

State Board Letter

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LWVMD

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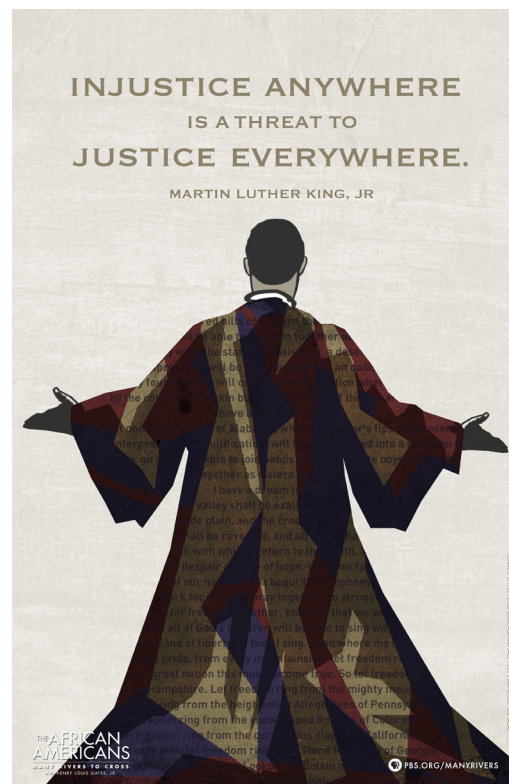
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Editor: Stacey Morrison



LWVMD Calendar

- | | | |
|------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Feb | 1-28 | African American History Month |
| | 21 | Presidents' Day |
| | 22 | LWVMD DEI Book Club virtual, 4pm-5pm |
| | 22 | Candidate filing deadline |
| Mar | 1 | Local League input on national priorities due to LWVUS |
| | 4 | Last day for candidates to withdraw |
| | 19 | LWVMD DEI Workshop virtual, 9am-12pm |
| | 21 | Presidents' Day |



The SBL is a monthly LWVMD publication that seeks to strengthen understanding and collaboration between the Board and local Leagues statewide

President's Message

The new year always brings changes. It is with regret and understanding that I inform you that on January 7, Deborah Mitchell, LWVMD Co-President, submitted to the LWVMD Board a letter of resignation from that role. However, I am pleased to announce that she has agreed to continue to serve on the Board of Directors of LWVMD as a member of various committees, a liaison to LWV St. Mary's County, and the lead advocate before the Maryland General Assembly on legislation related to affordable housing. In her letter of resignation, she cited unanticipated personal priorities, fulfilling the responsibilities as a local League Board member, and professional obligations as reasons that lead to this decision.

I want to express my heartfelt thanks for the six months that we worked together. Deborah threw herself into the job with passion and determination to learn from the experience. LWVMD is fortunate that she will continue to work to help the state League meet its goals of support for local Leagues and advocacy before the General Assembly.

As you read this issue of the State Board Letter, you will learn how volunteers from every local League are stepping up to meet the high demands of an election year and the Legislative Session. Members are gearing up for voter education and engagement by registering voters, preparing to publish Voters' Guides, and planning Get out the Vote activities.

We have also assembled the largest cadre of volunteer advocates that I have ever experienced in my 20 plus years of working on legislation in Annapolis. Thank you JC Hooker, Nikki Tyree, Action Team members, and all the League members who attended the Advocacy Orientation and decided to join an Advocacy Issue Team.



LWVMD President Nancy Soreng

State Board Meeting Highlights

The Candidate Forum Planning Committee is available to provide assistance to local Leagues in organizing and sponsoring Candidate Forums. Please contact Gail Sunderman, gsunderman@lwvmd.org, if you have questions or would like assistance.

The Action Committee has updated the *Advocate Training Manual*, which can be accessed [here](#).

Local Leagues are reminded that input on national priorities are due to the LWVUS by March 1, 2022. All responses must be provided online by completing a survey form available [here](#); each League can submit one response. The final vote on priorities will take place at national convention held June 23-26 in Denver and virtually.

Save the Date - LWVMD Spring Council will be on June 4, 2022.

Stacey Morrison, SBL editor

Committees

2022 Legislative Session Underway

The Action Committee has been working around the clock tracking, testifying, and reporting on the almost 900 bills that have been filed so far!

A huge thank you to all those who came to the LWVMD advocate training workshops in December and signed up to be members of teams. The Action Team is so excited to have such great leads for topics like election protection, police reform, housing, paid family leave, healthcare, the environment - almost too many to count. These teams are already doing round the clock work to keep up with their bills and provide the most updated information to the League.

LWVMD 2022 Issue Papers have been rolling out this month and the Action Committee has been alerting members via email as they are released. So far, papers covering topics such as redistricting, paid family leave, expanding access to healthcare, and many more have been submitted. The action teams encourage all League members to actively participate in LWVMD's legislative work by reading these papers, which can be found via email and on the LWVMD's [action blog](#).

Even more exciting than all the work that's to come is the work that's already underway. So far LWVMD has testified and is monitoring the following bills:

- **HB0017: Campaign Finance - Recurring Contributions and Donations Requirements**
- **HB0151: Hate Crimes - False Statements to Law Enforcement**
- **HB0056: Commission on Student Behavioral Health and Mental Health Treatment**
- **HB0085 Crimes on School Grounds**
- **SB0150: Maryland Medical Assistance - Dental Coverage for Adults**
- **HB0152: The Public Advocate Act**
- **HB0073: General Assembly - Special Elections**
- **HB0141: Equity in Transportation**



This list does not include everything that LWVMD has testified on, but it hopefully sheds light on the fact that LWVMD is acting on the issues that members deemed important this session. As the session moves on, members might be asked via Action Alerts to contact their legislators to help move critical legislation over the finish line; please respond to these alerts.

The Action Committee also encourages members to look into the DEI Advocacy report for a detailed approach on LWVMD's efforts to uphold the League's DEI policy and put equity at the forefront of legislative priorities.

If you have any questions about the Action Committee or this legislative session, or if you would like to talk with one of the action team leaders, please email action@lwvmd.org.

Nikki Tyree, Executive Director

Committees

The LWVMD Candidate Forum Planning Committee is gearing up to host state level candidate forums for the 2022 primary and general election. The committee is reaching out to potential co-sponsors and considering venue alternatives that will reach a broad audience and address the uncertainty of COVID-19. Members of the committee are also available to help local Leagues that may need assistance organizing and sponsoring candidate forums in their local communities.

In December, the LWVMD Board approved revisions to the Candidate Forum and Debates Policy. This revised policy has important information on FEC regulations governing public debates (hint, a debate must include at least two candidates); guidelines on candidate qualifications to be invited to participate in a League sponsored debate, such as how to gauge public support for including a potential candidate in a forum; and how to handle candidate inclusion when co-sponsoring with media broadcasters. A copy of the revised policy is available on the [LWVMD website](#).

Candidate Forums: Revised LWVMD Debates Policy



image by [mary1826](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Be sure to check out other resources, including LWVMD's *Candidate Forum Guidelines and Resources, 2021-22*, as well as the power point presentation, *Forum Management—Best Practices: Virtual and In-Person Forums During Uncertain Times*, which was presented at the 2021 LWVMD Fall Workshop.

Gail Sunderman, Candidate Forum Committee Chair

Key 2022 Election Dates:

<i>Candidate filing deadline:</i>	2/22/2022
<i>Last day to withdraw:</i>	3/4/2022
<i>Early Voting Primary:</i>	6/16/2022 - 6/23/2022
<i>Primary Election:</i>	6/28/2022
<i>Early Voting General Election:</i>	10/27/22 - 11/3/2022
<i>General Election:</i>	11/8/2022

Members of the Committee

Gail Sunderman, Chair	gsunderman@lwvmd.org
Barbara Crain	bcrain@lwvmd.org
Bee Ditzler	bditzler@lwvmd.org
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Ralph Watkins	ralph.watkins1@verizon.net

Committees

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Workshop

The LWVMD DEI Committee presents its first virtual workshop on Saturday, March 19, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. The program will include breakout discussions on Critical Race Theory in schools, confirmation bias, and more. Please attend to learn more about how LWVMD plans to continue to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in its everyday work. Registration details will be posted to the [LWVMD website](#) when finalized.

Nikki Tyree, Executive Director



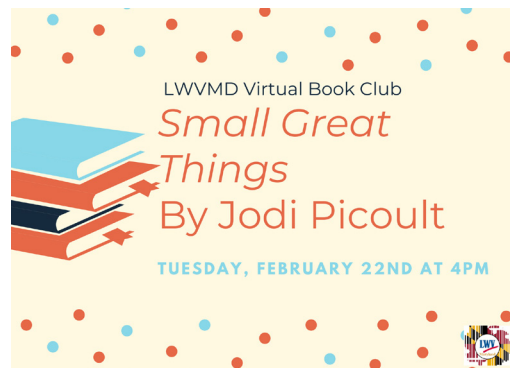
Book Club

The DEI book club kicks off 2022 with resumed meetings. At these monthly virtual events, participants will discuss the book selection within the framework of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This month's book is:

Small Great Things, by Jodi Picoult
Tuesday, February 22, from 4 p.m. - 5 p.m.

The book club is free and open to all. To join the conversation, register [here](#). If you have questions, email Executive Director Nikki Tyree at stateoffice@lwvmd.org.

Nikki Tyree, Executive Director



Program Planning

LWV positions are used to advocate on issues of importance to our organization. Typically, when a local or state League wants to develop a new position, a study is done and after a vote by members, new positions are adopted.

The development and adoption of new positions at the national level follows a different process. At national convention, held this year from June 23-26 in Denver and virtually, concurrences get proposed when a state or local League puts forward a position they have already adopted and asks for it to be considered at national convention. After the discussion of pros and cons, there is a vote by the convention delegates and if adopted, the concurrence becomes a national position. When Leagues advocate around an issue, local, state and/or national positions can all be used.

The LWVMD Board is aware of one proposed concurrence from LWV California related to criminal justice, and LWVUS expects additional proposals will come forward; **proposed concurrences can be submitted up to six weeks before convention**. LWVMD will convene a meeting in late May or early June of all Maryland's delegates who will be participating in the convention to review the proposed concurrences and how they might relate to LWVMD's current positions so delegates will be prepared to fully participate in the conversation.

Linda Kohn, Vice President of Program

Committees

VOTE411: Gearing Up for the 2022 Elections

Thanks to all the local Leagues who submitted questions for candidates for state offices in the upcoming elections and ranked their choices for topics. Members had clearly put a lot of effort into these, and their hard work was appreciated.

Special thanks go to Niecy Chambers, Barbara Crain, Genie Massey, Deborah Mitchell, and Nikki Tyree, who spent long hours going through the suggestions. They did a wonderful job, and the final list was reviewed and approved by the State Board at its January 19 meeting.

LWVMD Board members hope to get full access to the VOTE411 website in early February. LWVUS began giving access to the system in mid-January, beginning with Leagues with elections in February (!) or March and working down the list in chronological order. As the Maryland primary is not until June 28, LWVMD will be one of the last groups to get set up.

The in-person training sessions on the new system that were announced in last month's SBL have been postponed because LWVMD has not yet received access to VOTE411. Members who had signed up to do VOTE411 for their local Leagues or for counties without local Leagues will be notified of the new training dates once they are determined. Dates for in-person and virtual trainings will also be announced in the SBL and on the LWVMD website. For more information, contact Barbara Crain at bcrain@lwvmd.org.

Barbara Crain, Voter Services Chair



Legacy Gifts

You can contribute to LWVMD's lasting legacy by including the League of Women Voters Maryland in your will or estate plan. A bequest to LWVMD in your will or living trust helps to ensure we continue our mission for years to come.

Including the League in your will can be as simple as adding a codicil or amendment to your current will.

The following is suggested language for your lawyer to use to draft a bequest to the The League of Women Voters of Maryland:

"I devise and bequeath to The League of Women Voters of Maryland, Annapolis, MD, Federal Tax ID# 51-0204502, (Insert amount of gift or insert the percentage of estate) to be used for its general purposes."



Committees

Redistricting Update

The LWVMD, in partnership with The People's Maps Maryland, held an in-person Redistricting Rally on Lawyer's Mall in Annapolis on December 8 with the goal of keeping citizens informed of the Special Session to decide Congressional maps for 2022-2031 and to invite their continuing participation. The fifty people in attendance made a good show for the media present, ranging from a reporter from Japan to the Governor's videographer. Social media was key, with a live Twitter feed, managed by LWVMD Board Director Genie Massey, and photo-ops. Speakers included LWVMD Co-Presidents, NAACP Maryland, and Represent Maryland; a large contingent from the Delta Sigma Sorority was also in attendance.

Redistricting Commissions' Congressional Maps – MGA Special Session Dec 6-9, 2021

The Legislative Redistricting Advisory Commission's (LRAC) Congressional map was adopted at the Special Session, vetoed by the Governor, and that veto over-ridden, all within four days! No Republican voted for the LRAC map; the Maryland Citizens Redistricting Commission's (MCRC) map was voted down. We testified at both hearings, opposing both maps because neither process aligned with our position. Our position is detailed about process and standards but does not offer any specifics on how to evaluate a map. We had a LWVUS grant to hire a demographer to advise us, but were unable to find one.

Two state constitutional challenges have been filed in Anne Arundel Circuit Court by Republicans, the first one filed by Judicial Watch (Parrott et al. v. Lamone et al.), and the second one announced by Fair Maps Maryland (Szeliga et al. v. Lamone et al.).

Redistricting Commissions' Legislative Maps – MGA Session Jan 12-April 11, 2022

The MCRC released their final Legislative Map on November 5, 2021. This allowed time for other non-partisan groups to evaluate it favorably for non-partisanship and compactness; the LWVMD does not have the expertise to do such reviews. For details see the LWVMD [Action Blog](#).

The LRAC released their proposed Legislative Map on December 20, 2021, with hearings on December 22. We testified, mostly pointing out the lack of warning and time to study the maps. The other six witnesses gave detailed feedback, some of which was reflected in the final LRAC map approved by the LRAC on January 7 with three hours' notice along party lines. Third-party evaluators therefore did not have time to assess it.

Both Commission's maps are joint bills, SJ2/HJ1 and SJ3/HJ2, and the joint hearings were January 18, 2022. Our testimony consistently opposed both maps. The SJ2/HJ1 Legislative Map (LRAC) was voted out of the Senate committee and enjoyed a spirited floor debate, after which the map was adopted without change along party

lines. The House Rules and Nominations Committee scheduled its vote on the two maps for Tuesday January 25, and we expect that the LRAC bill HJ1 will be voted out of committee without change and go to the House floor at some point. This bill cannot be vetoed by the Governor.

Time is of the essence because the candidate filing deadline is February 22, 2022, and the Boards of Election need to prepare for the June 28, 2022 primary. State Delegates, Senators and Circuit Judges are constitutionally required to live in their district for six months before the election; a 2022 Ballot question would amend this to "... or as long as the district has been in existence." No lawsuits have yet been filed.

Planning for 2031

The current LWVMD's Redistricting position was last studied in 2004. Since then, the advent of publicly accessible mapping technology as well as the experiences of a number of other states' independent redistricting commissions, not to mention Maryland's own 2021 double-commission experience, is likely to inform an updated position.



Beth Hufnagel, Redistricting Committee Chair