



The Voter

League of Women Voters — Loudoun County



**Nicole Hamilton, Executive Director,
Loudoun Nature Conservancy**

**Upcoming LWV-LC Annual Meeting
Saturday, April 25**

“Birds, Bees and Butterflies”

The State of Loudoun County’s Environment

Nicole Hamilton, executive director of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy will be the keynote speaker at the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County (LWV-LC) annual meeting and luncheon at 11:30 on April 25 at the Palio Ristorante

Italiano in Leesburg. The luncheon costs \$35 for LWV-LC members and \$40 for nonmembers. Reservations must be made by April 20.

Ms. Hamilton will address one of LWV-LC’s major policy issues—the quality of Loudoun County’s environment—as she discusses, “Birds, Bees and Butterflies.” The mission of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy is to promote the preservation and proliferation of healthy wildlife habitats throughout Loudoun County. The Conservancy offers field trips, conducts habitat restoration projects like “Bringing Back the Monarch,” presents citizen science programs, and advocates on behalf of wildlife so Loudoun’s representatives know that we care about the wildlife and habitat of the county.

Nicole Hamilton was president of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy from 2004 to 2008 and again from 2012 to 2014. As president, Ms. Hamilton established Loudoun Wildlife’s Bluebird Nestbox Monitoring program through a partnership with the Virginia Bluebird Society; developed the Loudoun Amphibian Monitoring Program; created the “Field Guide to the Butterflies of Loudoun”; and most recently launched the Loudoun Wildlife’s Monarch butterfly campaign: “Bringing Back the Monarch, Keeping the Magic Alive.” In 2014 she was asked to serve as the first executive director of the organization. Ms. Hamilton holds a master’s degree in business administration and worked for 19 years with Booz Allen Hamilton as a senior associate.

Reservations for lunch and checks should be sent to: League of Women Voters of Loudoun County, P.O. Box 822, Leesburg, VA 20176 by April 20. Please include contact information.

Spring High School Voter Registration Campaign

Led by Jean Brown and Betsy Mayr, LWV-LC will be registering seniors in seven of Loudoun County's high schools to vote. Any senior who will be 18 by November 3 and is a US citizen can register to vote in the election where every seat in the state General Assembly and county Board of Supervisors will be up for election. More and more schools are encouraging seniors to register online, but the League is still committed to personal presentations when requested. In years past, the League has registered more than 2,000 seniors each year during this campaign. We continue to work with the Loudoun County Department of Voter Registration & Elections to register voters at many sites. A special program at the Loudoun campus of the Northern Virginia Community College is planned for next fall with registration and a panel on voters' rights.

In Memoriam – Terry Bell 1929-2015

On March 12, 2015 longtime League member Terry Bell died at the age of 85. She was well-known for her work with the popular "Know Your County" radio program which she hosted for LWV-LC on WAGE Radio. In a letter to her family, LWV-LC president, Priscilla Godfrey, wrote: "We are sad to learn of the death of Terry, a staunch and faithful supporter of the League of Women Voters here in Loudoun County. We will miss all she did to keep the League an important source of political information and well respected by the community at large.

We will strive to follow in her footsteps by continuing to keep the League in the public eye and provide to the voters the very best information available so they can be informed voters when they go to the polls.

Please pass along to the family our sincere sympathies and gratitude for her friendship and leadership through the years."

Join the LWVLC Board

The Nominating Committee has announced the following positions open on the LWV of Loudoun County Board of Directors:

- * Secretary
- * 6 Directors (one and two-year terms)
- * Nominating Committee

The Board meets monthly and takes the lead with many of LWVLC projects, including high school voter registration, HOA elections, candidate fora, fundraising, and membership recruitment. It's hard work, it's fun, and it's important. Please contact Denise Donnelly, ddofva@aol.com, chair of the Nominating Committee, or JoEllen Keating, jw4dk@aol.com to express your interest.

Priscilla Godfrey, President
Kathleen Hughes, 1st Vice President
Jean Brown, 2nd Vice President
Marla McIntyre, Secretary
Hatsy Cutshall, Treasurer

B.J. Beyer, Director
Alicia Cohen, Director
Ellen Heald, Director
JoEllen Keating, Director
Betsy Mayr, Director
Denise Moore Pierce, Director

Redistricting Reform

On November 13, 2014, LWV-LC hosted a lively panel on “Redistricting Reform: Partisan Politics, an Apathetic Electorate, and Judicial Intervention” with OneVirginia2021 panelists Greg Lucyk, Former Chief Staff Attorney of the Virginia Supreme Court, Stephen Farnsworth, Political Science Professor & Director of Leadership & Media, Meg Heubeck, Director, UVA Center for Politics & Youth Leadership, Matthew Scoble, former Executive Director, OneVirginia2021. They explored the voting rights issue of gerrymandering in Virginia, how it has corrupted our electoral process, and what can be done to redress it, so that voters pick their politicians—not the other way around. LWV-LC is committed to educating the public about the dangers of gerrymandering and to working to redress it.



OneVirginia2021 panelists Stephen Farnsworth, Meg Heubeck, Greg Lucyk, Matthew Scoble and LCLWV President Priscilla Godfrey

Redistricting remains an ongoing issue in Virginia. The League of Women Voters of Virginia has been very active in efforts to bring about a nonpartisan process for drawing legislative lines by a commission as described by the Redistricting Coalition of Virginia, formed in 2010 and of which LWV-VA is a member organization. LWV-VA has participated with the Coalition in educating and informing voters in Virginia about the importance of this issue.

Despite heroic efforts with this year’s General Assembly, none of the redistricting reform bills passed (see article on following page). But the issue is far from dead. On April 7, the Supreme Court asked a three-judge trial court to take another look at the 3rd Congressional District to determine whether it was the product of an unconstitutional racial gerrymander, as African-American voters have contended. <http://www.brennancenter.org/blog/virginia-congressional-map-will-get-second-look-courts>.

And, you can still help. Here is a message from the new executive director of OneVirginia2021

It’s going to happen. Reform will come...it’s just a matter of when. We’ve seen unparalleled progress in the General Assembly and just today the U.S. Supreme Court struck a major blow to politicians manipulating elections by picking their voters. It’s a long road ahead, but the progress is real. Today it was monumental. In honor of that, please take a minute from your day to have a conversation with a friend about this cause. ...you understand how important redistricting reform is to Virginia, don’t keep it a secret!

- Ask your friend or a loved one to sign our petition
- Ask them to join you in donating a small amount to help the cause
- Take a moment and share on Facebook or Twitter

Get involved! The League of Women Voters of Virginia biennial convention is coming up May 29-31 in Charlottesville with the theme of Tool Kit for Redistricting Reform: What it is, Why it is needed, and How you can help. This is a great opportunity to get involved. Find out more at <http://www.lwv-va.org/>.

Report from the 2015 Session of the Virginia General Assembly

The 2015 Virginia General Assembly session officially ended on February 27; considered 2,776 pieces of legislation, and passed 1,513. Subsequently, Governor Terry McAuliffe vetoed 17 of them.

This summary of key voting rights bills is excerpted from the last weekly report compiled by Carol Noggle, Legislative Coordinator for the League of Women Voters of Virginia, and sent by email to all Virginia League members. You can read Carol's full report at <http://lwv-va.org>. Another excellent summary can be found at <http://www.dailypress.com/news/politics/dp-nws-ga-legis-wrap-20150228-story.html#page=1>.

Redistricting Reform

SJ284 (Vogel) Failed. Senator Vogel's resolution for a Constitutional Amendment to establish a bipartisan redistricting commission was not heard in the P&E subcommittee or full committee.

SB824 (Miller) Failed in the House P&E Subcommittee: SB824 would have provided for a statewide referendum in 2015 to give the voters the opportunity to demonstrate their preference on adopting an amendment to the Constitution to establish an independent redistricting commission. It went down almost immediately when the more than \$131,000 price tag was noted.

SB1000 (Lewis) Failed. Senator Lewis valiantly presented the proposal for redistricting criteria and a temporary redistricting advisory commission based on the Iowa process.

SB840 (Watkins) Failed. Members of the House P&E Subcommittee described his bill as "good" but came up with an excuse not to pass it. Del. Landes thought that passing a bill with criteria for redistricting when the current 3rd Congressional District lawsuit was pending was not a good idea. Del. Minchew stated after adjournment that the lawsuit was not a good argument because there are always a significant number of civil cases pending when they pass related legislation during the GA session.

Check Virginia's Legislative Information System (LIS) for resolution of all 2015 General Assembly bills. <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?ses=151&typ=bil&val=SB1350>

Photo ID

HB1318 (Campbell) to require Photo ID with application for absentee ballot. Vetoed by Governor McAuliffe: "This bill imposes barriers on an eligible voter's ability to obtain and cast an absentee ballot. The requirement would not in any way deter fraudulent voting since it provides no means of verifying the identity of the individual depicted in the submitted photograph."

HB1653 (Bulova) Passed in both the House (84-16) AND the Senate (38 to 0) to add the Photo ID of private high school students to the eligible list for voting. Signed by Governor.

SB816 (Sen. Howell) Passed! Removes the requirement that a person applying to vote absentee because of a religious obligation also state the nature of that obligation. As Sen. Howell said it is not the government's business to know that. Signed by Governor.

Felon Voting Rights

SJ238 (Dance) Failed in the House P&E Subcommittee after passing in the Senate 29 -9. This resolution for a Constitutional amendment would authorize the General Assembly to make a law for the restoration of voting rights to persons convicted of nonviolent felonies, who have completed their sentences, including any period or condition of parole, probation, or suspension of sentence.

Legislative Initiatives continued

SB1017 (Dance) Failed: The “Ban the Box” bill that would allow former felons to be granted a job interview at a state agency or at localities before checking the box that means he was convicted at some time. It managed to pass in the Senate but failed in the House Courts of Justice Civil Law subcommittee. Three subcommittee members were sympathetic, however, and believe there is a way to adjust the bill for success in another session. Several cities have a “Ban the Box” provision in place already.

Equal Rights Amendment

SJ216 (Ebbin) Failed. The Equal Rights Amendment bill barely passed in the Senate and was never placed on the House P&E Committee docket. Even so, Del. Joannou kindly made a motion to hear the ERA resolution. It was seconded but Del. Cole denied a vote by stating that the deadline for ratification had passed. Then there was the immediate motion to adjourn.

HB2281 (Carr, Byron, Simon) Failed. Passed the House (100 to zero) and the Senate Rules Committee. The bill establishes the Commission for the Commemoration of the Centennial of Women’s Right to Vote. The Commission is charged with planning and leading the commemoration throughout Virginia in 2020 and educating citizens concerning the importance and significance of the right to vote by all citizens in a democracy. An amendment by the Senate P&E committee changed the number of Senators to be appointed to three so that the two houses have equal representation.

Message from President Priscilla Godfrey

Welcome to our new members and an invitation to all to join the League of Women Voters of Loudoun County as we continue promoting the need for non-partisan redistricting in the Commonwealth of Virginia; getting Loudoun’s high school seniors registered to vote; and planning ways to inform voters this fall in the General Election scheduled for Tuesday, November 3. We certainly hope you will join us for our annual meeting on April 25.

Welcome to Our New Members

Do you know someone who believes in voter education and is passionate about preserving voter rights? If so, forward this newsletter and bring her or him to the next meeting on September 8 so she or he can meet the Board and learn about the many things League does. Dues are \$60 per year or \$90 for family. Membership applications can be found on our website.

Our mailing address is:

PO Box 822

Leesburg, VA 20176

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