Senate races were decided by less than a 10 percent margin in 2003; (iii) only six of the 11 congressional district races were contested by both parties in 2002 and there were no close contests, with the smallest victory margin being a 25 percent victory margin in the Eighth District; and (iv)

only one incumbent member of the House, Senate, or Congress was defeated in the 2002 and 2003 general elections; and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters of Virginia in its study, "Does Your Vote Really Count?" similarly documents the lack of turnout, suggests that partisan gerrymandering is one of the contributing factors, and offers a bipartisan redistricting commission as a step towards reducing that factor; and

WHEREAS, other states have turned to independent commissions or staff to redraw districts or participate in the process, and other states have developed guidelines to promote reliance on neutral redistricting criteria; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the redistricting process. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of 12 members that shall consist of eight legislative members, two nonlegislative citizen members, and two ex-officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; five members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; one nonlegislative citizen member to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, who shall be a representative of a public policy center at one of the Commonwealth's public institutions of higher education; and one nonlegislative citizen member to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, who shall be a local government official. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia, or his designee, and the Secretary of the State Board of Elections shall serve ex-officio with nonvoting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) evaluate the present Virginia redistricting process and its impact on competitive elections and district criteria, (ii) review alternative redistricting

processes used in other states, (iii) examine the impact of federal legislation such as the Voting Rights Act, (iv) consider both constitutional and statutory changes in the process, and (v) study the criteria that should be followed in developing redistricting plans.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2006 interim and four meetings for the 2007 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$8,800 for each year without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the Senate members or a majority of the House members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint subcommittee.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings for the first year by November 30, 2006, and for the second year by November 30, 2007 and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the Governor and the General Assembly a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2006 and 2007 interims.

2006 Calendar of Events

Date	Time	Place	Description
Wednesday, February 8	9:00am – 10:00am	Richmond VA	Lobby Day (information at http://virginia.va.lwvnet.org)
Thursday, February 9	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport 1001 Sycolin Road, S.E. Leesburg, VA	Redistricting - LWVLC Monthly Unit Meeting. Open to the public
Wednesday, February 15			Program Planning Forms Due
Tuesday, February 28	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members
Saturday, March 11 or 18	TBD	TBD	Women’s History Month Tea with The Honorable Judy Connally, co-founder of Womens Health Virginia, member of Commonwealth Transportation Board, and former member Virginia House of Delegates on women’s health and transportation issues.
Tuesday, March 28	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members
March & April		Loudoun High Schools	High School Voter Registration Volunteers Needed
April	TBD	TBD	Meet Your Legislator
Friday, April 14	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	Discussion of the Reapportionment and Redistricting State Study Open to the public.
Tuesday, April 25	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members.
Saturday – Sunday, April 29-30	TBD	Williamsburg, VA	LWVVA Council Call 866-427-8512 or info@virginia.va.lwvnet.org for more information
Saturday, May 6 & Wednesday May 17		South Riding, VA	South Riding Home Owner Association Elections Volunteers Needed
Friday, May 12	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Monthly Unit Meeting. Open to the public.

Tuesday, May 23	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members.
Friday – Tuesday June 9 - 13	TBD	Minneapolis	LWVUS 47th National Convention: "Meeting in the Middle"
Tuesday, June 27	7:00pm - 9:00pm	Leesburg Airport	LWVLC Board of Directors Meeting. Open to all League members.

Thoughts from *An Uncommon Scold*

Compiled by Abby Adams, ©1989

I am firm. You are obstinate. He is a pigheaded fool. Katharine Whitehorn

Never lose your temper with the Press or the public is a major rule of political life.
Christable Pankhurst

Ninety-eight percent of the adults in this country are decent, hard-working, honest Americans. It's the other lousy two percent that get all the publicity. But then – we elected them.
Lily Tomlin

Calvin Coolidge looked as if he had been weaned on a pickle.
Alice Roosevelt Longworth

The First Lady is an unpaid public servant elected by one person – her husband.
Lady Bird Johnson

The reason there are so few female politicians is that it is too much trouble to put makeup on two faces.
Maureen Murphy

There is only one political career for which women are perfectly suitable, diplomacy.
Clare Boothe Luce

In politics, if you want anything said, ask a man. If you want anything done, ask a woman.
Margaret Thatcher

They say women talk too much. If you have worked in congress you know that the filibuster was invented by men.
Clare Boothe Luce

The history of men's opposition to women's emancipation is more interesting perhaps than the story of that emancipation itself.
Virginia Woolf

I was the first woman to burn my bra. It took the fire department four days to put it out.
Dolly Parton



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF LOUDOUN COUNTY**

P.O. Box 822, Leesburg, Virginia 20178

Please add my voice to the 120,000 members and supporters nationwide!

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Betsy Mayr – President

January 2006

